



IT'S NOT TOO MUCH of a compliment, I suppose, to say that Francesco Rosi, with Antonio Cervi, has made the best film about bullfighting to date in *The Moment of Truth*. So, to beef my praise up a bit, so to speak, I think I should say he has made a very fine film indeed—in spite of the fact that bullfighting as a film subject would seem to have been, long since, run into the sand. Rosi has managed to overcome most of the clichés inherent in the story of a young Spaniard who achieves fame, fortune, and eventually death in the bullring, by an honest use of the camera and by not blinking an iota away from the realities. No cutting away from the bull in its last throes of agony, no ducking the sorry mess of bloody matted hair, the goring of horses, the sometimes fatal injuries to the fighters—and also no romanticizing of the motives of the toreros, or certainly not the one played very convincingly by matador Miguel Mateo Miguelin.

Why does he fight bulls? For money, lots of it. He happens to be able to do it well, but after coming to the city from the provinces, he has first tried a variety of jobs through which he can barely scrape along. Rosi first shows one of those visually exciting but undeniably barbaric religious processions, to set the relatively primitive atmosphere of the boy's milieu, and then catches that peculiar Spanish madness of young men chasing after and taunting bulls let into the streets and getting tossed and mangled for their bravado. These scenes have more meaning than Hemingway gave similar ones in *The Sun Also Rises* because Rosi gives them the sickening, senseless quality they undoubtedly have—tourist reports to the contrary.

And why are bulls fought? Because of some elemental ritual, something in the Spanish sunlit atmosphere, deep wellsprings of tradition in the people? Not really, according to Rosi, who views it all rather bleakly as a kind of economic determinism. There's an old matador who teaches boys like Miguel the rudiments of the sport, and he keeps calling it an "art," but what it turns out to be is a crowd-pleaser; most of the spectators come to enjoy the spectacle of someone else taking the risks, and get kicks out of a bewildered beast—bound for the stockyards in any case—its nerves and muscles tuned to explosive edge, attempting to free itself, always futilely, from its tormentors. Rosi, by the way, doesn't make a blanket con-

Blood, Sand, and Money



demnation of the exploiters who fasten onto the capable ones like Miguel—they're part of the system, businessmen supplying a product.

To become a star, a celebrated matador, like Miguel, means fighting ninety long afternoons each year; overcoming the continual anxiety, attacks of fear; and, meanwhile, recovering from the less lethal gorings. To please the crowd Miguel must dare, increase the element of risk, depend upon split-second timing to avoid the rushes. He develops an individual style, of course, for the aficionados and the critics to analyze, and there is, too, a demonstration of Miguelin's great prowess for the so-called esthetes who overlook the nasty aspects or build them into pretty rationalizations. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Rosi's film is that he calls into the mind of the viewer a host of speculations and attitudes without any sort of heavy, ulterior emphasis. Make up your own mind about it, he seems to say; here it is as we see it. Miguelin in the bullring is in his element, naturally, but he also does his "acting" scenes well. Perhaps standard are those with Linda Christian playing a movie star in Spain whose sex glands are aroused by good-

looking young bullfighters, and standard, too, is the fatal ending, saved, however, by the air of inevitability given it. The photography in color is extraordinary throughout.

PATRICIA GOZZI, the child actress of *Sundays and Cybele*, has reached the age of fifteen in *Rapture*, her new film (and in real life, too), but her development seems to be along lines less artistic than physical. To be fair to this obviously gifted girl, it must be admitted that her role is a garish one, that of a wild-eyed, brooding girl, verging on insanity, or believing herself so (for neither the script nor the direction ever makes this quite clear), living with a quietly nutty retired judge in a farmhouse on the craggy coast of Brittany, playing with dolls, and building a scarecrow that she insists is live and real. In the household, too, is a ripely endowed maid (Gunnel Lindblom) who entertains young locals in her room at night. Enter thunder, lightning, rain, and Dean Stockwell, an escaped criminal—the scarecrow come to life, assumes the girl—and he is harbored in the farmhouse by the judge, seduced by Miss Lindblom, and adored by the nymphetic Miss Gozzi, who has her few moments of rapture with him before he plunges to his death from a cliff. John Guillermin, the director, has loaded this already overloaded vehicle with obvious symbols, startling sound effects, gulls screeching over the cliffs (I, for one, hope never to see another shot of gulls wheeling against a darkening sky), and Miss Gozzi running around with enough energy to qualify her for the decathlon in the Olympics. I read in a review somewhere that "Miss Gozzi graduates to a woman's love through joy, homicidal rage, and searing pain. . . ." Maybe we didn't see the same movie.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.

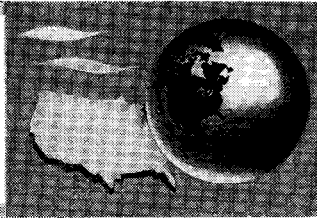
Statement by Italian-American League to Combat Defamation on Barzini's Book "*The Italians*"

We recognize an author's right to express his views, but we also exercise our right to pass judgment upon his product. In doing so, we find Barzini's book defamatory of Italy and Italians for, *inter alia*, the following reasons:

1. Barzini describes Italians generally as brutal, when it is universally known that as a people Italians are kind, friendly and respectful of authority.
2. He scoffs at the 21,000,000 tourists who visit Italy annually, ridiculing them for traveling to this land of enchantment.
3. He speaks of Italy as his mother and then finds in that mother "corruption, depravity and shamelessness."
4. He says there is no law in Italy, ignoring her renowned universities and the fact that Roman Law is the foundation of modern jurisprudence.
5. He charges Italy with never having wanted unification and independence, thus slandering the countless patriots who died for the freedom of their country. He ignores the battle of Vittorio Veneto, one of the most decisive military battles in history.
6. Barzini's book is unreliable in history, deficient in analysis, and irresponsible as a sociological study. The Italy he describes exists nowhere except in his own uninhibited imagination.
7. We recommend to Mr. Barzini the immortal poem, which begins "Breathes there the man, with soul so dead . . ."

NATIONAL ITALIAN-AMERICAN LEAGUE TO COMBAT DEFAMATION INCORPORATED
FERDINAND PECORA, Chairman, Advisory Committee

As Others See Us



TORONTO:

Toward Negotiations

A HOPEFUL NOTE in the tragic Vietnam tangle . . . is the indication that the United States Government is taking a less rigid and more conciliatory approach to peace negotiations with the Communists. This may well be a by-product of President Johnson's decision to enlist the aid of the United Nations in settling the conflict. . . .

The U.S. is willing to accept some face-saving formula to allow the Vietcong, the Communist rebel organization in South Vietnam, to take part in the peace conference. Previously it has categorically refused to have anything to do with the Vietcong, on the ground that it was merely a puppet of North Vietnam.

The change is sensible. It is the Vietcong that is doing the actual fighting in South Vietnam, so that there was always something Alice-in-Wonderlandish about the effort to exclude it from the peace talks. Besides, however dependent the Vietcong leaders may be on arms and supplies from North Vietnam and

China, it is quite possible that they have aims and ambitions of their own which will have to be considered in any genuine settlement.

The new approach to peacemaking seems far more realistic than the old. It may not persuade Communists to accept a compromise peace, but at least it meets some of their conditions for coming to the conference table.

What is perhaps even more hopeful, the new attitude seems to reflect the growing realization in Washington—after all these years—that in a war like the one in Vietnam a clear-cut military victory is impossible and that an end to the bloodshed can only come through political negotiation. —*Daily Star*.

ST. JOHN'S:

What Next?

THE GRAVITY OF the implications of the war in Vietnam is plainly to be seen in the efforts that are being made to seek a solution by negotiation. . . .

The only people who are unperturbed are the Communists in Southeast Asia.

They are convinced they can win in the long run. They have forced the United States into a kind of war it had tried to avoid, a war in which it must make increasing commitments of land forces, a war in which guerrilla tactics in an ideal environment can nullify the potency of the most sophisticated weapons.

In the end the main targets for American air power may have to be found in the north in areas which, up to now, have been carefully avoided. In the end it could mean a conflict in which nuclear weapons will be used. Beyond that nobody is anxious to exercise his imagination.

But what influences can persuade Hanoi and Peking to accept a truce in order to seek a negotiated settlement? The Americans have proposed unconditional talks. The Commonwealth has sought to intervene without success. Will the U.N. or groups of nonaligned nations have better luck? The effort must be made, but the immediate prospects of bringing a halt to this nasty, dangerous, and escalating war are far from encouraging unless a new sense of responsibility dictates policy in Hanoi and Peking. —*Daily News*.

YORKSHIRE:

Behind the Battle

THE AMERICANS are not sticking it out to save face. They are sticking it out because a total victory for the Communists in South Vietnam would dismay the non-Communist countries in Southeast Asia and convince China that aggression pays. Britain, with responsibilities toward Malaysia, ought to be thankful that the Americans are bearing the grim burden in Vietnam. Certainly Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand are glad that the United States is fulfilling its commitments; and no doubt quite a number of diplomatically silent countries are relieved to know that the Chinese dragon will always have to reckon with an American St. George.

—*The Yorkshire Post*.

HAMBURG:

The Uses of Air Power

THE EXPERIENCE and success of the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam, despite its failures, is changing the picture of guerrilla warfare as it has existed throughout the world for nearly twenty-five years. The result of air operations could lead to a revision of the theories on guerrilla warfare. All these theories grew out of battle experience or were conceived for fighting in which air power would fail or be without significance. . . . All prisoner-of-war interrogations and the reports found on dead Vietcong officers and political commissars clearly show



—*El Tiempo, Bogota*.

A Colombian view of the great powers—"Twenty years after Hiroshima, the nuclear race goes on."