

PM

Monday, September 14, 1942

Film's Hero Is China

PM Reviews ✓

THE SCORCHED EARTH, a compilation of newsreels and documentary film of Jap aggression in China; produced by Lamont Pictures; at the Irving Place Theater.

If you can stand a bellyful of misery, destruction, wholesale ruthlessness and death, *The Scorched Earth* may give you some idea of what eleven years of Japanese "co-prosperity" have visited on the Chinese people. It is an actual record in film of ceaseless Jap depredation from the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 to the present, and words cannot express what an appalling document it is.

Memorable scenes like those reproduced on this page, of unarmed people in agony, of valiant soldiers in death, of hateful little scavengers swarming over China—these are the essence of *The Scorched Earth*. That a nation so stricken could have risen to its incomparable defense of the last few years against Oriental Fascism should be an eternal lesson to defeatists.

Unhappily, all the praise and encouragement due China's magnificent fight cannot be applied to this movie, which despite its terrific content was assembled with a singular lack of understanding of the Chinese and an acquisitive eye to dragging out a half-hour's worth of film to a "feature-length" hour.

Without repeating the gaucheries of the movie's commentary, suffice it to say that *The Scorched Earth* compels the conclusion that the job of acquainting us with our Allies ought to be taken out of the hands of money-grubbers and placed under the supervision of the Office of War Information, where the Chinese and other races at least stand a chance of being treated as something other than the white man's burden.—JOHN T. MCMANUS



Bombed out of their villages in the Jap advance on Shanghai, thousands of Chinese families converge on the city with hasty selections of household goods. This Chinese mother has salvaged a sleeping mat.

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THE SCORCHED EARTH



In this scene from *The Scorching Earth*, showing Chinese attacking Jap positions, like the figure in the background die before your eyes.



Death is commonplace among the numbed masses of Chinese refugees in *The Scorching Earth*, as mechanical barbarism strikes down an unarmed people.

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