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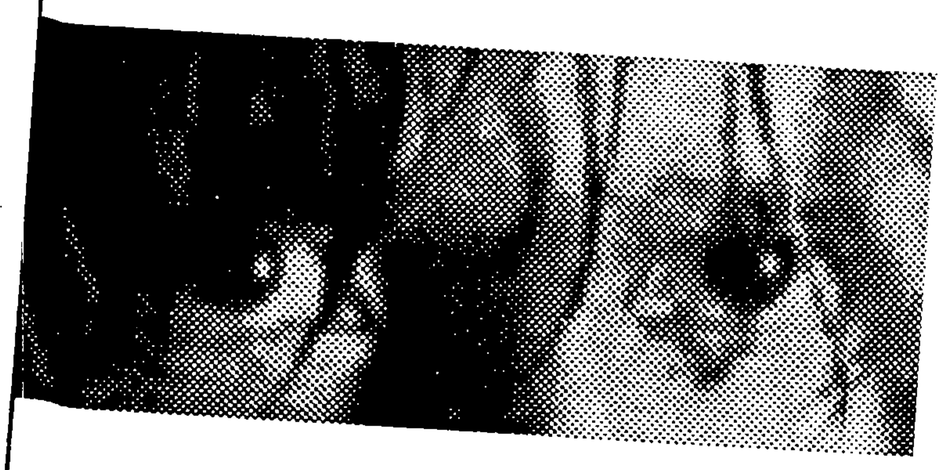
i am CUBA

a francis ford coppola
and martin scorsese presentation



directed by mikhail kalatozov
cinematography by sergei urusevsky
script by yevgeny yevtushenko
and enrique pineda barnet

"Visually Staggering ...
A newly discovered classic!
Deliriously choreographed ...
I AM CUBA is one
gorgeous image after another.
Astounding ... Incredible!"
— Dennis Harvey, Variety

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and buffeting spray, Enrique picks up a rock and walks toward the fat cop. The policeman takes careful aim and shoots. Enrique falls ...

Alberto covers his dead friend's face with the Cuban flag and helps carry his body past the wreckage of the burning cars. To the sound of tolling bells, a funeral cortege follows Enrique's body through the streets of Havana. In a dazzling single shot, the camera rises from street level, travels up the side of a building, crosses the street, enters a window, moves through a room where workers are rolling cigars, then launches out into space and proceeds down the length of a street filled with mourners from a vantage point in the middle of the thoroughfare and above the rooftops.

At night, deep in the swamps, government troops capture three rebel soldiers. They shine a light in each man's face and ask "Where is Fidel?" Each answers, "I am Fidel."

An exhausted freedom fighter approaches a hut in the mountains where Amelia, a peasant woman is pounding corn. Her husband, Mariano invites him to sit down and offers him a plate of food. The peasant, noticing the rifle, says that he wants to live in peace and orders the soldier to go. After the rebel leaves, they hear the sound of bombs falling nearby. Terrified the parents gather up their children and desperately run for cover. Their home is demolished in a fiery explosion. When he searches for his young son, Mariano discovers only a blackened doll. After the bombing ends, Mariano is reunited with the rest of his family. He tells his wife that he has to go.

High in the Sierra Maestre mountains, rebel troops are massing to the sounds of Insurgent Radio broadcasts. As men from all walks of life gather, the radio celebrates their struggle. The rebel soldier runs into Mariano and tells him, "I knew you would come." Mariano says that now he needs a rifle. The freedom fighter tells him that he has to capture a gun in battle, as they have all done.

I am Cuba.
Your arms have gotten used to farming tools,
but now a rifle is in your hands.
You are not shooting to kill.
You are firing at the past.
You are firing to protect your future.

The guerrillas battle the government troops as they sing the Cuban anthem. Mariano wins a rifle in hand-to-hand combat, as his comrades sing "Do not fear a glorious death; to die for your motherland is to live." The triumphant rebel forces march to universal celebration and joy.

The Production

On November 25, 1962, the *New York Times* carried a Reuters wire service report from Havana:

> *Mikhail Kalatozov, the Soviet director whose film* The Cranes are Flying *won international acclaim, will begin work on a joint Soviet-Cuban production here in January ... The film,* Soy Cuba *will be based on a script by the Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko and the Cuban poet Enrique Barnet.*

The announcement came just a year after the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion and less than a month after the world had reached the brink of nuclear conflict in the Cuban missile crisis. Although the missile confrontation was a victory for the United States, there was still great international optimism and hope for Cuba's future. Castro's regime was devoting tremendous resources for schools, hospitals and literacy brigades and the Cuban people remained dedicated to their charismatic leader and his ideals.

Both the Cuban rebellion and the 1917 Russian revolution that inspired it were led by men — Castro and Lenin — who believed in the revolutionary power of film to educate and inspire and both supported

filmmaking that transcended mere propaganda. *Potemkin, Storm over Asia, October, The End of St. Petersburg* — the list is endless — combined great artistry and groundbreaking techniques with political fervor.

Influenced by Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein, Mikhail Kalatozov wanted to create his own *Potemkin* for the people of Cuba. Just as Eisenstein's *Potemkin* had celebrated the Russian people's freedom from the Czars, *I am Cuba* would glorify that country's liberation from Batista and his exploitive U.S.-backed dictatorship. Like Eisenstein, Kalatozov wanted to create a new cinematic language to express his political beliefs and personal vision — and he similarly risked (and faced) official censure when his films veered off from the official party line.

With *I am Cuba,* Mosfilm and ICAIC got far more than they bargained for — Kalatozov's masterpiece is wildly schizophrenic celebration of Communist kitsch, mixing Slavic solemnity with Latin sensuality. The plot, or rather plots, feverishly explore the seductive, decadent (and marvelously photogenic) world of Batista's Cuba — deliriously juxtaposing images of rich Americans and bikini-clad beauties sipping cocktails with scenes of ramshackle slums filled with hungry children and old people. Using wide-angle lenses that distort and magnify and filters that transform palm trees into giant white feathers, Urusevsky's acrobatic camera achieves wild, gravity-defying angles as it glides effortlessly through long *continuous* shots. But *I Am Cuba* is not just a catalog of bravura technique — it also succeeds in exploring the innermost feelings of the characters and their often desperate situations.

Begun before the Cuban missile crisis, the preproduction on *I Am Cuba* took longer than most films — over a year — because Kalatozov went to great lengths to plan every aspect of the film's script and look. Yevgeny Yevtushenko was a perfect choice to co-write the screenplay, despite (or perhaps *because* of) his inexperience as a scriptwriter. The world-famous poet had worked as a corespondent in Cuba for *Pravda* and was (at that time) a friend of Castro's. Kalatozov was interested in working with Yevtushenko because of his "youthful innovative spirit." For Yevtushenko's Cuban counterpart, he chose Enrique Pineda Barnet, a well-known novelist. Kalatozov, Yevtushenko and cinematographer Sergei Urusevsky began preproduction by traveling to Cuba to prepare the script. There they met with Pineda Barnet at the Balalaika nightclub — where all four discovered they shared a devotion for Hemingway, Mayakovsky, Matisse and Picasso (and a dislike for that particular club). The three Soviets were also in Cuba to find a composer (ironically, they discovered Cuban Carlos Fariñas later in Moscow) and a painter for the production. For the latter, they chose Rene Portocarrero, Cuba's greatest artist. Portocarrero also designed the poster for the Cuban release.

Pineda Barnet, Kalatozov, Yevtushenko and Urusevsky toured Cuba and studied Cuban folklore to gather background material for the script. The three Soviets were most interested in, as Pineda Barnet called it, "the moral fallout of Cuba's colonial past." They visited many of Havana's nightclubs where they delighted in the joyous freedom of Cuban music. Kalatozov tape recorded many interviews with those who took part in the revolution as preparation for the film — this preserved the 'emotional temperature' of being in Cuba. Later, while filming the student riots, people would approach them to describe how the scenes had actually occurred, offering reminiscences and advice. The filmmaking team also watched documentaries and features of past and present Cuba. A constant visitor to ICAIC's screening rooms at the time was Fidel Castro, who spent many evenings watching films. Alexander Calzatti, assistant cameraman on *I am Cuba,* remembers that many of Castro's favorite films were Hollywood movies. The men met with Haydee Santamaría, a veteran of the Moncada massacre and with Che Guevara, who spent the day reliving the *Granma* voyage, the battles in the Sierra Maestra and the final march to Havana. From that time on Guevara acted as an unofficial advisor to the film and often dropped by the set.

Castro told Pineda Barnet that the filmmakers had to visit the Sierra Maestra, "even if you have to go on a donkey." There the men visited the scenes of the revolution and met Raúl Castro, who told them stories of those perilous days. Like his brother Fidel, Raúl loved the cinema and the men had long discussions

about the art of film. When they returned to Havana, the four began work on the script. Along the way, Yevtushenko wrote several poems inspired by their journey and Urusevsky took many photos and filmed many locations with his small movie camera.

The first draft was a scene-by-scene recreation of the Cuban revolution. But the writers felt burdened with too much historical material and decided instead to make a cinematic poem: "the main heroine would be the revolution — the hero would be the people." Their goal was not to elevate any one individual (in the film, Castro is mentioned but never seen), but to show the "historic necessity" of the people's break from Batista's American-backed government. They decided to divide the screenplay into five stages:

1) colonialism, and its affects on the city,
2) the tragedy of the peasants,
3) the gestation of the workers/students' struggle.
4) the struggle in the plains (the disastrous invasion on the Moncada army barracks)
5) the struggle in the mountains and the final triumph.

This breakdown became the basis for the completed script, although the fourth segment was never filmed. Pineda Barnet described the men's working relationship:

> *We had group meetings: Kalatozov, Urusevsky, Yevgeny and me. We discussed subjects, ideas, characters, situations... Whenever we got to an agreement, we would separate to elaborate on it. Yevgeny locked himself in his room on the 17th floor of the Havana-Libre Hotel. I worked in my house near the waterfront. Kalatozov and Urusevsky listened to music, wandered around the streets of Havana, shot scenes freely, and tried filters, natural light and locations. Every time any of us got results, we met to discuss the development. Sometimes Kalatozov gave us an idea to work on, sometimes Urusevsky did. Other times Yevgeny and I met alone to exchange impressions and I told him about personal experiences or some well-known anecdote, or I just supplied him with more information about the Cuban atmosphere. In the last meetings, we selected the best of all our efforts. When we presented the project to the meeting of the ICAIC, we had a beginning that was more or less worked out, and the rest was in the form of synopsis. It received some constructive criticism as well as some observations and advice from Che Guevara, [filmmaker Julio] García Espinosa, [filmmaker Tomás] Gutiérrez Alea. We had the project fully outlined — now we needed to fill in the details, which would take many months.*

It was now January 1962. The three Soviets returned to Moscow to work on the script and Pineda Barnet followed the next month. When Pineda Barnet arrived in Moscow, he found a land covered in snow. Kalatozov, Yevtushenko and Urusevsky and his wife Belka met him at the airport and gave him a tour of the city. To help them in their work on the script, Kalatozov encouraged Pineda Barnet and Yevtushenko to watch various edited and unedited versions of Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico*. Kalatozov later introduced them to Eisenstein's former assistant, Grigori Alexandrov. They also screened other Soviet productions (Pineda Barnet found some inspiring, others dreadful) and visited the set of Sergei Bondarchuk's *War and Peace*. Pineda Barnet wrote about Kalatozov's vision for the film:

> *Kalatozov told us about his idea of a script where dialogue would not need translation. In other words, to try to include the least possible amount of dialogue, including only the words strictly necessary and in that, they would be so expressive there would be no need for translation.*
>
> *We were getting ready to start the work on the third part (the students-workers' struggle), for which we had already prepared a synopsis in Havana. We discussed the elements that were going to be more or less emphasized. We also agreed that the characters would not necessarily appear in all five subplots (back in Havana, we had originally wanted the same group of characters to interact in all five stories). Now we could treat subjects related to our main characters without having to give a biographical or narrative account of each one.*

At this time the group met Carlos Fariñas, a highly regarded Cuban composer who had written the scores for several well-known ballets, who was presently studying at Moscow's Tchaikovsky Conservatory. Fariñas was a great help to Pineda Barnet — for the first time in Moscow, the writer was able to speak with a fellow Cuban artist who could make suggestions and critiques. The third part of the story had become such a problem, that the group went on to start work on the fourth. It was Kalatozov — belying his "official" reputation as a filmmaker of style rather than content — who pushed the writers for more insight into the characters and urged them to go beyond stereotypes to discover the virtues and weaknesses of each man and woman in the film. At this time, an idea for a sixth story, of present-day Cuba, was proposed. After much discussion, the idea was abandoned.

By May Day, the team was now concerned that the script was too long and that some scenes lacked depth and strength. All agreed that the script needed major editing to make the film leaner and more powerful. Kalatozov made many of the cuts in the first and second stories — eliminating scenes that were unnecessary for the advancement of the plot — and the four men were happy with the final version. According to Pineda Barnet, every scene now seemed integral and irreplaceable. For the first time, he began to understand the dynamics of scriptwriting and the vision that Kalatozov had in mind. Pineda Barnet began to work with great enthusiasm on the third and fourth stories. Kalatozov further helped the young writer by suggesting that he write some scenes in the form of poems and then put them in terms of normal film description.

In Cuba, Kalatozov began to assemble his cast. They came from all walks of life, but always students to play students, peasants to play peasants, et cetera:

> *I am a food service worker. I was born 53 years ago — exactly the year of the Mexican Revolution. I work in an INIT restaurant in Boca de Jaruco, in Guanabo. In other words, I am* not *a peasant — even though Kalatozov thought that I have an amazing* guajiro *(peasant) look — but a restaurant worker. The restaurant is called "Pollo Pampero" since we serve the best Pampero chicken in all Guanabo. When my companions heard that I was going to work in the movies, they said that they had always known that I would be a good actor because I look like Spencer Tracy. That's what they say. I can easily pretend to be a* guajiro *because I experienced the life of a peasant when I was responsible for "social distribution" at a* hacienda *(ranch). In the movie I play Pedro ... According to the screenplay, I have to die in my shack in the middle of the flames. I am very curious to see how they are planning to shoot this scene because the truth is that I'm not going to let them burn even my little finger. No way.*
>
> — José Gallardo

> *I am 15 years old and a student at the* Academia de Arte Dramático. *I had just arrived one morning and was getting some coffee when Kalatozov saw me and thought that I would be great as Pedro's daughter in the movie. In the movie we are shooting now, I still don't know why we're doing what we're doing and I don't have a very clear idea about how things are going to look on screen.*
>
> — Luisa María Jiménez

> *I study acting at the* Escuela Nacional de Arte. *I have been interested in theater for many years. I put a group together, and directed some plays at* Central Fe *(now the* Central José María Pérez*), where my father works. Kalatozov chose me because he thought I looked perfect to play the role of a young Cuban* guajiro.
>
> — Mario González Broche

Many other actors had similar stories. Kalatozov said during the making of the film:

> *I have not chosen experienced actors — some have never acted before, while others are just getting started. I think that cinema does not really require professional actors, because what counts more than anything is the human presence. That is what creates a character on screen.*

One of the more interesting additions to the cast was the black singer in the bar scene at the beginning of the film. His name was Ignacio, but before the revolution he lived in America and was famous as the falsetto lead of the pop group, The Platters.

Once the cast was set, the momentous task of creating *I am Cuba* lay in the hands of Kalatozov, Urusevsky and the camera operator Alexander Calzatti. Although Urusevsky had great vision and enormous talent, he did not have the technical training that the very young cameraman had received in film school. Calzatti's professor was Eisenstein's legendary associate, Eduard Tisse, and his father (still living in Los Angeles) was also well-known Soviet cinematographer who had also worked with Kalatozov. In fact, Calzatti's first professional film experience had been as an intern on *The Cranes are Flying*.

It was left to Calzatti devise the technical requirements for the many complicated and elaborate shots in *I am Cuba*. For the dreamlike opening of the film and for many of the shots throughout the film — where palm trees and sugar cane look like white feathers against the black sea or sky — Urusevsky and Calzatti were among the first to use infrared film stock (obtained at great effort from an East German film lab). The men also experimented with many filters. What made *I am Cuba* especially difficult to film was the fact that 97% of the film was shot hand-held. The camera of choice was an Eclair, an ultra-light French camera that held a five-minute roll of film. For the famous scene where in a long traveling shot, the camera descends from the rooftop of a building, down to a swinging scene overlooking Havana and finally, *into* the swimming pool, Calzatti had to make a watertight box out of sheets of Dupont plastic with three handles so the camera (using a 9.8mm lens) could be passed between Urusevsky and Calzatti at crucial moments. On the first take, the camera box refused to dive beneath the water surface, and Calzatti had to adapt the box with a hollow steel tube running through it so the air could escape the box, but no water would enter the camera.

For the crane shot where Pedro sets fire to his hut, the crew devised a closed-camera video system to view their work while shooting — twenty years before this technique was "invented" in Hollywood. For their monitor, Urusevsky took his personal Russian television set from his home in Moscow and held it on the plane all the way to Cuba.

The eerie shot of Enrique's death, where the camera swirls around and the image "dissolves" was difficult to conceive and easy to achieve. First, the filters in front of the lens were twisted to distort the image, oil was poured down on a plastic sheet in front of the lens and then in the laboratory, the image slowly faded into its negative image and was freeze-framed.

The shooting of *I am Cuba* lasted almost two years and during that time an astonishing amount of footage was shot. Although brief mentions of the film appeared, the film was never shown outside of the Soviet Union and Cuba and was effectively lost until today.

In 1992, Tom Luddy and Bill Pence presented a tribute to Mikhail Kalatozov at the Telluride Film Festival and screened *I am Cuba* (unsubtitled) for the first time in America. It had a great reception — among others, filmmakers Bertrand Tavernier and the Quay Brothers became big fans of the film. At the 1993 San Francisco International Film Festival, *I am Cuba* was shown to a sold-out audience who gave the film a standing ovation *during* the screening — twice. Milestone heard about the film from friends who had attended that screening and went on to acquire the rights from Mosfilm and ICAIC, commission a new translation and subtitles and strike new 35mm subtitled prints and fine grain from the original negative.

Mikhail Kalatozov
(December 28, 1903 - March 27, 1973)

Mikhail K. Kalatozov (Kä´ lä tô´ zov) was born in Tiflis (now Tbilsi), Georgia as Mikhail Konstantinovich Kalatozishvili. After leaving school at fourteen, he worked as a mechanic and driver while studying for his high school diploma. Kalatozov went on to business school to study economics until a job as a

Sergio Corrieri

Sergio Corrieri (*Alberto*) is one of Cuba's most renowned actors, having also starred in Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's acclaimed *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968). Since he last appeared on Cuban television almost ten years ago, Corrieri founded an avant-garde theater company, *Escambray*, up in the mountains. He is currently president of the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos.

Jean Bouise

Jean Bouise (*Jim, the man with the crucifix fetish*) was the one actor in *I am Cuba* who would gain a world-wide reputation. Bouise was on vacation in Cuba during the making of the film and Kalatozov convinced him to play the important role of the American at the bar who picks up "Betty." He was later to become one of the most important stars in France during the 1960s, famous for his roles in Alain Resnais' *La Guerre est Finie*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist*, and Constantin Costa-Gavras' Z.

A Brief History of the Cuban Revolution

On Sunday October 28, 1492, Christopher Columbus landed in Cuba and called it "the most beautiful land human eyes have ever seen." Still known as the "Pearl of the Antilles," Cuba was then populated by several different Amerindian groups. The Spanish conquest of Cuba started in 1511 under the leadership of Diego de Veláquez. As a major staging area for Spanish exploration of the Americas, Cuba was also a target for French and British pirates. The indigenous population of the island was quickly destroyed by disease and Spanish repression and the native American workforce was soon replaced by African slaves. The influx of the slaves, reaching its peak in 1817, had enormous impact on Cuba's cultural evolution.

The Cuban independence movement began in 1810 and erupted in 1868 as the fierce Ten Years War. Spain negotiated a peace with the islanders but none of the brokered reforms was carried out (although slavery was abolished in 1886). In 1895, a second revolution was launched, this time by the great writer and poet, José Marti. There was a strong support in the United States for Cuban independence (mostly because of the economic advantages a "free" Cuba would offer) and with the February 15, 1898 sinking of the U.S. battleship Maine in Havana harbor, the Spanish American War began. Spain capitulated on December 10, 1898 and the peace treaty established Cuban independence. But the U.S. Congress forced the Platt Amendment on the new country — keeping the island under U.S. "protection" and giving the government the right to "intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence."

American corporations quickly moved into Cuba and bought up many of the country's plantations, refineries, railroads and factories. A revolt in 1905 headed by José Miquel Gómez led to U.S. military occupation from 1906 to 1909 (future president William Howard Taft was one of the provisional governors during this period). The U.S. military evacuated the island in 1909 but returned in 1912 to assist in the suppression of black Cubans' protests against discrimination. During World War I, the destruction of European crops created a boom industry for sugar cane and Cuba reaped unexpected prosperity.

However this wartime boom was soon followed by a crash and poverty again swept the island. Fraudulent elections and corrupt politicians were the order of the day. Gerardo Machado, president of Cuba from 1925 to 1933 began to make major changes and instituted projects for the poor. However, the early promise of his administration remained unfulfilled as Machado turned his energies to the suppression of his opponents — earning him the nickname, "The Butcher." Machado was overthrown in 1933 by a military and student junta led by a former army sergeant, Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar (1901-1973).

production made in Cuba, co-written by Yevtushenko, photographed by Urusevsky. In this picture Kalatozov and Urusevsky have far surpassed their epoch-making camera innovations of *Cranes are Flying* and *The Letter Never Sent*, and have realized Eisenstein's dream, which he was trying for in his abortive Mexican film — to give an extremely dynamic, emotional, epic picture of the revolutionary struggle of oppressed Latin American masses, using visual images and no dialogue ... A year before Yutkevich's more publicized experiment with narrated dialogue in Lenin in Poland, Kalatozov and Yevtushenko made *I Am Cuba* virtually silent, with dramatic music, natural sound, and bits of Yevtushenko's impressionistic poetry introducing each episode and connecting them together. The film also harks back to Eisenstein's silent classics like Potemkin and Strike and to Kalatozov's own 1930 ethnographic masterpiece Salt for Svanetia, in showing a generalized, impersonal mass hero consisting of nonactor types rather than individual characters, in the stylized sort of persuasive, emotional, epic melodrama once known as "agitprop" — before it was rejected by Stalin in favor of prosaic, sentimental, conformist "social realism" in the middle 1930s.

Kalatozov and Urusevsky have applied their technique of the "emotional camera" to an extent which has to be seen to be believed, with moving camera and handheld camera (Urusevsky ends one unforgettable scene swimming underwater), wide-angle (9.8mm) lenses, oddly tilted angles which distort the characters' images and give the whole picture a very distinctive form, and some elaborate crane shots — especially one traveling up inside a skyscraper across the roof and then flying out over the street below — which in engineering complexity probably equal anything done by the Germans in the 1920's ...

From the standpoint of content, the film met a rather cold reception in Cuba and Eastern Europe because of an obvious emphasis on art for art's sake, and because it concentrates with barely concealed fascination on the miseries of poor Cubans under Batista. But, after all, such topics as crime, suffering, police brutality, perversions, student demonstrations, a burning field of sugar cane, and violent death under a bourgeois regime can be stimulating — a cinematic — for a film-maker, more so perhaps than the regimented society and dull life to be found under some other government systems ... Because of two anti-American elements, this film may not find American distribution.

Statement on *I am Cuba* by David E. Nachman
Attorney in New York and consultant to Human Rights Watch/Americas

All films are products of their times. Some, though, manage to transcend their origins and speak to future generations with immediacy and undiminished relevance, while others remain captive to the particular outlook of their creators, and can be seen today only as artifacts of conditions as they existed at the moment of their making. On the aesthetic and psychological levels, "Soy Cuba" (*I am Cuba*), this extraordinary joint Soviet-Cuban homage to the Cuban Revolution produced in 1964, belongs firmly in the transcendent camp. Through a series of urban and rural scenes shot in high-contrast black and white, with close, off-angle camera attention to the protagonists of its story, and aided by an excellent score drawn from the diverse Cuban musical lexicon of the day, "Soy Cuba" creates an enduring sensory impression of the outer topography of Cuba and the inner geography of the island's people — from the sophistication of nightlife Habaneros, to the honest industriousness of the city's artisan class, to the grace and determination with which Cuban peasants have traditionally confronted a life dominated by the hardships of growing and cutting cane.

The passage of time has been less kind, however, to the message of revolutionary enthusiasm that "Soy Cuba" proclaims with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer. There is no denying, of course, the reality of the injustices and excesses of the Batista regime that are depicted here — farmers *were* subject to the whim of their not-always-benevolent absentee landlords, peaceful student and worker protest *was* met with indiscriminate fire by a repressive and increasingly corrupt police force, the Cuban army *did* respond to Castro's forces' gains in the countryside by bombing villages that posed no military threat, and the resources of the country (including its land and countless women) *were* placed at the service of foreign

interests, personified in this film by the U.S. Sugar Corporation, American sailors, and caricaturized Jewish businessmen/gangsters. Indeed, many of the abuses chronicled in "Soy Cuba" were equally the mark of a number of Latin American countries during the past decades, and they provided the impetus for a regional rebel movement that looked to the Cuban revolution for inspiration.

What ultimately makes "Soy Cuba" a political and historical relic, however, is the failed promise of the revolution it so unabashedly celebrates. The prospect of mass political empowerment suggested by the film has been replaced by a regime that demands unquestioning popular support but is ever less able to obtain it; the hope of material advancement has been dashed on the rocks of a centrally planned economy which, shorn of its Soviet support, is incapable of providing the most basic needs of the Cuban population; and the film's vision of an autonomous insular culture free of foreign domination has been substantially eroded as the Cuban government, starved for foreign currency, freely encourages tourism and foreign investment and openly tolerates their less attractive by-products, including even child prostitution. Watching this film is a sad lesson in irony. At various points, revolutionary fighters are heard to say "Liberty or Death." Today, those words would serve as a rallying cry only for those Cuban "balseros" who, to escape the lack of democratic and economic freedoms at home, choose to risk death at sea.

"Soy Cuba" simply could not be made today — the energy is gone, and so too are the great hopes of the revolution. As a window onto another, more optimistic time, however, "Soy Cuba" provides a beautiful and bittersweet experience.

Milestone Film & Video

Milestone was founded in 1990 by Amy Heller and Dennis Doros to bring out the best films of yesterday and today. Milestone's re-releases include restored versions of Visconti's *Rocco and his Brothers*, Murnau's *Tabu* and *The Last Laugh*, Cooper and Schoedsack's *Grass* and *Chang*, Antonioni's *Red Desert*, and Buñuel's *The Young One*. Among its new releases are the films of artist Eleanor Antin, the documentaries of feature filmmaker Philip Haas, Wim Wenders' *Notebook on Cities and Clothes*, Bae Yong-kyun's *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, and Luc Besson's *Atlantis*. Milestone, however, is primarily known for acquiring and distributing unknown "classics" that have never been distributed in the US and Canada including such films as Pasolini's *Mamma Roma*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, a series of twenty-eight films from the early Russian cinema (1908–1919), Mikhail Kalatozov's *I am Cuba* and next, Jane Campion's first feature film, *Two Friends*.

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