

"HENRY V" AT LAST

HENRY V is at last going to be shown in New Zealand.


According to present plans it will be released first in Christchurch some time in July (probably about the middle of the month), with Auckland and Wellington to follow round about September. Dunedin and the rest of the country will come later, depending on such circumstances as existing commitments for British product and the extent to which the film catches the public fancy and runs for extended seasons.

I am very happy to be able to pass on this news, mainly because we have waited altogether too long in New Zealand to see this British masterpiece, but also because I hope it will satisfy all those people who, ever since I reviewed the film last November, have been writing to me and phoning me, at home as well as at the office, to ask when they will be able to see it. The tone of some of these inquirers rather suggested that they thought I must be keeping the film in my own pocket; but their impatience is understandable.

I saw *Henry V* for the second time the other evening, at a preview arranged in Wellington for the benefit mainly of people in the educational world. It would be possible for me to write a lot more about the film than I have already: at the second viewing one notices points one overlooked before, and certain first impressions are confirmed and strengthened—for example, that the comic interludes are the flattest parts of the production, while the most effective cinematically are those which Shakespeare did not write (I mean the Battle of Agincourt sequences). But I think it is enough now merely to endorse the opinion of the American magazine *Time*, which prefaced a three-page review of the film with the statement that in *Henry V* "the movies have produced one of their rare great works of art."

IN OUR TIME

(Warner Bros.)

 THIS would have been a more effective film if it had been even half as topical as the title suggests, instead of its having taken nearly three years to get here. As it is now, when we think of Poland in our time we are much less likely to remember the heroic futility of her attempt in 1939 to withstand Nazi aggression than her subsequent fate and her present plight in a starving Europe. The result is that some of the fine hopes expressed in the film have turned sour by the time they reach us.


Yet in spite of this, and in spite also of the melodramatics of some of the cast, this is a pretty good picture. The story in parts is faintly suggestive of something Chekhov might have written; a blunted and diffused Chekhov admittedly, but Director Vincent Sherman tries hard to make the script say something, and occasionally succeeds. This is really no small achievement, since the political and social ideas—the conflict

between liberalism and feudalism—are so well cushioned by the romantic and domestic details of the love-story that considerable skill and sincerity were necessary to give them any point at all. Fortunately Sherman knows how to use his cameras intelligently and Ida Lupino is both skilful and sincere: she plays the little English girl who marries the Polish aristocrat (Paul Henreid) in pre-war Warsaw and transforms his life as well as his estate. This is a very good performance indeed, by an English actress who has not forgotten how to act during her long sojourn in Hollywood.

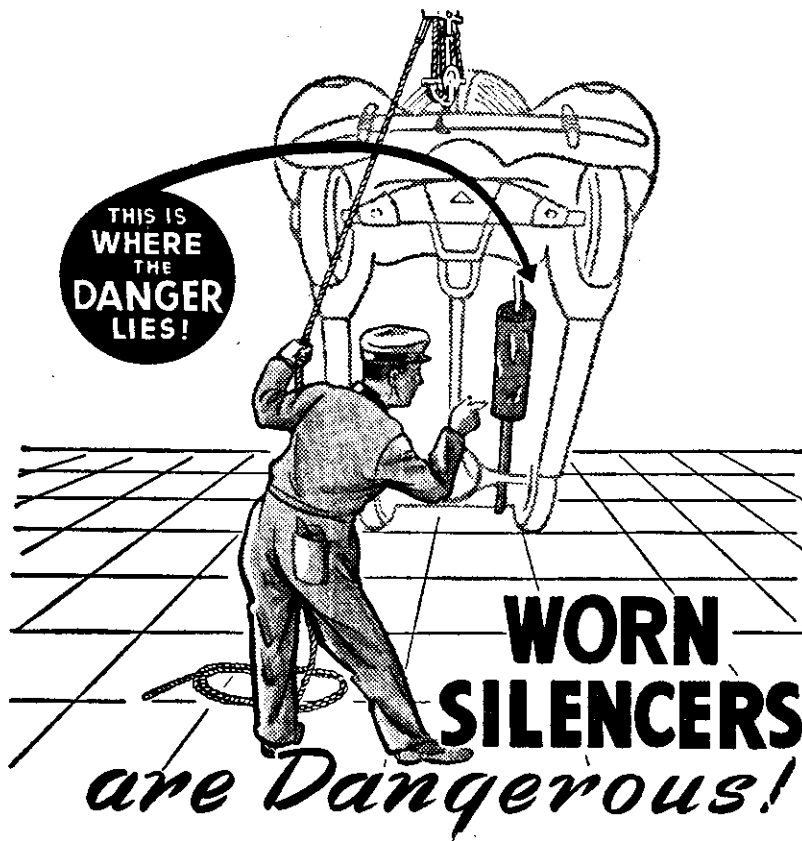
The villain of the piece is a reactionary Polish statesman who works patriotically enough to keep his country out of war, but goes boar-hunting with Goering for the purpose, opposes (as head of the noble family) his nephew's marriage to the English commoner and especially their joint efforts to treat the peasants as human beings—by making them share-croppers—and finally skips across the border when the Nazis smash through Poland, leaving the hero and heroine to fight on undaunted. I don't know how true this portrait is to life, but it seems to have something in common with Colonel Beck or Marshal Smigly-Rydz (remember them?) Similarly, I have no means of knowing whether the hero's mother actually resembles a Polish grand-dame of pre-war vintage, or how close the atmosphere of Warsaw and the country estate is to the original. But it is always a pleasure to see Nazimova (she's the mother), and I have the feeling that on the score of background as well as of content, *In Our Time* can bear rather closer scrutiny than the average Hollywood melodrama about a foreign country at war.

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

(20th Century-Fox)

 ASIDE from wondering why on earth the famous French director Rene Clair bothered to employ his considerable talents in making it, I think the point that most interested me in this version of an Agatha Christie "whodunit" was the change that has been made in the title, and certain internal amendments depending on it. In Britain the film was called *Ten Little Niggers*, the reference of course being to the old nursery rhyme about the unhappy band of little blackmoors who suffered, so to speak, from the law of diminishing returns. And this is quite a good basis for a thriller dealing with a group of ten assorted victims who are liquidated one by one in circumstances which roughly parallel those in the nursery-rhyme. In this country, however, and presumably also in the U.S.A., the film is called *And Then There Were None*. I can appreciate the reason for this change in America, it was no doubt dictated partly by the fact that the word "nigger" is offensive (and rightly so) to a good many Americans, and partly also by a desire not to keep other customers

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