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Cinema of Liberation: Analyzing and Archiving Third Cinema

> The people must react. To be able to react in the most revolutionary manner is magnificent. Since the people are not allowed to between life and death, only by choosing death can they choose life
>
> -Mrinal Sen, *Montage*

Introduction

In the wake of the Cuban Revolution, leftists in Latin America began raising questions surrounding the cultural politics of film, a fairly new popular medium. Previously, Latin American cinema portrayed a false reality which did not represent the politically charged climate of the 1960s. As Latin America faced scarcity and political crisis, Marxist filmmakers extended their political activism into artistic production. This act was repeated by African and Asian filmmakers as well who shared their politics and the common goals for their national cinemas. They created films which portrayed the political needs and cultural values of their audiences in order to encourage social and political change. At the same time, new aesthetic techniques were developed to adapt to this new radical attitude towards film. Film movements adopting this sentiment arose in different countries: *Cinema Novo* in Brazil, Cuban revolutionary cinema, *Cine de la Base*, and *Grupo Cine Liberación* in Argentina. Filmmakers belonging to these movements evolved into what is now Third Cinema, a cinema that addresses the social and economic injustices of the Third World and recognizes it as a result of colonialism, imperialism, and/or neocolonialism.

While Third Cinema originated in Latin America, its emancipatory goals were shared by African and Asian filmmakers. In Africa, national cinemas were emerging as the era of decolonization came to an end. In the Middle East, films were being developed in times of revolution. Asian filmmakers were also documenting the turbulent politics of their nations. Despite the events, these filmmakers were linked by common struggles. At the time of their films, their nations were going through historic changes in the Cold War. While the Western world focused on the United States and the Soviet Union, international networks of solidarity were being built amongst people of the Third World. The Cuban government sought to foster cultural and political ties amongst those united in the struggle against imperialism. I argue that Third Cinema belongs to a larger anti-imperialist project launched by the Cuban Revolution and continued by revolutionary movements throughout the Third World. In this internationalist spirit, Third Cinema not only focused on national issues, but in also telling a story that relates to the oppressed globally.

I trace the ideological and theoretical origins of Third Cinema as a tool for political change in the Cold War period. I analyze *Grupo Cine Liberación's* seminal documentary and visual essay, *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Argentina, 1968), which solidified the theoretical framework of Third Cinema in Latin America. Expanding on Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas' call for action, or the praxis of Third Cinema, I turn to Jorge Sanjinés' *The Blood of the Condor* (Bolivia, 1969) which was responsible for the expulsion of the Peace Corps in Bolivia. I also evaluate Indian-Bengali cinema, which documented the complex postcolonial struggles. examination of Bengali Marxist filmmaker Mrinal Sen's Calcutta trilogy: *Interview* (India, 1971), *Calcutta 71* (India, 1972), and *Padatik* (India, 1973). The trilogy portrays Calcutta society during the intensity of the Naxalite insurgencies--interrogating common-sense notions of fear as it relates to insurgent political movements. I link these films as they focus on life before, during, and after revolutionary periods in their nations. While these films focus on national issues, I will demonstrate how they bridge common issues of capitalist oppression internationally. I also examine the Tashkent Festival of Asian and African cinema and the Third World Filmmaker's Conference, as they establish formal networks of anti-imperialist solidarity. What follows is episodic by design. I present vignettes as episodes in Third Cinema, illustrating its dialectic of parts and whole.

Ideological Origins of Third Cinema

Cuban revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara promoted the view that Latin America, along with Asia and Africa, was a continent distorted by imperialism. The Cuban Revolution served as an example to the rest of the world, but particularly for Latin America, who had similar conditions to Cuba. As revolutionary fervor swept through the continent, the Latin American left grew rapidly. The left presented a serious threat to the United States' hegemonic relationship with the continent.. The United States attempted to strengthen their dominion over Latin America with the National Security Doctrine. With the doctrine, the Latin American military gained the most important role in the political sphere and adopted a new style of authoritarian rule. Under the command of the United States, the military abused their power in their extermination of the "communist cancer" (CIDAI 1995: 1).

The military had a long presence in Argentinian politics since the 1955 military coup d'état that removed President Juan Domingo Perón from office, followed by the beginning of the Aramburu regime. The populist policies of Perón divided Argentine between Peronists and anti-Peronists. After Perón fled Argentina, Peronism radically shifted to espouse a more socialist politics contrasting the anti-communism of the military junta. In 1966, Argentine President Arturo Illia, the first democratically elected president since Perón was ousted from power in a military coup d'état. The Argentine military accused him of being soft on the radical Peronists. The military installed General Juan Carlos Onganía as president who established an authoritarian regime repressing workers, students, and all forms of counterculture- including avant-garde cinema (Noizelles and Montaldo 2002: 343). With training from the United States, the Latin

American military adopted counterinsurgency techniques, including methods of torture. In their pursuit to stop the threat of communism, the Argentine military was responsible for kidnapping, torturing, murdering and disappearing thousands of political opponents- anyone who questioned their legitimacy (CIDAI 2002: 2). This was the beginning of a long period of censorship which only intensified opposition to the military junta.

Filmmakers, along with many political dissidents were silenced with widespread censorship in Argentina. Looking for a voice, film group *Grupo Cine Liberación*, anonymously released their powerful documentary and visual essay, *The Hour of the Furnaces.* The four-and-a-half-hour-long film was divided into three parts detailing the effects of imperialism and neocolonialism in Latin America, Peronism, and a call for liberation. The group of guerrilla filmmakers created and released the film clandestinely, navigating the production and distribution of film under political repression. The negative was smuggled out of Argentina to Italy where it was finished. With around 50 prints in circulation, it was seen by 100,000 Argentines until 1973, where it then had a commercial release with Perón's return from exile (Chanan, 1997: 1). The group released their films anonymously to protect themselves from Onganía's regime, but by doing so, made the film belong to the Argentinian people. It gave them a political voice amongst censorship. Reflecting on the film, Argentine filmmakers Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas offered their mediations on a new revolutionary cinema in "Towards a Third Cinema," which would become the theoretical framework for the movement proposing an alternative mode of production opposing the Hollywood model, in addition to creating political content.

While the term Third Cinema was coined by Getino and Solanas, the foundations were a synthesis of concepts taken from manifestoes written by participating directors such as Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa's "For an Imperfect Cinema" and Brazilian filmmaker Glauber Rocha's "The Aesthetics of Hunger." Rocha, a pioneering figure in Cinema Novo, argued that themes of hunger demonstrate the larger issues of structural violence as a result of poverty on the continent (Rocha 1997 [1965]: 59). The main concerns were to develop a cinematic style in rejection of dominant cinema and to use film as an ideological and revolutionary tool. Espinosa, belonging to the Cuban Revolutionary Cinema movement, was particularly influential, claiming that creating films using aesthetic techniques which he considered "imperfect," requires active participation from the audience (Espinosa 1979 [1966]: 2). He argued that the aesthetic perfection of the Hollywood model does not require anything from the spectator, allowing them to passively view the movie. An imperfect cinema represents the daily hardships of the viewer, and the historical processes behind it. By doing so, the audience gains agency in their viewing. Espinosa writes: "The subjective element is the selection of the problem, conditioned as it is by the interest of the audience — which is the subject. The objective element is showing the process which is the object" (Espinosa, 26). The audience becomes the subject of the film, eliminating the passive relationship between spectator and film. Although Getino and Solanas' manifesto became the

Figure 1. *Liberación* (Liberation) is flashed across the screen in the opening scenes of *Grupo Cine Liberación's The Hour of the Furnaces* (Argentina, 1968).

framework for the movement, in their revisions over a decade later, they clarified that the manifesto was their reflections based on the making of *The Hour of Furnaces* and does not serve as a rigid definition. This allowed the definition of Third Cinema to be flexible to the filmmakers writing in different political conditions (Chanan 1997: 5).

First, or dominant, cinema, served as the primary example for emerging film industries. The films imitated the Western concepts and market-driven practices of Hollywood. Films made within the Third World that espouse these Western, alien, values are not Third Cinema. It must be noted that Third Cinema is not simply films that were made in the Third World. As Teshome Gabriel insisted, Third Cinema is not defined by its geography but by its socialist and anti-imperialist politics. For example, Bollywood is the dominant film industry in India, but does not espouse the radical politics of the Indian left nor advocated for revolutionary change. Bollywood films, while portraying Indian culture, have a distinctly Western mark on its form and aesthetic. Therefore, it is not considered Third Cinema. However, the films produced outside of Bollywood such as the early films of Bengali-Marxist filmmakers Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak, are considered Third Cinema. Gabriel also declares, "Third Cinema is a cinema of the Third World which stands opposed to imperialism and class oppression in all their ramifications and

manifestations" (Gabriel 1978: 2).[1] The plots of First Cinema films focus on dramatic storylines whereas Third Cinema portrays the drama of everyday life. The seemingly normal life of the protagonist is complicated by the social, economic, and political factors that affect their ability to live, exposing capitalism as the root of the 'underdevelopment' of their continents.

While Getino and Solanas insist that Third Cinema is a rejection of First and Second Cinema, Mike Wayne suggests that Third Cinema is a dialectical transformation between them (Wayne, 2005: 108). In Argentina, First Cinema had progressive origins in its content and Second Cinema had a small stint, but it was ultimately politically ineffective. Both industries were censored during different right-wing governments. Getino and Solanas' contemporary, fellow filmmaker Fernando Birri, disagreed with their claim. He asserts that First Cinema is successful in that it attracts the masses, but not an industry the Third World can support. Second Cinema viewers make a small elitist minority within the industry. Third Cinema adopts the populist and artistic components of both industries and rids itself of the hierarchical constraints.

The most significant component of Third Cinema films are its emphasis on praxis. These films should be viewed as a call for action. What action means in the national context, varies by filmmaker. Bolivian filmmaker Jorge Sanjinés believed that films should be a "summons for action" (Sanjinés 1971: 2). However, formerly exiled Chilean director Miguel Littin believed that film becomes revolutionary when it grips the masses (Littín and Crowder 1971: 8). Provocation was often used to trigger an emotional response from the audience. Filmmakers in Latin America for example, had revolutionary periods with the rise of guerrilla warfare in the continent. Some filmmakers believed that they passed that period and focused on gradually inciting the consciousness of the viewer rather than demanding immediate change. Despite the differing perspectives, Third Cinema filmmakers sought to educate and provoke their audiences in order to create a radical consciousness within the viewers.

Jorge Sanjinés' Revolutionary Cinema in Bolivia

Getino and Solanas worked closely with Sanjinés, who was in the process of forming a revolutionary cinema for Bolivia. Sanjinés who was growing disillusioned with General René Barrientos revitalization of the film industry, created a guerrilla film crew called the *Ukamau* group. Bolivia was particularly affected by their neocolonial situation. A small Bolivian elite benefitted from the nation's wealth with a history of unequal income distribution prior, considerably worse than the rest of the continent. The 1952 revolution gave power to the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), a middle-class and working-class coalition which enacted agrarian reform, gave indigenous people and women the right to vote, and nationalized the mining industry which was previously owned by 3 mining magnates with foreign owned

[1] Although definitions of Third Cinema are constantly evolving, I included Gabriel's original definition to reflect the filmmakers' urgency during this period.

companies. They were responsible for 80% of the nation's metal exports, making them among the richest men in the world, while the miners often lived in extreme poverty (Siekmeier 2000: 67). Although MNR had a radical agenda, they wanted to keep an amicable relationship with the United States and convinced them that they were equally concerned with the communist threat. Because of this, the United States supported the revolution and gave the nation $200 million in economic aid. This was less than a decade before U.S. President John F. Kennedy proposed the Alliance for Progress, a ten-year plan to boost Latin American development and economy, with less publicized interests such as weakening radical movements. MNR failed to broaden their base to include all workers and peasants, leading to political opposition. The Bolivian film industry was underfunded and often turned to the United States for financial support, adopting their ideological interests as well.

Blood of the Condor was Sanjinés second feature-length film with the *Ukamau* group to include an all-Quechua non-professional cast. The audience is introduced to the Quechua couple, Ignacio and Paulina, who are have difficulties conceiving their third child, along with other indigenous couples. Ignacio is shot by corrupt police when questioning the sudden infertility in their community. It is later revealed that the Progress Corps- a parody of the American Peace Corps- was sterilizing women in the goal of genocide. In one scene, indigenous women raid a Peace Corps clinic and forcibly sterilizes an American volunteer. Sanjinés' friend witnessed a forced sterilization and used it to express the genocidal nature of American imperialism and the colonial structures. Since there was no acknowledgement of the forced sterilization by the Bolivian and American government at the time, Sanjinés claimed it was a metaphor for the cultural genocide of indigenous people in Bolivia, in favor of mestizo culture. Bolivians were extremely convinced by the film despite his warnings, and began protesting the presence of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps stopped distributing contraceptives, closed the clinics, and experienced mass resignation by volunteers. As protests intensified, the Bolivian government collected enough evidence to expel the Peace Corps from the country (Sanjinés 1986 [1977]: 40). For Sanjinés, this was a major blow against U.S. imperialism, who were run out of the nation by mass protest. This emphasized the communicability of Third Cinema films, or the conscious effort to produce films which captured popular interest.

> This communicability, if structured by a dialectical concept of the relationship between film and the people, would avoid the twin stumbling blocks of paternalism and elitism. It was a matter of deepening the perception and representation of reality, for clarity of language could not derive from a mere simplification but had to come from a lucid synthesis of reality (Sanjinés 1986 [1977]: 40-41).

Sanjinés did acknowledge faults with the film such as his use of experimental techniques– which only confused viewers– and his bourgeois assumptions of Quechua community. He chose

Figure 2. Quechua leaders form a mob to confront Peace Corps volunteers in Jorgé Sanjines, *The Blood of the Condor* (Bolivia, 1968)

to not use these techniques such as close-ups in favor of an objective gaze which removed his subjective role as the director. Sanjinés shares an anecdote in production where his film crew was rejected by the local Quechua people after appealing to their community leader. They are confused as to why the leader didn't convince the community to join and support their film, even though they stated their honest intentions and the high wages for participants. They realized it was a bourgeois assumption to presume that they were vertically dependent on their leader. Quechua people think of themselves as a community before as individual beings. (Sanjinés 1986 [1977]: 46). By removing close ups, there is no focus on the individual, but rather a "non- psychological gaze that facilitates participation of indigenous cultures where the notion of the individual does not predominate and a close up diminishes the 'freedom to think, act, invent'" (Fradinger, 2016: 51). It replaces the individual protagonist with a collective protagonist. By eliminating "actors" and using the community to tell their own story, it also creates a horizontally structured filmmaking process, echoing the goal of a democratized film crew in "Towards a Third Cinema."

The aftermath of the film confirmed the most important aspect for him which was the role of the active participant. This is what pushes *defensive* cinema to become *offensive* cinema. Sanjinés wrote

> A revolutionary process does not exist, nor is it ever realized, *except* through the mobilization and dynamic participation of the people. Likewise, with revolutionary cinema. If it does not happen, it is because there is no reciprocity. And if there is no reciprocity, it means that there is opposition, ideological conflict. Because what the artist gives to the people, should be nothing less than what he or she receives from them (Sanjinés 1986 [1977]: 47)

For him the most important quality of a film is its ability to mobilize the masses. Through his form, he relates a communal element found both in indigenous traditions and Marxist aesthetics. He notes the dialectical relationship between the film and its audience. The goal of Sanjinés' film was to create discussion and debate for the spectator. By doing so, he awakened a revolutionary consciousness within his audience.

Naxalite Insurgency in Mrinal Sen's Calcutta Trilogy

By the 1960s, the Golden Age of Bollywood was coming to an end and the expanding industry solidified itself as the dominant and most mainstream of cinemas in India. At the same time, a parallel cinema had emerged, challenging the dominant melodramatic musical genre. Inspired by Italian neorealism, filmmakers associated with his movement depicted the Indian reality, which Bollywood films often tended to overlook. The Bengali filmmakers that launched the movement documented the socioeconomic reality of India, emphasizing the politically charged environment of Calcutta. Bengali filmmaker Mrinal Sen's assessment of Calcutta is the most critical of political unrest in the city, recognizing the moral failings of the Indian government and the left. Bengal had become an active site of Naxalite activity, sparking an urban and rural guerrilla war amongst the widespread poverty and high unemployment.[2] Along with contemporary Satyajit Ray, Sen created his Calcutta Trilogy including films: *Interview, Calcutta 71,* and *Padatik*. Unlike other filmmakers associated with this movement, Sen was the most overtly political in his form and content. In an interview he stated

> I was arrested. There were killings and murders around every corner. I could hardly step out of the house. It was the worst of times for the country but the best of times to carry out experiments like this. To make an attempt at establishing some sort of difference. That was

[2] Naxalites are Maoist guerrillas currently at conflict with the Indian government. Naxalite insurgency began in 1967 in Northeast India originally as peasant revolts, but became a national movement supported by then newly formed Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Naxalites groups have been declared as terrorist organizations for their violent attacks

> also when I was watching a lot of Latin American films. After I made *Interview*, I had reached a point of no return. There was no looking back. Then I made *Calcutta 71*…
> (Sen, 2018 [2001]: 83)

Sen, a lifelong Marxist, was committed to highlighting the unending violence of Calcutta during the Naxalite insurgency in his trilogy. Sen did not identify his work as Third Cinema, but he supported the films, which became a source of inspiration. When *Calcutta 71* was released, "wanted" leftists were arrested on the queue for the film. Sen was also confronted by numerous angry spectators who happened to see dead family members in his shots of Calcutta streets (Sen, 2018 [2001]: 84). He was aware of the fact that his films were impactful mainly because of the times that they were released. In contrast to Bollywood, Sen's trilogy fulfills the promise of creating films of relevance to the audience's social, economic, and political environment.

Calcutta had become a city of unrest, dealing with increasing unemployment and poverty. Class antagonisms grew in the rural areas most notably, the Naxalbari Uprising in 1967, which spread quickly to the urban populations. Calcutta became the center of Naxalite activity, exposing the political anxieties that had been presence since the Independence era (Ghosal, 2015: 88). The middle-class protagonist of *Interview* has the seemingly straightforward task of attending a job interview. This goal is complicated by the fact that his Western style suit is at the laundry, whose workers are on strike, leaving him to wear his traditional dhoti and kurta. Sen reveals the pervasiveness of the colonial mindset in Calcutta society, long after gaining independence. His next film in the trilogy *Calcutta 71,* is split into 4 stories spanning over 4 decades, nonlinearly documenting the city descent into poverty beginning with the aftermath of the Bengal famine. The last film, *Padatik*, was centered on a Naxalite outlaw who hides in a rich divorcée's apartment, contemplating his role as a revolutionary amongst the breakdown of the Indian left.

Padatik, locates an issue of leadership within the Indian left. The protagonist, Sumit, is a young Naxalite who is directed to hide from the police in the apartment of a wealthy Naxal sympathizer, Mrs. Mitra. While *Padatik* is the only full narrative of the trilogy, Sen pays homage to Marxist filmmakers through his incorporation of newsreel footage through the film. Sen highlights the violent nature of the capitalist system through his juxtaposition of these techniques. In the film, advertising executive Mrs. Mitra creates a commercial for a baby food company depicting images of a mother and with an upbeat song playing in the background. Sen immediately plays this commercial again, but now removing the initial images and instead placing photos of the Calcutta street- particularly half-starved people. The film also frequently visits a newspaper printing press between scenes, flashing shocking headlines across the screen detailing the cities crackdown of Naxalite activity, unemployment, and inequality. Through Sen's isolation of Sumit, he reveals an issue of leadership and unquestioning faith in an ideology.

Figure 3. Sumit contemplates leaving Mrs. Mitra's apartment and risking his freedom in order to visit his dying mother in Mrinal Sen's *Padatik* (India, 1973)

Despite *Padatik* being a controversial release, Sen stated

> My business is to disturb them, my spectators, and to start a dialogue, if not between the spectator and myself, then between the spectator and his fellow- spectator… Many of the Marxist-Leninist activists in Bengal did not like my film at all. They hated it [*Padatik*]. Yet some of them found it to have some substance politically speaking. For me that is good enough, for the film can then provoke a discussion of a political nature. Whether you like this film or not whether you accept my point of view or not is another matter. But the very fact that my film acts as somewhat of an agent to provoke a dialogue on political issues, that is where I feel I succeed (Sen, 2018 [1983]: 197)

At the root of Sen's films is a desire to provoke his audiences, mimicking Getino and Solanas' declaration of their film as a "film-act" (Solanas and Getino, 1970: 10). He reorients the camera to focus on the evident issues plaguing India, combating the neocolonialist misinformation of dominant cinema, compelling the spectator to act.

Sen's contribution to Third Cinema should not be understated. Sen went beyond his role as a filmmaker and became a political mediator for Latin American filmmakers imprisoned by

their government. In 1972, Sen received a letter from Colombian filmmaker Carlo Alvarez from jail, who was imprisoned along with his family for producing subversive films. Sen, with other filmmakers, wrote communiques and letters to the United Nations and other human rights organizations to create international pressure on the government. It has not been determined whether Alvarez was released by these efforts or released at all. Sen notes the absences of several Latin American filmmakers who managed to escape into exile, or worse, became "disappeared" like Glauber Rocha, Raymundo Gleyzer, and Patricio Guzman- all filmmakers associated with the early Third Cinema movement (Sen, 2018 [1994]: 224-226).[3] The network created by Third Cinema films is a clear example of solidarity in the global anti-imperialist project. The films bridged testimonies of capitalist oppression internationally, compelling the filmmakers themselves to act. Sen's solidarity with Latin American filmmakers demonstrated the moral foundations of Third Cinema.

Third Cinema and Anti-Imperialist Solidarity

Third Cinema films fundamentally creates a common language amongst those who have been excluded from the gains of the colonial and capitalist system. Often due to political constraints, Third Cinema filmmakers could not always meet other filmmakers outside of their country. In addition to the films themselves, formal networks of solidarity were being formed. The most significant to the cause of a radical cinema were the First Tashkent Festival for African and Asian Cinema, the Third World Filmmakers Conference, and the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Third World (not Third Cinema) films gained international recognition at film festivals, usually organized by sympathetic countries in Western Europe. Third Cinema films gained a new meaning at this new festival, altering its political meanings. The First Tashkent Festival for African and Asian Cinema premiered in the Uzbekistan capital, providing a new space for dialogue amongst Third World nations.[4] Many interpret the launch of the Soviet film festival as a strategic geopolitical move in the Cold War, fostering relationships with non-aligned countries who have shunned the hegemony of the great powers. However vital it was to the Cold War strategy, it created a new "contact zone" for Third Cinema filmmakers (Djagalov and Salazkina, 2016: 282). Tashkent provided a platform for promoting an oppositional cinema that did not follow framework of the Hollywood model or auteurist cinema. Soviet and Third Cinema filmmakers also bonded over their films' shared peripheral status to Hollywood and Western European cinema (Djagalov and Salazkina, 2016: 294). Tashkent attempted to break the monopoly of the Western film industries and establish a voice for Third Cinema films.

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[3] "Disappeared" or *desaparecidos* refers to people who have been secretly arrested and kidnapped by an authoritarian government. The term emerged during the Argentine Dirty War (1973-1983) when the US-backed military junta began a period of state terrorism against those suspected of political dissidence. The junta destroyed any evidence by throwing prisoners into the Atlantic Ocean.

[4] Latin American filmmakers were granted "observer status" until 1976, when they became eligible to participate.

Tashkent fostered ties with the Soviet bloc, but a more radical alternative was offered in the Third World Filmmakers Conference. From December 5 to 13, 1973, over 20 filmmakers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America attended the Third World Filmmakers Conference in Algiers.[5] The conference included filmmakers from Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Chile, Colombia, the Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Senegal, and Tunisia. Among the delegation were noted filmmakers Med Hondo, Ousmane Sembene, and Fernando Birri, along with other filmmakers and observers, all equally invested in political and social change. They were all concerned with their role as filmmakers in the struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism. The Committee of People's Cinema discussed the development of capitalism on a global scale, the issues of imperialism and neocolonialism within their own countries, and the role of cinema in these struggles. The resolutions concluded:

> Films being a social act within a historical reality, it follows that the task of the Third World filmmaker is no longer limited to the making of films but is extended to other fields of action, such as articulating, fostering, and making the new films understandable to the masses of people by associating himself with the promoters of people's cinemas, clubs, and itinerant film groups in their dynamic action aimed at disalienation and sensitization in favor of a cinema which satisfies the interests of the masses, for at the same time that the struggle against imperialism and for progress develops on the economic, social, and political levels, a greater and greater awareness of the masses develops, associating cinema in a more concrete way in this struggle. (Sembene, 2014 [1973]: 280)

The conference sought to expand the role of the filmmaker. They must create a new cinematic language which is identifiable with their audiences. By addressing the social, economic, and political concerns that underpin the misery of their audiences, they also attack the imperialist forces that create it. The attendees of the conference agreed that Third Cinema was not only for the filmmaker's national audience, but for the entire Third World. They recognize that the emancipatory goals of their films are obvious demands that are shared by all of those in the struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism. The Committee on People's Cinema ended their resolution with a fierce condemnation of American imperialism and listed their crimes against the Third World. They declare their solidarity with all of those in the struggle against imperialism. The demands of the committee mimic the voice of Che Guevara. In the Message to the Tricontinental, Guevara wrote,

> Our every action is a battle cry against imperialism, and a battle hymn for the people's unity against the great enemy of mankind: The United States of America… our battle cry, may have reached some receptive ear and another hand may be extended to wield our weapons

[5] There were also observers from the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Italy as well. This was done on the conditions that they would not exercise any political or ideological hegemony over the filmmakers.

> and other men be ready… with the staccato singing of the machine-guns and new battle cries of war and victory. (Guevara, 2003 [1966]: 64)

For Guevara, in this context, the battle against imperialism, is a military confrontation between the Third World and its aggressors. For Third Cinema filmmakers, production, aesthetic, viewership, and distribution are all political acts in the anti-imperialist struggle. Getino and Solanas powerfully state in their manifesto, "the camera is a gun which shoots twenty-four frames per second" (Getino and Solanas, 1970: 8). The camera is a weapon of war. For the viewer, attending a screening and understanding that the film correlates with their reality, is a political act itself. The consciousness-raising principles of Third Cinema filmmakers goes beyond borders as the internationalist writings of Che Guevara suggest.

The conference was organized in the internationalist spirit, mostly initiated by Cuban internationalism. In 1966, Cuba organized and hosted the Tricontinental Conference. Delegations representing different organizations of national liberation met in Havana to discuss economic assistance for newly independent states through the lens of internationalism. After the assassination of Tricontinental secretary and Moroccan politician Medhi Ben Barka and the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban government felt the urgency of developing a united front against imperialism. Out of the conference, the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) was born. OSPAAAL's main objective was to build ties amongst liberation struggles internationally. OSPAAAL published the *Tricontinental Magazine*, further publicizing various struggles of the time, but from a Third World Marxist perspective such as the resistance in Palestine, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, the Black Panthers in the United States, and other causes in support for a liberated Third World.

At the Third World Filmmakers Conference, the committee on distribution announced the creation of the Third World Cinema office, to be located in Algiers. It resulted in the organization and distribution of Third World cinema, particularly Third Cinema. The office secured the production and distribution of these films, so that they may be screened despite restrictions on political film in the viewer's country. It also helped ensure that films would find audiences despite First Cinema's monopoly on the industry.

Conclusion

As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Cold War came to an end, and so did the concept of a Third World. The political climate was drastically changing globally. After Indira Gandhi declared Emergency powers in India from 1975-1977, repressing Naxalite activity, the appeal of guerrilla warfare mostly died down. In Latin America authoritarian regimes were weakening, and civil society emerged in their push for democratization. Through these major shifts, other alternatives were proposed, slowly discarding the Marxist model of revolution. The Third World became the Global South, a new term to describe the lower income, industrializing or industrialized countries with a history of colonialism. Despite attempts to recategorize these countries, what was formerly

the Third World, does not require a single identification. The Third World contained a plethora of cultures, languages, and identities, but ultimately was a political space for African, Asian, and Latin America vis-à-vis the Cold War superpowers. As the Cold War came to an end, these filmmakers sought new ways to reinvent alternative cinemas that reflected the new multicultural world, often responding to issues such as racism, globalization, and gender.

Gabriel proposes that Third Cinema lives as popular memory today (Gabriel 1989: 2). Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzmán screened his influential documentary on the 1973 coup and Pinochet-era repression, *The Battle of Chile* (Chile, 1975-1979), for a group of students in his 1996 documentary, *Chile, Obstinate Memory* (Chile, 1996). The students who only knew of Salvador Allende through Pinochet's anti-communist propaganda, were moved to tears when witnessing the actual atrocities of the 1973 coup. The film pits official history against collective memory. This tension echoes the goals of the Third World Filmmakers Conference to create a popular history for the people. As popular memory, it also serves as a framework for filmmakers to create new narratives that call for radical political action. In addition to national memory, the anti-imperialist project launched by Third Cinema filmmakers remains in what is now considered "global cinema" through their formal networks of solidarity. Third Cinema had established a cinematic space for peripheral nations to exchange their narratives of resistance, in which it confronted the violent capitalist forces that underpinned their oppression.

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