

The Film Forum

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE *The Saturday Review's Weekly Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.*

When The New York Times conducted a survey of its foreign correspondents to determine in which countries the private-enterprise system still flourished, it discovered that the U.S. and Canada stood virtually alone in upholding this system in its original form.

To the many appraisals of private enterprise which have appeared recently, the movies have added their quota. Most of them, as these reviews show, are one-sided, the critics failing to explain the prosperity of which the system is capable, the defendants assuming that social progress in America ceased about 1900, and that all is already for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

In the absence of a film which trenchantly argues the case on both sides, we recommend that our readers use all the existing films as source material for what is sure to prove a vigorous discussion.

DEADLINE FOR ACTION

Produced by Union Films for the United Electrical Workers of America. Available from Film Program Services, 1173 Sixth Ave., New York, N. Y. (32 min.)

This trenchant and hard-hitting film tells the story of a worker, Joe Turner, who tries to learn the secret of postwar high prices and layoffs in the history of the depression and the trustification of big business. While the film effectively dramatizes the present concentration of wealth in America, it also exaggerates its political power—as witness the recent election. Because it is designed for union audiences, "Deadline" takes for granted a legislative program of reform, and therefore confines itself to destructive criticism.

Nevertheless, the film is packed with action and argument, much of it convincing and true. It is not surprising that the bulk of its very large sales went to company executives who felt that they must get out an answer to it—and quick.

CROSSROADS FOR AMERICA

Produced by Academy Films for The Research Institute of America, Inc. Available from Film Program Services (address above). (31 min.)

Produced as a reply to "Deadline for Action," this film tends to cast serious doubt on the veracity of the medium itself. Using the same story as the earlier film, the same basic premises, even many of the same visual images, "Crossroads" arrives at diametrically opposite conclusions. Its hero, Dave Nelson, is aware of the cross-currents in American life. But for him strikes are only incidental to a larger unity, the concentration of wealth is an unimportant obverse to the multiplication of wealth by shareholding, while the figure of Lincoln, invoked by Joe Turner as a threat to the Capitol's reactionary occupants, is to Dave Nelson a symbol of the united force of the American Government.

Indeed, the only black spot that Dave Nelson can find is the Communist agitator (not mentioned, of course, in "Deadline"), whose stratagems are effectively exposed. Much

of the film, however, is devoted to a defense of the economic status quo, and it has therefore not got the vigor of protest which makes "Deadline" so effective. These are two films which should be shown together, but there is a world of relevant material which both of them ignore.

IN BALANCE

Produced by Wilding Pictures for Burroughs Adding Machine Co. Available from the sponsor, 219 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y. (34 min.)

"In Balance" argues the case for high business profits, and tries to justify the payment to shareholders of comparatively low dividends during a prosperous period like the present, at the same time warning employees that profit-sharing schemes are not in their own ultimate interest.

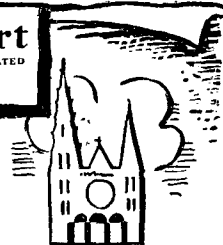
This rather sour-tasting pill is wrapped up in the tale of two Gloucester fishermen, Captain Tad Simpson, who wants to share the profits of a good year with his crew, spending only the minimum on refitting his ship, whereas his brother Ben would spend most of his profits on the ship and let his men be content with the good wages they draw.

A writer who has access to the Burroughs Company impresses on the brothers the need for adequate reserves, and the film thereupon nosedives into a narration of company activities. It is rather abruptly wound up to the story's denouement—the hard-headed Ben going on from success to success, the warm-hearted Tad, who, when his ship's engines break down and his crew deserts, is finally forced to sell out and, too proud to stay in Gloucester, disappears and is never seen again.

The churches may discover with some embarrassment that this unprogressive argument, this false balance between "the head and the heart," is put into the mouth of a minister. But in more ways than this the film is tendentious and unrepresentative of enlightened management. The technique of presentation is uniformly mediocre, but the technical quality is high.

—RAYMOND SPOTTISWOODE.

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the Phoenix Nest

ON READING TOYNBEE

DOWN History's channel Toynbee steers,
Passing multiple thousand years.
What insignificant time I'm in
That equals but the point of a pin.

Under his eyes the challenges grow,
Civilizations come and go,
Rout and rally, rally and rout,
Breakdown, rise, belief, and doubt.

Cultures flow, and then they freeze,
When they plunder, pillage, and seize,
Until at last they reach too late
The deadly universal state.

Space is out, and time dissolves,
The thought dimension wheel re-
volves,

And, as I feel my senses nod,
I thank the Lord I believe in God.

—DONALD FRENCH.

* * *

DON QUIXOTE'S LIBRARY

I am sorry that the subjoined communication is anonymous:

You may have a good translation of "Don Quixote" handy, or perhaps you prefer the original—then so much the better, for Cervantes has a flavor second to none. Pray read once again the sixth chapter of the first book; and do not take it amiss that in this letter some of the homely phrases are again set down by a wondering reader in the defense of his perusal of *The Saturday Review of Literature*:

This Chapter Sixth, as you may recall, deals with the purging of Don Quixote's library by the joined forces representing, on the one hand, in the persons of the niece and the housekeeper, the home, and, on the other, in the village curate and the village barber, the public. (What, I wonder, would Cervantes have had a member of the fourth estate contribute, supposing he had worked one into the scene?)

The first volume dealt with is condemned to the flames by the Curate, because it furnished the law and the precept for a bad sect; but the Barber, having heard that

it was the best of its genus ever to have been written, that it was, indeed, unique in its art, would have it spared on that account—and to this the Curate agreed. On they go, agreeing, disagreeing, compromising, but always making short shrift of the Hidalgo's treasured books. Of one entitled "The Knight of the Cross," the Curate states: "With a name so holy as this book has, it would be possible to forgive its ignorance; but on the other hand, it is often said that the Devil hides behind the Cross: to the flames!" A bit later, he holds forth on the inadvisability of attempting to translate verse from one language to another. And on top of this, they consign to the oblivion in a dry well, one whole series of works "until it is more surely seen what's to do with them." (Are there no dry wells extant in these latter days?) And in all this the Barber agreed, for he considered the Curate to be proper Christian, and a friend of Truth.

The judgments on some books are mildly severe: one is to be torn to shreds and to be burnt, so that not even ashes shall remain of it (anyone who has tried burning books and magazines without stripping out the leaves will know how the ash does remain. I recall once becoming absorbed in reading an article when all that remained was one friable leaf whose print however, still remained quite legible.) Others will serve the ends of justice and mercy when they shall have been edited, but they should by no means occupy places in the Hall of Fame, and meanwhile, says the Curate to the Barber, "do you take these, old fellows, to your house, but don't let anybody read them." To this the Barber agreed, but not wishing to be burdened with the said books, threw them on the fire.

But look you, of this library, there falls at the feet of the Curate one book, of a kidney with the rest, an old acquaintance of his, and he will by no means permit that it be cast aside; look at his reasons, as he praises the author's style! "Here the knights have enough to eat, and they sleep and die in their beds, and they make their wills before they die, and many other things which all the rest of this class of books lack. Do take it and read it." "Very well," agrees the Barber, "but what shall we do with these little books which are left?" "These," said the Curate, "can be nothing else but poetry," and he would spare them all, because "they are books for entertainment, without injury to third parties."

The housekeeper has all this while been breathing about, consigning books to oblivion, but now the niece speaks up—against poetry! She is afraid, his books of knight errantry gone, her uncle

BOOKSTORE



the Hidalgo will be tempted to turn poet, "which, they say, is an infirmity cruel and incurable." And so they begin to make short work of the poetry, saving only this volume and another. With what extravagant praises does the Curate greet one author! And here he treats of a thesaurus, "This book needs to be cleansed, but put it aside, because its author is a friend of mine, and out of respect for other more heroic, more elevated, works which he has written." Comes another friend whose style he admires, and yet enough, for here Cervantes has put himself into the picture (as though he were not there all the time) and the play is nearly done. Remains some praise for heroic verse; but the Curate tires, while the Barber is yet examining titles. Somehow we never quite reach the end of Don Quixote's library, because he himself commences to raise the devil when he finds what's afoot—and that's another story.

If you've read all this, just one word of explanation: there's one segment of the Universe that's labeled by some, "Practically Nothing," and this is apropos of what may be found there.

"Lo que ha de ser . . ."

* * *

—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 766)

H. M. KALLEN:
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