THE WINDOW

HOLLYWOOD HANDLES DYNAMITE

By FREDERIC SONDERN, Jr., with C. NELSON SCHRADE

When the war broke out on December 8, 1941, the United States was totally unprepared for the tasks facing her. She was unprepared not only in a military sense—as was quickly proved by subsequent events—but also psychologically. Hence Washington's problem was, by means of propaganda, to change the American mentality from peace to war as quickly as possible. And there is no more powerful instrument of propaganda in America than the movies.

Circumstances of war occasionally make a breach in the high walls separating one warring nation from another. We found the following article in the January 1942 issue of the "Reader's Digest," which chance played into our hands. We believe it will be of interest to our readers, as it shows how the American movies are consciously being used for the advertisement of almost everything—from Coca-Cola to patriotism. However, the developments since this article was written seem to indicate that it is easier to sell Coca-Cola. A few days ago we learned by way of Buenos Aires that the American movie industry has had to reduce the production of war propaganda pictures due to lack of interest on the part of the American public.

Frederic Sondern is one of the best-known American columnists. C. Nelson Schrader has been connected for several years with a large American advertising agency, for which he investigated the effect of the movie on the public mind.—K.M.

WHEN Charles Boyer, in Love Affair, throatily ordered pink champagne for Irene Dunne, he started a minor revolution in the wine industry. Immediately restaurants all over the country were amazed by the demand for this exotic beverage. Thus, from Nome to Jacksonville, Hollywood stars lay down the law on fashions, manners, speech, and behavior.

The tobacco industry discovered that when movie directors began putting cigars exclusively into the mouths of corrupt politicians, gangsters, and other unattractive characters, the sale of cigars dropped sharply. Advertising experts give "Popeye" credit for much of the 40 per cent increase in the sale of spinach. Sonja Henie wears white skating shoes, and a week after her picture is released every available pair in the country is sold out. The elaborate bathroom, the one-hand telephone, and the Venetian blind, inspired by Hollywood, have become prerequisites of the American home.

But these are only superficial symptoms of Hollywood's powers of suggestion. The movies, with equal ease, lead and change the nation's thought on politics, morals, and social questions of great importance. Every week, eighty-five million Americans go to the movies. In the darkness of the theater, where they sit relaxed and give undivided attention to the flashing pictures, psychological conditions are perfect for putting ideas across to them.

Nelson Schrader, co-author of this article, made a test on audiences of the technicolor picture Maryland, then playing at three New York theaters of various grades. Sixty per cent of the people interviewed knew what color a particular automobile in the picture was, 40 per cent knew it was a Packard. In another investigation 80 per cent knew what brand of cigarettes Bing Crosby smoked in a certain picture. Some wide-awake commercial firms—for instance, Western Union, Remington Rand, Lipton's Tea, the makers of Ritz crackers and of Bromo-Seltzer—pay high fees to three successful promoters in the movie capital who have a virtual monopoly on getting plugs for manufacturers into the pictures.

A few years ago the Payne Fund instituted an exhaustive scientific study of the effects of movies on the minds of young people. Twelve outstanding university psychologists spent almost two years at it, and did a monumental job. In one test, 4,000 high-school students were questioned on their
ideas of the Germans, the Chinese, the Negro, war, crime, and capital punishment. Then they were sent to see pictures which dealt with these peoples and problems. When questioned again, the large majority had swung over to conform with ideas presented by the pictures. For example, one who had written “Most Chinese are cunning and underhand” in the first quiz wrote “Few Chinese are cunning and underhand” after seeing Son of the Gods.

Dr. Gallup’s poll-takers, some of the big advertising firms, and various educational groups, have taken up where the Payne Fund left off in the analysis of the moviegoer’s mind. The experts find that the average spectator believes that the scenes and characters he sees in a movie are authentic or typical. Ninety per cent of a large cross-section of moviegoers thought that Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, melodramatic fiction, gave an accurate picture of the United States Senate. So profound was the effect of this picture—which showed a gallant scoutmaster elected to the Senate and there battling corrupt politics—that in a Texas congressional district the Boy Scouts were able to campaign their scoutmaster, 31-year-old Gene Worley, into the House of Representatives. In a similar investigation, 65 per cent believed that Down Argentine Way—a product of Hollywood’s wildest imagination and bad taste—showed Argentineans as they really were.

And it amazes army and navy morale officers to find that a great many people actually believe that admirals, generals, and top-sergeants are like those in the Abbott and Costello comedies. “You’re not at all like the sergeant I saw in the movies,” is a common remark made by mothers who visit their sons in camp to polite young men with three chevrons on their sleeves.

Hollywood has done serious damage to other American institutions. Over a period of years it has portrayed the newspaper publisher as an unscrupulous politician, the city editor as a noisy neurotic, and the reporter as a drunken bum. The newspaper office on the screen is always a bedlam of confusion. Competent authorities in the advertising field lay at Hollywood’s door much of the blame for the public’s decreasing confidence in its newspapers.

Another sufferer is commercial and private aviation. Airlines have expanded slowly and private flying is still in its infancy, not because of expense but because of fear. The advertising people are sure of that. Hollywood pictures year after year have identified the airplane with disaster. Test Pilot, Flight Command, Forced Landing are recent examples. There are a few exceptions like China Clipper, which did Pan-American airlines a lot of good, but the airplane crash is a favorite Hollywood thrill-maker. The average man, researchers have found, will leave the theater inclined to travel henceforth by rail.

Back in 1917, Hollywood performed propagandistic miracles in conditioning this country for war. The Battle Cry of Peace, showing an invasion of the United States by the Kaiser’s troops, drew enormous audiences; George Mock, in his book Words That Won the War, gives it credit for swinging a considerable portion of American sentiment to the Allied cause. Under George Creel’s Committee on Public Information—our official propaganda and censorship agency in the last war—Hollywood produced a series of shockers which rocked the nation. Perahing’s Crusaders, The Prussian Cur and The Kaiser, and The Beast of Berlin, put their audiences in a fighting mood which no lectures or books could have duplicated.

After the war Hollywood went into reverse with pictures which did much to make the American people hate everything military. Movie audiences became familiar with the slime of the trenches, with the sight of men and animals blown to bits, with the rack of the “zero hour.” The Big Parade was a harrowing story of doughboys returning to find their jobs gone and nothing but misery awaiting them.

Hollywood was slow to change that trend and to attack the dictatorships. European markets were not to be thrown away for the sake of ideology. The first try was Confessions of a Nazi Spy, a story of espionage in this country; but it was a poor draw at the box office. So were the anti-Nazi pictures Mortal Storm and Escape. It was only after Charlie Chaplin made profits with The Great Dictator that the studios began to change their attitude. Now the wave is rising. Underground, Manhunt, Sergeant York and other belligerent films have been successful, and Hollywood begins to see box-office receipts in stories dealing with our relation to the European war. A Yank in the RAF is one example. More are in production.

The power of Hollywood’s movies to mold the nation’s thinking, and how to direct
that power, has become a major worry to the various agencies of the Federal Government which are responsible for maintaining this country's morale in the coming tempestuous years. A subcommittee of the United States Senate recently began investigating the motion-picture industry's influence on the war sentiment of the American people. But when the hearings degenerated into a mud-slinging political battle between interventionist and isolationist factions, the public lost interest and the investigation slid into oblivion.

Still, if Spencer Tracy or Mickey Rooney can skyrocket the sales of a beverage by asking for "a coke" in their pictures, responsible officials in Washington feel that war-like speeches from the screen can whip this country into frenzy for a war that it is not yet, by a long shot, prepared for. These same experts point out that, while exciting the country on foreign issues, Hollywood has done nothing to build the faith of the nation in itself and its destiny. Not a single film has shown the American people the seriousness of the situation facing them. War, according to Hollywood, would be a light matter interspersed with a few attractive spies, some uniformed and singing sisters who encourage the boys to do their bit, and a few Germans who turn tail when they see a bayonet.

Serious men in Washington believe that there are only two alternatives for Hollywood. The movie industry should confine itself to entertainment alone and not deal with serious issues, or it should bring its tremendous power to bear in awakening the nation to a love and appreciation of its heritage, its traditions, and its might. It should acquaint the nation with the actual nature of the crisis before Clark Gable is shown beating down Panzer divisions single-handed. If Hollywood puts box-office receipts before its duty to the country, the movie industry will deserve everything it gets—in restriction, censorship, and ruin.

NEW NOVELS FROM EUROPE

By R. L.

Europe is involved in a gigantic struggle, and we who live on the other side of the globe often ask ourselves how this has affected its spiritual and cultural life. We are sure that literature and the arts continue there even in war time, but we know almost nothing about them since the wars in Eastern Europe and East Asia have cut us off from Europe's cultural manifestations.

By devious routes the contributor of the following pages has obtained packages of European books, some of which he analyzes here, trying to consider them less as independent-literary creations than as symptoms of the spirit of Europe of today.—K. M.

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ONE frequently hears people speaking of "old" and "new" Europe nowadays. They are contrasted as the two political and spiritual battle fronts of this war. On the one side, men offer their lives for ideals which stand for a new, regenerated order of Europe. On the other side, people oppose the growth of these young ideas. Between these two fronts, however, there are millions who are now struggling, under the impact of the first results of this war, as to what attitude is to be taken toward the changing times.

Our thoughts turn back involuntarily to the Great War, although its problems can by no means be identified with the aims and problems of the present war. The war of 1914/18 was neither a struggle of young doctrines against old ones, nor did its victors provide an idea by which the vital force of Europe could be upraised and tested. When the end came, the world collapsed for many. There was an atmosphere of decline, an atmosphere for which Spengler gave dogmatic reasons in his famous work The Decline of the West. Today, however, young and old throughout Europe have the impression that a new world is being established, and that is enough to provide starting points for many common thoughts. All the nations of Europe know that we are in the midst of great developments whose outcome will one day determine the fate of the whole continent. With very few exceptions, it is this recognition, applied to the individual countries and peoples, which determines the main trend in the literary representation of human and social conditions and relations in every European nation.
THE WINDOW

MAN AND FATE

An appreciation of the contemporary European novel must, therefore, attempt to distinguish between what is fundamental and what is nonessential. European literature has undergone a change during the last ten years which came faster or slower according to the mental attitude of each nation. The time is past when all genuine writing threatened to be submerged in the literary counterpart of Marxism, in naturalism, and other "isms," when nothing uplifting could be expected from literature. Where once discussions of historical sociology and economy formed the basic theme of so many novels, we now encounter everywhere the striving to discover the proper relationship of Man to himself and to the world in which he lives, that is, to God and to his people, or to both in one. As in ancient times, the writer has once again become the voice of his people. Through the power of the word, he reveals to his people, not only what it is vaguely longing for, but also that which it should do or desire.

Many of our authors belong outwardly approximately to the same generation. They were born at the turn of the century or in the first subsequent decade, so that they have all lived through more or less the same events. The social and political crises of the postwar period confused or at least overshadowed their youth. In view of this it is interesting to note that almost all of them—no matter how different their nature, their style, or their subject—agree in that one must in no circumstances admit oneself beaten by life, but that, on the contrary, one must maintain a positive attitude towards it, regardless of how it turns out. The author no longer takes refuge in distant ideals, he is not filled with ecstatic visions, he does not indulge in flights of fancy: he stands with both feet firmly on the ground. Reality is no longer avoided nor the world idealized: rather does it appear in its naked shape. This is the leitmotiv of the modern European novel. It may also be said that, generally speaking, the European novels show a tendency towards simplicity.

EIGHT ITALIAN GIRLS FACE LIFE

Typical of this new attitude towards life is The Other Side of the River, the great novel by the Italian authoress Alba de Cespedes. It must be the answer to a demand which is similar everywhere, for it has already been translated into fourteen languages. The Other Side of the River describes the period of transition from young girlhood to maturity. The book already belongs to world literature in Goethe's sense, meaning a literature which, although written for one's own people, is, as a finished work, so significant that, with all its national and cultural individuality, it appeals to the people of many other nations. To acknowledge a novel as a masterpiece today, we demand of it a unique plot of which a duplicate cannot easily be found in the works of other authors, a straightforward, natural style and, finally, truth, emotion, surprise, suspense, and adventure.

The main part of the story takes place in the joyless atmosphere of an institution in Rome. There eight young girls, differing in character, inclinations, and traditions, form a loyal group of friendship. They all feel that they are standing on a bridge of life which they must cross in order to reach the other bank. The crossing is full of temptations and dangers, and it is easy to tire and fall into the rushing torrent, which swallows one up if one does not know how to swim.

This subject is treated by the author without a trace of sentimentality or romantic idealization. How true sounds to the people of our times the assurance that everyone of us is responsible for becoming good, happy, and useful. These thoughts remind one of the powerful pleading of the German philosopher Gustav Wyneken, that the European of the future must feel personally responsible even for his God. Written in a time of European upheaval, this novel fulfills an educational mission.

MELANCHOLY IRISHMEN

The Master of Baravore by the Irishman Francis Stuart, a book about Ireland, lacks any heroic, forward-striving attitude. Creative deeds are replaced by melancholy and hopelessness. The figures of the novel, Englishmen as well as Irishmen, are clearly drawn and true representatives of their class. They embody, consciously or unconsciously, the sharp Anglo-Irish contrast for which there seems to be no peaceful solution. One must bear in mind that Ireland forms one of the open sores in the British Empire. The novel offers a glimpse of the eternal ups and downs in the eight-hundred-year-old struggle of the Irish against the English policy to make Ireland a military base, a breakwater, or a second-class colony.
Some of the more detailed episodes of the book give the reader an idea of the ruthlessness and cruelty with which this struggle has been carried on.

The reader might expect the Irish author to show his people a leader in the figure of the master of Baravore who will find a way out of darkness. But he will be disappointed: the author does not get beyond a merciless self-revelation of the Irish character. High and low are dominated by a pessimistic attitude, which loves to indulge in biting self-mockery. The occasional scenes of overflowing gaiety and of unrestricted high spirits do not change the impression of the whole: Mr. Stuart’s Irishmen have a long way to go before they understand the signs of the new times. All in all, the novel is a document of penetrating social criticism, but without spiritual background and without those literary ethics which are becoming more and more apparent in the literary production of the European nations.

**FINNISH KATRI**

What a tremendous difference there is between this spiritual senility and a new novel from Finland! The literature of this country has been translated into foreign languages is distinguished, not so much by quantity, as by its high quality. The spirituality and literary trends of the Finland of today show unequivocally that there are two motifs which constantly recur and from which Finnish writers obtain their inspiration. They are a deep, traditional religious feeling and the eternally new experience of Nature in the far North. Those who are used to lakes and forests are not accustomed to eloquent words. They will call every emotion by its right name when they tell of people who must struggle, not only against each other, but also with a hostile Nature. This is true of Finnish as well as of some of the other Scandinavian literature.

As a representative of this type of literature the Finnish woman writer Auni Nuoliwaara merits no small praise for her prize-winning novel *Steadfast Little Katri*. In a long series of impressive, usually laconic scenes, she writes of a poor peasant girl who from childhood onwards has to earn her living in the houses of strangers. In the end, when she has become a farmer’s wife and a mother, she gives to others, out of a rich heart, the happiness that life gave her in good and bad years, in painful and joyous experiences.

The reader senses something of the great social changes which penetrate from the south into the quiet contentment of northern peasant life with its apparently immutable distinctions between rich and poor, master and servant. Katri, who steadfastly overcomes all the trials of fate and all the persecutions of wicked people, reflects more than anything else the motherly nature of her people. Here the peasant theme does not lead, as it so often does, to a simple eulogy of the arduous country life, but to a resounding hymn of the self-conquest of the modern European.

**NORWEGIAN HERO**

The wealth of Norway’s young literary talents is gradually being discovered and made known to a growing circle of readers by translations, especially into German. The most striking motif to be found in the novels written during the last few years is a varied treatment of the subject of how a person conquers life wherever he has been placed by fate. The *King of Raava* by the promising Lars Hansen is a thrilling story of those latitudes with which our imagination has been familiar through the fighting at Narvik. The Norwegian author deals with the ideas of our time by making the fishermen’s struggle for their human rights an indication of a new sense of order. The European principle of leadership is expressed in the hero of the story who, a poor fisherman heading a bond of courageous, death-defying men, conquers an island from the sea and from men.

**FLEMISH CONCORD**

Modern Netherlands novels have in common a leisurely style with a very plastic description of the pleasure in the little things of life. The affected manner of describing peasant and small-town life has almost become a fashion in this literature. On the other hand, the influence of European developments has become so strong that great expectations can be placed in the future literary work of the Flemings and the Dutch, who are united by the bond of a common language. The description of static conditions and of milieu which was formerly so popular is beginning to give way to the ideological discussion of problems of our time.

It is no coincidence that so many Flemish novels were first translated into German in recent years and thence found their way
into the rest of the world. More than the
Netherlands, the Flemings feel themselves
to be related in spirit and in fate to present-
day Germany. In his chronicle of a village
entitled The Discord Inn, Anton Coolen
reveals a religious nature open to the world,
with an all-conquering love of life. The
“hero” of the novel is an entire community
united by destiny. The paths of the people
described all lead to the “Discord Inn,”
which thus becomes the symbol of the story.
In the end, the consciousness of a com-
munity spirit triumphs over village disputes
and bitter party strife.

THE MARCH OF WAR

THE BATTLE OF THE SEVEN SEAS

The interest in the land battles of the present war is constantly shifting.
At times all eyes are focused on Russia, then on Burma, on Tunisia, or on New
Guinea. But on one battlefield, the battlefield of the seven seas, the war against
Allied shipping has been going on without interruption, although with varying re-
sults, ever since the war began.

Following a detailed article in our issue of August/September 1942, we have
published reviews of the progress of this struggle in our issues of October and November
1942 and January 1943. Today’s review is a continuation of this series and dis-
cusses developments from December 1942 to April 1943 inclusively.—K.M.

The shipping situation of the Allies
depends on the following four
factors:

(1) Their available tonnage at the start
of the war.
(2) Their replacements.
(3) Their losses.
(4) Their requirements.

WHAT THEY STARTED WITH

We are basing our calculations on the
assumption that the total tonnage built
prior to September 1939 and available to
the Allies (excluding the USSR) was, not
counting sinkings and replacements, 39
million tons. This figure includes only
oceangoing merchant shipping and excludes
fishing craft (about 500,000 tons) and ships
under 1,000 tons (about 4 million tons).
A detailed calculation can be found in the
August/September issue of 1942 (p.140),
where we reached a figure of 38,384,000 tons,
to which we added, after the occupation of
French Africa, 616,000 tons of captured
French shipping, bringing the figure of
oceangoing tonnage available to the Allies
up to a total of 39 million tons.

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All the books we have mentioned can be
said to be characteristic of the spirit of the
nations to which they belong. From all of
them speaks a profound knowledge of the
spiritual developments within their own
people, and almost all of them are striving
to form a new conception of life. One
should not expect all of them to express the
same feelings; but there are many indications
that the overwhelming majority of European
authors are consciously experiencing the
present-day changes and are trying to ex-
press them.

REPLACEMENTS

The greatest difficulty in appraising the
present tonnage situation is to find an
approximately correct figure for the replace-
ments built by the Allies since the start of
the war in September 1939. Using all
material available, both from Axis and
Allied sources, and with the desire not to
decieve ourselves, we have come to the
conclusion that the Allies were able to build,
up to the end of 1942, a total of 9,150,000
tons and that at present they are able to
put into service an average of 600,000 tons
a month, which means that by the end of
April 1943 their replacements had reached
a figure of 11,550,000 tons.

Again we remind our readers that in all
our calculations, unless otherwise stated, we
use gross registered tons. To find the cor-
responding figure of dead-weight tons or, as
for simplicity’s sake we shall from now on
call them, American tons, the gross registered
tons must be multiplied by 1.5. Thus by
our calculation, the present monthly re-
placements of the Allies amount to 900,000
American tons and their total replacements up
to April 30, 1943, to 17,330,000 American tons.