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feature about torture, *The Disappeared*—The Cubans could take as their subjects the construction of a new society. They could even make situation comedies about the exasperations of organizing land reform.

Brazilian films, most of them made with help from national film distribution and funding agency Embrafilme, shared with Cuban films a technical competence. Typically they had a blunter political edge, and often made Brazilian African-influenced folklore their theme.

Nonetheless critical, politically charged statements sneaked in. Geraldo Sarno's fiction feature *Coronel Delmiro Gouveia* (which shared a Coral with a Cuban film *Maluala*) topped a story about a turn-of-the-century entrepreneur with a worker calling for worker control in factories.

How did a film with so bold an ending get approved by Embrafilme? Sarno explained "Embrafilme can't withdraw its support once it has approved the script. This film was made at the tail end of the Geisel era (1975), when the political situation was very much up in the air. No one was looking when it went through."

"Right now is a good time for films in Brazil. Dozens that have been held up by the censor for seven or eight years are being released. But you never know. The door is open now, but it could shut at any time."

Audience reaction.

Nuevo Cine films all must confront not only political obstacles but the problem of making a film that rejects a colonized approach and yet garners an interested audience. For many at the festival, the problem is closely linked to problems of distribution. Dan Talbot of New Yorker Films commented on cross-cultural difficulties of distribution, saying "The U.S. is still xenophobic about foreign films, especially from Latin America."

Better distribution could mean not reaching more people but sharpening a film focus. MECLA offered hope for Latin American filmmakers, Berta Navarro explained. "Setting up a market and reaching socialist distributors is very important. We need distributors who share our interest. Otherwise we don't know who will ever see our films, and who we're talking to. The filmmakers become isolated."

The problem of reaching the audience is one the Cubans are very familiar with. What is a socialist hit?

Cubans are passionate filmgoers. On Sunday nights in Havana you can see lines around the block at the movie houses. In a recent ICAIC survey, 90 percent of the respondents said they preferred fiction to documentary films. Although 99 percent of the respondents said that they go to Cuban features, they don't get a chance to go too often. Only three percent of Cuban screen time is spent on Cuban features. ICAIC can only produce five or six films a year, and Cubans need around 130 films to satisfy the demand.

The pitfalls of pitching to popularity were clear with the new Cuban feature *Maluala*, directed by Sergio Giral (*The Other Francisco*). The film was his attempt to be less didactic, more lyrical and more "transparent" than his earlier work, while still politically engaged. The film focuses on a runaway slave community in the 19th century, and shows the different slave leaders' choices when the government offers a treaty settlement

with the slaves.

The film's historical accuracy is shaky, however, and it depends on cowboys-and-Indians kinds of clichés, transposed into slaves-vs-soldiers. It has yet to show in Cuban theaters, so no one knows if it will be the hit Giral hopes for.

Retrato de Teresa, Cuba's smash hit—it outsold the previous record set by *Jaws* and *The Godfather* by four and five

times and more than half a million tickets in three weeks—also uses a traditional style. But its story is gripping, the narrative is tight and the acting convincing.

The festival revealed that, in Cuba as in Latin America generally, faces new challenges, not only those imposed from without but challenges of growth within this politicized medium. In the wealth of films and discussions that the festival

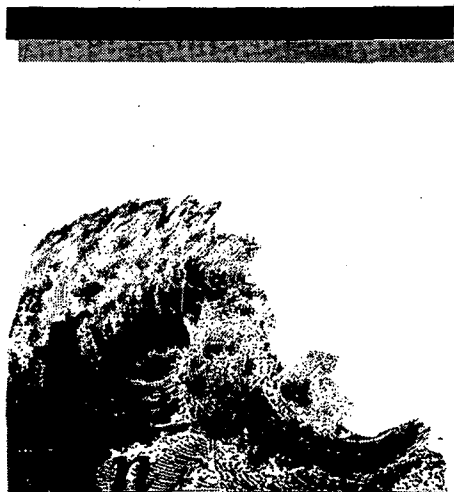
hosted, there were no easy answers.

Surprising? Not at all. The surprise was that you can experiment in socially conscious cinema and survive, that you can make a socialist hit, that you can keep alive the spirit to make movies about your culture when your people are being held hostage by mass murderers, and that a festival of this size could happen.



Filmmakers Julio Garcia Espinosa (center) and Jorge Fraga (right) participate in a symposium.

Roger Simon



Interview with Espinosa

Julio Garcia Espinosa is one of the founders of ICAIC, a filmmaker who at the time of the revolution had made with Tomas Gutierrez Alea and others a neo-realist style documentary on charcoal workers. (The Batista regime banned it and arrested him.) He has made both award-winning documentary and fiction features. His 1967 *The Adventures of Juan Quin Quin* has a quixotic hero and refers ironically to the romance of the western genre. His 1969 essay "For an imperfect cinema," which called for a redefinition of the purpose of cinema in the underdeveloped world, stirred great debate in Cuba and abroad.

Is there a typical Cuban style?

Our earliest and most urgent objective was to inform people about Cuban reality with our films. We tended to use the style of Italian neorealism and we were also influenced by the great Soviet masters.

As we moved into features and fiction it became more difficult to work as we had in the first newsreels and documentaries—with a small group of

people, without a formal script. The documentary form itself also developed. We began making feature films that mixed fiction and documentary aspects, and they became international successes.

What has been the most successful approach?

We have been concerned not to be rigid or selective, but to try as many techniques as we can.

There have traditionally been two attitudes in left cinema, both in themselves dangerous and unproductive. One is to treat the ideological message exclusively, without thinking of how to express it. And there's the opposite, concerned only with the aesthetic expression. Much of Latin American cinema at the moment seems preoccupied with expressing the ideological message without trying to achieve an aesthetic composition of any quality. It's a weak and ineffective solution.

I don't think you can separate the ideology from the form.

We need to make our films come closer to today's reality than they are now. Cuban films have gone through a phase in which the films dealt a great deal with history. Our history had been warped, and we needed to educate people as to what had really happened. Also, our history shares themes with much of Latin America. But now without abandoning those historical themes, I think we have to pick up more current ones. *Portrait of Teresa* is one example. It has a traditional script, but it works.

What has been the influence of Hollywood on Cuban filmmaking?

The influence on our public has been inevitable—and I even think it's a good idea. As a filmmaker you have to confront that challenge. We have to acknowledge the great popular appeal of a kind of film, but also its mechanisms of alienation. We need to make movies that show how those movies work.

For instance, take the myth of Tarzan. You can write a book or an essay

critiquing Tarzan. But it doesn't reach people. But if I could make a movie today, I would make one about Tarzan going back to modern Africa.

In Hollywood they are talking about making such a film.

Well, they ran away with my idea. I've had it for many years. But my idea was not only to show Tarzan in Africa today but to show him confronting the new Africa, to show how hard it is for him to stay Tarzan in that situation. To watch him, effectively, become politicized. Tarzan will finally marry a black woman and they will have children and Tarzan—the myth of Tarzan—is over.

The cinema has much more power to demystify Tarzan than any essay. An essay cannot fight the form itself.

Would you like to experiment with other formulas?

I would like to make a musical, but I can't. I lack the resources—the women who all look alike, who know how to dance together in perfect time, who all have perfect legs and so on. So I would like to analyze why it isn't possible—after all, we have excellent music.

We are working now on the cabaret shows. There are a lot of them, and people like them, but we haven't taken advantage of that form. Artists don't think of shows as an artistic medium yet. You can see the results at the Tropicana night club, where we demonstrate our desire to be what we are not.

Have audience expectations changed over time in Cuba?

I think the Cuban people have changed their ideas of what cinema is dramatically since before the revolution.

But though they are beginning to like new things, they don't abandon the old. That's why it's important for the Cuban, the Latin American, the left cinema all over the world to have a constantly greater presence on the Cuban screens.

—Dyanne Asimow Simon
Roger L. Simon
Pat Aufderheide

Left to right: Coral winning animated film, *In The Jungle There Is Lots to Do*; *The Teacher (El Brigadista)*; *The Last Supper*.



LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

TOO ANTI-SOVIET

THE REPLY BY SAUL LANDAU AND Philip Brenner to Radosh's concept of the "good old days when the Cuba was not a Soviet satellite," contains another of the usual anti-Soviet smears, but from a different side of the balcony (or should we say, box seats?)

I read Spanish; I read *Granma*, the Cuban daily. I listened carefully to Castro at the UN; I've spoken to Cubans on my three trips there. At all times, Castro and the Cuban press acknowledges fully and gratefully its debt to the Soviet Union. Such a fact sticks in the throat of the professional anti-Sovieters, and it is totally irrational to deny that Cuba's very existence was preserved and is maintained by the Soviet Union. Cuba's schools, hospital care, day care centers, women's groups are clearly modeled on Soviet patterns.

Its art, true, is free, as is its maintenance of relations with some African countries with whom the Soviet Union is not deeply involved. After all, however, half of Cuba's population is black, and it has a closer affinity to those African states. As for Radosh, it seems to me that he is in his way as maniacal about Cuba and the Soviet Union as is the *New York Times* and all the other publications that refuse, even, to recognize the achievements of the Soviet Union, and of its aid, for example, in bringing the imperialists in Vietnam to their knees.

—Leon Baya
—New York City

BROADENING

IHAVE FOUND *ITT*'S NONDOGMATIC and creative journalism very encouraging. In reference to the editorial policy statements about devoting newsprint to the Pope as opposed to the CP, however, something is still wrong.

The worst need is to bring people on the left together. The sectarian groups do appear messianic and isolated. Nevertheless, there are many dedicated and experienced folks among small radical parties whom we ought to bring into the dialogue. We can all benefit from discussion of the mistakes and successes of the past (whether from the CP, the New Left, the Social Democrats, etc.).

ITT's coverage is refreshing compared to any other left weekly, but there's an imbalance created by such frequent presentation of the viewpoints of (for example) DSOC writers. I was particularly unimpressed by what Radosh or Lieber had to contribute. There are numerous sectarian socialists whose analysis is more incisive, even though readers must be wary of lapses into rhetoric or narrow partisanship.

Revitalization of the American left must come from a broadening of our associations and not all of them with Kennedy apologists and reformists.

—David Kirsh
—Tucson, Ariz.

WHAT YOU MEAN "WE," BOSSMAN?

SOME NEWS WRITERS ARE SAYING "we" have an Iran crisis. Well, the biggest crisis most of us have is getting a decent job.

If Carter is really worried about the

hostages' lives, he would let Panama send back the shah.

If Carter worried about "national honor," he would stop paying our tax money to the C.I.A. and the Pentagon. The whole world hates them.

If Carter wants "national security," he can guarantee job security. He could nationalize Chrysler for starters.

If Carter worries about our liberties, he can get the F.B.I. away from our mail and off our phones.

If Carter is afraid of an energy crisis, he can nationalize oil and build trains.

It beats getting killed in Iran.

—Blaine Coleman
—Williamsburg, VA

TOOLS?

THE BROADCAST OF INTERVIEWS from the U.S. embassy in Tehran has brought a welter of criticism down on the TV networks for allowing themselves to be used as a propaganda tool. This calls to mind my chagrin upon coming to the U.S. a year ago and finding that the news here virtually never allows the parties to a conflict to state their positions first hand. Walter Cronkite might tell us that a union is striking for such and such a reason. On the BBC and most other European media we would see a spokesman from the union and another from the industry present their respective cases. This is not considered to be opening up the airwaves to propaganda, but the minimum essential of objective reporting.

Americans are inured to having all their information squeezed through the wringer of three or four very limited news sources, which is why they writhe in agony when something else leaks though and actually begins to touch the issues.

The Iranian students or government not been given any forum to present their case. We are presented the position of the protagonists only second hand, the way that the news bureau and commentators see it. Such frustration at not being heard is what leads to terrorist kidnappings, the first demand of which is inevitably "print our statement!"

—Adam Cadmon
—Oakland, Calif.

IRA

LET ME SECOND PATRICK ALLITT'S plea for more balanced coverage in *ITT* on the issue of Northern Ireland (*ITT*, Nov. 7). The situation there is indeed a good bit more complex than "Brits Out!" slogans and Dennis O'Hearn's coverage would have us believe.

What of the substantial Catholic sentiment for the continued presence of British troops to ward off Protestant paramilitary attacks (which a recent poll put at close to 50 percent)? What of recent gains by the moderate Alliance Party, consisting of both Protestants and Catholics and advancing a liberal/social democratic program? Since when is the indiscriminate murder of innocent personages by bomb worthy of being hailed in the pages of *ITT*?

If I wish to read an IRA house organ I'll buy the *Republican* at my local newsstand.

—Patrick Laceyfield
—New York, NY

SHAKE PAL

ASISTER'S HANDSHAKE TO DR. KEN- nedy Oldfield of Mays, Kans. (*ITT*, Oct. 24) for his comments on which direction Dylan's ass faces. I myself found the old Dylan also fundamentally sexist in the neat way that the hip folk have been sexist. I would like to suggest that a study of his lyrics and style would make a good exercise in criticism-self-criticism by some of the men's groups now modish in certain circles.

I don't know the new mystical Dylan to whom Oldfield refers. But I can guess. Again, of course, the religious zeitgeist of our time (with the exception of feminist spirituality) is a deeply male-chauvinist and also necrophilic phenomenon. What I'm wont to say is that while Dylan may not be "Genuine" in one sense, he's the real article in another—a prime condition cultural artifact.

—Miriam Wolf
—Minneapolis

A RARE GEM

SOME PEOPLE COLLECT ART, HORSES, stamps, nations, baseball cards. I collect "art reviews," which I compile in scrapbooks for the delight of myself and others.

Your recent review by Joel Schechter (*ITT*, Dec. 5, 1979) is an inane attempt to justify the mindless and infantile work of Joseph Beuys.

The review rates "tops" in absurdities for 1979. Give us more. They are very funny and God knows we need more laughter as we enter our mid-Roman era.

—Paul Fenstermacher
—Germantown, Penna.

IRAN

OF COURSE THE AMERICAN GOVERN- ment cannot hand the ex-Shah over to the Iranians. But it is nice that they should ask.

Their request is just that. His crimes were immense. Numerous political executions and widespread use of torture have been widely documented and reported in the American media. Equally well known, however, is the fact that the CIA played a crucial role in the coup of August 1953 that assured him unlimited powers. Also, that the Americans helped him build up and train his dreaded secret police, the SAVAK, which became almost universally hated in Iran.

American complicity with the Shah makes it impossible now to abandon him to the Iranians regardless of whether he would face a fair or an unfair trial. It is a cornerstone of American foreign policy to bolster tyrannical regimes in order to protect American business interests. They doom the bulk of their peoples to deepening privation and suffering, and can remain in power only by relying on armed force, torture and other kinds of police terror.

Henry Kissinger insisted all along that the deposed Shah be welcomed to a dignified retirement in the U.S., along with Anastasio Somoza and other friends of American business interests. The morale of tyrants around the world must be bolstered. Moreover, when popular movements come to power in Third World countries, as in Chile and Nicaragua, there must be colonels or generals to stage military coups to "nip socialism in the bud." These people must be assured that the U.S. will stand by them.

I hope the American hostages will soon be freed. The taking of diplomats as hostages is an unprecedented violation of international law. But is it worse than U.S. sponsorship and support of terror-regimes in Iran and elsewhere? Does it occur to President Carter or his advisors that the righteous indignation in Tehran might be as justified as their own?

A constructive beginning of a process to free the hostages would be for President Carter to acknowledge

American complicity in the Shah's alleged crimes in Iran, and to declare his willingness to cooperate with a U.N. sponsored tribunal to investigate these matters impartially and on condition that the hostages be freed as soon as such an agreement can be signed.

I doubt that President Carter, for all his concern for human rights across the world, will attempt such a conciliatory course toward the Ayatollah's regime. Much like Khomeini, though for different reasons Carter has too much to gain politically from a posture of toughness, and too much to lose by a show of reasonableness. Paradoxically, it is "safer" politics to keep issuing implied threats of drastic, even military, action, even at the obvious price of increasing the belligerency in Tehran.

Some day, when the hostages have been returned unharmed, I hope a climate of reason will return to these shores, with a critical discussion of why anti-American feelings ran so high in Iran. Could it be that a serious attention to human rights abroad should be called for, as a guiding principle in U.S. foreign policy?

—Christian Bay
—Toronto

HIGH BROW

DIANA JOHNSTONE'S EMOTIONAL outburst about the U.S. embassy takeover in Iran (*ITT*, Nov. 21) took her "out of the world" of principled anti-imperialist solidarity. The gross distortions, high-brow vocabulary (what, pray tell, is "economic autarky"?), and emotionalism filling her article do nothing to aid our understanding of a complex situation in which the U.S. government has played a major role.

By providing every type of political, military and moral support for the Shah's incredibly brutal, iron-clad police state, the U.S. effectively prevented the emergence of any except radical right-wing religious leadership of the Iranian revolution. Kissinger, Rockefeller, Carter, and company knew that the Shah's presence here would provoke a strong mass reaction in Iran. Given the high level of anti-imperialist popular consciousness there, seizure of the embassy and its staff was inevitable—with or without Khomeini.

Just what is so "outrageous" about demanding the Shah's extradition to Iran? He is, after all, one of the most notorious torturers and mass murderers in the world today. Even if he was on his "deathbed," which his doctors have indicated he is not, this murderer should be held responsible for his crimes. No sentence could be too harsh for such a vicious criminal.

Iran's internal problems—including the aberrations of its government—can only be solved by the Iranian people themselves. Johnstone should concentrate her outbursts against U.S. manipulation and threatened intervention, instead of attacking Iran's moves to free itself from imperialist political and economic domination.

—Elissa Jannes
—Madison, Wis.

CALENDAR

Marxism and the Metropolis—seminar offered on 4 Thursday evenings beginning Jan. 24, 8-9:30. Sponsored by DSOC, Washington DC local, 6th floor conference room, 1346 Connecticut Ave., just south of Dupont Circle. Nominal fee. For details, call 296-7693.

Long-time anti-war activist, Igal Roodenko, will be on a speaking tour of the Southeast February through May. Topics on which Igal speaks include: Gandhian Nonviolence, Strategies for the Anti-Nuclear Movement, Pacifism and Non-violence, Peace in the Middle East, and The War Resisters League: 56 Years of Nonviolent Action. For information on how to arrange a visit by Igal to your community, write WRL, 604 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, N.C. 27701.