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defy a picket ban and they come down the street in an army of men, women, and kids in the summer sun, and the kids strut past the fatal line before the rest just like Renoir's moppets peering into the Tuileries after the militia has breached the gates in *La Marseillaise*.

Earl Robinson's chorus sings on the sound track and the commentary is as factual as the picture. The union couldn't believe anybody else wanted to see the film, but they were convinced by nationwide squawks. So this Friday night, March 8, the Theater Arts Committee is going to show it at Manhattan Center at 8:30. I predict it will empty the balcony at *Pinocchio*.

JAMES DUGAN.

## "Another Sun" Sets

Dorothy Thompson's first play, written with Fritz Kortner.

IN CONVERSATION and in print Miss Dorothy Thompson is an endlessly garrulous and generally monologist personality, and this questionable virtue she has carried over into the first play of her authorship. I am inclined to think that her co-author, the former distinguished actor Fritz Kortner, wrote the play, with considerable backseat writing from Miss Thompson. But there remains more Thompson than Kortner in the finished product.

This dramatic work concerns itself deeply with the plight of the German-Austrian-Italian refugees in this country, who have fled from brutal dictatorship and are trying to establish themselves beneath another sun. It is a serious and a dramatic problem, and Miss Thompson and Mr. Kortner have made a real attempt to deal seriously with their theme, in dramatic terms.

The German refugees with whom they are chiefly concerned are George Berndt and his wife, Maria, actors of the Berlin stage. Berndt was driven from his home when he refused to close a play in which he believed—it was written by a Jew. In America, he cannot learn English fast enough to keep alive; his wife puts pressure on him to return, and succeeds (through her special contacts with Nazi officials) in having him "pardoned" for his "offense." But when he learns of the death (in a Nazi concentration camp) of the Jewish playwright, he tears up Mr. Hitler's pardon and accepts a job making animal-noises on the radio.

You would not think from this summary that the play deserved serious consideration, but it does. It has many moments of genuine pathos (and sickly sentimentalism as well); it comes to grips with one aspect of the problems of a special group of refugees. Also present is an Italian emigre (anti-Mussolini), the Jewish playwright's wife (and American-born son); a Viennese soubrette, a Russian producer (Miss Thompson's expected anti-Soviet rubber stamp). Something of the suffering that exile enforces (whatever the special con-

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ditions that imposed it) is conveyed by the drama, but largely it is static, cliché, unarresting, talky, and immediately forgotten.

This play was undoubtedly written before Miss Thompson's column of February 23, and I invite your attention to that effusion as a curious example of intellectual and emotional dichotomy. In it, the peripatetic scribbler and irresponsible hysteric has effectively made the life of every German and Austrian refugee in this country forfeit. I am certain it was a considered piece, and that she would not have written it unless she was prepared to go the limit as a stoolpigeon. For in this column Miss Thompson explicitly implied that "anti-British and anti-French" (read anti-imperialist war) propaganda was being spread in America by German refugees who were released from concentration camps by France, when "they should have kept [them] locked up."

Several pleasant and talented refugees were given employment (for a few days) by Miss Thompson. Notably, Hans Jaray, Johanna Hofer, Adrienne Gessner, and Arnold Korff. Their compatriots will have occasion to curse Miss Dorothy Thompson's highly syndicated name.

"LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN"

John Van Druten once wrote a slight and tender play of adolescence, in which a young schoolboy fell in love with the wife of his teacher. In *Leave Her To Heaven*, at the Longacre (but soon to close), he is still interested in the theme of older-woman, younger-man, and this time chooses the middle-aged wife of an elderly man and her young chauffeur, as the agonists. It is valid material for dramatic treatment, but in the author's hands it comes out very thin and lies flat on the brush. Inept motivation, melodramatic treatment (probably designed to indicate subtle psychological understanding of human character), and undistinguished writing serve to provide a dreary evening.

Ruth Chatterton is an accomplished performer, but she can do little enough with this material. Her stage paramour, Edmond O'Brien, is so unfortunately cast and plays so violently that the audience cannot quite believe that any woman as charming as Miss Chatterton could give him a second glance. Come again, Miss Chatterton, but get some good advice before you pick another play.

"THE BURNING DECK"

There's nothing to say about Andrew Rosenthal's first play, *The Burning Deck*, except that the author is twenty-one, wealthy, and a passionate admirer of Noel Coward. His autobiographical hero is twenty-one, wealthy, and a passionate admirer of "Rex Wolfson." Strongly derivative, *The Burning Deck* exploited a group of expatriates and their dislocation from the world in which we live. They were a scurvy crew, and in their author's hands, quite uninteresting.

ALVAH BESSIE.

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