



Luise Platt will play with dynamite as a revolutionary "Personal History."

# HANDLE with CARE!

*The Film Industry Is  
Toying With  
Explosive Material*

Written for the "Record" by

**ROGER HOLDEN**

**F**ILM producers have more to worry about these days than merely making pictures to please their own immediate public. They have to be very careful to make pictures which will not annoy the heads of foreign States. With practically the whole world a battle-ground for rival ideologies, with nationalism rampant in so many countries, it is perhaps small wonder that, in recent years, film production has been almost completely confined to innocuous, superficial themes. Anything even faintly controversial has been suspect.

But now there are signs of a change.

Perhaps the most important picture of the moment is Walter Wanger's "Blockade." This melodrama, with a Spanish Civil War setting, may prove epoch-making because it contains, in the midst of its familiar adventure story of spies and dirty work, a somewhat diffuse but none the less obvious impeachment of the bombing and starvation of non-combatants in modern warfare.

"Blockade," says the authoritative American paper "Variety," is the key to the opening up of a vast source of screen material that hitherto has been kept locked up because the film industry has regarded it as explosive. But if Walter Wanger can get away with "Blockade" other producers will probably follow suit.

"Upon the success of this picture financially revolve the plans of several of the major studios, heretofore hesitant about tackling stories which treat with subjects of international, economic and political controversy," remarks "Variety."

That is why "Blockade" is important—not because of any very exceptional merit in itself (though it is a good picture), but because Hollywood regards it as a cue on provocative themes.

**S**UPPORTED by Labour and anti-Fascist organisations, the film has already broken records in London.

**S**HOULD Walter Wanger succeed in running the blockade on "inflammatory" films, M.-G.-M. may be the next to try. This studio is all ready to launch production on "Idiot's Delight," a film version of the Robert E. Sherwood play in which Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne have appeared in New York and London. Undisguised anti-war propaganda, "Idiot's Delight" is scheduled to star Norma Shearer and Clark Gable, with Clarence Brown directing.

If "Blockade" can successfully clear the obstacles of international distribution and be a paying proposition, then, it is reasoned, "Idiot's Delight" will also stand a good chance of making money.

## Make Him Think Twice

**A**PPARENTLY Walter Wanger is satisfied that his key-picture will not get jammed in the lock, because already he is under way with a production that should be even more controversial than "Blockade." This is "Personal History," based on Vincent Sheean's record of his experiences as a foreign correspondent. The "British Film Weekly" says that the original book touches on enough international problems to make even such a free-willed producer as Wanger think twice. It will be necessary to recast Vincent Sheean's biographical writing so as to introduce a fictional story against the vivid backgrounds of European and Oriental aggressive diplomacy, of which Sheean wrote frankly and vehemently.

Madeleine Carroll, star of "Blockade," was to have continued her screen career (Continued on page 40.)



Hollywood's idea of war-torn China in "The General Died at Dawn" caused complications.