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Review

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erately restraining himself: his restraint sometimes smacks of French classicism as well as of the vaudeville disciplines of slapstick simplicity. Nevertheless, not enough of the human being emerges—too much frosting and not enough cake.

In the future, let us hope that this mischievous clown Sellers will fill up his funny masks with all of the inner—not just the outer—resources at his command.—KENNETH J. LETNER

I'm All Right, Jack

Director: John Boulting. Screenplay: Frank Harvey and John Boulting. Camera: Max Greene. Music: Ken Hare.

Spike Milligan of the BBC's "Goon Show" recently called the class structure the curse of British film comedy, the dead hand that keeps inventiveness down and confines characters to the nice lord and lady, titled or not, and those lovable uncouth comics belowstairs. Certainly the "lower classes" are indispensable to the "Carry On" brand of coarseness, in or out of uniform, and they've made even the best Ealing comedies too quaint to be as pointed as they might be. But now come the Boulting brothers, not to overturn the system, but to turn it to comic advantage. The structure here serves not merely to provide an endless supply of unlet-

tered drolls, a strategy well worn after generations of music-hall comedy, but to keep the classes in their place long enough to make them standing targets. *I'm All Right, Jack* is not only funny but unique; it manages to be unfair to almost everyone.

Labor, management, and, more casually, the public, are equally fair game, but labor seems, in *Animal Farm* terms, a little "more equal than others." Management's representatives are blackguards, bounders, and cads—written, played, and even dressed in those terms, so that they're not quite of this time despite their production of arms "to preserve peace in the Middle East." The nonworking workers, on the other hand, are clearly The Working Class: congenitally lazy, greedy, and—behind their slogans of the class struggle—envious of the bosses. The union leader, in one of Peter Sellers' best performances, is never seen working. Instead, he leads marches, makes pronouncements, usually mispronounced, and leads the most conventional of home lives. His daughter bypasses the Lenin in his library for movie magazines, and "Mum" turns out to have a lot in common with the hero's dowager aunt. Everyone in this picture sails under false colors, and one of the funniest sequences contrasts a candy bar's cheery jingle with the sickening reality of its manufacture.

I'm All Right, Jack abounds with sly touches, some not quite relevant, such as the hero's father, a nudist who looks a great deal like Bertrand Russell. But much more is right on target, with little of the scattering of shots that marred *The Mouse That Roared*. The time-and-motion man makes himself inconspicuous to the men by reading *The Daily Worker*, a crew that can't be fired plays cards behind crates, an executive instructs trainees in marketing techniques that are too true to be comfortable. And most of the performances, while not unfamiliar, are gorgeous. Terry-Thomas is a perfect rotter as the personnel chief; one longs to see him in Waugh. Liz Fraser's mindless leading lady is an ideal foil to Ian Carmichael's decent, not-too-bright, incurable optimist. The role is his usual one, but he makes it singular enough to balance



THE MOUSE THAT ROARED. Peter Sellers as Tully Bascom (left), the Duchess (center), and the Prime Minister (right).

Nadia Tiller and Peter Van Eyck in *ROSEMARY*.
Dinah Washington in Bert Stern's

the types arrayed against him in a strike engineered by the management, supported by the union, and sustained by the public. Everyone is taken in, including the judge who puts him away for inciting to riot (another wild slapstick sequence) and we see him last still in flight from groups, as a flock of eager sportswomen pursues him through the nudist camp. *I'm All Right, Jack* offers no answer to the expertly stated menace of people who "want something for nothing," but it's one of the few comedies of recent memory that asks questions and gets laughs while doing it.—JOSEPH KOSTOLEFSKY

Rosemary

Written and directed by Erich Kuby and Rolf Thiele. Lyrics by Mario Adorf and Jo Herbst. With Nadja Tiller and Peter Van Eyck.

The central figure in *Rosemary* is based on fact: in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1957, a call-girl named Rosemarie Nitribitt, whose clientele numbered many important German industrialists, was murdered in her apartment. She was suspected of selling industrial secrets to a foreign agent, having taken down on a tape recorder the confidences of her bedfellows. Her murder was not solved.

Erich Kuby and Rolf Thiele (who also directed) have used these facts in constructing their screenplay for this West German film. From the tutelage of two street musicians, under whose control she operates as a prostitute, Rosemary moves up in the social scale, shedding her trenchcoat for more modish apparel and her basement room for more lavish surroundings. Her success in the shadows of the industrial world is complete until, ironically enough, her efforts at private enterprise when she attempts blackmail with the incriminating tape recordings she has made prove to be her undoing.

Rosemary's successful rise is linked with the postwar economic recovery of Western Germany. The French industrialist who instigates the scheme of the tape recordings, as a means



of acquiring valuable information for his own purposes, envisions Rosemary as a contemporary DuBarry, a figure of influence and power behind the throne, in this case occupied by the industrial magnates whose pivotal position in international affairs makes them the representatives of the new Germany, examples of the proverbial German efficiency.

It is this world of cartels and corruption that Kuby and Thiele have focused on with a biting, sardonic humor. Their device for doing so is the pair of street musicians, who serve as a chorus, commenting on the action in musical interludes reminiscent in both style and content of *The Threepenny Opera*. Their bitter, caustic lyrics on the ills, the depravities, and the follies of a capitalist society set the tone of cynical pessimism and nihilism for the film. (Unfortunately, the English subtitles do not always do full justice to the lyrics.) This attitude is expressed further in a sound track which exaggerates mechanical sounds to the level where they seem to have an independent existence of their own, and in a series of visual symbols designed as the equivalent of the verbal satire—the fleet of black Mercedes in which the industrialists silently prowl the city; the parade of the capitalists through the hotel lobby; the scene in the cabaret, with the row of call-girls seated at the bar and the stylized, mechanical dancing; the scene in the basement as the two pimps audition new prospects to replace Rosemary. At its best, this technique is striking, as in the murder scene: the cars waiting in a row in the street outside Rosemary's apartment drive off