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CEDDO



Senegal. Written and directed by Ousmane Sembene. Prod. Filmi Doomi Reew. Photo: Georges Caristan. Music: Manu Dibango. Cast: Tabara Ndiaye, Mamadou Ndiaye Diange, Mustapha Yade, Ousmane Camara, Alioune Fall. 120 mins.

Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembene's latest statement on European cultural imperialism in the Third World, *Ceddo* is set in the 17th century, the period of slave-trading and the introduction of Christianity and Islam to West Africa. The adherents of these religions wished to fill their mosques or churches with converts by whatever means necessary. Arms and alcohol began to appear, as well as shoddy goods — gadgets from another era. Anyone with a rifle was permitted to track down and barter men, women and children. Men became money.

The Imam converts the royal family and government dignitaries, but encounters the refusal of the Ceddo people. For the Ceddo adhering to Islam or Catholicism would mean renouncing African spiritualism — giving up being themselves. To accomplish his goals the Imam usurps the throne with the complicity of the dignitaries — even the coup d'état has been imported. Combining spiritual and temporal power, the Imam reduces the recalcitrant to slavery and trades them for rifles, which he uses to force others to accept Islam.

Ceddo is a film of reflection, bringing together bits and pieces of facts and authentic events that took place in a period spanning the centuries to the present day.

In 1973 Edinburgh presented a retrospective of the work of Ousmane Sembene, including *Black Girl*, *The Money Order* and *Emitai*: also a novelist and poet, his powerful and direct descriptions of the cultural contradictions imposed on developing countries by Western intervention make him the foremost filmmaker currently working in Africa.

Ceddo was presented at the Cannes and Berlin Film Festivals.