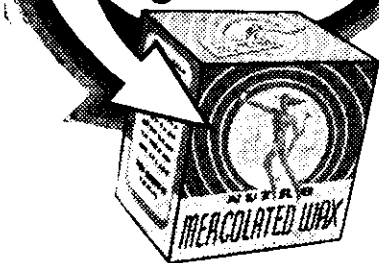


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Film Reviews by G.M.

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

HITLER'S CHILDREN

(RKO-Radio)


 LORD VANSITTART, I imagine, would not like this film; neither would those critics who disapproved of *The Moon is Down* and *The Watch on the Rhine*. It may also be disappointing to some people who are misled, perhaps by the title, perhaps by the publicity, into hoping for an orgy or sadism and atrocity. For *Hitler's Children* presents Nazis who remain human beings even when they are most unpleasant; some German citizens who are not even unpleasant, a valiant old Catholic bishop (H. B. Warner), who defies the authorities—and, believe it or not, a hero (Tim Holt), who is actually a Gestapo captain! And though there are a good many raw patches, they do not spread over the whole picture.

The story is simple melodrama-cum-propaganda (where one ends and the other begins I wouldn't like to say), about a German-born American girl (Bonita Granville), who is being educated in Germany before the war and is claimed by the Nazis as a citizen of the Reich. When she resists, they spirit her away to a "Labour Camp," where she is threatened with horrible penalties. Her sweetheart, who has graduated from the Hitler Youth to the Gestapo in the course of the story, tries to win her for Nazism, but fails, and ends by dying with her in denouncing the system.

There is much that is improbable, a good deal that is silly. But I frankly went fearing the very worst and found the treatment so much less lurid and, indeed so much more intelligent than I had expected that I am inclined to give the film comparatively high marks.

REUNION IN FRANCE

(M-G-M)

 IF you saw *Paris Calling*, you'll have some idea of the type of film *Reunion in France* is; but you have to substitute Joan Crawford (she says she's starving, she certainly looks thin) for Bergner, and a chase in high-powered cars for the tension of the piano broadcast from the sheet music. Otherwise, I'd say the films were much of a muchness.

Crawford, also like Bergner, belongs to one of France's Best Families, and is engaged to a high-up chap—not a title, but tons of money; he's in the engineering business in a big way, and makes tanks and armoured cars. And like Bergner, she beats it on the way to Lisbon when the trouble begins; and like Bergner she comes back—to France in France's hour of need. Like Bergner she meets a Yank who is in the R.A.F. (it's John Wayne instead of Randolph Scott) and like Bergner she is horrified when she finds that her fiancé is playing into the hands of the Nazis, going to their parties, eating their rich food, and being spat on by the urchins of Paris. So she goes to Manton, the dress designer, whose name even the Nazi women utter with lowered voices, and begins to work

STAND-UP CLAPS: *Fantasia, The Man Who Came to Dinner, The Talk of the Town, Moontide, Wake Island, Tortilla Flat, The Moon and Sixpence.*

SIT-DOWN CLAPS: *Seven Days' Leave, Shining Victory, My Sister Eileen, Natasha, Between Us Girls, Saludos Amigos, The Affairs of Martha, Always in My Heart, Saboteur, The Great Lie, Holiday Inn, Seven Sweethearts, This Above All.*

as a fitter devoting herself to France . . . though what she intends to do for France doesn't seem clear.


Along comes Johnny Wayne, and she gives him shelter, begs money from Manton, returns to her fiancé to beg for forged papers for the airman to use to escape back to England. The fiancé is Philip Dorn; he doesn't seem as sinister as Bergner's Basil Rathbone. Yes, he'll get the papers, arrange all, if she will come back to him, back to his heart. . . . Well, she goes back, leaves her job as a fitter, wears her wonderful clothes again, drives about in one of her cars with the R.A.F. man as chauffeur. Spies follow them wherever they go. And it's very exciting, but she has promised to trust her fiancé to get her and the R.A.F. man safely out to Lisbon. Should she trust him? The audience is very doubtful. And what a surprise there is in store for the audience—and for Joan Crawford.

If this film were judged solely on the success of its propagandist theme, you might have to applaud, because it tells you so very clearly that all the decent people of France, the gendarmes, the dress-fitters, the urchins in the streets, the shopkeepers and the big manufacturers, are quietly working against the oppressor (who is invariably greedy, sneaking, fat, cunning, or lecherous), and that all the other people, the traitors, are fit only to spit on.

But that doesn't seem to me a very satisfactory way to judge a piece of entertainment, and this one doesn't make the grade by any other standard.

TEN GENTLEMEN FROM WEST POINT

(20th Century-Fox).

 REVEALING that the establishment of America's famous military academy in the early 19th century was largely the outcome of a wily political ruse whereby a pretty young patriot (Maureen O'Hara), kissed dissenting members of Congress and made them vote the right way. Mr. Roosevelt: please note.

More difficult to overcome is the opposition of the first martinet commandant of West Point (Laird Cregar), who, believing that college boys are sissies, and that book-learning is unnecessary for soldiers, does his best to wreck the joint, and succeeds in driving away all the students except 10. These 10 gentlemen then prove him wrong by re-fighting the Battle of Tours (A.D. 732) with a host of hostile redskins. West Point is thus made safe as a cradle for celebrated American warriors, including General MacArthur. Isn't History wonderful?

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