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forces of the screen will increasingly be found elsewhere. Hollywood has become too successful, too comfortable, and too complacent: the cinema's centre of gravity, so to speak, is gradually shifting, and the responsibility of producing films to make people *think* in the post-war world will pass more and more to other countries.

It may be rash to prophesy what film production will be like in France, Germany, and other Continental countries after this war, or even whether there will be any film production there at all, but we can at least recall what happened in those places after the last conflict. Ironically, it was the fact of being defeated in war that gave Germany a leading position in the world cinema in the period from 1920 to the rise of Nazism. And it was the devastation of France and the turmoil of Russia, that, more than anything else, were responsible for the vitality, and brilliance, and daring experiments of the French and Russian cinema.

Even if France's post-war role in Europe should no longer be that of a great military power, she may yet find an equally worthwhile destiny in the politer arts; and a cinema industry which carried on her pre-1939 traditions of film-making would certainly be to the fore among them.

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WRITING two or three years ago, C. A. Lejeune put this paradox better than anyone else:

"The nations which suffered most from the last war, Germany and France, began within a couple of years to build up the finest cinema they had ever known. Out of material poverty came richness of ideas. Out of devastation came renaissance. . . . Cut off from the outside world, with little money to spend, the Germans fell back on their own rich store of invention and legend. Artists of every sort worked together in the interests of entertainment—film men, men of the theatre, writers, painters, musicians, even sculptors and architects. Imagination was strong and vivid in Germany in those days. There was a story everywhere—in history, in dreams, in the beloved waltz tunes of their fathers, in youth, in legend, even in the borderland of magic. Those were the days of *Caligari*, *Waxworks*, *The Nibelungs*, *The Last Laugh*, *Destiny*, *The Waltz Dream*, and dozens more, each film a full and exciting adventure. No one who saw those pictures has ever forgotten them."

In France and Russia the story was roughly the same: while Hollywood was using its millions, they were using their brains. "It is not too far-fetched to assert that the last war was responsible for the great French cinema that the present war destroyed," said Lejeune.

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WHETHER history will repeat itself we cannot say. All we know is that in the past the greatest films have come from struggling and impoverished nations thrown back on their own resources. Last time the British cinema did not benefit from the experience of war. It was too timid, too anxious to ape Hollywood. But to-day there are signs of a new spirit of alertness and independence. The reasons that caused France, Germany, and Russia to lead the world in picture-making after the last war are basically the same as have caused Great Britain to make most of the best pictures during this war.

Finally, the box-office success of *San Demetrio*, *London* and other British films of its type does much to refute the arguments of Hollywood, and suggests that the underlying vein of seriousness

in the public—instanced in another direction by the popularity of the Brains Trust session on the radio—has as yet been scarcely tapped by the motion-picture.

In this connection the finding of the Gallup Poll on the cinema, to the effect that an increasingly critical mood in the public is likely to give the American movie industry all it can do to stay on the right side of the ledger, should make even Hollywood think.

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