


SPEAKING CANDIDLY

THE YELLOW CANARY

(R.K.O.-British)

 THIS satisfactory British spy thriller may keep you guessing for a good while, unless you make up your mind at the outset that an actress who has twice portrayed Queen Victoria and once Edith Cavell could never descend so low as to help the Nazis to bomb Buckingham Palace and blow the port of Halifax to blazes. If you do so decide, your faith in Anna Neagle's immaculate integrity will eventually be fully justified. It will, however, often be sorely tested, for the whole purpose of this melodrama during most of its length is to build up Miss Neagle in the character of a fifth columnist of the rankest sort.

She appears as Sally Maitland ("Sally from Unter den Linden"), and if audiences see in this Nordic beauty some resemblance to a certain Unity Freeman-Mitford they will probably be doing no more than the producers intended, in spite of the disclaimer at the beginning. Sally has spent several years in Germany, has reputedly been the girl friend of Hitler and Goering; she breaks her

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that there is a strong public opinion in this country behind what UNRRA is trying to do.

H.W.: I'm sure that's important. The Allies have made great promises of freedom and plenty when Nazi and Japanese tyranny is removed. Our genuineness will probably be judged on what UNRRA does in the first few months after peace is declared. Another thing, UNRRA is the first practically world-wide experiment in construction and can, if it's successful, lay the foundation for further world-co-operation.

C.M.: That is so. I think, too, we ought to get clearly in our minds the picture of the appalling need for relief in terms of people. Think of the little kids wasted to skeletons, scavenging about like animals. Think of the millions of families scattered from each other to strange places, not knowing whether they will ever meet again. Think of the homes destroyed, and worse still, the hope destroyed.

H.W.: Yes, that makes you think of UNRRA not as a set of initials, or a lot of red tape balled up in Washington or London, but as a human agency that carries on its back a great part of the world's hopes of peace and sanity. More power to their right arm — and to CORSO, who you say are out to support UNRRA with every help this little Dominion can give. And New Zealand can do a job when it wants to. I believe this is just the kind of cause that this country will take to its heart. By the way, those who do want further information about CORSO and the way they can help — what should they do?

C.M.: Write to me and I'll try to answer their questions, or if they want to be considered for relief work, I'll send them the questionnaire to fill in. The address is The Secretary, CORSO, Dominion Building, Wellington.

H.W.: The Secretary, CORSO, Dominion Building, Wellington. Thank you. (Writing).

patriotic parents' hearts and enrages her Wren sister by saying awful things about the Allied war effort; and what's worse, she is caught by a couple of literary-minded firewatchers in the opening scene directing a Nazi bomber to Buckingham Palace by flashing a torch. Or rather, she isn't caught, but that's what she's doing.


Yet, instead of applying Regulation 18b, the authorities ship Sally off to Canada for the duration, with a nice young naval commander (Richard Greene, incognito) to keep an eye on her. On the way over, a porthole is opened in the blackout and up pop a submarine and a German raider — but Sally is allowed to reach her destination—because, of course, that's exactly what the Nazis want her to do. And, if you haven't guessed, that's exactly what the British authorities want, too.

Canada, it would appear, contains a small but very efficient spy ring (beware of the man who examines your passport as you enter!). With her bona fides as an admirer of the Reich satisfactorily established, Sally is soon on the inside of it. But things, as I have been trying to suggest, are by no means what they seem, and although Sally is shot, it is not by a firing-squad. Nor is the shooting fatal.

Nothing, in fact, stands in the way of Miss Neagle's making a third film as Queen Victoria.

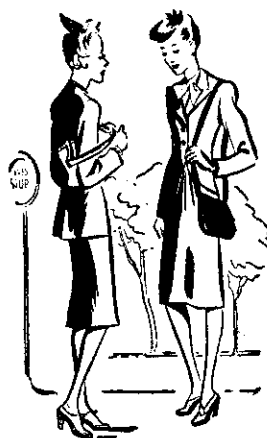
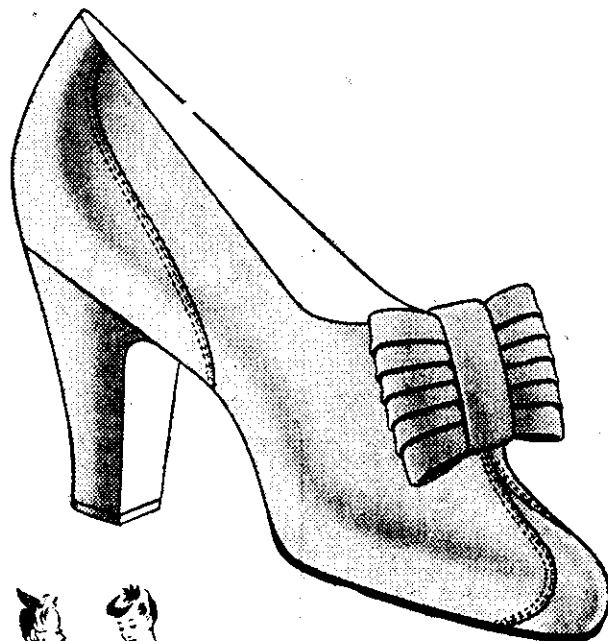
THE STORY OF DR. WASELL

(Paramount)

 BOTH President Roosevelt, who first told the story in a "fire-side chat" in 1942, and the original Dr. Wassell himself are reported to be well satisfied with this Cecil de Mille version of how the doctor took under his wing 12 badly-wounded U.S. sailors when the Japanese invaded Java and eventually managed to evacuate them safely to Australia. If that is the case, they are likely to be more easily satisfied than some picture-goers—especially those who have a hankering regard for accuracy and integrity in factual narration.

For if this film really were the true Story of Dr. Wassell, Gary Cooper, who portrays him, would have to be nearly 60 years of age, and most of the De Millean embellishments would have to go overboard, including all those retrospective bits about snails and broken hearts in China, Dr. Wassell's peripatetic sweetheart (Laraine Day), those beauty chorus nurses with which the Javanese hospitals are staffed for the delight of wounded Americans, and that finale in which the Flying Fortresses roar up, like Custer's Cavalry in a Red Indian thriller, in time to save the refugees from the Japs. Indeed, and rather curiously, almost the only thing that might have been retained was the Dorothy Lamour touch: the episode of Three Martini, the Javanese nurse. That, it seems, is authentic.

No, Cecil B. De Mille was probably the last man in the world to entrust with the job of telling an essentially simple story of wartime heroism. But of course when it comes to turning such a story into a Super Hollywood Spectacle in Glorious Technicolour, Mr. De Mille can't be beaten.



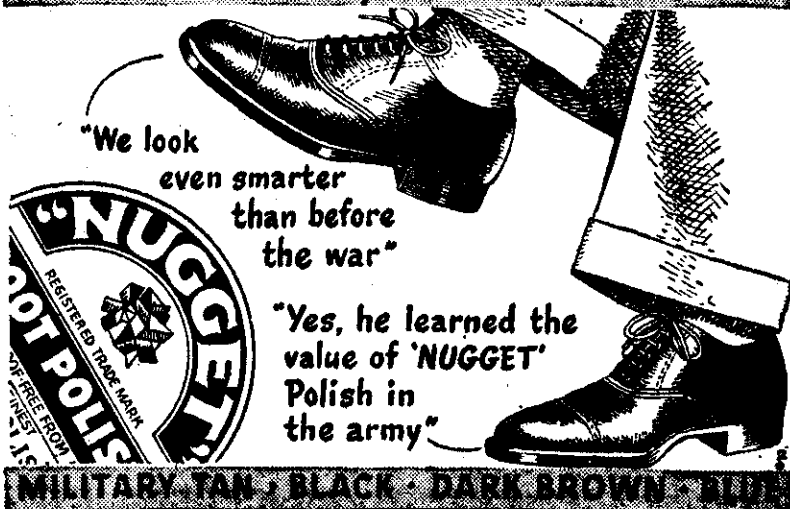
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