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"THE NORTH STAR" is not without shortcomings. There is some validity in the objection that the first section of the film—life before the invasion—is top-heavy, over-long in relation to the remainder; another, that again the first section has been overloaded with music (Aaron Copland's), excellent though it be; that although the film makes brilliantly clear to Americans that their Russian allies are folks like themselves, who bask in the fullness of harvest, laugh, love, prize liberty above all other possessions, it fails to give sufficient insight into those essentials which differentiate Soviet life from ours. To the majority of these criticisms we can make the categoric reply that had Mr. Goldwyn seen fit to adhere completely to Miss Hellman's script, all would have been well. Elements that now seem unbalanced were not so in her original. You may read it for yourself in the Viking Press edition. To our mind, Miss Hellman's chief, if not only, error has been her choice of dramatic expedient—the inexplicable release of Doctor Kuprin after his attempt on the life of a Nazi surgeon—on which so much of the film's solution hangs. But I am straining at gnats. The over-all achievement of *The North Star* is great cause for rejoicing.

Mr. Goldwyn's omissions—they can only have been his—deserve a few words. Somewhere we have read a press release to the effect that in *The North Star* Goldwyn aimed at attaining "universal" application—Man, in capital letters, versus Oppression. The implication in his reasoning was obviously "the less specific, that is Russian and Soviet, the more, the universal."

But apart from flouting all sound esthetic process, this is pure rationalization. The truth of the matter appears to me to be either that Mr. Goldwyn was wary of offending certain appeasing gentry or that he believed the American public at large unprepared for a completely detailed representation of the USSR. If it was the former of the two reasons, his protestations have fallen on deaf ears. Sir Hearst, for one, has already made up his hirelings' minds. The Hearst hooligans are splashing about in their tubs of paint, the better to smear *North Star*. If the latter reason, we must insist that Goldwyn has erred. Americans will welcome the fullest reportage on their ally's ways. Mistakes apart, however, I sincerely congratulate Mr. Goldwyn on his latest, and in many re-

spects his most distinguished effort. I am fully confident that the American film audience will protect his investment.

DANIEL PRENTISS.

Yiddish Art Theater

THE FAMILY CARNOVSKY, by I. J. Singer, produced by the Yiddish Art Theater. Directed by Maurice Schwartz.

THE Yiddish Art Theater, that highly creative organization which has contributed so much to the cultural life of the Jewish people in both continents of the Americas, celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with a new drama by I. J. Singer, author of *Yashe Kalb* and *Brothers Ashkenazi*. *The Family Carnovsky* is a serious play, it is ably directed and well acted, it is often entertaining and sometimes moving, it is certainly anti-Nazi—and it is woefully behind the times. It is the sort of play we saw on the English stage in 1934 depicting a middle-class Jewish family with one parent Gentile, caught in the toils of the victorious Hitlerites. In all these plays as in the present one under discussion, Nazism had no class origin; it exercised terror only against the Jews, and it had no distinctly discernible attitude toward the welfare of the rest of the world. Singer does include a scene in which Bundists are shown at a meeting somewhere on Long Island, but it has no dramatic meaning, is again limited to an expression of anti-Semitism, and is dragged in only to provide Maurice Schwartz a fustian opportunity to take personal vengeance on a Nazi-schoolmaster. Moreover, the play is outdone by time because, while we are shown the Nazi terror occupied in stripping a boy of his clothing and permitting, at a price, the escape of some well-to-do families to the United States, we are only too dreadfully aware that the Nazis have slaughtered over three million Jews by hanging, by shooting, by gas, and by starvation. We are aware that they have thus far caused the deaths of fifteen to twenty millions of soldiers and civilians. We are aware that their bestiality is directed toward an even larger slaughter and finally the enslavement of all mankind.

Singer has not only set up the conflict as between the Nazis and the Jews, he has kept it there and so indicated that it can only be resolved between these two forces. Nowhere do we see that the Nazis have aroused worldwide fear of and resistance to their acts and intentions. It is therefore within the logic of his play that the author brings it to a conclusion with the individual and socially isolated vengeance killing of a Nazi. The audience enjoys the killing, but that is not due to the power of the dramatic moment on the stage. It is due to the fact that the audience knows the record of the foe beyond the author's description; it knows it in all its anti-human horror; and it believes every Nazi killed is



a victory for the human race. The only clear point the play makes is that Jews cannot hope to escape anti-Semitism by marrying Gentiles and that theory is a very dead dog indeed. Beyond this negative expression, the play has in it no hope for the Jews or for the rest of the world.

Having made this estimate, and most regretfully, let me add that the play is nevertheless worth seeing. While the English theater is at the moment committing its limited stages to tawdry, imbecilic spectacles which seek practically to deny the significance of the armed men in its audience, the Yiddish Art Theater salutes and honors the absorption of its own audience in the paramount condition of our time. *The Family Carnovsky* might have been more worthy of its theme, but it is still sufficiently pertinent to the interests of the Jewish people to merit a visit.

HARRY TAYLOR.

Czech Concert

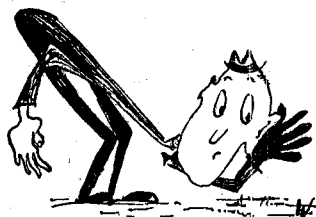
IN CONNECTION with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Czechoslovak republic the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Artur Rodzinski, gave a concert (which was repeated twice) devoted to Czechoslovakian compositions. Unfortunately I attended the third performance where for some mysterious in-artistic reason the Dvorak Piano Concerto was omitted and the Beethoven Concerto No. 4 substituted. Since this was placed in the middle of the program, it disrupted the national Bohemian atmosphere that should have been created. Moreover, the concerto was played by Leonard Shure without the rhythmic tenseness and emotional intensity that characterizes Beethoven and was accompanied by Rodzinski in an indifferent sort of way.

The most interesting part of the program was the Smetana String Quartet No. 1, arranged for orchestra with much color and sensitivity by George Szell who really should have conducted the work. The opening "Memorial to Lidice" by Martinu was dignified but not outstanding. The concluding number, the symphonic poem "Blanik," by Smetana, dealing with the Hussite wars of liberation, has its fine melodic and dramatic movements, but fails to achieve the final climax which one is led to anticipate.

To really present sympathetically the contribution of Czech composers would require a series of programs, not thrown together esoterically but arranged around the development of each of the composers so as to reveal not merely the character and evolution of the individual composer, but show his relation to the folk music. In the case of the Czech composers this folk music is not only the basis of their art but often its very heart.

PAUL ROSAS.

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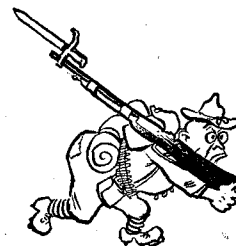
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