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trated by James MacDonald. Harcourt, Brace. \$3. The story of rockets—how they developed, how they work, what their future will be.

MAKING THE MOVIES, written and illustrated by Jeanne Bendick, McGraw-Hill. \$2. All about movie studios and what they do. Nice pictures.

FILMS OF THE WEEK

IN THE BELLS OF ST. MARY, RKO, director Leo McCarey, and Father Bing Crosby O'Malley of *Going My Way* renew their celluloid adventures in Catholicism (Music Hall). Despite the habiliments and locale it has as much to do with its subject as *Mexican Fiesta* has to do with Mexico. It is a neatly conceived poster designed to sell the movie idea for the reality. For all the references to parish problems and the occasional pietistic indulgence, its characters are strictly secular. Father Crosby remains Bob Hope's old sparring partner. The looks that pass between him and Bergman (who as the Sister Superior replaces Barry Fitzgerald as the protagonist of old-fashioned teaching methods) are supposed to be of an unworldly order, but their manufactured misunderstandings, their flimsy antagonisms, their optical caresses, and their personal appraisal of one another would suit the customary Hollywood romance.

There are humorous episodes, and Crosby and Bergman are ingratiating salesmen in the promotion of Hollywood's idea. But the product sold is something else. Faith can procure miracles, it can cure a heart ailment, goes the sales talk laughingly, in a tongue-in-cheek manner; and it maintains, also roguishly, that evil can be overcome by turning the other cheek. In the matter of formal education, however, there is no kidding around. On the bedrock of the parochial institution, the film contends that a child of proper spirit should never flunk an exam, no matter how much of a dope he or she is at fractions. The film does not show that most of the parish pupil's day is taken up with catechism and other subjects lumped under the heading of "religion." A student well up in religion will always pass, other scholastic requirements notwithstanding. In a round-about way, the film seeks to justify this practice.

There have been complaints that Hollywood has been making too many pictures of the Catholic religion and not enough of the others. But if religious

films are to be such rubber stamps it doesn't matter much what the label is. *The Bells of St. Mary* pretends to argue for good will toward all men. Well, the time has come for the film producers to really put up. The time was never riper for films dealing with interracial unity. I would like to see the representatives of the Catholic Church call for movies that will crusade for equality for all races and all religions. When that happens I will be persuaded that the present crop of religious pictures aren't instances of special pleading.

"APPOINTMENT IN TOKYO" is the official documentary of the Pacific campaign. It is too much of an outline in its treatment to have same impact as *True Glory*, nor does it have, in its separate incidents, the tension and shock of the smaller previous documentaries on Wake, the Marianas, or Okinawa. But it is valuable in its bird's-eye presentation of the strategy that (exclusive of the atom bomb and the entry of the Red Army) led to the Japanese surrender.

What distinguishes this film from other documentaries is the superb quality of its camera work. The photographers of the Signal Corps, the Army Air Force and the Navy seem to have got unusually close to their subject. Bursting planes scatter their pieces almost in the face of the camera. You see clearly the enemy trench and the exchange of tracer bullets. A GI directs a burst of machine-gun fire at an enemy position, and the camera gets to the spot while the hit Japs are still twitching.

The least attractive part of the film is that dealing with the surrender ceremonies aboard the *Missouri*. It is parade-ground ceremony, so formal as to appear stage-managed. General MacArthur, speaking into a mike, calls upon the various figures to sign the peace documents. These respond with the precision of trained actors. Then MacArthur closes the book containing the documents, and says in a measured voice, "the matter is now closed." I expected

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to see the Japanese officials, the performance being over, turn around and go home.

“TOO YOUNG TO KNOW” (Strand) says that marriages made at too young an age land on the rocks. It also wants to know whether a child should be left in the home of kindly foster-parents it has got used to or yanked back under the parental roof. All the arguments on the subjects are voiced with an impartial lack of knowledge.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

"The Tragic Jest"

IN RUSSIA, during the first decade of the century, bloody pogroms were followed by the official prosecution of charges against a Jew for the ritual murder of a Christian child. This fantastic case aroused world-wide indignation and in the face of it the Czarist court was forced to acquit its intended victim.

With the bitterness of this outrage in his mind the great Jewish satirist Sholem Aleichem wrote a savage comedy, *The Tragic Jest*, which has become a classic of the Jewish Theater. Like Arthur Miller's powerful current novel, *Focus*, it makes its point by having the weight of anti-Semitism fall, through a "tragic jest," on a Christian.

It is this play that the Jewish Theater Ensemble of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order has put on as its second offering, following its brilliant production of *The Downfall of Haman*, a festival play dealing with the defeat of an earlier Hitler in Jewish history. Produced as a pantomimic musical comedy, *Haman* was well suited to the talents of the director, Benjamin Zemach, the noted choreographer. For *The Tragic Jest* they are not quite right. The ballet-like movement and the over-gestured acting in some of the roles detracts from a sense of reality.

Nevertheless, there is an attractive saving spirit in the performance, and for that and the timeliness and power of Sholem Aleichem's satire the play is well worth seeing. It is being given in week-end performances at the Barbizon Plaza Theater in New York.

I. S.

Milhaud: Twenty Years

MILHAUD's *Suite for Violin and Orchestra*, which Zino Francescatti performed at a concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra on November 20, and the *Suite Francaise* and *Le Bal*

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