

**“Toward a Third Cinema”**

**Octavio Getino y Fernando Solanas**

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Publicado originalmente en Cuba en la revista *Tricontinental* (1969) el influyente manifiesto “Hacia un tercer cine” de Octavio Getino y Fernando “Pino” Solanas propone un nuevo lenguaje cinematográfico propiamente tercermundista y autónomo, una nueva manera de hacer cine fuera del aparato imperialista y de sus redes de difusión. En dicho ensayo el grupo de cineastas autodenominado Colectivo Cine Liberación establece los objetivos de una nueva estética de cine latinoamericano. Tal como se expresa en el texto este “tercer cine” debe constituirse desde la etapa inicial de producción como antiimperialista y revolucionario; un nuevo cine que busque incidir directamente en los fundamentos materiales del proceso histórico bajo una militancia izquierdista activa y latinoamericana. Pero más allá de sus postulados ideológicos este texto revela la urgencia impostergable de la tarea política del intelectual dentro de la turbulenta crisis social y política en la que fue concebido y apunta hacia la compleja situación latinoamericana frente al imperialismo, por un lado doblegándose ante la fortaleza incontenible del poderío económico y, por otro, renegándose combativamente mediante la revuelta revolucionaria.



new  
expression

# Toward a Third Cinema

Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas

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In an alienated world, culture — obviously — is a deformed and deforming product. To overcome this it is necessary to have a culture of and for the revolution, a subversive culture capable of contributing to the downfall of capitalist society.

In the specific case of the cinema — art of the masses par excellence — its transformation from mere entertainment into an active means of dealienation becomes imperative. Its role in the battle for the complete liberation of man is of primary importance. The camera then becomes a gun, and the cinema must be a guerrilla cinema.

This is the proposition of Fernando Solanas (33-year-old Argentine) and Octavio Getino (34-year-old Spaniard) in this article written especially for **Tricontinental**. Solanas began his cinematic activity with the short-length film **Seguir andando** (**Keep Walking**). Getino, who has lived in Argentina since he was 16 years old, won the 1964 Short Story Award of Casa de las Américas with **Chulleca**; in 1965 he made the film-short **Trasmallos**. Both recently produced **La hora de los hornos** (**The Time of the Furnaces**), a vigorous film denunciation of the injustices to which the Latin-American peoples are subjected.

Just a short time ago it would have seemed like a Quixotic adventure in the colonialized, neocolonialized, or even the imperialist nations themselves to make any attempt to create films of decolonization that turned their back on or actively opposed the System. Until recently, film had been synonymous with show or amusement: in a word, it was one more consumer good. At best, films succeeded in bearing witness to the decay of bourgeois values and testifying to social injustice. As a rule, films only dealt with effect, never with cause; it was cinema of mystification or anti-historicism. It was surplus value cinema. Caught up in these conditions, films, the most valuable tool of communication of our times, were destined to satisfy only the ideological and economic interests of the owners of the film industry, the lords of the world film market, the great majority of whom were from the United States.

Was it possible to overcome this situation? How could the problem of turning out liberation films be approached when costs came to several thousand dollars and the distribution and exhibition channels were in the hands of the enemy? How could the continuity of work be guaranteed? How could the public be reached? How could System-imposed repression and censorship be vanquished? These questions, which could be multiplied in all directions, led and still lead many

people to scepticism or rationalization: "revolutionary films cannot be made before the revolution"; "revolutionary films have been possible only in the liberated countries"; "without the support of revolutionary political power, revolutionary films or art is impossible." The mistake was due to taking the same approach to reality and films as did the bourgeoisie. The models of production, distribution, and exhibition continued to be those of Hollywood precisely because, in ideology and politics, films had not yet become the vehicle for a clearly drawn differentiation between bourgeois ideology and politics. A reformist policy, as manifested in dialogue with the adversary, in coexistence, and in the relegation of national contradictions to those between two supposedly unique blocs — the USSR and the USA — was and is unable to produce anything but a cinema within the System itself. At best, it can be the "progressive" wing of Establishment cinema. When all is said and done, such cinema was doomed to wait until the world conflict was resolved peacefully in favor of socialism in order to change qualitatively. The most daring attempts of those film-makers who strove to conquer the fortress of official cinema ended, as Jean-Luc Goddard eloquently put it, with the film-makers themselves "trapped inside the fortress."

But the questions that were recently raised appeared promising; they arose from a new historical situation to which the film-maker, as is often the case with the edu-

cated strata of our countries, was rather a late-comer: ten years of the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnamese struggle, and the development of a worldwide liberation movement whose moving force is to be found in the Third World countries. The existence of masses on the worldwide revolutionary plane was the substantial fact without which those questions could not have been posed. A new historical situation and a new man born in the process of the anti-imperialist struggle demanded a new, revolutionary attitude from the film-makers of the world. The question of whether or not militant cinema was possible before the revolution began to be replaced, at least within small groups, by the question of whether or not such a cinema was necessary to contribute to the possibility of revolution. An affirmative answer was the starting point for the first attempts to channel the process of seeking possibilities in numerous countries. Examples are Newsreel, a US new-left film group, the cinegiornali of the Italian student movement, the films made by the Etats Généraux du Cinéma Français, and those of the British and Japanese student movements, all a continuation and deepening of the work of a Joris Ivens or a Chris Marker. Let it suffice to observe the films of a Santiago Alvarez in Cuba, or the cinema being developed by different film-makers in "the homeland of all" as Bolívar would say, as they seek a revolutionary Latin-American cinema.

A profound debate on the role of intellectuals and artists before liberation today is enriching the perspectives of intellectual work all over the world. However, this debate oscillates between two poles: one which proposes to relegate all intellectual work capacity to a specifically political or political-military function, denying perspectives

to all artistic activity with the idea that such activity must ineluctably be absorbed by the System, and the other which maintains an inner duality of the intellectual: on the one hand, the "work of art," "the privilege of beauty," an art and a beauty which are not necessarily bound to the needs of the revolutionary political process, and, on the other, a political commitment which generally consists in signing certain anti-imperialist manifestoes. In practice, this point of view means the separation of politics and art.

This polarity rests, as we see it, on two omissions: first, the conception of culture, science, art, and cinema as univocal and universal terms, and, second, an insufficiently clear idea of the fact that the revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie, but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense the need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change through activities on different fronts.

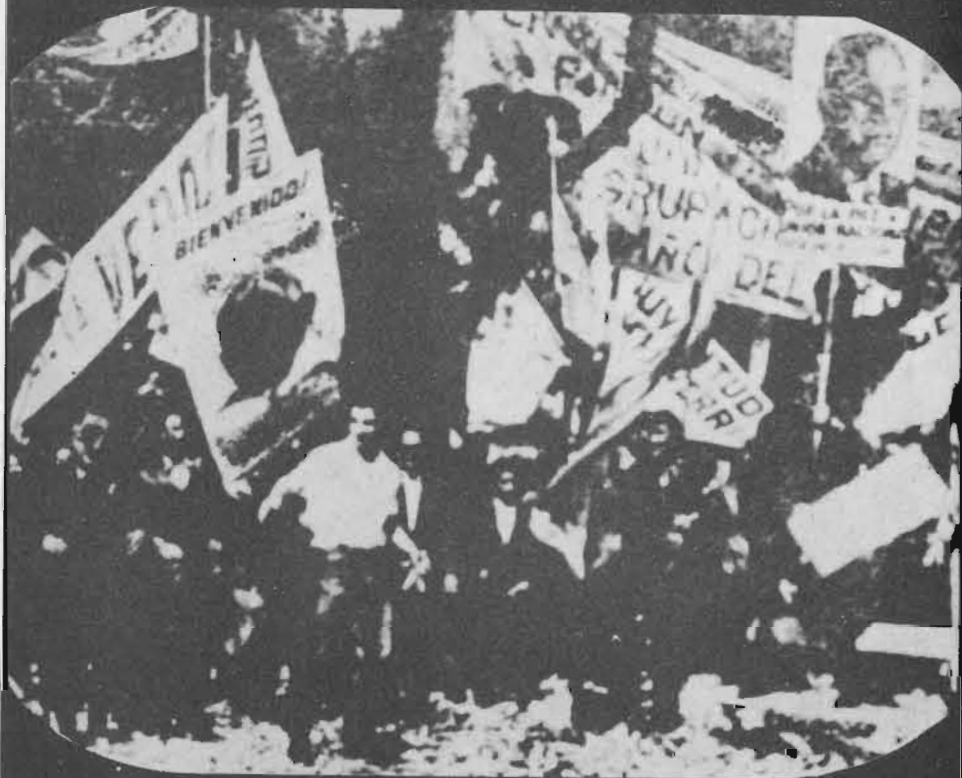
Culture, art science, and cinema always respond to conflicting class interests. In the neocolonial situation two concepts of culture, art, science, and cinema compete: that of the rulers and that of the nation. And this situation will continue, as long as the national concept is not identified with that of the rulers, as long as the status of colony or semi-colony continues in force. Moreover, the duality will be overcome and will reach a single and universal category only when the best values of man emerge from proscription to achieve hegemony, when the liberation of man is universal. In the meantime, there exist our culture and their culture, our cinema and their cinema. Because our culture is an impulse towards emancipation,



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it will remain in existence until emancipation is a reality: **a culture of subversion** which will carry with it an art, a science, and **a cinema of subversion**.

The lack of awareness in regard to these dualities generally leads the intellectual to deal with artistic and scientific expressions as they were universally conceived by the classes that rule the world, at best introducing some correction into these expressions. We have not gone deeply enough into developing a revolutionary theater, architecture, medicine, psychology, and cinema; into developing a **culture by and for us**. The intellectual takes each of these forms of expression as a unit to be corrected **from within the expression itself, and not from without, with its own new methods and models**.

An astronaut or a Ranger mobilizes all the scientific resources of imperialism. Psychologists, doctors, politicians, sociologists, mathematicians, and even artists are thrown into the study of everything that serves, **from the vantage point of different specialties**, the preparation of an orbital flight or the massacre of Vietnamese; in the long run, all of these specialties are equally employed to satisfy the needs of imperialism. In Buenos Aires the army eradicates **villas miseria** [urban shanty towns] and in their place puts up "strategic hamlets" with urbanized setups aimed at facilitating military intervention when the time comes. The revolutionary organizations lack specialized fronts in **the Establishment's** medicine, engineering, psychology, and art — not to mention the development of **our own revolutionary** engineering, psychology, art, and cinema. In order to be effective, all these fields must recognize the **priorities** of each stage; those required by the struggle for power or those demanded by the already victorious revolution.

Examples: creating a political sensitivity as awareness of the need to undertake a political-military struggle in order to take power; intensifying all the modern resources of medical science to prepare people with optimum levels of health and physical efficiency, ready for combat in rural or urban zones; coordinating energies to achieve a production of ten million tons of sugar, as is happening in Cuba; or elaborating an architecture, a city planning, that will be able to withstand the massive air raids that imperialism can launch at any time. The specific strengthening of each specialty and field subordinate to collective priorities can fill the empty spaces caused by the struggle for liberation and can delineate with greatest efficacy the role of the intellectual in our time. It is evident that revolutionary mass-level culture and awareness can only be achieved after the taking of political power, but it is no less true that the use of scientific and artistic means, together with political-military means, prepares the terrain for the revolution to become reality and facilitates the solution of the problems that will arise with the taking of power.

The intellectual must find through his action the field in which he can rationally perform the most efficient work. Once the front has been determined, his next task is to find out **within that front** exactly what is the enemy's stronghold and where and how he must deploy his forces. It is in this harsh and dramatic daily search that a culture of the revolution will be able to emerge, the basis which will nurture, **beginning right now, the new man** exemplified by Che — not man in the abstract, not the "liberation of man," **but another man**, capable of arising from the ashes of the old, alienat-

ed man that we are and which the new man will destroy — by starting to stoke the fire today.

The anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the Third World and of their equivalents inside the imperialist countries constitutes today the axis of the world revolution. **Third cinema** is, in our opinion, the cinema that recognizes in that struggle the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point — in a word, the **decolonization of culture**.

The culture, including the cinema, of a neocolonized country is just the expression of an overall dependence that generates models and born from the needs of imperialist expansion.

In order to impose itself, neocolonialism needs to convince the people of a dependent country of their own inferiority. Sooner or later, the inferior man recognizes Man with a capital M; this recognition means the destruction of his defenses. If you want to be a man, says the oppressor, you have to be like me, speak my language, deny your own being, yourself into me. As

early as the 17th century the Jesuit missionaries proclaimed the aptitude of the [South American] native for copying European works of art. Copyist, translator, at best a spectator, the neocolonized intellectual always be encouraged to refuse to assume his creative possibilities. Inhibitions, uprootedness, escapism, cultural cosmopolitanism, artistic imitation, metaphysical exhaustion, betrayal of country — all find fertile soil in which to grow.<sup>1</sup>

Culture becomes bilingual

not due to the use of two languages but because of the conjuncture of two cultural patterns of thinking. One is national, that of the people, and the other is estranging, that of the classes subordinated to outside forces. The admiration that the upper classes express for the US or Europe is the highest expression of their subjection. With the colonialization of the upper classes the culture of imperialism indirectly introduces among the masses knowledge which cannot be supervised.<sup>2</sup>

Just as they are not masters of the land upon which they walk, the neocolonized people are not masters of the ideas that envelop them. A knowledge of national reality presupposes going into the web of lies and confusion that arise from dependence. The intellectual is obliged to **refrain from spontaneous thought**; if he does think, he generally runs the risk of doing so in French or English — never in the language of a culture of his own, which, like the process of national and social liberation, is still hazy and incipient. Every piece of data, every concept that floats around us, is part of a framework of mirages that it is difficult to take apart.

The native bourgeoisie of the port cities such as Buenos Aires, and their respective intellectual elites, constituted, from the very origins of our history, the transmission belt of neocolonial penetration. Behind such watchwords as "Civilization or barbarism!" manufactured in Argentina by Europeanizing liberalism, was the attempt to impose a civilization fully in keeping with the needs of imperialist expansion.

<sup>1</sup> *La hora de los hornos* (The Time of Forges), "Neocolonialismo y violencia" (Neocolonialism and Violence).

<sup>2</sup> Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura* (Imperialism and Culture).

and the desire to destroy the resistance of the national masses, which were successively called the "rabble," a "bunch of blacks," and "zoological detritus" in our country and "the unwashed hordes" in Bolivia. In this way the ideologists of the semicountries, past masters in "the play of big words, with an implacable, detailed, and rustic universalism,"<sup>3</sup> served as spokesmen of those followers of Disraeli who intelligently proclaimed: "I prefer the rights of the English to the rights of man."

The middle sectors were and are the best recipients of cultural neocolonialism. Their ambivalent class condition, their buffer position between social polarities, and their broader possibilities of access to civilization offer imperialism a base of social support which has attained considerable importance in some Latin-American countries.

If, in the openly colonial situation, cultural penetration is the complement of a foreign army of occupation, during certain stages that penetration takes on greater importance in the neocolonial countries.

It serves to institutionalize and give a normal appearance to dependence. The main objective of this cultural deformation is to keep the people from realizing their neocolonized position and aspiring to change it. In this way pedagogical colonialization is an effective substitute for the colonial police.<sup>4</sup>

Mass communications tend to complete the destruction of a national awareness and of a collective subjectivity on the way to enlightenment, a destruction which begins as soon as the child has access to these media, the education and culture of the ruling classes. In Argentina 26 television channels; one million television sets; more than 50 radio stations; hundreds of news-

papers; periodicals, and magazines; and thousands of records, films, etc. join their acculturating role of the colonialization of taste and consciousness to the process of neocolonial education which begins in primary school and is completed in the university. "Mass communications are more effective for neocolonialism than napalm. What is real, true, and rational is to be found on the margin of the Law, just as are the people. Violence, crime, and destruction come to be Peace, Order, and Normalcy."<sup>5</sup>

**Truth, then, amounts to subversion. Any form of expression or communication that tries to show national reality is subversion.**

Cultural penetration, pedagogical colonialization, and mass communications all join forces today in a desperate attempt to absorb, neutralize, or eliminate any expression that responds to an attempt at decolonization. Neocolonialism makes a serious attempt to castrate, to digest, the cultural forms that arise beyond the bounds of its own aims. Attempts are made to remove from them precisely what makes them effective and dangerous, their politicization. Or, to put it another way, to separate the cultural manifestation from the fight for national independence.

Ideas such as "Beauty in itself is revolutionary" and "All new cinema is revolutionary" are idealistic aspirations that do not touch the neocolonial condition, since they continue to conceive of cinema, art, and beauty as universal abstractions and not as an integral part of the national processes of decolonization.

<sup>3</sup> René Zavaleta Mercado, *Bolivia: crecimiento de la idea nacional* (Bolivia: Growth of the National Concept).

<sup>4</sup> *La hora de los hornos*, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Any dispute, no matter how virulent, which does not serve to mobilize, agitate, and politicize sectors of the people to arm them rationally and perceptibly, in one way or another, for the struggle — is received with indifference or even with pleasure. Virulence, nonconformism, plain rebelliousness, and discontent are just so many more products on the capitalist market; they are **consumer goods**. This is especially true in a situation where the bourgeoisie is in need of a daily dose of shock and exciting elements of controlled violence<sup>6</sup> — that is, violence which absorption by the System turns into pure stridency. Examples are the works of a socialist-tinged painting and sculpture which are greedily sought after by the new bourgeoisie to decorate their apartments and mansions; plays full of anger and avant-gardism which are noisily applauded by the ruling classes; the literature of progressive writers concerned with semantics and man on the margin of time and space, which give an air of democratic broad-mindedness to the System's publishing houses and magazines; and the cinema of "challenge," of "argument," promoted by the distribution monopolies and launched, by the big commercial outlets.

In reality the area of "permitted protest" of the System is much greater than the System is willing to admit. This gives the artists the illusion that they are acting "against the System" by going beyond certain narrow limits; they do not realize that even anti-System art can be absorbed and utilized by the System, as both a brake and a necessary self-correction.<sup>7</sup>

Lacking an awareness of how to utilize what is ours for our true liberation — in a word, lacking

**politicization** — all of these "progressive" alternatives come to form the leftist wing of the System, the improvement of its cultural products. They will be doomed to carry out the best work on the left that the right is able to accept today and will thus only serve the survival of the latter. "Restore words, dramatic actions, and images to the places where they can carry out a revolutionary role, where they will be useful, where they will become **weapons in the struggle**."<sup>8</sup> Insert the work as an original fact in the process of liberation, place it first at the service of life itself, ahead of art; **dissolve aesthetics in the life of society**: only in this way, as Fanon said, can decolonization become possible and culture, cinema, and beauty — at least, what is of greatest importance to us — become **our culture, our films, and our sense of beauty**.

The historical perspectives of Latin America and of the majority of the countries under imperialist domination are headed not towards a lessening of repression but towards an increase. We are heading not for bourgeois-democratic regimes but for dictatorial forms of government. The struggles for democratic freedoms, instead of seizing concessions from the System, move it to cut down on them, given its narrow margin for maneuvering.

The bourgeois-democratic facade caved in some time ago. The cycle opened during the last century in Latin America with the first attempts at self-affirmation of a national bourgeoisie differentiated

<sup>6</sup> Observe the new custom of some groups of the upper bourgeoisie from Rome and Paris who spend their weekends traveling to Saigon to get a close-up view of the Vietcong offensive.

<sup>7</sup> Irwin Silber, "USA: The Alienation of Culture," *Tricontinental* 10.

<sup>8</sup> The organization *Plásticos de Vanguardia* (Vanguard Artists) of Argentina.

from the metropolis (examples are Rosas' federalism in Argentina, the López and Francia regimes in Paraguay, and those of Bengido and Balmaceda in Chile) with a tradition that has continued well into our century: national-bourgeois, national-popular, and democratic-bourgeois attempts were made by Cárdenas, Yrigoyen, Haya de la Torre, Vargas, Aguirre Cerda, Perón, and Arbenz. But as far as revolutionary prospects are concerned, the cycle has definitely been completed. The lines allowing for the deepening of the historical attempt of each of those experiences today pass **through the sectors that understand the continent's situation as one of war and that are preparing, under the force of circumstances, to make that region the Viet-Nam of the coming decade. A war in which national liberation can only succeed when it is simultaneously postulated as social liberation — socialism as the only valid perspective of any national liberation process.**

At this time in America there is room for neither passivity nor innocence. The intellectual's commitment is measured in terms of risks as well as words and ideas; what he does to further the cause of liberation is what counts. The worker who goes on strike and thus risks losing his job or even his life, the student who jeopardizes his career, the militant who keeps silent under torture: each by his or her action commits us to something much more important than a vague gesture of solidarity.<sup>9</sup>

In a situation in which the "state of law" is replaced by the "state of facts," the intellectual, who is **one more worker**, functioning on a cultural front, must become increasingly radicalized to avoid denial of self and to carry out what is expected of him in our times. The impotence of all reformist concepts

has already been exposed sufficiently, not only in politics but also in culture and films — and especially in the latter, **whose history is that of imperialist domination — mainly Yankee.**

Culture and cinema are national not because they are located within certain geographical limits, but when they respond to the particular needs of development and liberation of each people. The cinema which is today dominant in our countries, set up to accept and justify dependence, the **origin of all underdevelopment**, can be nothing but a **dependent and underdeveloped cinema**.

While, during the early history (or the prehistory) of the cinema, it was possible to speak of a German, an Italian, or a Swedish cinema clearly differentiated and corresponding to specific national characteristics, today such differences have disappeared. The borders were wiped out along with the expansion of US imperialism and the film model that it imposed: **Hollywood movies**. In our times it is hard to find a film within the field of commercial cinema, including what is known as "author's cinema," in both the capitalist and socialist countries, that manages to avoid the models of Hollywood pictures. The latter have such a fast hold that monumental works such as the USSR's Bondarchuk's **War and Peace** are also monumental examples of the submission to all the propositions imposed by the US movie industry (structure, language, etc.) and, consequently, to its concepts.

The placing of the cinema within US models, even in the formal aspect, in language, leads to the adoption of the ideological forms that

<sup>9</sup> *La hora de los hornos*, *ibid.*

gave rise to precisely that language and no other. Even the appropriation of models which appear to be only technical, industrial, scientific, etc. leads to a conceptual dependency situation, due to the fact that the cinema is an industry, but differs from other industries in that it has been created and organized in order to generate certain ideologies. The 35 mm. camera, 24 frames a second, arc lights, and a commercial place of exhibition for audiences were conceived not to gratuitously transmit any ideology, but to satisfy, in the first place, the cultural and surplus value needs of a specific ideology, of a specific world-view: that of US financial capital.

The mechanistic takeover of a cinema conceived as a show to be exhibited in large theaters with a standard duration, hermetic structures that are born and die on the screen, satisfies, to be sure, the commercial interests of the production groups, but it also leads to the absorption of forms of the bourgeois world-view which are the continuation of 19th century art, of bourgeois art: man is accepted only as a passive and consuming object; rather than having his ability to make history recognized, he is only permitted to read history, contemplate it, listen to it, and undergo it. The cinema as a spectacle aimed at a digesting object is the highest point that can be reached by bourgeois film making. The world, existence, and the historic process are enclosed within the frame of a painting, the same stage of a theater, and the movie screen; man is viewed as a consumer of ideology, and not as the creator of ideology. This notion is the starting point for the wonderful interplay of bourgeois philosophy and the obtaining of surplus value. The result is a

cinema studied by motivational analysts, sociologists and psychologists, by the endless researchers of the dreams and frustrations of the masses, all aimed at selling movie-life, reality as it is conceived by the ruling classes.

The first alternative to this type of cinema, which we could call the first cinema, arose with the so-called "author's cinema," "expression cinema," "nouvelle vague," "cinema novo," or, conventionally, the second cinema. This alternative signified a step forward inasmuch as it demanded that the film-maker be free to express himself in non-standard language and inasmuch as it was an attempt at cultural decolonization. But such attempts have already reached, or are about to reach, the outer limits of what the system permits. The second cinema film-maker has remained "trapped inside the fortress" as Goddard put it, or is on his way to becoming trapped. The search for a market of 200 000 moviegoers in Argentina, a figure that is supposed to cover the costs of an independent local production, the proposal of developing a mechanism of industrial production parallel to that of the System but which would be distributed by the System according to its own norms, the struggle to better the laws protecting the cinema and replacing "bad officials" by "less bad," etc. is a search lacking in viable prospects, unless you consider viable the prospect of becoming institutionalized as "the youthful, angry wing of society" — that is, of neocolonialized or capitalist society.

Real alternatives differing from those offered by the System are only possible if one of two requirements is fulfilled: making films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System.

Neither of these requirements fits within the alternatives that are still offered by the second cinema, but they can be found in the revolutionary opening towards a cinema outside and against the System, in a cinema of liberation: the third cinema.

One of the most effective jobs done by neocolonialism is its cutting off of intellectual sectors, especially artists, from national reality by lining them up behind "universal art and models." It has been very common for intellectuals and artists to be found at the tail end of popular struggle, when they have not actually taken up positions against it. The social layers which have made the greatest contribution to the building of a national culture (understood as an impulse towards decolonization) have not been precisely the enlightened elites but rather the most exploited and uncivilized sectors. Popular organizations have very rightly distrusted the "intellectual" and the "artist." When they have not been openly used by the bourgeoisie or imperialism, they have certainly been their indirect tools; most of them did not go beyond spouting a policy in favor of "peace and democracy," fearful of anything that had a national ring to it, afraid of contaminating art with politics and the artists with the revolutionary militant. They thus tended to obscure the inner causes determining neocolonialized society and placed in the foreground the outer causes, which, while "they are the condition for change, they can never be the basis for change";<sup>10</sup> in Argentina they replaced the struggle against imperialism and the native oligarchy with the struggle of democracy against fascism, suppressing the fundamental contradiction of a neocolonialized country and replacing it with "a contradiction that was a copy of the world-wide con-

tradiction."<sup>11</sup>

This cutting off of the intellectual and artistic sectors from the processes of national liberation — which, among other things, helps us to understand the limitations in which these processes have been unfolding — today tends to disappear in the measure that artists and intellectuals are beginning to discover the impossibility of destroying the enemy without first joining in a battle for their common interests. The artist is beginning to feel the insufficiency of his nonconformism and individual rebellion. And the revolutionary organizations, in turn, are discovering the vacuums that the struggle for power creates in the cultural sphere. The problems of film making, the ideological limitations of a film-maker in a neocolonialized country, etc. have thus far constituted objective factors in the lack of attention paid to the cinema by the people's organizations. Newspapers and other printed matter, posters and wall propaganda, speeches and other verbal forms of information, enlightenment, and politicization are still the main means of communication between the organizations and the vanguard layers of the masses. But the new political positions of some film-makers and the subsequent appearance of films useful for liberation have permitted certain political vanguards to discover the importance of movies. This importance is to be found in the specific meaning of films as a form of communication and because of their particular characteristics, characteristics that allow them to draw audiences of different origins, many of them people who might not respond favorably to the announce-

<sup>10</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, *On Practice*.

<sup>11</sup> Rodolfo Pruilgros, *El proletariado y la revolución nacional* (The Proletariat and National Revolution).



ment of a political speech. Films offer an effective pretext for gathering an audience, in addition to the ideological message they contain.

The capacity for synthesis and the penetration of the film image, the possibilities offered by the living document and naked reality, and the power of enlightenment of audiovisual means make the film far more effective than any other tool of communication. It is hardly necessary to point out that those films which achieve an intelligent use of the possibilities of the image, adequate dosage of concepts, language and structure that flow naturally from each theme, and counterpoints of audiovisual narration achieve effective results in the politicization and mobilization of cadres and even in work with the masses, where this is possible.

The students who raised barricades on the Avenida 18 de Julio in Montevideo after the showing of *Me gustan los estudiantes (I Like Students)* (Mario Handler), those who demonstrated and sang the "Internationale" in Merida and Caracas after the showing of *La hora de los hornos (The Time of Furnaces)*, the growing demand for films such as those made by Santiago Alvarez and the Cuban documentary film movement, and the debates and meetings that take place after the underground or semipublic showings of **third cinema** films are the beginning of a twisting and difficult road being traveled in the consumer societies by the mass organizations (*Cinegiornali liberi*, in Italy, Zengakuren documentaries in Japan, etc.). For the first time in Latin America, organizations are ready and willing to employ films for political-cultural ends: the Chilean Partido Socialista provides its cadres with revolutionary film material, while Argentine revolutionary

Peronist and non-Peronist groups are taking an interest in doing likewise. Moreover, OSPAAAL is participating in the production and distribution of films that contribute to the anti-imperialist struggle. The revolutionary organizations are discovering the need for cadres who, among other things, know how to handle a film camera, tape recorders, and projectors in the most effective way possible. The struggle to seize power from the enemy is the meeting ground of the political and artistic vanguards engaged in a common task which is **enriching to both**.

Some of the circumstances that delayed the use of films as a revolutionary tool until a short time ago were lack of equipment, technical difficulties, the compulsory specialization of each phase of work, and high costs. The advances that have taken place within each specialization; the simplification of movie cameras and tape recorders; improvements in the medium itself, such as rapid film that can be printed in a normal light; automatic light meters; improved audiovisual synchronization; and the spread of know-how by means of specialized magazines with large circulations and even through nonspecialized media, have helped to demystify film making and divest it of that almost magic aura that made it seem that films were only within the reach of "artists," "geniuses," and "the privileged." Film making is increasingly within the reach of larger social layers. Chris Marker experimented in France with groups of workers whom he provided with 8 mm. equipment and some basic instruction in its handling. The goal was to have the worker film **his way of looking at the world, just as if he were writing it**. This has opened up unheard-of prospects for the cinema; above all, a **new conception of film making and the**

**significance of art in our times.**

Imperialism and capitalism, whether in the consumer society or in the neocolonialized country, veil everything behind a screen of images and appearances. **The image of reality** is more important than reality itself. It is a world peopled with fantasies and phantoms in which what is hideous is clothed in beauty, while beauty is disguised as the hideous. On the one hand, fantasy, the imaginary bourgeois universe replete with comfort, equilibrium, sweet reason, order, efficiency, and the possibility to "be someone." And, on the other, the phantoms, we the lazy, we the indolent and underdeveloped, we who cause disorder. When a neocolonialized person accepts his situation, he becomes a Gungha Din, a traitor at the service of the colonialist, an Uncle Tom, a class and racial renegade, or a fool, the easy-going servant and bumpkin; but, when he refuses to accept his situation of oppression, then he turns into a resentful savage, a cannibal. Those who **lose sleep from fear of the hungry**, those who comprise the System, see the revolutionary as a bandit, robber, and rapist; the first battle waged against them is thus not on a political plane, but rather in the police context of law, arrests, etc. The more exploited a man is, the more he is placed on a plane of insignificance. The more he resists, the more he is viewed as a beast. This can be seen in *Africa addio*, made by the fascist Jacopetti: the African savages, killer animals, wallow in abject anarchy once they escape from white protection. Tarzan died, and in his place were born Lumumbas and Lobemgulas, Nkomos, and the Madzimbamutos, and this is something that neocolonialism cannot forgive. Fantasy has been replaced by phantoms, and man is turned into an extra who dies so Jacopetti can comfortably film his

execution.

**I make the revolution; therefore, I exist.** This is the starting point for the disappearance of fantasy and phantom to make way for living human beings. The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of **destruction and construction**: destruction of the image that neocolonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions.

The restitution of things to their real place and meaning is an eminently subversive fact both in the neocolonial situation and in the consumer societies. In the former, the seeming ambiguity or pseudo-objectivity in newspapers, literature, etc. and the relative freedom of the people's organizations to provide their own information cease to exist, giving way to overt restriction, when it is a question of television and radio, the two most important System-controlled or monopolized communications media. Last year's May events in France are quite explicit on this point.

In a world where the unreal rules, artistic expression is shoved along the channels of fantasy, fiction, language in code, sign language, and messages whispered between the lines. Art is cut off from the concrete facts — which, from the neocolonialist standpoint, are accusatory testimonies — to turn back on itself, strutting about in a world of abstractions and phantoms, where it becomes "timeless" and historyless. Viet-Nam can be mentioned, but only far from Viet-Nam; Latin America can be mentioned, but only far enough away from the continent to be ineffective, **in places where it is depoliticized** and where it does not lead to action.

The cinema known as documentary, with all the vastness that the

concept has today, from educational films to the reconstruction of a fact or a historical event, is perhaps the main basis of revolutionary film making. Every image that documents, bears witness to, refutes or deepens the truth of a situation is something more than a film image or purely artistic fact; it becomes something which the System finds indigestible.

Testimony about a national reality is also an inestimable means of dialogue and knowledge on the world plane. No internationalist form of struggle can be carried out successfully if there is not a mutual exchange of experiences among the people, if the people do not succeed in breaking out of the Balcanization on the international, continental, and national planes which imperialism is striving to maintain.

There is no knowledge of a reality as long as that reality is not acted upon, **as long as its transformation is not begun on all fronts of struggle.** The well-known quote from Marx deserves constant repetition: **it is not sufficient to interpret the world; it is now a question of transforming it.**

With such an attitude as his starting point, it remains to the film-maker to discover his own language, a language which will arise from a militant and transforming worldview and from the theme being dealt with. Here it may well be pointed out that certain political cadres still maintain old dogmatic positions, which ask the artist or film-maker to provide an apologetic view of reality, **one which is more in line with wishful thinking than with what actually is.** Such positions, which at bottom mask a lack of confidence in the possibilities of reality itself, have in certain cases led to the use of film language as a mere idealized illustration

of a fact, to the desire to remove reality's deep contradictions, its dialectic richness, which is precisely the kind of depth which can give a film beauty and effectiveness. The reality of the revolutionary processes all over the world, in spite of their confused and negative aspects, possesses a dominant line, a synthesis which is so rich and stimulating that it does not need to be schematized with partial or sectarian views.

Pamphlet films, didactic films, report films, essay films, witness-bearing films — any militant form of expression is valid, and it would be absurd to lay down a set of aesthetic work norms. **Be receptive to all that the people have to offer, and offer them the best; or, as Che put it, respect the people by giving them quality.** This is a good thing to keep in mind in view of those tendencies which are always latent in the revolutionary artist to lower the level of investigation and the language of a theme, in a kind of **neopopulism**, down to levels which, while they may well be those upon which the masses move, do not help them to get rid of the stumbling blocks left by imperialism. The effectiveness of the best films of militant cinema show that social layers considered backward are able to capture the exact meaning of an association of images, an effect of staging, and any linguistic experimentation placed within the context of a given idea. Furthermore, revolutionary cinema is not fundamentally one which illustrates, documents, or passively establishes a situation: **rather, it attempts to intervene in the situation as an element providing thrust or rectification.** To put it another way, it provides **discovery through transformation.**

The differences that exist between one and another liberation process make it impossible to lay

down supposedly universal norms. A cinema which in the consumer society does not attain the level of the reality in which it moves can play a stimulating role in an underdeveloped country, just as a revolutionary cinema in the neocolonial situation will not necessarily be revolutionary if it is mechanically taken to the metropolis country.

Teaching the handling of guns can be revolutionary where there are potentially or explicitly viable layers ready to throw themselves into the struggle to take power, but ceases to be revolutionary where the masses still lack sufficient awareness of their situation or where they already have learned to handle guns. Thus, a cinema which insists upon the denunciation of the effects of neocolonial policy is caught up in a reformist game if the consciousness of the masses has already assimilated such knowledge; then the revolutionary thing is to examine the causes, to investigate the ways of organizing and arming for the change. That is, imperialism can sponsor films that fight illiteracy, and such pictures will only be inscribed within the contemporary need of imperialist policy, but, in contrast, the making of such films in Cuba after the triumph of the Revolution was clearly revolutionary. Although their starting point was just the fact of teaching reading and writing, they had a goal which was radically different from that of imperialism: the training of people for liberation, not for subjection.

The model of the perfect work of art, the fully rounded film structured according to the metrics imposed by bourgeois culture, its theoreticians and critics, has served to inhibit the film-maker in the dependent countries, especially when he has attempted to erect similar models in a reality which offered

him neither the culture, the techniques, nor the most primary elements for success. The culture of the metropolis kept the age-old secrets that had given life to its models; the transposition of the latter to the neocolonial reality was always a mechanism of alienation, since it was not possible for the artist of the dependent country to absorb, in a few years, the secrets of a culture and society elaborated through the centuries in completely different historical circumstances. The attempt in the sphere of film making to match the pictures of the ruling countries generally ends in failure, given the existence of two disparate historical realities. And such unsuccessful attempts lead to feelings of frustration and inferiority. Both these feelings arise in the first place from the fear of taking risks along completely new roads which are almost a total denial of "their cinema." A fear of recognizing the particularities and limitations of a dependency situation in order to discover the possibilities inherent in that situation by finding ways of overcoming it which would of necessity be original.

The existence of a revolutionary cinema is inconceivable without the constant and methodical exercise of practice, search, and experimentation. It even means committing the new film-maker to take chances on the unknown, to leap into space at times, exposing himself to failure as does the guerrilla who travels along paths that he himself opens up with machete blows. The possibility of discovering and inventing film forms and structures that serve a more profound vision of our reality resides in the ability to place oneself on the outside limits of the familiar, to make one's way amid constant dangers.

Our time is one of hypothesis rath-

er than of thesis, a time of works in process — unfinished, unordered, violent works made with the camera in one hand and a rock in the other. Such works cannot be assessed according to the traditional theoretical and critical canons. The ideas for our film theory and criticism will come to life through inhibition-removing practice and experimentation. "Knowledge begins with practice. After acquiring theoretical knowledge through practice, it is necessary to return to practice."<sup>12</sup> Once he has embarked upon this practice, the revolutionary film-maker will have to overcome countless obstacles; he will experience the loneliness of those who aspire to the praise of the System's promotion media only to find that those media are closed to him. As Goddard would say, he will cease to be a bicycle champion to become an anonymous bicycle rider, Vietnamese style, submerged in a cruel and prolonged war. But he will also discover that there is a receptive audience that looks upon his work as something of its own, that makes it part of its own existence, and that is ready to defend him in a way that it would never do with any world bicycle champion.

#### Implementation

In this long war, with the camera as our rifle, we do in fact move into a guerrilla activity. This is why the work of a **film-guerrilla** group is governed by strict disciplinary norms as to both work methods and security. A revolutionary film group is in the same situation as a guerrilla unit: it cannot grow strong without military structures and command concepts. The group exists as a network of complementary responsibilities, as the sum and synthesis of abilities, inasmuch as it operates harmonically with a lead-

ership that centralizes planning work and maintains its continuity. Experience shows that it is not easy to maintain the cohesion of a group when it is bombarded by the System and its chain of accomplices frequently disguised as "progressives," when there are no immediate and spectacular outer incentives and the members must undergo the discomforts and tensions of work that is done underground and distributed clandestinely. Many abandon their responsibilities because they underestimate them or because they measure them with values appropriate to System cinema and not underground cinema. The birth of internal conflicts is a reality present in any group, whether or not it possesses ideological maturity. The lack of awareness of such an inner conflict on the psychological or personality plane, etc., the lack of maturity in dealing with problems of relationships, at times leads to ill feeling and rivalries that in turn cause real clashes going beyond ideological or objective differences. All of this means that a basic condition is an awareness of the problems of interpersonal relationships, leadership and areas of competence. What is needed is to speak clearly, mark off work areas, assign responsibilities and take on the job as a rigorous militancy.

Guerrilla film making proletarianizes the film worker and breaks down the intellectual aristocracy that the bourgeoisie grants to its followers. In a word, it **democratizes**. The film-maker's tie with reality makes him more a part of his people. Vanguard layers and even masses participate collectively in the work when they realize that it is the continuity of their daily struggle. **La hora de los hornos** shows how a film can be made in hostile circumstances when it has the support and

<sup>12</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, *op. cit.*

collaboration of militants and cadres from the people.

The revolutionary film-maker acts with a radically new vision of the role of the producer, teamwork, tools, details, etc. Above all, he supplies himself at all levels in order to produce his films, he equips himself at all levels, he learns how to handle the manifold techniques of his craft. His most valuable possessions are the tools of his trade, which form part and parcel of his need to communicate. The camera is the inexhaustible **expropriator of image-weapons**; the projector, a **gun that can shoot 24 frames per second**.

Each member of the group should be familiar, at least in a general way, with the equipment being used: he must be prepared to replace another in any of the phases of production. The myth of irreplaceable technicians must be exploded.

The whole group must grant great importance to the minor details of the production and the security measures needed to project it. A lack of foresight which in conventional film making would go unnoticed can render virtually useless weeks or months of work. And a failure in guerrilla cinema, just as in the guerrilla struggle itself, can mean the loss of a work or a complete change of plans. "In a guerrilla struggle the concept of failure is present a thousand times over, and victory a myth that only a revolutionary can dream."<sup>13</sup> Every member of the group must have an ability to take care of details; discipline; speed; and, above all, the willingness to overcome the weaknesses of comfort, old habits, and the whole climate of pseudonormality behind which the warfare of everyday life is hidden. Each film is a different operation, a different job requiring variations in methods in order to confuse or refrain from alerting the enemy, especially as the processing laboratories are still in

his hands.

The success of the work depends to a great extent on the group's ability to remain silent, on its permanent wariness, a condition that is difficult to achieve in a situation in which apparently nothing is happening and the film-maker has been accustomed to telling all and sundry about everything that he's doing because the bourgeoisie has trained him precisely on such a basis of prestige and promotion. The watchword "constant vigilance, constant wariness, constant mobility" has profound validity for guerrilla cinema. You have to give the appearance of working on various projects, split up the materials for processing, use go-betweens, mix The Material with other materials, put it together, take it apart, confuse, neutralize, and throw off the track. All of this is necessary as long as the group doesn't have its own processing equipment, no matter how rudimentary, and there remain certain possibilities in the traditional laboratories.

Group-level cooperation between different countries can serve to assure the completion of a film or the execution of certain phases of work that may not be possible in the country of origin. To this should be added the need for a reception center for file materials to be used by the different groups and the perspective of coordination, on a continentwide or even worldwide scale, of the continuity of work in each country: periodic regional or international gatherings to exchange experiences, contributions, joint planning of work, etc.

At least in the earliest stages, the revolutionary film-maker and the work groups will be the sole producers of their films. They must

<sup>13</sup> Che Guevara, *Guerra de guerrillas* (Guerrilla Warfare).

bear the responsibility of finding ways to obtain the economic means to facilitate the continuity of work. Guerrilla cinema still doesn't have enough experience to set down standards in this area; what experience there is has shown, above all, the **ability to make use of the concrete situation of each country.** But, regardless of what these situations may be, the preparation of a film cannot be undertaken without a parallel study of its future audience and, consequently, a plan to recover the financial investment. Here, once again, the need arises of closer ties between political and artistic vanguards, since this also serves for the joint study of forms of production, exhibition, and continuity.

A guerrilla film can be aimed only at the distribution mechanisms provided by the revolutionary organizations, including those invented or discovered by the filmmaker himself. Production, distribution, and economic possibilities for survival must form part of a single strategy. The solution of the problems faced in each of these areas will encourage other people to join in the work of guerrilla film making, which will enlarge its ranks and thus make it less vulnerable.

The distribution of guerrilla films in Latin America is still in swaddling clothes, while System reprisals are already a legalized fact. Suffice it to note in Argentina the raids that have occurred during some showings and the recent film suppression law of a clearly fascist character, in Brazil the ever-increasing restrictions placed upon the most militant comrades of **cinema novo**, and in Venezuela the banning and license cancellation of **La hora de los hornos**; almost all over the continent censorship prevents any possibility of public distribution.

Without revolutionary films and a public that asks for them, any attempt to open up new ways of distribution would be doomed to failure. But both of these already exist in Latin America. The appearance of the films opened up a road which in some countries, such as Argentina, occurs through showings in apartments and houses to audiences of never more than 25 people; in other countries, such as Chile, films are shown in parishes, universities, or cultural centers (of which there are fewer every day); and, in the case of Uruguay, showings were given in Montevideo's biggest movie theater to an audience of 2500 people, who filled the theater and made every showing an impassioned anti-imperialist event.<sup>14</sup> But the prospects on the continental plane indicate that the possibility of a revolutionary cinema rests upon the **strengthening of rigorously underground base structures.**

Practice implies mistakes and failures.<sup>15</sup> Some comrades will let themselves be carried away by the success and impunity with which they present the first showings and will tend to relax security measures, while others will go in the opposite direction of excessive precautions or fearfulness, to such an extent that distribution remains circumscribed, limited to a few groups of friends. Only concrete experience in each country will demonstrate which are the best methods there, which do not always lend themselves to application in other situations.

In some places it will be possible

<sup>14</sup> The Uruguayan weekly **Marcha** organized late-night and Sunday morning exhibitions that are widely and well received.

<sup>15</sup> The raiding of a Buenos Aires union and the arrest of dozens of persons resulting from a bad choice of projection site and the large number of people invited.

to build infrastructures connected to political, student, worker, and other organizations, while in others it will be more suitable to sell prints to organizations which will take charge of obtaining the funds necessary to pay for each print (the cost of the print plus a small margin). This method, wherever possible, would appear to be the most viable, because it permits the decentralization of distribution; makes possible a more profound political use of the film; and permits the recovery, through the sale of more prints, of the funds invested in the production. It is true that in many countries the organizations still are not fully aware of the importance of this work or, if they are, may lack the means to undertake it. In such cases other methods can be used: the delivery of prints to encourage distribution and a box-office cut to the organizers of each showing, etc. The ideal goal to be achieved would be producing and distributing guerrilla films with funds obtained from expropriations of the bourgeoisie — that is, the **bourgeoisie would be financing guerrilla cinema with a bit of the surplus value that it gets from the people.** But, as long as the goal is no more than a middle or long-range aspiration, the alternatives open to revolutionary cinema to recover production and distribution costs are to some extent similar to those obtained for conventional cinema: every spectator should pay the same amount as he pays to see System cinema. Financing, subsidizing, equipping, and supporting revolutionary cinema are political responsibilities for revolutionary organizations and militants. A film can be made, but if its distribution does not allow for the recovery of the costs, it will be difficult or impossible to make a second film.

The 16 mm. film circuits in Europe (20 000 exhibition centers in

Sweden, 30 000 in France, etc.) are not the best example for the neocolonialized countries, but they are nevertheless a complement to be kept in mind for fund raising, especially in a situation in which such circuits can play an important role in publicizing the struggles in the Third World, increasingly related as they are to those unfolding in the metropolis countries. A film on the Venezuelan guerrillas will say more to a European public than 20 explanatory pamphlets, and the same is true for us with a film on the May events in France or the Berkeley, USA, student struggle.

**A Guerrilla Films International?** And why not? Isn't it true that a kind of new International is arising through the Third World struggles; through OSPAAAL and the revolutionary vanguards of the consumer societies?

A guerrilla cinema, at this stage still within the reach of limited layers of the population, is, nevertheless, **the only cinema of the masses possible today**, since it is the only one involved with the interests, aspirations, and prospects of the vast majority of the people. Every important film produced by a revolutionary cinema will be, explicit or not, **a national event of the masses.**

This **cinema of the masses**, which is prevented from reaching beyond the sectors representing the masses, provokes with each showing, as in a revolutionary military incursion, a liberated space, a **decolonized territory.** The showing can be turned into a kind of political event, which, according to Fanon, could be "a liturgical act, a privileged occasion for human beings to hear and be heard."

Militant cinema must be able to extract the infinity of new possibilities that open up for it from

the conditions of proscription imposed by the System. The attempt to overcome neocolonial oppression calls for the invention of forms of communication; **it opens up the possibility.**

Before and during the making of *La hora de los hornos* we tried out various methods for the distribution of revolutionary cinema — the little that we had made up, to then. Each showing for militants, middle-level cadres, activists, workers, and university students became — without our having set ourselves this aim beforehand — a kind of enlarged cell meeting of which the films were a part but not the most important factor. We thus discovered a new facet of cinema: the **participation** of people who, until then, were considered **spectators**. At times, security reasons obliged us to try to dissolve the group of participants as soon as the showing was over, and we realized that the distribution of that kind of film had little meaning if it was not complemented by the participation of the comrades, if a debate was not opened on the themes suggested by the films.

We also discovered that every comrade who attended such showings did so with full awareness that he was infringing the System's laws and exposing his personal security to eventual repression. This person was no longer a spectator; on the contrary, from the moment he decided to attend the showing, **from the moment he lined himself up on this side** by taking risks and contributing his living experience to the meeting, he became an actor, a more important protagonist than those who appeared in the films. Such a person was seeking other committed people like himself, while he, in turn, became committed to them. **The spectator made way for**

**the actor, who sought himself in others.**

Outside this space which the films momentarily helped to liberate, there was nothing but solitude, noncommunication, distrust, and fear; within the freed space the situation turned everyone into accomplices of the act that was unfolding. The debates arose spontaneously. As we gained in experience, we incorporated into the showing various elements (a stage production) to reinforce the themes of the films, the climate of the showing, the "disinhibiting" of the participants, and the dialogue: recorded music or poems, sculpture and paintings, posters, a program director who chaired the debate and presented the film and the comrades who were speaking, a glass of wine, a few mates, etc. We realized that we had at hand three very valuable factors:

- 1) **The participant comrade**, the man-actor-accomplice who responded to the summons;
- 2) **The free space** where that man expressed his concerns and ideas, became politicized, and started to free himself; and
- 3) **The film**, important only as a detonator or pretext.

We concluded from these data that a film could be much more effective if it were fully aware of these factors and took on the task of subordinating its own form, structure, language, and propositions to that act and to those actors — to put it another way, **if it sought its own liberation in the subordination and insertion in the others, the principal protagonists of life.** With the correct utilization of the **time** that that group of actor-personages offered us with their diverse histories, the use of the **space** offered by certain comrades, and of the **films themselves, it was necessary to try to transform time, energy, and work into freedom-giv-**

**ing energy.** In this way the idea began to grow of structuring what we decided to call the **film act**, the **film action**, one of the forms which we believe assumes great importance in affirming the line of a **third cinema**. A cinema whose first experiment is to be found, perhaps on a rather shaky level, in the second and third parts of *La hora de los hornos* ("Acto para la liberación"; above all, starting with "La resistencia" and "Violencia y liberación").

Comrades [we said at the start of "Acto para la liberación"], this is not just a film showing, nor is it a show; rather, it is, above all, A MEETING — an act of anti-imperialist unity; this is a place only for those who feel identified with this struggle, because here there is no room for spectators or for accomplices of the enemy; here there is room only for the authors and protagonists of the process to which the film attempts to bear witness and to deepen. The film is the pretext for dialogue, for the seeking and finding of wills. It is a report that we place before you for your consideration, to be debated after the showing.

The conclusions [we said at another point in the second part] to which you may arrive as the real authors and protagonists of this history are important. The experiences and conclusions that we have assembled have a relative worth; they are of use to the extent that they are useful to you, who are the present and future of liberation. But most important of all is the action that may arise from these conclusions, the unity on the basis of the facts. This is why the film stops here; it opens out to you so that you can continue it.

The film act means an open-ended film; it is essentially a way

of learning.

The first step in the process of knowledge is the first contact with the things of the outside world, the stage of sensations [in a film, the living fresco of image and sound]. The second step is the synthesizing of the data provided by the sensations; their ordering and elaboration; the stage of concepts, judgments, opinions, and deductions [in the film, the announcer, the reportings, the didactics, or the narrator who leads the projection act]. And then comes the third stage, that of knowledge. The active role of knowledge is expressed not only in the active leap from sensory to rational knowledge, but, and what is even more important, in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. (...) The practice of the transformation of the world. (...) This, in general terms, is the dialectical materialist theory of the unity of knowledge and action<sup>16</sup> [in the projection of the film act, the participation of the comrades, the action proposals that arise, and the actions themselves that will take place later]. Moreover, each projection of a film act presupposes a **different setting**, since the space where it takes place, the materials that go to make it up (actors-participants), and the historic time in which it takes place are never the same. This means that the result of each projection act will depend on those who organize it, on those who participate in it, and on the time and place; the possibility of introducing variations, additions, and changes is unlimited. The screening of a film act will always express in one way or another the historical sit-

<sup>16</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, *op. cit.*

uation in which it takes place; its perspectives are not exhausted in the struggle for power but will instead continue after the taking of power to strengthen the revolution.

The man of the **third cinema**, be it **guerrilla cinema** or a **film act**, with the infinite categories that they contain (**film letter, film poem, film essay, film pamphlet, film report**, etc.), above all counters the film industry of a cinema of characters with one of themes, that of individuals with that of masses, that of the author with that of the operative group, one of neocolonial misinformation with one of information, one of escape with one that recaptures the truth, that of passivity with that of aggressions. To an institutionalized cinema, he counterposes a guerrilla cinema; to movies as shows, he opposes a film act or action; to a cinema of destruction, one that is both destructive and constructive; to a cinema made for the old kind of human being, for them, he opposes a **cinema fit for a new kind of human being, for what each one of us has the possibility of becoming.**

The decolonization of the film maker and of films will be simultaneous acts to the extent that each contributes to collective decolonization. The battle begins without, against the enemy who attacks us, but also within, **against the ideas and models of the enemy to be found inside each one of us.** Destruction and construction. Decolonizing action rescues with its practice the purest and most vital impulses. It opposes to the colonialization of minds the revolution of consciousness. The world is scrutinized, unraveled, rediscovered. People are witness to a constant astonishment, a kind of second birth. They recover their early ingenuity, their capacity for adventure; their

lethargic capacity for indignation **comes to life.**

Freeing a forbidden truth means setting free the possibility of indignation and subversion. Our truth, that of the new man who builds himself by getting rid of all the defects that still weigh him down, is a bomb of inexhaustible power and, at the same time, **the only real possibility of life.** Within this attempt, the revolutionary film-maker ventures with his **subversive observation, sensibility, imagination, and realization.** The great themes — the history of the country, love and unlove between combatants, the efforts of a people that comes awake — all this is reborn before the lens of the decolonized camera. The film-maker feels free for the first time. He discovers that, within the System, nothing fits, while outside of and against the System, everything fits, **because everything remains to be done.** What appeared yesterday as a preposterous adventure, as we said at the beginning, is posed today as **an inescapable need and possibility.**

Thus far, we have offered ideas and working propositions, which are the sketch of a hypothesis arising from our personal experience and which will have achieved something positive even if they do no more than serve to open a heated dialogue on the new revolutionary film prospects. The vacuums existing in the artistic and scientific fronts of the revolution are sufficiently well known so that the adversary will **not try to appropriate them, while we are still unable to do so.**

Why films and not some other form of artistic communication? If we choose films as the center of our propositions and debate, it is because that is our work front and because the birth of a **third cinema** means, at least for us, **the most important revolutionary artistic event of our times.**