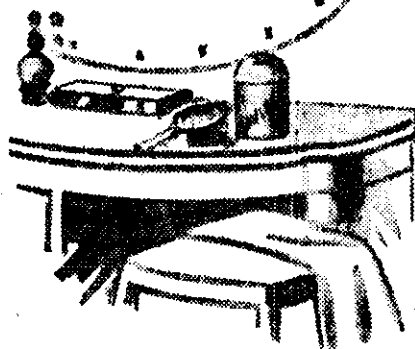


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"For Whom The Bell Tolls"

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The cast of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is almost as cosmopolitan as the International Brigade or as the Spanish Civil War itself. The nationalities within it include Russian (Akim Tamiroff and Vladimir Sokoloff), Greek (Katina Paxinou), Swedish (Ingrid Bergman), Polish (Alexander Granach), Spanish (Fortunio Bonanova), Maltese (Josef Calleja), Mexican (Arturo de Cordova) and Hungarian (Victor Varconi). Gary Cooper, of course, is very much American—a man who, as *Time* puts it, has "over the years so cornered the beloved American romantic virtues of taciturnity, melancholy, tenderness, valour and masculine gauche grace that he has become for millions a sort of Abraham Lincoln of American sex."

Because Cooper possesses this romantic screen aura, the film inevitably pays much attention to the brief, passionate love affair between Robert Jordan and Maria. Much too much attention, some overseas critics contend. Hemingway's original story did not neglect it either, of course; on the contrary, the love scenes in the book are among the most fervid in contemporary writing. Naturally, censorship would never permit such realism on the screen. According to *Time*, the Hays Office has "let sleeping-bags lie," but "the closest study cannot determine whether either or both the lovers are or are not in or out of the bag at any time."

But chief controversy over the picture wherever it has been shown has been less concerned with the nature of the romantic passages than with the question whether the producers have allowed love-making to push political ideas too far into the background, and instead of filming *For Whom the Bell Tolls* from Hemingway's angle of partisan support for the Spanish Loyalists and bitter indictment of the Fascists, have filmed it from the Hollywood angle of "boy meets girl in Spanish Civil War."

"Not For Or Against Anybody"

Paramount's executives, one writer says, have preserved an "almost divine political detachment"—a view apparently supported by the executives themselves, for their chairman, Adolph Zukor, is reported to have said, "It is a great picture, without political significance. We are not for or against anybody." Paramount's president, Barney Belaban, added, "We don't think it will make any trouble."

As one might expect, this "playing safe" attitude has provoked a good many critics. When Sam Wood, the director, described his film as "a great love story against a brutal background which would be the same love story if the characters were on the other side," C. A. Lejeune cuttingly commented, "It would indeed. It would be the same love story if they were Hottentots or ancient Romans, or co-eds. . . . It always has been that same darn love story."

Comparing the film with the book, *Picture Post* declared that the whole point about the story is that it should make its readers—or if you will, its filmgoers—feel at one with the Spanish people in their struggle against a regime imposed upon them by Moors, Germans and Italians. This theme, it is pointed

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