

fare and justice, but with political freedom as well. In fact, in the name of economic freedom, powerful interests ranging from labor unions to corporations may pose a catastrophic threat to the rest of society. Gordon has harsh words for British labor syndicalism that threatens to subvert English freedom of the press.

Welfare, on the other hand, is an unambiguous good that does not threaten the status of justice, although Gordon finds it impossible to predict the effect of incremental changes in welfare on economic, intellectual, and political freedom. Political freedom itself is the least ambiguous of goods. An increase in political freedom, according to Gordon's careful analysis, has a beneficial effect on all other social goods.

Gordon's is a significant contribution to contemporary social, political, and economic debate. Its greatest shortcoming is perhaps its very large debt to Mill's *On Liberty*. In fact, to restate Mill's conclusions is to restate Gordon's: "a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments...even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished, and that the perfection of machinery to which it has sacrificed everything will in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly, it has preferred to banish." **WV**

**FRENCH CINEMA
OF THE OCCUPATION
AND RESISTANCE: THE BIRTH
OF A CRITICAL ESTHETIC**

by **André Bazin**

(Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.; 166 pp.; \$12.95)

Philip Sicker

During the Nazi occupation of Paris, François Truffaut recalls in his introduction, it was common to find no less than sixty pairs of women's panties after the last Sunday showing in the city's largest movie palace. With the dance halls closed and the City of Light under blackout, Parisians sought sex and warmth, shelter and fantasy in the narrower and more reassuring darkness of the cinema. The films they saw between air raid alerts usually offered

little of the variety and originality they were accustomed to. France's greatest directors—Jean Renoir, Max Ophuls, and René Clair—had fled to Hollywood, and the output of the directors who remained was reduced to a trickle by the rigid censorship of the Vichy government. The times seemed anything but propitious for the publication of cogent, unbiased film reviews, much less for "the birth of a critical esthetic" of the cinema. Yet it is precisely a film aesthetic—a specific grammar and analytic framework within which films might be discussed as works of art—that this collection of thirty-two reviews and essays by the great French film critic André Bazin strives to establish. Written between 1941 and 1946, when Bazin was in his twenties, and published mainly in university newspapers, the pieces discuss the mise-en-scène of particular films, briefly summarize cinematic trends, and make broad formulations of the function of film and film criticism. What all of the pieces share, however, is Bazin's tone of urgent intellectual authority, his sense of his mission to unify and reinvigorate French culture by awakening both creators and critics to the cinema's unique role as the twentieth century's only "popular art." The man who would later produce in *What Is Cinema?* one of our most seminal collections of film theory and criticism, believed from the outset of his career that it was only through the cinema that "art and the people could be reintegrated." Bazin has patience neither with those hide-bound intellectuals who had turned away from film when the dawn of sound made it appealing to the masses nor with those movie producers and hordes of patrons who, insensitive to the combined efforts of director, scenarist, and cinematographer, had created instead "the depraved cult of the star."

Briefly stated, cinema's obligation as a unifying force is to express "the soul" of its society with "care for material exactitude and moral authenticity." Even the finest films made in France during the Occupation fail to satisfy the demands of Bazin's realistic aesthetic. Carne's allegorical *Les Visiteurs du Soir* (*The Devil's Own Envoy*) takes place in the Middle Ages; Delonnoy's *L'Eternel Retour* (*The Eternal Return*) recasts the Tristan legend in a modern setting; while Bresson's *Les Anges du Péché* (*Angels of the Streets*) explores the moral struggles of a novice within

cloister walls. Judicious and penetrating in his praise of the fusion of literary, dramatic, and directorial talents that produced these films, Bazin still finds that such works of fantasy, enchantment, and historical remoteness pale beside the expressive naturalism of Carne's earlier *Le Jour Se Lève* (*Daybreak*) and the comprehensive cultural awareness of Renoir's *La Grande Illusion*. In his impatience Bazin seems at times to forget not only the Occupation audience's need for imaginative escape, but the fact that any film that dared express the "soul"—the rage, humiliation, and hatred—of millions of Frenchmen who jammed the theatres would be suppressed and destroyed. The limitations of Bazin's notion of realism are most clearly evident in the fact that he saw in Carne's *Les Enfants du Paradis* (*Children of Paradise*) not a brilliant recreation of French theatre life in the eighteenth century nor a testimony to the enduring spirit of art in the face of political chaos, but "meagerness and inadequacy" beneath its "stylistic finesse."

More exacting and prescient than Bazin's views on the role of "The Seventh Art" are his discussions of the function of film criticism. "One day," Bazin confidently predicts, "we will have an 800 page thesis on the art of comedy in American movies between 1905 and 1917...and who then will dare maintain that the subject cannot be taken seriously?" But before film criticism could so establish itself in the academy, Bazin realized, it had to broaden its awareness of the popular nature of the art, take into account "the sociological, economic and technological forces that determine it." Moreover, unlike any criticism before it, film criticism would have to create, in just a few decades, its own tradition, history, and sense of purpose. "One would think that, like the intangible shadows on the screen, this unusual art has no depth. It is more than time to invent a criticism in relief."

Bazin addresses his most ambitious pieces ("Toward a Cinematic Criticism," "The Cinema and Popular Art," and "For a Realistic Esthetic") to film critics because he regards them as appropriate high priests of the "popular art." Ideally, they are an "elite," who seek to spread their special understanding of both the aesthetic and social dimensions of film, cultural unifiers who encourage directors to create films

that embody the unrealized yearnings and potential of their race and who educate the public in interpreting these expressions of its own soul. If Bazin stops short of Matthew Arnold's notion of art criticism as a secular substitute for religion, he nonetheless assigns to it a role that may seem quixotic today, when production companies and billion-dollar conglomerates, not reviewers, form popular taste, when intelligent film criticism has generated only its own elite readership, and when the distinction between "movies" and "the cinema" seems bolder than ever.

Bazin's hopes may seem improbable, but even in this collection of his earliest efforts he has given us a model of what film criticism can and should be. At their best these pieces contain far more than the "minimum of intelligence, of culture, of honesty" that he asks of his fellow critics. Bazin can dissect and recompose a few frames of celluloid with the same incisive thoroughness that Ruskin discussed a painting. This is film criticism of a high order, criticism that, at once, encourages speculation upon the boundless potential of cinematic analysis and reminds one of how rarely it has lived up to this potential. **WV**

**DOUBLETALK:
THE STORY OF SALT I**

by Gerard Smith
(Doubleday; 473 pp.; \$14.95)

THE SOVIET UNION AND SALT
by Samuel B. Payne, Jr.

(MIT Press; 110 pp.; \$19.95)

Roger Zane George

The reader of these two very different volumes on SALT, the strategic arms limitation talks, will come away with a single question: How did the United States and the Soviet Union manage to conclude a SALT I agreement, much less come close to a second accord? Gerard Smith, the former director of the U.S. Arms Control Agency and a professional negotiator for thirty years, chronicles the twists and turns of SALT I. Professor Samuel Payne, an expert on factional struggles in the Soviet Politburo, articulates the "militarist" and the "arms controller" poles of opinion within the Soviet leadership. Both accounts capture the fragility and uncer-

tainty of the negotiating process. The two accounts taken together lead to doubts that the concept of arms reductions can survive the current state of Soviet-American relations.

Gerard Smith, in public service since the London Disarmament Conference of 1957 and head of the U.S. SALT delegation from 1969 to 1972, speaks with some authority, and his story of SALT I is bittersweet. The book praises the positive contributions of his delegation to the 1972 ABM treaty but damns Dr. Kissinger for his now famous "back channel" negotiations with the Soviet leadership. The author's most fervent wish is that future presidents rely more on a "collegial" approach to negotiations with the Russians than on the personal style of a Henry Kissinger. Totally ignorant of the important agreements between Kissinger and the Politburo, Smith could not properly advise the president. The delegation later found problems arising from the ambiguities of these unrecorded agreements. One such area that became a major stumbling block involved limitations on submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). According to Smith, Henry Kissinger once implied in a casual remark to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin that as far as the U.S. was concerned SLBMs might or might not be included in an interim offensive agreement. "Here in one sentence," complains Smith, "the position which the United States had pressed for almost a year was changed." It was not until shortly before the May, 1972, interim freeze was signed that the White House gained Soviet acceptance of an SLBM limit. By then it had also accepted terms permitting larger Soviet submarine forces, a condition no one in the delegation had favored.

The irony of this vignette and many others throughout the book is deepened by the president's rude treatment of the delegation. Mr. Nixon's reputed aversion to "arms controllers" seems out of place. The delegation, after all, included Paul Nitze, later co-founder of the anti-SALT II Committee on the Present Danger, and Dr. Harold Brown, former secretary of defense. Possibly Mr. Nitze's acrid criticism of the recent SALT efforts stems from a lingering distrust of White House judgment on how negotiations should be conducted with the Russians.

Lest the reader be misled, the Smith volume is much more than just a

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