

The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Movie Magnate

By HENRY MONTOR

Reviewing the Scenario Written by Upton Sinclair

HERE you have the authentic inside story of William Fox's downfall which rocked the Motion Picture industry in every corner of the world.

When William Fox went down under the blows of the Wall Street bankers, he seemed to carry with

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TUESDAY, April 18th Matinee beginning 12 noon Tickets to be obtained from: Palace Theatre, Mount Carmel Clinic, European Baths, McGregor and Manitoba, 425 Selkirk Avenue, Globe Insurance, 691 Main St.

him the entire movie world as it was known up to that time, with the possible exception of one firm. His downfall coincided with the end of the personal era in the motion picture business and the complete establishment of the hegemony of financiers over Hollywood and its sister film capitals. William Fox was, therefore, a symbol and also a portent. But his case seems also to have been a warning. For that is the theme of Upton Sinclair's life of William Fox.

That Sinclair, debunker of art, literature, press and big business, should have undertaken to present the chronicle of the bourgeois film magnate, is not a reflection upon his integrity but a guarantee that the story which he undertook to write has within it all the elements familiar to readers of Sinclair: Drama, greed, aggression, irresponsibility, corruption — these are the components of an Upton Sinclair scenario. "Upton Sinclair presents William Fox," published by the author, is another chapter of the voluminous history of America being compiled by Sinclair to demonstrate that the United States is encircled by the octopus of Big Business, which steadily encroaches upon the freedom, the security and the economic equilibrium of the individual and of the nation. It is doubtful whether the fact that William Fox was Jewish had any bearing upon the fate that eventually overtook him. And yet there was a certain barrier between him and his non-Jewish associates which prevented that subtle understanding and mutual identification which is an invisible but nevertheless powerful bond between members of the same race or creed. The distinctive Jewish mannerisms of William Fox were a target for over humor or covert sneers among those who sought to destroy him. It is strange, considering that William Fox was never too closely identified with the Jewish community as such, that he himself believes that his ancestry was a contributory factor in the accumulation of enmities.

William Fox started his career as a salesman in the textile industry. He ended up as the owner of the largest motion picture concern in the world. William Fox was a legend that was known from one end of the word to the other. If the Fox firm was responsible for poor and mediocre productions, it could also be credited with films of high artistic calibre. It displayed enterprise and courage in the choice of many of its features. Business was expanding so rapidly that William Fox had visions of becoming the head of a gigantic motion picture merger, which would include Paramount, Metro-

Goldwyn-Mayer and Warner Brothers. He did, in fact, start negotiations toward that end. It is quite likely that if the October, 1929 crash had not occurred, he would today be the outstanding figure in the movie world.

What was it that brought this giant to his feet? In the biography of Fox, as written by Sinclair, it is stated with emphasis that a group of bankers wanted control of the vast and profitable Fox organization. Therefore, when obligations, on which they had previously promised help became due, they refused to extend loans that were amply justified by the state of the business and for which there was ample collateral. Fox makes it appear that there was a conspiracy, joined in by some of the biggest personalities in the banking world, to seize from his grasp the enterprises which paid such splendid dividends. That this charge, in many respects, is true can be seen from the fate of other movie organizations since that time, the majority having succumbed to the power of Wall Street. It might be added that the sharply downward history of Fox Films since the exit of William Fox from that organization is paralleled by the career of the other concerns. That this situation is not due entirely to the events following the economic collapse is known to every observer who realizes what personal pride and devotion can mean to a business.

Upton Sinclair makes it clear that every charge and every indictment — and there are scores of them throughout the book, together with names, dates and places — is reprinted on the sole authority of William Fox. Readers of his book will, accordingly, reserve final judgment on the facts. But even from that objective viewpoint, the account presented by Fox has its undoubtedly authentic atmosphere. We have yet to hear of any banker, film magnate or politician starting a libel suit against Fox on the basis of statements made in the Sinclair book. And if these statements are not libels, they are the most amazing commentary on American Big Business that has ever come from the lips of one who was formerly a part of it.

It is interesting to note that one of the men whom Fox holds largely responsible for his fate is now under indictment for his part in financial deals. He is Harry L. Stuart. And J. P. Morgan & Co., who, Fox holds to be the prime mover in the plot against him, faces a Congressional in-

vestigation of the most far-reaching kind. There are other men in his story who have only moral irresponsibility but legal criminality. All of which adds corroboration to the picture he paints of them.

The portrait which Sinclair infers, actually draws of William Fox is far different from that which Fox's previous history would conjure up. Fox, the film adventurer, the man with vast imagination who thought of mergers, consolidations and expansions without regard to friend or foe, is revealed as a God-fearing man, who delights to quote from the Old Testament, and who firmly believes that God grants the prayers of those who pray hard enough and conscientiously enough. Fox would want us to see in him a guileless, naive person who credulously accepted the promises of friends and acquaintances and could not understand rapacity on the part of any one. But the most fascinating revelation is that of the intimacy between William Fox and his wife. The latter was aware of every deal that her husband made. When the Electric Research Products Company and the American Telephone & Telegraph Company were hounding her husband, she refused to let him take steps which she thought would ruin his prestige, aside from destroying his fortune. It makes a sentimentally appealing picture to think of this man and wife, banded together, resisting an entire world to preserve their honor and the hard-earned gains of a lifetime. One wonders, however,

Through Upton Sinclair's completely absorbing, staccato narrative, pulsating with the rapidity of the succession of its events, there stalk such men as Herbert Hoover and Louis B. Mayer, Albert H. Wiggin and Clarence Dillon, Albert M. Greenfield and A. C. Blumenthal. There are such incidents as the hurried trip made by David A. Brown to Detroit, in the effort to interest Henry Ford in Fox's plight. But Ford, who has a hatred of everything emanating from Wall Street, found it impossible to help. Then there is the story of Clarence Dillon, the Jew who spends sleepless nights in the fear that someone will discover that fact, promising Fox aid but reneging on his promise, presumably because J. P. Morgan had sent orders to all and sundry that Fox must not be helped.

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SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

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Mrs. S. Granovsky, Pine Falls, Man., and children arrived in the city to be the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Shaen, Camden Place.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Hurtig, Pleasantdale, Sask., arrived Monday and will visit with Mr. and Mrs. M. Lauer for the next three weeks.

Mrs. S. Hock, Marcellin, Sask., is visiting the city for a few weeks.

Mr. N. Cohen, Home St., returned from The Pas to spend a few days in the city.

Mr. and Mrs. A. I. Buckwold, Cadillac, Sask., are visiting with Mrs. C. Nitkman.

Mrs. Norman Croil, Yorkton, Sask., is the guest of her brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. M. Shnoor, Banerman Ave.

Mrs. L. D. Rusek, Inkster Blvd. was a charming tea hostess recently to a large gathering of friends in compliment to Mrs. Norman Croil, Yorkton. The attractive tea table was carried out in red.

Under the patronage of Mrs. Andrew O. Schwartz, the Hadassah organization will entertain the children of members and friends of Hadassah at a Kiddies' party, Saturday, April 16th, from 3 to 5 p.m., at the Zionist hall. One hundred Kiddies, ages 3 to 7 are expected to attend. There will be games and stories for all ages and Passover goodies will be served. Those assisting Mrs. Schwartz are: Misses Eva Schwartz; Nina Frankel; Florence Barish; Belle Lubart; Dolie Schwartz; Josephine Cottillo; Doris Abramovich; Gany Spector; Donna Goldstein; Edith Spector; Natalie Diner.

In honor of a ward of the Jewish Orphanage, Miss Annie Tenenbaum, whose marriage will take place shortly, the Ladies Society will hold a linen shower Sunday, April 23rd, from 2 to 6 o'clock at the Orphanage Home. All are requested to attend.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Beth Abraham will hold a silver tea at the home of Mrs. M. W. Triller, 363 Flora Ave., Sunday, April 23rd, from 3 to midnight.

The Girls Auxiliary of the Y. M. H. A. are holding a dance Sunday, April 23rd at the "Y" Clubrooms. A good orchestra has been secured.

The National Council of Jewish Women will hold their annual Membership Rally Tea, Monday, April 24, at the home of Mrs. L. Churchill, 41 Kingsway.

Members of the National Council of Jewish Juniors Bowling League wound up a successful bowling season with a dinner and bridge at Levin's restaurant, Thursday evening, April 6th, when prizes won during the season were presented.

The following were successful in winning prizes: highest team Bella Nozick's; second highest team Jessie Main's. Highest average Anne Alpert; second highest average Jessie

and Miss C. Lenore Silberman, pianist who has given several successful recitals in Detroit and Chicago.

"A JEWISH MOTHER," ALL TALKING JEWISH PICTURE AT THE PALACE

The Palace Theatre is presenting an outstanding Jewish Talkie starting Sun. April 16. "A Jewish Mother" featuring the renowned Jewish artist Mae Simon in the leading role, supported by a large and celebrated cast including Shmulkil the 10 year old wonder Cantor. The bill will also a number of Yiddish shorts such as Kol Nidre, Mi Ka, Mishme Lon and the Sailor's Sweetheart filled with wit and humor.

THE TELEPHONE AS PROTECTION

If tough-looking individuals start to break into the backyard, or fire breaks out in the kitchen chimney, or the baby gets the croup — if any one of these common household emergencies occurs, the first thing Mrs. Winnipeg does is rush to the telephone and call the police, or fire department, or doctor, or neighbour, or Mr. Winnipeg at the office. But is never occurs to her to wonder what she would have done had the telephone not been there. The telephone today has become such an essential part of the ordinary household, that we are prone to forget its enormous usefulness — for protection, for convenience, for social intercourse, for household business such as shopping. It is rather astonishing to hear the report, recently made by officials of

the Manitoba Telephone System, that there are some 46,000 homes in Greater Winnipeg which still have no telephones. To many of us who are used to the telephone, to be without it would be like cutting ourselves off from half our world. It would be unthinkable. In a modern city, trying to conduct business or social life without a telephone is simply impossible.

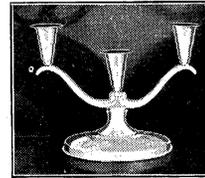
In Winnipeg we are fortunate in having an excellent and up-to-date telephone system which has the added advantage of giving service at one of the cheapest rates on the continent. Manitoba's system is publicly-owned, and is thus, in an important sense, the property of the people who are using it. Everyone should have a telephone, is a dictum which is coming to be accepted very widely. We venture to think that if those Winnipeg homes which are now doing without, telephone service realized fully not only the inconvenience, but the danger, to which they are exposing themselves, they would soon have the instrument installed.



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