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# REVIVALS IN FOCUS

A CRITICAL GUIDE BY ANDREW SARRIS & TOM ALLEN

## WEDNESDAY

Marcel Ophuls's **THE SORROW AND THE PITY** (1972), conceived by Ophuls and André Harris, with Pierre Mendès-France, Albert Speer, Sir Anthony Eden, and Dr. Claude Lévy, is a monumental documentary on the German occupation of France built upon eloquent eyewitness testimony from all shades of the political spectrum. There is neither fat nor fatuousness in the over four-hour running time, only the irreducible wholeness of a delicately balanced meditation on the mysteries of courage, cowardice, and commitment in an often overidealized chapter of French history. The only obvious game plan of the film is a concentration on the town of Clermont-Ferrand, near Vichy, and on the memories and testaments of those who passed through it from 1940 through 1944. The only overt bias is toward the noblest and most articulate survivors of the era. Ophuls's shaping vision pierces a bewildering array of idiosyncrasies to uncover a harsh judgment of history delivered by authentic heroes. The movie was affectionately satirized in *Annie Hall* as the



MOVIE STAR NEWS

### ***The Sorrow and the Pity*. a harsh judgment**

supreme nobility fix for revival-house habitués, a back-handed compliment to the film's rightful stature as mandatory viewing for civilized moviegoers. **Cinema Village: also Thursday, 2, 7:45**