



(continued from previous page)

Lang, behind the conventional melodramatics. And not until then does one meet Lilli Palmer, as the Italian underground worker who shares romance, danger, and several hiding-places with the professor. Miss Palmer, the foreign actress last seen in *The Rake's Progress* with her husband, Rex Harrison, is now in Hollywood and will doubtless soon go the way of all flesh in that place; but at the moment she retains her sincerity and restraint, and with the aid of these two qualities is able to make a moving and credible character out of the hackneyed figure of a heroine torn between love and duty.

Part of Fritz Lang's skill as a director of thrillers lies in his flair for catching our imagination with the incident that is logical, simple, and even natural, yet horribly unexpected in that particular context—the cat's eyes shining in the dark passage, for example, and above all that scene where the lorry containing the American spy and his Italian helpers, having passed the first scrutiny of the armed patrol, is waved on to proceed—and stalls, right in the middle of the soldiers. There is a quality of nightmare about that situation, because it is the sort of thing that could so easily happen.

Another good moment of shuddery tension comes when the hero strangles the Gestapo agent who is trailing him. You see the dying man's legs slip from under him (it is all you do see) and straighten out at the end of some stairs; and at that moment a child's ball starts bouncing down the stairs, with the child after it—a masterly combination of innocent and gruesome elements that is typical of Lang's technique of direction. Moments like these make *Cloak and Dagger* considerably more exciting than the average thriller, just as the acting of Lilli Palmer, not to mention that of Vladimir Sokoloff (as an Italian scientist), stands out well above the rather average performance of the film's official star, Gary Cooper.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

"TEST CRICKET," showing prominent players at the nets, and the Test Match—M.C.C. versus N.Z.—played in Christchurch, is a feature of the National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 294, released on April 18. Other items are "Cup Presentation," in which Lord Bledisloe presents the cup for the best managed Maori farm, and "Children's Theatre," an item from Hamilton where children give a performance in an outdoor theatre.

MAKERS OF BRITISH FILMS

(No. 3)

MICHAEL POWELL, seen here with the film star Deborah Kerr, was the British director responsible, in 1937, for "The Edge of the World," but his maturity as a film-maker dates from the war years. His films include "49th Parallel" (1941), "One of Our Aircraft is Missing" (1942), "Colonel Blimp" (1943), "I Know Where I'm Going" (1945), and the forthcoming "A Matter of Life and Death," many of them produced in partnership with Emeric Pressburger.



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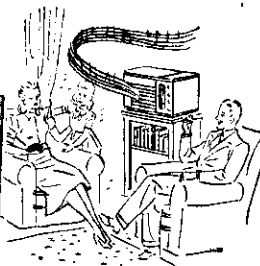
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