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THE SORROW AND THE PITY

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of communism. (Actually, Marx used the term *Komunismus* for both phases; it was Lenin who labeled the first phase a socialism, identifying this with the period of the temporary dictatorship of the proletariat.—But Harrington's understanding of socialism is obviously not Lenin's.) Nonetheless, a crucial difference is that Harrington settles for less than Marx: where the latter foresees a total resolution of conflicts among men, and the overcoming of human alienation through a synthesis of freedom and necessity, Harrington speaks instead of "an utterly new society in which *some* of the fundamental limitations of human existence have been transcended" (my italics). Those strong oft-quoted texts of Marx calling for revolution and temporary dictatorship of the proletariat (cf. especially the *Manifesto*) are underplayed as atypical of Marx, written at a time when political pressures probably provoked an exaggeration of his overall view.

Harrington's suggestion of a means through which to implement the socialist ideal in present-day America is to establish an "Office of the Future" at the White House: a department whose sole function is to determine the broad priorities of society, scrutiniz-

ing past efforts and projections for the future in the light of those priorities. Through its decisions, immediate benefits might be postponed or trimmed or eliminated for the sake of longer-range advantages. For example, if such an agency had existed sixty years ago in the United States, the key question asked by automobile manufacturers would not have been "How can we get everybody 'on wheels'?" but "How will 'a car for everyone' affect the atmosphere for future generations?"

Like Marx, Michael Harrington can be accused of political idealism. But there is clearly some evidence of realism in his admission that "what socialism ultimately is . . . will never come to pass in its ideal form," and there is even a degree of practicality in his insistence that "it is important to detail the dream in order to better design each approximation of it." Doubtless the optimistic temperaments among us will be more attracted to these ideas than will the pessimists. Whatever the temperament, however, *Socialism* challenges the reader to do his own homework to substantiate acceptance or rejection of Harrington's interpretation.

MARY B. MAHOWALD

THE SORROW AND THE PITY

Before the title and credits for Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity* come down we see a grainy textured establishment shot of the approach of a wedding. A hand-held moving camera taking quick cuts captures for us an ultraserious, even unhappy wedding party taking place in Germany in 1969. We wonder at the significance of a contemporary wedding in Germany being included in a movie which we expect to concern itself with the Nazi occupation of the

town of Clermont-Ferrand during World War II. Soon we realize the personality of Herr Helmuth Tausend, former Wehrmacht captain stationed in Clermont-Ferrand during the war. (Such information is set in titles on the screen at the advent of each new personality). Somehow or other Herr Tausend has been prevailed upon to offer an interview about the war at the very wedding reception where he is supposed to be celebrating the wedding of his son or daughter! The

weirdness of this whole scene is never commented upon—it falls right into the documentary nature of the film—but it establishes the askewed emotional tonality of the entire film. As often as we return to this small wedding party we are made more and more aware of the predominance of this militaristic personality who ironically carries the two historic themes of song and story—that of Love and War—into the wedding banquet of his son or daughter, much to the muted chagrin of all present.

Marcel Ophuls has created a sense of suspense about a film whose story we all think we know. We wonder, “What gives?” with this guy Tausend, and we become similarly intrigued about several other minor personalities of this World War—Christian de la Maziere, an aristocratic Frenchman right out of “The Damned” whose love of things martial is so great that he joins a special French division of the Waffen SS; Marcel Verdier, a bourgeois Frenchman of high principle who fought in the Resistance without having any heart for war; and Alexis and Louis Grave, simple farmers made of hard mettle but sophisticated Socialist doctrine, who fought in the Resistance and afterwards refused to take vengeance on their neighbors who had tried to undo them.

Ophuls has planned his basic story line to follow the chronology of the War. This lengthy four hour, twenty minute film, entitled in the French *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* (englished better, I would suggest, as *Of Chagrin and Sorrow*), is divided into two parts. Part I, entitled “The Collapse,” takes us from Hitler’s invasion of France to the full entrenchment of the occupation, symbolized by the end of Part I on the note of German soldiers condescending to fraternize with French women. Part II, entitled “The Choice,”

documents the development of the Resistance movement and takes us up through the Liberation, ending with DeGaulle’s triumphant visit to the town of Clermont-Ferrand. The major historic events of the story line are carried by the lengthy interviews with Pierre-Mendes-France and Sir Anthony Eden. Ophuls moves from interviews of the great and small to intercuts of actual newsreel footage taken at the time by German, French, British or American cameramen. These intercuts have the effect of verifying or contradicting the present day interviews. The newsreels also serve to contrast their own cinematography with that of Ophuls. Whereas Ophuls’ camera is pragmatic, serving to editorialize only as it zooms into interviewers’ eyes in synchronization with the interviewer’s escalation of pointed questions, the newsreels were uniformly highly polished propaganda pieces replete with the Kitsch music so popular in the newsreels of the forties and ringing with the intense triumphalism of the Scourbys of the day. In fact, Ophuls’ mounted camera is not even quite steady, giving the impression that his interest is more in the truth than in a pretty, finished product. Likewise he eschews the use of music, though he does make sparing use of anticipatory sound and lag sound. And whereas the newsreels used various types of V wipes, irises, fades and dissolves, Ophuls always uses the direct cut. Since most of Ophuls’ interviews are of one person indoors his camera is stationary, preferring a zoom for close-ups rather than moving.

In the three recurring settings of indoor groups, however—the Tausends’ wedding party, the Verdiers’ parlor gathering, and the Graves’ wine-tipping bout—we do see the camera move about for varying effects. At the Tausends’ we see the camera panning

for reaction shots as Herr Tausend speaks. Frau Tausend is caught looking somewhat frightened that her husband may erupt into sudden anger at some of the interviewer's more prying questions. A zoom in on Tausend's son who is wearing his military uniform to the wedding catches a glint in his eye and a faint smiling curl of the lip as his father talks of the slaughter of the Jews. Quickly the camera swings to Herr Tausend himself and we see the similar quiet gloating through his gold teeth and clenched cigar. After more than six or seven interviews with Tausend and well in to Part II of the film does the camera present us our first glimpse at the wedding party of the new bride. She looks like anybody would look who has been ignored so long—left out, distracted and immobilized. Ophuls is quietly letting us know the extent of Tausend's denial of life and love.

Contrasted to the Tausend grouping, the Verdiers' parlor setting reveals a man, his wife and their seven children, sitting around in relaxed fashion while Verdier answers questions and relates stories. The reaction shots show approving smiles. Verdier himself asks some of his children for their points of view on some of the matters. While the Verdiers represent the bourgeois Resistance, the Graves represent the peasants' Resistance. With them the camera is always on the move, attempting to catch the flow of conversation and bantering interruption. As wine bottles line the table the camera from a low angle pans to frame each of the table groupings. Just as their discussion goes from earthy humor to loud disagreement the camera too seems more flexible and high spirited.

The major theme of Ophuls' film is to uncover dishonesty and recover a sense of the actual truth of things

during the German occupation of Clermont-Ferrand during the War. When this film first appeared in 1969 it created a stir of controversy involving some of the personalities mentioned. The skeletons were thought to have been dutifully boxed and closeted. Ophuls joins a number of post-War documenters who are frightened that we have not learned the lessons of history. In this regard he places heavy emphasis upon the rabid anti-Semitism that afflicted not only the Germans but the French as well. In fact he draws a line of continuity between French Petainist collaboration and French anti-Semitism. This represents a major rhetorical point of the film. No Frenchman interviewed admitted to being a Petainiste and also to showing concern for the Jews being evacuated by the train-loads. Ophuls zeroes in less profoundly on the more immediate question of why a people as great as the French would have collaborated to the extremes they evidently did. Perhaps he could not get much honesty from interviewed collaborators to such a question.

What does come across to us in this film is how war highlights the more skewed humans among us. Says Emmanuel D'Astier de la Vigerie in summarizing the heroes of the Resistance: "It takes the maladjusted to make good resisters." Such was the homosexual Dennis Rake (the camera introduces his cut before it moves to his speaking voice) who became an underground agent to prove his masculinity to himself; several Resistance leaders testify they never experienced a more courageous man. Of opposite ilk but similar values was the aristocratic Christian de la Maziere (the camera introduces us to baroque chandeliers first for one interview, to medieval armor in a castle before another) who still cannot help but rhapsodize

sodize over Nazi values; who still speaks bitterly over Laval's "total, ruthless repudiation" of him when he came to visit Laval in his heroic, victorious German uniform; and who still says quite blandly: "Of course the Communist party was responsible for everything." On the other hand we hear the conformist Raphael Geminiani, champion professional cyclist of Clermont-Ferrand, saying: "We never saw the Germans," which words are then spelled out in titles across the screen. Similarly could Herr Tausend relate: "I myself knew nothing of the Jews sent to Germany. . . . We meant no harm," while his wife adds, "We were delighted by these victories." The teachers, Messieurs Danton and Dionnet, say they "don't remember" any students being missed in class because killed as resisters, even though plaques in the school hall honor them. The camera pans to the plaques and we hear them replying that they

thought these were World War I plaques.

The film ends with an interesting slick public relations spot by Maurice Chevalier after the Liberation. He uses some glossy language and typical charm to answer charges that he collaborated. Not subjected to questioning as were the rest of Ophuls' similarly placed subjects, Chevalier carries the day. But we are left wondering as Chevalier's easy charm fades and his song is sung over the film of De Gaulle entering Clermont-Ferrand as Liberator at the finale of this documentary whether the post-War popularity of a Chevalier has been just one more symbolic reminder of how necessarily humans race to forget their ignominies only to bask in the superficial lure of a few quick entertaining minutes before the charm of a nice tune, a wide smile and a handsome picture on steady mount and in perfect focus.

JAMES MAHONEY

FREEDOM NOW: THREE APPROACHES

America Is Hard to Find, Notes from the underground and letters from Danbury Prison by Daniel Berrigan. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972. \$5.95.

Christian Political Theology, A Marxist Guide by Joseph M. Petulla. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1972. \$3.95.

Liberation, Development and Salvation by René Laurentin, translated by Charles Quinn. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1972. \$5.95.

"Liberation" is the common theme, but its manner of expression varies considerably in the books named above. One could call Daniel Berrigan's expression an existential one, typical of his celebrated critical way

with words and life. As ever, the author says himself. Even from the underground, Berrigan's spontaneity supports the self-assessment that he is "not nearly as hard to find as America." (p. 16) And when finally the "net has fallen" to separate him from his unfree (because?) unimprisoned brothers, "liberation" still says the Berrigan spirit. In general, the attitude is reminiscent of Thoreau's famous retort to Emerson when asked what he (Thoreau) was doing in jail. "What are you doing *there?*" is as apt a rejoinder today to any tax-paying American who opposes the government's involvement in war.

Such consistency is enjoyably disturbing, perhaps especially to those who share an institutionally Catholic