

of the story was staged as a first step toward arousing interest in the film. Then came diplomatic suggestions that certain foreign Powers might put obstacles in the way of the film's distribution outside America, and the project was dropped. For Hollywood, of course, cannot afford to overlook its foreign markets entirely.

Now, however, the interest aroused by "Blockade" has revived interest in "Paths of Glory," but not, it is stated, at the Paramount studios.

One of Sam Goldwyn's big schemes of some time back was to film "Exiles," a story dealing with the prominent artists, scientists and authors who have found refuge in America from persecution in their own countries. It was an "inflammatory" theme; and international complications were certain. Rather than compromise and produce a half-hearted exposition of the refugee problem, Goldwyn decided not to make "Exiles" at all.

But now, with interest in the subject at high pitch, who knows?

AS an indication of how touchy foreign countries can be about the way in which Hollywood portrays them, there is the famous case of Paramount's "The General Died At Dawn." The Chinese Government protested that the screening of this film would create the wrong impression that China was over-run with war-lords whom the Central Government was powerless to control. China went further than mere protest: it decided that if "The General Died At Dawn" were shown anywhere in the world at all, then all Paramount productions should be boycotted in China—a fairly considerable market.

As everyone knows, the film was released—and for a while there were no Paramount pictures in China. But apparently the ban did not last very long.

Similarly, there was the deadlock which existed for nearly a year between the American film industry and the Mexican Government, because the villains in "Westerns" were always portrayed as Mexicans.

RACIAL intolerance is so strong to-day that a film does not have to be provocative on the surface to cause a flutter in the diplomatic dove-cotes. "The Lost Horizon" was banned by Italy and Germany as being "too idealistic"; Germany banned "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" because some of the actors in it were of non-Aryan blood; Italy shut out "The Lives of a Bengal Lancer" because of its "British nationalistic flavour"; Germany howled protest at "The Road Back" because, said Dr. Goebbels, it was "a two-hour blasphemy against dead men which only an American Jew could bring to the screen without punishment"; and even Deanna Durbin and Shirley Temple are under suspicion in Poland because Poland believes that "children should occupy a subordinate position in the family."

So there you are. The producer of English-language films certainly has plenty to worry about. But if the successful production of a film like "Blockade" means that Hollywood is likely to show more courage in approaching provocative themes, the change is, I think, to be welcomed. Without making the screen into a platform for arguing rival idealologies, we can do with some more backbone in our entertainment.

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