

YANK

September 14, 1945: p. 10

THE SOLDIER SPEAKS:

Do you like what you see in the movies?



Are You Kidding?

Do I like what I see in the movies? That's a laugh! All the falseness, the calumny and the hypocrisy in our fake culture reaches its climax in the Silver Screen of Hollywood. Where the cinema should serve as a glass to reflect life, our movies serve as a Coney Island comic mirror to distort it. The images are huge, grotesque, ludicrous and often hideous distortions of reality.

The frustrated female moons with rapt devotion at the wooden figure of a Taylor, a Scott, an Eddy, and she dreams of affairs with these two-dimensional blocks, these pale shadows of real men. The drab male fills his limited imagination with images of Grable or Montez or Lamour—legs, bust and torso—and substitutes them for his equally drab wife. The buck-toothed skinny store clerk looks at Crawford dressed in sables and sees herself. The meek Mr. Milquetoast gawks open-mouthed at the swashbuckling Flynn and sees himself flourishing the broadsword and putting enemies to rout.

In short we have become a nation of neurotics thanks in large measure to the pernicious misconceptions and misrepresentations of Hollywood's moguls. The main reason for this evil is the fact that movie magnates think with monotonous regularity that bigness is a substitute for beauty, quantity for quality, stupendousness for sensitivity, money for mood and a happy ending for truth. Until they realize the element of beauty in the simple and homely and the amount of dramatic suspense in the subtle, there can be no escape for us.

THE SOLDIER SPEAKS

The producers who realize the meaning of good taste and good drama can be counted on the fingers of one hand—John Ford with "The Informer," "The Long Voyage Home," "The Grapes of Wrath"; Pare Lorentz with "The River" and "The Plough that Broke the Plains"; Orson Welles with his "Citizen Kane"; Chaplin with "The Great Dictator" and "Modern Times"; and the early Hitchcock. These are almost the only men who have reached a level of emotional maturity with the movies.

Germany

—T-S MARTIN H. SLOBODKIN

Misplaced Halos

Why don't the movie people get wise and make a first-class picture of the Infantry? When we go to the movies all we see is a halo around the Marines or the Navy. It shouldn't be, when everyone knows that more blood has been spilt in the Infantry than in any other branch of the service. It sure burns us ex-infantrymen up.

Camp Howze, Tex.

—Pfc. LEONARD VILINSKY

Make It Real

I fought in Italy and France and whenever my outfit was not in the line we usually got a chance to see the movies. But the war pictures didn't seem like the real thing. Why not use reality in these pictures; why not show the real misery that the doughboys have to go through; why not show how they really act when they are hit?

When the movies show the taking of a large town why not show how men have to sweat and die to take it and not just have a big hero walking in and claiming it for the Allies without anything happening to him? Of course imagination helps with many pictures, but if you are going to have a picture about reality why not make it out of the truth?

France

—Pvt. EDWARD FRANK

Listen to the Soldiers

I like the movies pretty well. If Hollywood doesn't always succeed in meeting the GI's tastes, then it is probably because the movies have to please two kinds of audiences. For example, a picture describing suffering on the home front appeals to many civilians but a considerable portion of the average GI audience is apt to walk out on it in the middle. Soldiers aren't unwilling to admit that the civilian life is not a pleasant one. They just don't like to have it rubbed in.

The surveys are probably right that soldiers prefer musical films. Music and comedy and beautiful girls add up to solid entertainment. The GI wants to laugh and forget his worries for a little while. He doesn't want cheap heroics. Servicemen overseas are now seeing almost as many feature-length movies in a year as a newspaper or magazine critic. They know their likes and dislikes, and when they come home they will probably go to more movies than they did before. So the film producers would do well to put an ear to the ground and catch some of the reverberations.

India

—Cpl. RAY LOWERY

THE SOLDIER SPEAKS**Hollywood Innocence**

Hollywood is alert to the nation's purse but not to its pulse. The people making movies never did care to tread on anyone's toes even during normal times. A story must not antagonize any class of movie audience; it must not bend too far either to the left or right, and its expressions must not be conflicting. Hollywood's magnates are weak in realism. They don't seem to know what's going on outside of a script office.

The fellows out here laugh at the dialogue put into a soldier's mouth in the movies. GIs just don't talk that way. A fellow in a foxhole doesn't have to recite the Atlantic Charter to shoot straight. We know our job and we're doing it.

By the way, soldiers don't sing "Clementine" in the dayroom anymore. They just shoot crap.

Philippines

—Cpl. HERBERT JOFFEE

The High Horse

At this time the movies have a job to do, just like the rest of us. It'll be a great day for America and the world if Hollywood gets on the beam and assumes its proper responsibility. If only the wheels running the film industry would learn what the war is about, the movies would improve. I think the trouble lies in that the American people and Hollywood itself have set the movie people above the average American in the past. Even though the actors and actresses go overseas they think they are doing something for the boys instead of realizing that all Americans are on the same plane, regardless of wealth or station.

Philippines

—S/Sgt. GABE SANDERS

YANK