

and tragedy are ironic—but not the less moving. The same Englishmen who enslaved India found time to crush a harmless poet.

MR. MAETERLINCK'S cute little bluebird reappeared on Broadway last week, all dressed up in the trappings of Freud and psychoanalysis. The result was something awful, to put it inelegantly. In fact, a good theater week turned sour when Gilbert Miller, who must have had a reason, dredged up this dreary little item by J. B. Priestley, *I Have Been Here Before*.

I'm not exactly a fan for Mr. Priestley's novels, but I must say he does better between covers than across the footlights. The play, currently on view at the Guild Theatre, is very solemn stuff, all about time spirals and an officious professor who keeps remembering things out of his past four existences while the audience keeps wanting desperately to go home. The English, or at least Mr. Priestley, can certainly make a lot of solemn fuss about a little a.b.c. adultery.

Wilfred Lawson, that remarkable fellow who made the bad-tempered lawyer in *Libel* immortal, is stuck with the unfortunate part of the business man who kept shooting himself in all his other existences. He gives, as always, a flawless performance, in spite of Mr. Priestley's lines, and the rest of the cast does as well as can be expected, considering that the first act is made up almost entirely of stage waits and the rest of the play is entirely chewing the cud of Mr. Priestley's philosophy.

RUTH MCKENNEY.

Light on the Dark Continent

A PICTURE about the Belgian Congo that does not mention the terror which subdued the aborigines and the slavery that keeps the markets of Belgium profitable is scarcely a true picture. But the field of exploration films is so wide open for good work that Armand Denis and his expedition have been able to make a satisfactory, even an admirable movie, nonetheless. *Dark Rapture*, at the Globe, is a film account of the auto travels of the Denis-Roosevelt expedition from Belgium (where the young king blessed them off), through France, Spain (no mention of the war), across Gibraltar, through French desert outposts in the Sahara, into the Belgian slaveland of the Congo. Denis has a good sense of the newsworthy things in Africa—the pygmies, the giants, elephant hunts, volcanoes, prairie fires, native ritual, dance and music—and he handles this material in the spoken commentary with exceptional taste. The film is snidely titled and advertised as a sex revelation but it does not



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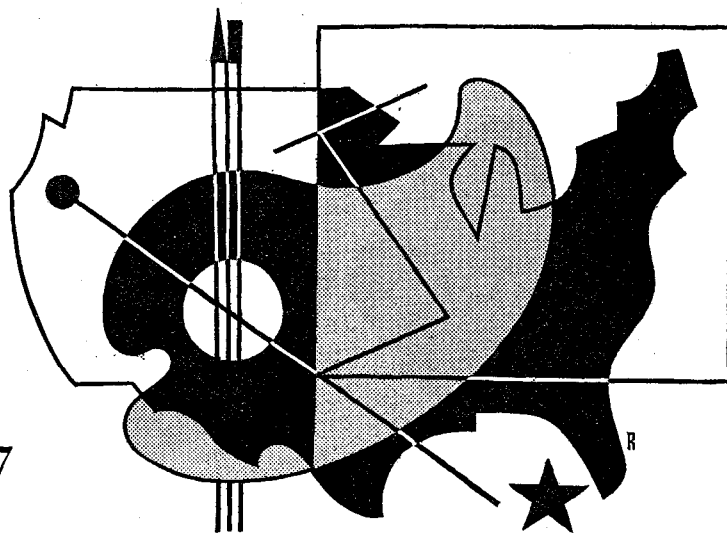
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GENERAL VICTOR H. YAKHONTOFF speaks on: "Soviet Russia and Its Allies" on Tues. Eve., Oct. 25th, 8:30 p.m. at 2 West 86th St. Social hour—Refreshments—Admission 50c.

SCOTT NEARING will speak on "The Doddering British Empire" on October 25th at 88 Seventh Ave., So., (IRT Sheridan Sq. Station) 8:30 p.m. Adm. 40c.

SIX OUTSTANDING Federal Poets—Bodenheim, Funaroff, Claremont, Maas, Sigal, Spector—reciting own poetry, Friday, Oct. 21, 8 p.m. Webster Hall, 119 E. 11th St. Admission 25c.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, American poet recently returned, will speak on "Culture in the Soviet Union," Oct. 21, 8:30 p.m., at Hotel Newton, 2528 Broadway. Ausp. A. F. S. U.

"A-NIGHT-AT-THE-LIDO"—Sunday Evening, Nov. 6, 1938. Featuring Stars of "Sing Out The News" and "Sing For Your Supper." Lido Annex, 146 St. & 7th Ave. Subs. 49c. Ausp.: Theater Anti-Fascist Committee.

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reveal as much as a dark mammary gland. Where the missionaries have failed to introduce "civilized" modesty the Legion of Decency has succeeded.

Leroy G. Phelps, the cameraman, has brought an uncommon pictorial quality to the immensities of Africa—the head-high grasslands, turgid rivers, the upland slopes where the vegetation might be the macabre foliage of Mars. He pictures the jungle where vines, great shafts of trees, and underbrush are woven like a cloth. The tribes of Africa are shown with a directness and sympathy that destroys many a superstitious illusion about "savagery," albeit the most important fact—imperialist rule—is left unsaid. When the director of the elephant station leads an elephant-drawn wagon train into the veldt there is a hint of the actual relations between the natives and their masters. Denis explains that the guns of the native boys who are shortly to undertake the desperate task of roping a young elephant are loaded only with blanks. Because, explains the narrator, the boys might get nervous and shoot each other, or even the white man. These "nervous" Negroes thereupon segregate a pachyderm from the herd and coolly rope him to a tree. Later the boys are shown breaking in the desperate captive, patiently climbing upon his back and jumping lightly off when he lunges with his trunk or tries to roll over on them. I can imagine the reason for the blank cartridges.

A speaker at the opening meeting of the World Youth Congress, an emphatic delegate from Africa, made the point that the aborigines of the so-called Dark Continent may be savages but they are savages who cannot be compared in duplicity and destructive frenzy with the armored savages of Europe. The blessed man of civilization, sitting in a theater, watching the intelligent and dignified pygmies of the deep jungle, the noble Watasi giants of the plateau, and the intrepid fishermen seining the boiling rapids, is struck with an emotion very much like envy. If the world had not got so far into the industrial epoch, one could almost wish for another Rousseau, preaching the idyl of

the Noble Savage. But civilization besotted with the amorality of capitalism, has reached the savage. Remotely down five thousand years, the caste system of Egypt is bestowed upon the seven-foot Watasi who have the bearing and the Semitic profiles of the Nile Delta; more recent and more brutal, the imperialism of Europe is visited upon the Africans. The jungle tribes who have not been captured for the rubber plantations, the mines, and the elephant stations, live in human brotherhood like the pygmy engineers, working in rationalized teamwork as they swing their vine bridge across a streamful of crocodiles.

Denis' commentary is a model of its kind, without a chauvinistic note in it. The expedition released last year an album of musical recordings of jungle ritual. The intricate drumming on these records fascinated American jazz musicians, notably Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa, and its influence is beginning to appear in hot music. This stick and log drumming appears in the picture. Because of its anthropological worth and its exciting photographic incident, *Dark Rapture* is an outstanding movie.

IRVING REIS, director of the exciting radio dramatizations for the Columbia Workshop last year, sold himself over the hill to Hollywood with the understanding that he write and direct only "B" pictures. *King of Alcatraz*, his first effort, suggests that his stipulation has been granted with a vengeance. This gangster-Captain Flagg-Sergeant Quirt melange moves so slowly that one suspects Mr. Reis took nothing to Hollywood from radio but the static.

THE ROOSEVELT THEATRE at Second Avenue and Houston St., New York City, is operated by a company bearing the laudable designation of the Non-Aryan Pictures Corporation. There you may see the best Soviet and European peoples' films at the lowest prices in town. The manager, Mr. Morton Minsky, whose family's reputation in urban anthropology was sullied by Commissioner Moss, has hit upon the bright idea of an historical chronicle of the Soviet Union in Russian films. Beginning October 18, the Roosevelt is pairing two Soviet films which describe the main events of revolutionary history and the growth of Soviet power. Each double bill will play for two days, carrying the audience along chronologically. The complete program follows, including silent and sound films:

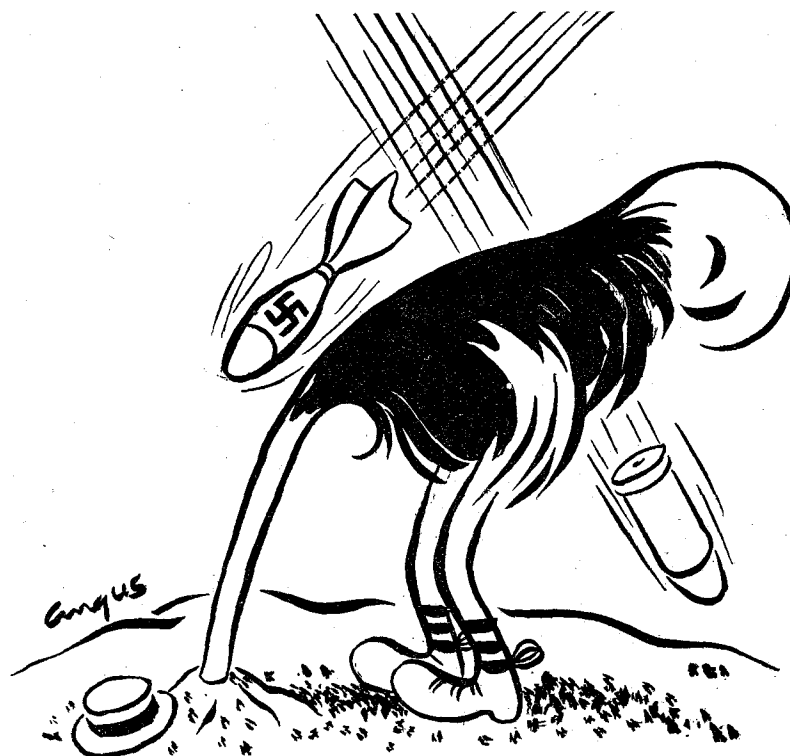
Oct. 20-21, *Potemkin*, *Lonely White Sail*; 22-23, *Youth of Maxim*, *Return of Maxim*; 24-25, *Mother*, *Nightingale*; 26-27, *Lenin in October*, *The Last Night*; 28-29, *Fragment of an Empire*, *Chapayev*; 30-31, *26 Commissars*, *Three Women*; Nov. 1-2, *Baltic Deputy*, *We Are from Kronstadt*; 3-4, *Road to Life*, *The Thirteen*; 5-6, *Beethoven Concerto*, *Peasants*; 7-8, *Moscow Laughs*, *Song of Happiness*; 9-10, *Broken Shoes*, *Der Kampf*; 11-12, *China Express*, *Son of Mongolia*.

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"This situation," his wife finally said, "is becoming untenable." And so she consulted all sorts of people who were authorities on complexes, but they were unable to get to the bottom of the situation (due to the fact that her husband kept his head in the sand whenever anyone came near).

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October 20, 1938

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