

Document Citation

Title	Chile .3. Guzman
Author(s)	Patricio Guzmán
Source	<i>Framework</i>
Date	1979
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	14-15
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	Guzmán, Patricio
Film Subjects	<p>La batalla de Chile: La lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Tercera parte: El poder popular (The battle of Chile: The fight of an unarmed people - Part 3: The power</p> <p>La batalla de Chile: La lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Segunda parte: El golpe de estado (The battle of Chile: The fight of an unarmed people - Part 2: Coup d'</p> <p>La batalla de Chile: la lucha de un pueblo sin armas - Primera parte: La insurrección de la burguesía (The battle of Chile: the fight of an unarmed people - Par</p>

company Kintopp and private donations were only sufficient for a first long compilation film covering the time up to 1931, the first Latin American film on a portion of the history of the workers movement. The chronicle in film made by Patricio Guzman during the UP period is also without precedent. So far two 90 minute parts of his Battle of Chile have appeared, and the third will be finished this year with the help of the Cuban Film Institute. This documentary film's only point of comparison with the Argentinian Hour of Fire by Fernando Solanas, is one of length. Never before, so far as I know, has a year of struggle

for social change been so fully depicted as in Battle of Chile. As no other film has done, it communicates the meaning that the short period of socialist government has for the masses.

Today the Chilean cinema exists in exile. Its film makers have, as it were, formed a 'movie front' against the fascism in their own country. In spite of their diverging political positions they are united in their conviction of the truth of these words of Pablo Neruda: "A way leads out of the darkness".

From: the "Frankfurter Rundschau, 27.5.1978.



CHILE.3. guzman

Our intention is not that of showing the revolutionary process during the period of Unidad Popular from a single viewpoint, but rather to reproduce in the most objective possible manner all the different positions adopted by the left-wing forces at that precise conjuncture. This was, at least, what we set out to do when we started our work: a film which dialectically embraced all the events that added up to such a cruel reality in the history of the working-class Chilean Movement. Our film was intended to represent something similar to the collective "memory" of that episode in history. We wanted to play the role of the witnesses who filmed a historical situation by now transformed into a history lesson. We could not conceive of it as a propagandaist film, our primary allegiance was to a directly analytical procedure.

On the Narrative Structure

In the film all that is caught up in the web of the events, that is the diegesis or the 'telling' of what happened, is never defused with supplementary information. The content (and/or information) of the film is born out of the diegesis itself; there are no subtitles to locate (or 'judge') the speaking subject's position and editing is kept to a bare minimum so as not to interfere or 'influence' the spectator. Even the two opposing strategies of the Left emerge from the pro-filmic recounting of the events in their violent clashes against the counter-revolutionary forces. The guiding principles of the film is therefore simply a dialectic juxtaposition of opposing

La Batalla de Chile Part II

strategic choices in the face of the chronological unfolding of events. This allows the spectator - confronted by the dynamic sequence of events - to relive and re-construct the images according to his formation. The only people who appear in the film clearly identified (by means of subtitles) are the leaders of the left-wing parties and other political personalities that provide their own context. The commentary however limits itself to a focusing of certain central pivots without interfering with the internal diegesis of the images. In this sense the second part of BATALLA (EL GOLPE DE ESTADO) was much harder to make than the first (LA INSURRECCION DE LA BUREUESIA). Where in the first part the struggle rested on a clearcut clash of revolutionary forces against fascism, the second highlights the growing contrast among the left-wing forces and our desire to retain the same narrative method was severely pressurised.

Origins of the Film

In order to clarify the ideological and strategic problems we had to engage with, it is necessary to explain how the film came about and how we came to decide on the editing of both parts before we began shooting.

We started filming in mid-February 1973 with the idea of just taking as much as possible and then structure all the 'journalistic' material at the desk. We soon realised though that it was impossible to catch all that was happening even if we were to post a filmmaker at every corner of each village, simply because reality cannot be identified in "all that is happening". Too much, too many events result from many invisible processes which culminate very often in an external event of little or no historical relevance. We examined all these questions closely for many months, scrutinising every possibility; gradually we abandoned the idea of a purely propagandaist documentary and drew nearer to that of a close, analytical documentary. In this first period which lasted about



La Batalla de Chile Part III

two months, we read and researched a great deal in all Latin-American film journals and magazines, CINE CUBANO especially. We were particularly impressed and influenced by an essay on "imperfect cinema" written by the Cuban director Julio Garcia Espinosa in which he deals with the problem of cinema as witness of a social reality and the importance of all invisible processes behind the visible ones.

We never did sit down to write a proper script; we simply drew an overall outline, a working script if you like, that grew in size and detail which we plastered all over our small studios. On the basis of this outline we tried to achieve a synthesis of the class struggle in Chile in 1973. By the end we succeeded in subdividing the central problem of the country into three 'fields of battle': ideological, political and economic.

The Working Method

In a sense the key feature of our project was the fact that the Chilean revolutionary process was tied to and developed within the bourgeois state apparatus. To shoot (film) in Chile did not mean to film a civil war, but rather events that came into being within the limits of a particular bourgeois constitution. We had to take full advantage of this situation. When in other revolutionary processes legality is abandoned for the sake of armed struggle, the function of the documentarist is reduced to that of offering reportages from the front lines and taking on oneself the mortal dangers therein which by necessity leads to another kind of working method. In the case of Chile, we could not decide to destroy the state's apparatus in spite of the fact that we were clearly moving directly into a fascist coup or a civil war. For this reason we filmed the class struggle as if it were a landscape. A parliamentary debate, a workers' meeting, a demonstration, a group of fascist academics could be filmed with relative calm, even by using sequence shots and other characteristics of feature films.

After the 11th September, 1973 many members of the production team were arrested, four out of six in fact. I was imprisoned for 15 days in the national football stadium of Santiago. Jorge Muller, our cameraman is still in jail. He was arrested on the 28th of November 1974 with his wife, the actress Carmela Bueno who was killed a few months later by DINA agents; her name appeared on Pinochet's list of "missing persons" published abroad. We know that Jorge Muller was tortured and suffered all possible kinds of abuses but that he is still alive in the Cuatro Alamos concentration camp in Santiago.

La Batalla de Chile was completed in Cuba with the aid of the I.C.A.I.C. which provided us with everything we needed to complete our trilogy. The third part is being edited at present. Only through the generous and valid Cuban solidarity were we able to complete our four-year old project. All the filmic and sound material was saved after the coup and taken outside the country.

Guzman Spring '76

Translated by Don Kanvaud

the other cinema

The leading distributor in the U.K. of Latin American features and documentaries.

Latest releases on 16mm:

THE COURAGE OF THE PEOPLE

Director: Jorge Sanjines.

Bolivia/colour/90 mins.

From the director of THE BLOOD OF THE CONDOR, a magnificent reconstruction of the historic massacre of Bolivian tin-miners and their families by government troops in June 1967.

THE TRIPLE 'A'

By Cine de la Base. Argentina/b&w/15 mins.

A documentary on the repression in presentday Argentina: the three armed forces that dominate the regime (the army, the airforce and the navy) are revealed as being in essential political harmony with the notorious proto-fascist AAA (the Anti-communist Association of Argentina). Based on the open letter to the military junta from Rodolfo Walsh.

Coming shortly: two major new documentaries on Popular Unity in Chile

THE BATTLE OF CHILE, PART III: POPULAR POWER

The long-awaited final part of this stunning documentary trilogy focusses on the forms of popular power thrown up by the masses during the Allende period.

(Also available: THE BATTLE OF CHILE, PART I: THE UPRISING OF THE BOURGEOISIE (Feb to June '73), and THE BATTLE OF CHILE, PART II: THE COUP D'ETAT (June to Sept '73).)

THE SPIRAL

France/1976/colour/145 mins. By Armand Mattelart, Chris Marker, et al.

A tremendous documentary achievement; 'the first film on Chile which successfully attempts a complete analysis of the Chilean left and centre' (Costa-Gavras).

This newly-completed English version is narrated by Donald Sutherland.

Still available:

Fernando Solanas's monumental THE HOUR OF THE FURNACES (Argentina; 260 mins), Jorge Sanjines' classic THE BLOOD OF THE CONDOR (Bolivia; 74 mins), Raymundo Gleyzer's MEXICO: THE FROZEN REVOLUTION (Argentina; 60 mins). Three features by Glauber Rocha: BARRAVENTO, TERRA EM TRANSE and THE LION HAS SEVEN HEADS (Brazil; 70 mins, 110 mins, 103 mins).

Plus: documentaries on Cuba, Bolivia, Columbia, Uruguay and the struggle by women in Latin America.

Send SAE to The Other Cinema at the address below for a full list of Latin American releases.

12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ
Telephone: 01-734 8508/9