

49th PARALLEL

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deserves it, of course, but it is still chicanery. Does this sound to you like good propaganda, worth at least £25,000 of the British taxpayers' money?

WHY on earth, I want to know, if they were going to make a picture like this, didn't they reverse the process and allow that psychological law which I have stressed to operate on a story about six British soldiers, sailors, or airmen who escape, say, from a German prison camp and battle their way, with just as much daring and resourcefulness but a little less brutality, across a hostile Europe? Then they really might have had something. Was it because somebody was determined to make a picture showing Canada's part in the war effort and dedicated, as all the publicity would have us believe, to the theme of the 49th parallel — "that frontier accepted with a handshake and kept undefended ever since"? Now there is a theme really worth making a picture about, and some day I hope somebody will make it; but it hasn't been made here. The idea of friendship between Canada and the United States hardly enters into 49th Parallel, except in the very last sequence, and then only when a U.S. Customs official plays a trick on the escaping Nazi and sends him back into Canada (which, incidentally, happens at the 42nd Parallel, not the 49th). As for Canada's war effort, we don't see much of it, though we do see plenty of magnificent scenery and various glimpses of the Canadian people, including Eskimos, Red Indians, and Hutterites (but not the Doukhobors).

ALL of the foregoing is not to deny that there are some very good pieces of propaganda in 49th Parallel, just as there are some very good pieces of entertainment apart from the propaganda (though it's hard to get apart from that!). I would describe it as a "blitsy" picture; and it comprises four main bits or episodes, each designed to show off the talents of the four "official" stars (Laurence Olivier, Anton Walbrook, Leslie Howard, and Raymond Massey, in that order of appearance), to permit each of these four to voice his sentiments on the war and democracy, and to eliminate

one or other of the Six Little Nazi Boys (who, I am afraid, are undoubtedly the unofficial stars).

Olivier is a French-Canadian fur-trapper who is killed in the first episode. Anton Walbrook makes what is, I think, the most interesting appearance as well as the most inspiring democratic speech as the leader of a settlement of German Hutterites who lead such an attractive communal life that one of the Nazis is converted to it and is executed by the others for "deserting" the Third Reich. Leslie Howard is one of those effete peace-loving, culture-loving fellows (his culture includes carrying round a Picasso painting on a camping holiday!) who are tigers when aroused, in the manner of Pimpernel Smith. In spite of all I said previously to the contrary, I am now beginning to suspect that this really is Mr. Howard's idea of the typical Englishman. Finally, there is Raymond Massey as a tough Canadian soldier, a.w.o.l., who encounters and deals with the last remaining Nazi. And here I must revert to my criticism of 49th Parallel as propaganda. If the film was designed to show among other things, the brutality of the Nazis, why spoil the effect by ending it with the unedifying spectacle of Massey, fresh and husky, advancing like a wild animal upon the utterly exhausted survivor of the German band and beating him up?

WELL, there you have it, the film there was all the talk about. Whatever you think of it as entertainment—and there is no doubt that many of you will think very highly of it—as a weapon of propaganda the gun has certainly back-fired. And who's going to stop the blast? Perhaps I am, for I shall probably make myself unpopular in some quarters with what I have written. It is some satisfaction, therefore, for me to have discovered, since seeing the picture, that in some other quite responsible quarters my views are substantially supported. And now that my readers have, as it were, been put on their guard against the flaws in the propaganda, I hope that none of them will stay away from 49th Parallel because of what I have said about it, if only because I should prefer them to decide for themselves whether they agree with me or not.



FRESH FROM his exploits among the blood and sand of the bull-ring, the ubiquitous Tyrone Power is now to be seen as "A Yank in the R.A.F." Here is a scene from the film which is reported to be doing phenomenal business wherever it has been released—small wonder with a title like that!

Out of the Blue Comes—

A DEMON IN A DOGFIGHT A DEVIL WITH THE WOMEN

THE MOST TIMELY MOTION PICTURE OF 1942
PACKED WITH THRILLS, LAUGHTER, ADVENTURE, DRAMA!

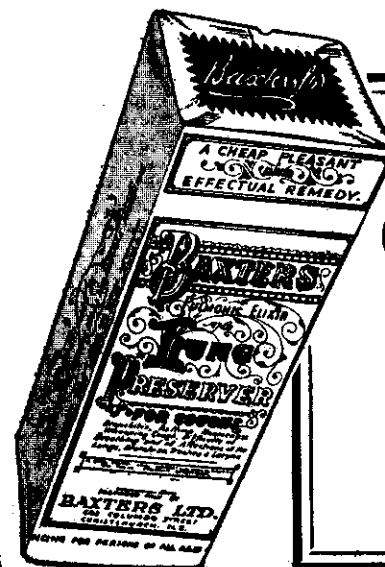


(Approved for Universal Exhibition)

SHORTLY TO BE SHOWN IN ALL THEATRES THROUGHOUT N.Z.

20th Century-Fox Coming Attractions:—

"HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY"
"REMEMBER THE DAY" "SWAMP WATER"
RELAX AT THE MOVIES!



Stop that
Cough with
BAXTERS
LUNG PRESERVER
The Time-Tested
Remedy