

## La Revue du cinéma

### 1.) Secularism and Politics

*La Revue du Cinéma* (formerly *Image et Son*) is the mouth-piece of UFOLEIS (Union Française des Oeuvres Laïques d'Éducation par l'Image et le son).

UFOLEIS is both an association of film societies -- the leading one in France due to the number and variety of its societies -- and the Audio-Visual Division of the French League for Teaching and Continuing Education (Ligue Française de l'Enseignement et de l'Éducation Permanente). This association -- by the law of 1901 -- loudly asserts its secularism, in other words, its total independence from religious organizations and political parties. The secular character of UFOLEIS was forged through years of struggle against all forms of clericalism -- understood (here) as the "power of the clerks" -- thus it isn't a question of being neutral but, rather, of taking a political position in all the great problems of today's world.

*La Revue du Cinéma*, in its specific field, reflects this orientation. Thus, for example, it denounces censorship not only in its official aspect (Commission de contrôle des Films), but especially in its economic aspect, as an expression of the capitalistic system. In this regard, we might mention François Chevassu's editorial in issue 271, April 1973:

"Once again I am going to speak to you about censorship. It crops up regularly in film journals like blossoming chestnuts in provincial newspapers. It has become a sort of ritual. The power forbids. We protest. Sometimes, if the producer has tact, if the director is famous, the ban is publicized. Other times it proceeds discretely and indifferently and the film is condemned to obscurity. Of course, it is probable that *Les noces rouges* will be sanctioned after the elections. If the spectators have a good memory, they can judge for themselves why the authorities waited until the end of March. But do you remember *Secteur postal* or *Désaccords d'Évian* from nine years or so ago? And haven't you forgotten *Octobre à Paris* when René Vauthier went on a hunger strike?"

The censors have everything under control: the decision-making power and the important news media. Can one really expect the *ORTF*, radio stations, and the large dailies to reveal the mechanics of prohibition? Beside them we appear a bit ridiculous, protestors, with our little journals, our leaflets, our mini-meetings. And they certainly don't mind telling us that. Nevertheless, that shouldn't discourage us. The sirens that lovingly whisper to us that our methods are outmoded and our influence nil wouldn't be so passionate about it if that were completely true.

But, on the other hand, we would be wrong to indulge in illusions or to feel overconfident because of a few well-placed lines. To feel relieved as others do by "Sunday Christianity", because we place our signature at the bottom of a petition each time a film is officially banned. We mustn't let the tree of the control commission obscure the forest of real censorship. That of banks which don't give money to controversial films, that of pre-censorship which warns and discourages the producer who "takes chances", that of film distribution agencies which close their doors to a product defined in advance as non-commercial, that of the mass media which forgets to speak of a film or mentions it hastily.

Official censorship, against which we tend to polarize ourselves too exclusively, is nothing but the last security sieve destined to hold back the few films which might succeed in passing through the other barriers. And the preferential treatment given it permits the real hindrances to the freedom of expression to be more easily forgotten by pushing them into the backround. This doesn't mean that we ought to submit to these tyrannical proclamations without protest, especially because these protests originally led to emphatic, non-negligible victories. But one must keep in mind that censorship is not a cause but an effect, that it cannot be dissociated from the system that engendered it and that it will not disappear without it.

As our old friends from the West said, "One good scalping is better than two bad haircuts."

The same affirmation on political views in issue 278, November, 1973 with an editorial devoted to Chile is expressed in these terms: "In this issue we are publishing, since it was expected since June, news on Chilean films and an interview with Aldo Francia. Our intention is not to honor him more than his colleagues, nor them more than their oppressed compatriots. It seems indecent to us to promote our profession in the present circumstances. It's the entire Chilean populus which is mocked, humiliated, massacred.

But even though the Chilean drama goes considerably beyond the cinematographic problem, it doesn't mean that it shouldn't be uppermost in our minds. As men, of course, but also as *animateurs* in film societies. Because all who have the possibility of speaking out at the present time, as slight as it might be, must use it to the maximum in order to penetrate the heavy cloak of silence and lies skillfully deployed by complicit powers,

suddenly concerned with discretion, a concern which has not always typified them.

Where are those virtuous pilgrims who celebrate the anniversary of Prague each year, but whose rheumy eyes don't see Santiago today any more than they saw Djakarta yesterday? Where are these "intellectuals" who cry daily over Solzhenitseyn, but who let Pablo Neruda die? Must we believe that their delicate nostrils only smell misfortune when it is brought on an easterly wind?

Moreover, where is that papacy, more the daughter of Pontius Pilate than of Christ, which saw the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in a Danish viewfinder but who didn't see any heresy in Pinochet's black masses? This chaste silence, this tacit consent given to the killer, perhaps that's what Monseigneur Selva Henriquez, Archbishop of Santiago, calls dying with the help of religion. ITT is certainly worth a mass after all.

The Chilean drama will at least have the merit of making the masks fall, of showing that the fascist beast will always be ready at the first command of its masters, the international trusts, and with the blessing of their allies, leaders and clerks hired by them, to commit genocide wherever democracy would like to settle. To Allende's pacifism they replied with the song of bombs. That's a lesson which we haven't the right to ignore if we do not want the killers to knock at our doors tomorrow. Valparaiso isn't all that far. One only has to see how the Commandos for the Defense of the Rich and other divisions of the Assault of Capitalism are organizing around us.

If we circulated "The First Year", it wasn't for the pleasure of adding a title to the cinemathique on a performance to the program of film societies. This film must be shown everywhere it possibly can be, but accompanied by real debates. So that people won't have to wait, as they did in 1943, to have a little less bread and a little less butter in order to notice they lack democracy.

For us the first year begins now. Hoping that it isn't too late."

## 2.) Cultural Vitalization and Analysis of Films

Since *La Revue du Cinéma* is destined primarily for *animateurs*, it is natural that it should devote study to modern methods of approaching films inspired by Semiology and by the human sciences, Materialism and Marxism.

For a year a regular feature has been devoted to the problems of the analysis of films and vitalizing film societies. It began in issue 266, December, 1972 with the opening of a public debate presented in these terms by André Cornand:

"For several years theoretical research has been developing and publications on film, on the relationships between film and politics, film and ideology, and film and revolution have been multiplying." In this realm, as in others, May '68 has provoked reflection, backwash and political commitments.

Polemics, often virulent ones, waged among different specialized journals have been witnessed.

*La Revue du Cinéma--Image et Son* in keeping with its informational role has reported -- as thoroughly as possible -- on each of these diverse tendencies. Open to all ideas capable of contributing to progress, it has attentively followed the ongoing studies.

We have always considered film to be an economic, political, and social phenomenon and we have always examined its impact and its function. That is the reason for which theoretical research has always seemed fundamental to us and *Image et Son* was the first journal to open its columns to McLuhan (#182, March, 1965) and to Christian Metz (#201, January, 1967).

Christian Metz, Jean Patrick Lebel, Marcel Hanoun, and others have participated on several occasions in national productions and various demonstrations of UFOLEIS. Our film societies -- these are more than 10,000 in France -- often call on personalities or on groups of such and such a tendency and initiate a debate. Such is our vocation, to open our columns to the different currents of thought, to provoke encounters and discussion.

It is not our place to impose on thousands of *animateurs* -- and readers -- a political line, but to permit them to take their own stand with regard to a means of expression which remains one of the primary manifestations of the audio-visual media, which is currently in full development.

*La Revue du Cinéma* belongs above all to UFOLEIS, the principal federation of film societies in the world. Its directors and the members of its "filmology" commission consider it important to inform readers about present studies but think that the entire movement can participate in the study.

Diverse experiments in film analysis are underway in film societies and local associations. These are the privileged sites where theory can find a field of practical application and lead to a cultural vitalization.

We have asked Alain Marty, the director of a major provincial film society, to send us the first results of his experiments. We present his text to our readers. This work is by a practically-based association, within our movement, doing research capable of renovating methods and political orientations. Other reports on experiments will follow.

Evidently, these articles -- that of Alain Marty today, the others following -- commit only their authors and do not reflect the views of the entire editorial committee. Certain of its members intend to give their points of view about these articles in our next issues.

And we insist on this point: the texts that are going to be read ought to provoke reactions. We expect them and we will publish them, with, of course, the author's right to reply.

Film society *animateurs*, readers of *La Revue du Cinéma*, a great debate has been opened. It's up to you to participate in great numbers."

In the course of its research, *La Revue du Cinéma* published in its issue 271, April 1973, a study by René Gardies on "The

Structural Analysis of a Textual System" based on the films of Glauber Rocha.

The debate was continued in issue 272 with letters from readers, the reply of Alain Marty, and a review by André Cornand of Sight and Sound Week 1972.

Finally, Jean-Claude Mairal and Chantal Laboureyras gave, in the June-July issue a report of the "Clermont-Ferrand Meetings" where Jean-Patrick Lebel (1) and Alain Marty were the guests of the University Film Society.

Since the beginning of the school year, issues 279 and 280 have presented a semiological and ideological analysis of Chabrol's "Boucher".

During 1974-1975 the journal will publish studies on "Film Criticism", "The Theory of Ideologies", and "Semiology and Cultural Vitalization".

### 3.) Cinematic Actuality (L'actualite cinematographique)

This new feature has brought a great many readers to the *Revue du Cinéma* but *animateurs* and film enthusiasts always expect news on cinematic actuality which comprises an important part of the publication: film criticisms and interviews with filmmakers, technicians, or artists. The journal also presents, and always in connection with current subjects, detailed documents devoted either to a film, or a director, or national cinema; for example, the most recent issues presented studies on "La Marseillaise" of Renoir, "Antoine and French Realism", "Sade and Film", "Filmmakers and Television Writers", "Claude Chabrol", "The Young Swiss Cinema", and "The Young Cinema of Germany".

For 1974, special issues devoted to Billy Wilder and women filmmakers are planned.