

**Some pages of this thesis may have been removed for copyright restrictions.**

If you have discovered material in AURA which is unlawful e.g. breaches copyright, (either yours or that of a third party) or any other law, including but not limited to those relating to patent, trademark, confidentiality, data protection, obscenity, defamation, libel, then please read our [Takedown Policy](#) and [contact the service](#) immediately

**AU SERVICE DU MARECHAL?**

French Documentary Under German Occupation

STEVE WHARTON

Doctor of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

July 1991

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.



The University of Aston in Birmingham

*AU SERVICE DU MARÉCHAL?*  
*FRENCH DOCUMENTARY UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION*

Steve Wharton

Doctor of Philosophy

1991

Following the fall of France in June 1940 and the installation of the Vichy Regime, government set about establishing its own New Order. A reprogramming of national consciousness was attempted through an emphasis on a return to traditional values which was disseminated in various fora. Despite publications on divers aspects of Vichy's propaganda machine, work on film production of the period has merely touched on mainstream documentary without further analysis. Such a *lacuna* appears inexplicable in light of the production of 550 or so documentaries between 1940 and 1944, especially in view of a 1948 comment by the film writer Roger Régent that documentary in many ways provided a focal point for the regime's wishes for "*moralisation collective*".

This thesis sets out the first steps of a new evaluation of the role of documentary during the Occupation. After an overview of the changes to the industry and the ideological framework of the *Révolution nationale*, the thesis discusses theories of propaganda together with direct examples of Vichy propaganda documentary. The 'control' thus established is then applied to an examination of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' series of documentary screenings (1941-43) and the Premier congrès du film documentaire (1943), tracing thematic and ideological consonances and evaluating the use of documentary film of the Occupation in the Service of the Marshal.

Key words: Vichy, Film, Propaganda

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Dennis and Marina Wharton, who have shown me throughout my life that goodness, love, understanding and the determination to defend them, are qualities to be prized.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the following people for their help in various ways during the preparation of this thesis:

My parents, Dennis and Marina Wharton, and my supervisor, Dr Lorna Milne, for their support and guidance. Thanks are also due to supervisors Professor Dennis Ager and Dr Susan Hayward. Colleagues at the University of Bath have seen me through the production process, providing encouragement and copious cups of coffee. Certain of them deserve especial mention, and they know who they are!

Research in various archives in Great Britain and abroad was facilitated by: Véronique Fusée and the staff of Atlantic Film; Chantal Bonazzi and the staff of the Archives Nationales, Paris; the staff of the Public Record Office, Kew; the British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; the British Film Institute and National Film Archive; the Imperial War Museum; the Centre National de la Cinématographie, Bois d'Arcy; Etablissement Cinématographique et Photographique des Armées, Fort d'Ivry; the Cinémathèque de Toulouse; Faculté de Droit, Université de Paris; Archives de la Ville de Paris; (formerly East German) Archiv für wissenschaftlichen Film, Berlin; Pathé archive, Joinville-le-Pont; Jean-Pierre Berthin-Maghit; Anne St Dreux; and André Tadié. Any omission from the foregoing list is purely unintentional.

My final thanks go to Jean Renoir, whose *La Règle du jeu* set me off along the doctoral research path.

## CONTENTS

Summary		2
Dedication		3
Acknowledgements		4
Contents		5
Tables and Figures		6
Introduction		7
Chapter One	Past, Present, Future: relevant developments in cinema under Vichy	20
Chapter Two	Myths, Cults and Theories of Communication	43
Chapter Three	Ideology and Propaganda under Vichy	64
Chapter Four	Themes and Variations: The 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' Screenings	95
Chapter Five	<i>Lettres de noblesse</i> : the Premier congrès du film documentaire	125
Chapter Six	Conclusion: Au service du Maréchal?	157
Bibliography		207
Appendix I	Programmes at the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées	219
Appendix II	Arts, Sciences, Voyages Screenings	220
Appendix III	Programme for the Premier congrès du film documentaire	223
Appendix IV	André Robert, biographical entry in <i>L'ABC</i>	226
Appendix V	Vichy Posters	227
Appendix VI	Documentaries produced 1940-1944	238

## Tables and Figures

Table 1	Thematic similarities in propaganda film	122
Table 2	Subsidies to the Film Industry 1940-1944	194
Figure 1	Poster, " Etes-vous plus français que lui?"	57
Figure 2	"La Pensée que nous servons", <i>Brochure</i> for the Premier congrès du film documentaire, 1942	127
Figure 3	Poster, "Donne à ton fils l'amour de ton métier"	228
Figure 4	Poster, "L'Empire réclame des hommes d'élite, des savants, des techniciens"	229
Figure 5	Poster, "Vos dépenses seront moins lourdes..."	230
Figure 6	Poster, "Trois couleurs, un drapeau, un Empire"	231
Figure 7	Poster, "Travail, Sport"	232
Figure 8	Poster, "Le métier reste"	233
Figure 9	Poster, "Vous avez la clef des camps"	234
Figure 10	Poster, "Du travail vous attend à la campagne"	235
Figure 11	Poster, "Retournez à la terre"	235
Figure 12	Poster, "Ils ont construit ta patrie"	236



## INTRODUCTION

The history of documentary is the history of exploring new fields of material, always with difficulty at first, then easier and better<sup>1</sup>.

The invention of Lumière's *cinématographe* in 1895 marked the first step on the road towards a new form of popular entertainment. Whereas theatre could take the spectator to an imagined representation of an event or circumstance, film provided a reproduction of the event itself. As time passed, more and more people went to see films, be they of actual events - state funerals, visits, etc. - or playlets with their own storyline, and the cinema exerted ever more power over its audience, either as storyteller, interpreter, or purveyor of fact or fiction.

Be it as a medium of entertainment or information, film can be argued to play a part in the life of the society in which it is viewed. Much has been written on the power of the moving image, and of the cinema as social activity. There is agreement that analysis of film can give an insight into the period in which it was made: Keith Reader speaks of events in film being "rooted in the economic and political conjunctures...of their time"<sup>2</sup>, and as such they cannot but reflect those conjunctures and their effects.

Film therefore becomes a primary research tool for historians or sociologists, enabling them to gain greater insight into the period in which particular films were made. Every film becomes a research document, since it places on record (celluloid in this case) the actions or thoughts of

---

<sup>1</sup> Grierson, "The Documentary Idea", in Hardy, p117

<sup>2</sup> Reader, p116

people at a given time. The pioneering works of the Lumière brothers survive as the first of these documents: *Sortie des usines Lumière* (1895), *L'Entrée d'un train en gare* (1895), and those less *actuel* such as *L'arroseur arrosé*.

This filmic document can take several forms: feature film (entertainment), newsreel (information), and documentary. What is of interest in this thesis is documentary, the recording of events on celluloid not for reasons of pure entertainment, but rather to inform and educate. Documentary provides a contrast to the 'imaginative' of the feature film through the very 'fact' of its content. Whereas a fiction filmmaker would work to an artificially created script with actors, the documentarist takes the events or situations before the camera and uses them; the artificial sets of the fiction film are replaced by the natural setting, actors by 'real characters'. Rather than the film evolving from its (contrived) plot as was the case in fiction, the 'natural' plot of the documentary evolved from the characters and events recorded by the camera. However, despite this natural evolution, documentary is not simply descriptive: it also performs an interpretative, analytical, didactic and informative task (see below, p10). In contrast to the work of archivists, who perform function *a posteriori* with their materials to arrive at a conclusion, documentarists create the document as they portray events on film; they develop the material as they work.

As with feature film, theoretical trends in documentary have developed with the techniques of film themselves. As Guynn has noted:

“ Theories of nonfiction film are quite diverse, for every theory of documentary bears the marks of the

historical movement in which it was generated.<sup>3</sup>

And so the pioneering work of the Lumière Brothers, who had intended their discovery to be principally a recorder of events (a role which declined following the development of the more theatre-based feature film style)<sup>4</sup>, was to give way to a more poetic and then realist evocation of the subject matter. Early documentary filmmakers were a hybrid of ethnographer and educator, recording distant civilisations. So it is that we see the work of Robert Flaherty, whose *Nanook of the North* (1921) is regarded as among the first truly great documentaries, chronicling the life and activities of the Inuit people.

But this was not the only direction in which documentary developed. In the political ferment of the first decades of this century, the establishment of the Soviet system saw filmmakers such as Vertov regarding the medium more as a means of documenting socialist reality, moving therefore from a recording role to a more motivational one. Meanwhile in the West, there was a move towards a more artistic use of film, be it with city symphonies by people such as Cavalcanti and Vigo, or Georges Rouquier's portrayal of traditional agricultural life in *Vendanges* (1929); here the camera was used as a paintbrush with which to trace events through pictorial use of the medium.

With the arrival of economic collapse and the Depression, filmmakers shifted the attention of their lenses towards advocating change in the system. It was felt that

---

<sup>3</sup> Guynn, p41

<sup>4</sup> Barnouw, p8



The documentary filmmaker, dramatising issues and their implications in a meaningful way, could lead the citizen through the wilderness<sup>5</sup>.

Or as Dréville was to say in *Cinémagazine* in 1930,

dissecting the world in which we live, documentary cinema exposes everything which ordinarily goes unnoticed.<sup>6</sup>

It is at this moment that the name of John Grierson appears on the documentary stage. In contrast to Flaherty's work, which had been feature-length and dealt with subjects which were familiar despite their far-off geographical location, Grierson produced shorter works, designed to provide a commentary on a particular situation. As he himself said,

The documentary film was conceived and developed as an instrument of public use. It was conceived, moreover, as an instrument to be used systematically in all fields of public instruction and enlightenment<sup>7</sup>.

And so we can trace the development of the documentary from chronicler and poet towards a role of educator and illuminator and, as War approached and took over in 1939, even further. For masters of the genre such as Grierson, their duty in the use of documentary was clear:

as to the faithful, to stir the blood, building determinations to the highest pitch; as to the enemy to chill the marrow, paralysing the will to resist<sup>8</sup>.

There had been manifestations of this latter tendency in France in the simplest form during the First World War, when the work of the *Service Cinématographique de l'Armée* responded to the need to provide pictures

---

<sup>5</sup> Barnouw, p85

<sup>6</sup> Abel, p42, *op cit*

<sup>7</sup> Grierson, "Documentary: The Bright Example", in Hardy, pp188-189

<sup>8</sup> Barnouw, p139

of action at the front that inspired patriotism and support for the Allied cause. Outside of this period, however, documentary in France continued its 'traditional' role of lyrical chronicler.

The documentary in France has not received the critical, historic or academic attention of its British counterpart. Although research remains to be done into French documentary prior to the period studied for the purposes of this thesis, we can say that a didactic strand had developed amongst more lyrical and artistic films in France with their interest in recording events for the camera<sup>9</sup>. Such developments did not however exclude the influence of the various historical trends we have already indicated. More importantly perhaps, where Britain had its Empire Marketing Board and GPO Film Unit permitting the development of documentary technique, France did not have a corresponding body and was thus unable to develop documentary film in the same way as its *partenaire d'outre-Manche*. By the time the Second World War broke out, then, documentary in France was a medium which, though providing mainly lyrical and occasionally didactic work of interest to some, was not as well-funded and regarded as in Britain. Such is the background to the period under study in the following pages.

We have already noted that films are not made in a vacuum, reflecting as they do the period in which they are made. For the purposes of this thesis, in focusing on the period 1940-1944 the essential question is therefore the extent of impregnation with and reflection of dominant ideology conscious<sup>10</sup> or not<sup>10</sup> - on the part of the filmmaker who shapes his or her material. Excluding interviews with the filmmakers themselves (see

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf Abel

<sup>10</sup> Cf Chapter Two, p45 *et seq*

below, p16 and Daquin), resolution of this question is best achieved by examination of the films. Whilst feature film of the Occupation has been the subject of much study, the role of documentaries of the period has been largely ignored. L glise's *Histoire de la politique du cin ma fran ais*, which devotes an entire volume to the Occupation, makes only passing reference to the documentary in half a page. Bertin-Maghit (1990) also pays little attention to documentary, and indeed is inaccurate with regard to the screenings forming the main corpus of this thesis<sup>11</sup>. Although Pr dal's recent work *Le Documentaire fran ais* looks at post-war documentary production, no work has yet concentrated on the Occupation from the point of view of documentary film. Where documentary has featured, for example with R gent's *Cin ma de France* (1948), it has done so more in passing since, here again, the author concentrates on feature film. R gent concludes that French cinema survived the Occupation strengthened and untainted on the whole. And yet at the same time he acknowledges documentary's role when he talks of Vichy's encouragement of "le film documentaire qui comblait, par bien des points, ses vœux de moralisation collective"<sup>12</sup>. [My emphasis.]

In view of this comment from an acknowledged film historian of the period, why, then, has documentary under Vichy not been more closely scrutinised? Any apparent academic *lacuna* hitherto could, perhaps, be justified if there were insufficient numbers of documentaries to be worthy of study; yet over 550 films (known as *courts m trages* or *moyens m trages*) were produced between 1940 and 1944 (see Appendix VI). With such a potential corpus of works, the documentary as an example of non-fiction film must not be excluded, especially since it purports to

---

<sup>11</sup> Number of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings, details of films, etc.

<sup>12</sup> R gent, p135



dramatise fact instead of fiction. The non-fiction film maker focuses his personal vision and his camera on actual situations - persons, processes, events - and attempts to render a creative interpretation of them<sup>13</sup>.

The documentary therefore becomes of prime importance in the study of any given society, but certainly so in view of the Vichy régime's attempts to refashion post-Armistice France into a new order. Its exclusion from discussions of the period is therefore all the more puzzling.

This thesis attempts the first steps along the road of evaluating the role of documentary film during the Occupation, and seeks to discover whether, during that time, the creative interpretation of events combined with "voeux de moralisation collective" to serve the régime. It was not until 1940-41 that pre-war reports on the administration and funding of the film industry were acted upon by a government anxious to ensure more centralised control of many aspects of life, and film was reorganised and brought into line as an industry rather than as an art form (*cf* Chapter One, p25). If government which shaped, controlled and promoted this industry was clearly using other artistic material for propaganda - for example, books, posters and the press<sup>14</sup> - can we assume that the documentary was also brought into service for the provision of propaganda through educational guise? The title of the thesis, adapted from the comment in the *Brochure* for the Premier Congrès du film documentaire of 1943<sup>15</sup>, poses our essential question: In documentary of the period, do we see the specific programming of ideologically acceptable material that reinforced the messages whose inculcation was sought by Vichy? If so, how is this achieved?

---

<sup>13</sup> Barsam, p6

<sup>14</sup> *Cf* below, Chapter Two

<sup>15</sup> *Cf* below, p15; and Chapter Five

From a practical point of view, the principal problem in assessing the importance of the role of documentary for the period in question is that less than 50% of the material survives. As has been noted:

Documentary film is particularly vulnerable to loss, as even government-sponsored films are likely to disappear once they have served their...purpose<sup>16</sup>.

For the period under study, there is an additional factor, that of the poor quality of film used. Financial constraints of the time led producers to use cheap fast film stock<sup>17</sup>, and the nitrate film then in use is highly flammable; films are liable to spontaneous combustion. A fire at the Centre national de la cinématographie in the 1960s destroyed some 50% of the surviving material of the period held there<sup>18</sup>, and the only known surviving copy of *Dans les canyons du Colorado* (1938) outside the CNC - whose own copy is *non inventoriée* - was discovered recently at Atlantic Film and in 1987 was awaiting processing to render it stable, having almost been lost when its tin was opened<sup>19</sup>.

How, then, may we obtain a representative sample of Occupation documentary production? If we exclude material specifically made for use by government ministries and distributed by them (as opposed to material on general release), and if less than 50% of the material has survived, we are therefore left with a notional *maximum* of 275 films. We must then find a way of delimiting the corpus of material studied for the purposes of the thesis so that we arrive at a representative yet not artificially chosen sample from that notional maximum.

---

<sup>16</sup> Lisa Pontecorvo, "The raw material", in Smith, p17

<sup>17</sup> Conversation with André Tadié, 2 April 1987

<sup>18</sup> Conversation with Nicole Schmitt, Director of the CNC, March 1987

<sup>19</sup> Conversation with Véronique Fusée, March 1987

During the period 1941-1943, special screenings of documentaries under the title 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' were arranged. Together with the Premier congrès du film documentaire of March-April 1943, which brought together examples of French, German, Italian and other Axis documentary, these programmes provide us with material specifically chosen at the time as reflecting the best of documentary film. And since the programmes represent a *conscious choice* of the best of documentary material in France for the period in question by André Robert, a man with contacts in and access to the industry, the 'quality' of the film would indicate a greater chance of survival than for less 'renowned' production. Moreover, the frequency and promotion of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings means that the particular films which featured would have been seen by enough audiences in France for them to have become, to some extent, representative of the genre. Of the 55 French-produced titles featuring in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes (50 excluding cartoons), 29 (58%) have been seen for the purposes of the thesis: a favourable comparison with the projected survival rate of less than 50% for overall documentary film production of the period.

A more complex set of problems for our project resides however in the need to elaborate a suitable theoretical framework for the analysis of those films which are available. One might argue, for example, that whatever the country and period, the documentary *per se* has been victim of the simple economic fact that its specialist content does not appeal to audiences generally, thereby limiting potential income and return on investment. As a result, financial backing for such films has been difficult to find. In such circumstances, the maker of a documentary is forced to seek funding under terms that compromise any artistic integrity:



No matter its social, aesthetic, educational or other purposes, a documentary film costs a good deal of money to make and sometimes to show... The great majority [of directors] have had to square up to finding private investment which receives adequate return on outlay, or alternatively involvement by a State-run industry which may carry obligations of political propaganda...<sup>20</sup>

To base our analysis on the provenance of funding alone would, however, be simplistic, as the example of Daquin's *Première de Cordée* (1943)<sup>21</sup>, made by the government-backed Ecran français company and Pathé, shows. The film, with a mountaineering theme, was hailed after the war as a work of resistance. However, it is now acknowledged by Daquin himself to be

very much impregnated with the political ideology of Pétain, with its themes of return to the land, noble struggle against natural forces, and so on<sup>22</sup>.

The same contradictions of opinion may be found with regard to Raoul Ploquin's *Le ciel est à vous* (1944). While its title evokes memories of the Popular Front's *La vie est à nous!* (1936) and its content may be seen to give a fillip to French Nationalism by showing a French world record holder (the heroine of the film) arriving in a French aircraft (a Caudron) where tricolour flags are conspicuous<sup>23</sup>, the film has also been attacked for the fact that the heroine is the hard-working mother of the type praised by the Vichy régime; and its ideological acceptability may be gauged by the fact that the film was shown to Madame Pétain and government ministers

---

<sup>20</sup> Rotha, p267

<sup>21</sup> Itself the subject of a documentary film (*Comoedia*, 18 September 1943, p5)

<sup>22</sup> Armes, p123

<sup>23</sup> The film played a further resistance rôle in that the activity of the hundreds of extras engaged for this scene at Le Bourget attracted the attention of the RAF, which bombed the airport (Semple, in Kedward and Austin, p123). Advocates of the 'collaborationist theory' point out that to film at such a site required friends in high places...

in a gala screening at Vichy on 8 February 1944<sup>24</sup>. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that whereas the right-wing reviewer Georges Sadoul opines that

cette peinture réaliste d'un certain aspect de l'héroïsme français sonna comme un appel aux armes pour ceux qui comprirent le message<sup>25</sup>,

Raymond Borde, Director of the Cinémathèque de Toulouse, refutes any such suggestion:

J'étais à l'époque militant communiste et j'affirme ici et solennellement, [que le film] fut ressenti comme un acte de propagande de l'ennemi de classe. Objectivement il servait les intérêts du Maréchal et toute la Révolution Nationale s'y retrouvait...<sup>26</sup>

Seen forty years on, the film may be said to endorse Borde's view rather than Sadoul's. It opens with shots of peasants, sheep and children (which, as we shall see in Chapter Three, were icons that featured in Vichy policies harking back to the organic France), and tells the story of a Frenchwoman's successful attempt to hold the world record for flying in a straight line. We are introduced to the family as they are preparing to move house to make way for an aerodrome, "au besoin du terrain"<sup>27</sup>. Throughout the film the principal characters profess such sentiments as, "On va travailler dur...ce seront les enfants qui vont bénéficier" and "Nous sommes une petite ville, mais nous servons une grande idée", which, as we shall go on to discuss in Chapter Two, enter the very rhetoric of Pétainist ideology explicated in the slogan "Travail, Famille, Patrie" (*cf* p67 *et seq*).

What we should underline here, however, is that these two examples neatly encapsulate the paradox of filmic investigation. It is always easy for the

---

<sup>24</sup> *Le Film*, 19 February 1944, p3

<sup>25</sup> Sadoul 1956, p56

<sup>26</sup> Courtade, p14

<sup>27</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at British Film Institute (BFI)



film historian to examine material with the benefit of hindsight and attribute themes and interpretations; yet the producers themselves may later call into question the validity of such theories. Moreover, the so-called *années noires* of French history which continue to divide opinion within and without the country can lead directors to reinvent their history in order to avoid discussion of their activities during the Occupation<sup>28</sup>. We must also seek evidence as to the reception of the films themselves, both at the time of screening and subsequently over the years (*cf* below, p48 *et seq*).

In order to attempt a resolution of this paradox, the thesis will establish our historical context in Chapter One by exploring the legal reforms and changes to the administrative framework of the film industry, drawing parallels with its German counterpart. We shall then pass in Chapter Two to an examination of the ideology and culture of Vichy within the context of ideological theory, and to an investigation of theories of communication (meaning and the transmission of meaning, and its reception by different audiences). Chapter Three explores propaganda and applies theory to examples of acknowledged propaganda film of the period.

With a theoretical framework and series of 'control' propaganda films thus established, Chapters Four and Five of the thesis will examine material from without and within the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and the Premier congrès respectively, in order to investigate their status as possible vehicles of propaganda. In addition to this theoretical analysis of the films' storyline and content, material will also be discussed in Chapter Six with reference to comments from the trade press of the time. These press comments perform a dual role in that they complement appreciation of

---

<sup>28</sup> *Cf* p182

those films which can still be screened, and are useful in the total absence of surviving filmic material since they provide practically the only record or appreciation of the film save for brief mention of some in government records<sup>29</sup>. Whilst the historical development of the thesis follows a linear track, appropriate cross-referencing will enable the tracing of similarities of theme and content across this *schéma*.

However, before discussing content we must first discuss context, and so we begin with Pétain's radio broadcast of 17 June 1940, which was to usher in the Occupation and indeed feature in film productions of that period...

---

<sup>29</sup> *eg* Mere listings of titles, as per F42/132

## CHAPTER ONE - Past, present, future

L'Image authentique ne trompe pas, elle ne nuit pas, elle est un document historique.  
*La Cinématographie Française,*  
27 January 1940

France had been at war with her 'traditional' enemy, Germany, for a little over eight months when on 17 June 1940, listeners to French radio heard the voice of Marshal Pétain, the 84-year-old hero of Verdun so recently called from his ambassadorship in Spain to head the government following the collapse of French defences, make this announcement:

Sûr de la confiance du peuple entier, je fais à la France le don de ma propre personne pour atténuer son malheur...C'est le coeur serré que je vous dis aujourd'hui qu'il faut cesser le combat.<sup>1</sup>

With those simple words came the acknowledgement that Germany had won. Within five days the terms of an Armistice were agreed, coming into force on 25 June. They included the occupation by German troops of the northern part of France (with the Departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais becoming military zones controlled from Belgium), the reduction of French troop numbers to a mere 100 000, and French reparations of twenty million Reichsmarks (four hundred million francs at the prevailing rate). Rather than govern their newly-divided country from occupied territory (for Paris lay within the *zone interdite*), the government retired to Vichy in the free zone, commandeering hotels to accommodate its various ministries. For four years, then, until the entry of Free French troops into Paris, southern France was governed from this unassuming spa town. Vichy became the administrative hub of the new Etat français whose ideologies are discussed in Chapter Three.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pétain, p41

Vichy France as it came to be known, has been a source of study for many social and political historians, who have written at length on the various aspects of this period of France's past. However, as we have seen from the Introduction, non-fiction film has not featured in this research<sup>2</sup>. Non-fiction film falls broadly into two categories, newsreel and documentary. The newsreel is to a certain extent self-explanatory: an evocation of a particular series of events, selected and commented on for the information of the cinema-goer. The process of selection and commentary is of importance in this field, for the propagandistic nature of the newsreel on all sides during the war has already been the subject of limited study<sup>3</sup>. In the case of Occupied France where the newsreel company was an expressly created Franco-German organisation (France-Actualités-Pathé-Gaumont; cf p35 *et seq*), it is worthy of further research outside the scope of this thesis.

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates a capacity for veracity in both documentary and newsreel, but the *documentary* differs from the newsreel however in its length, the individuality of its subject, and its capacity to treat its subject in greater depth than the constraints of newsreel could allow. Newsreel seeks ostensibly to inform the viewer of recent and even momentous events. Documentary however goes further: it broaches a much wider variety of subjects at much closer quarters. As the potential

*medium with a message...[whose maker]  
wishes to persuade, or even influence, and to  
change his audience*<sup>4</sup>,

documentary may even possess greater scope to achieve this aim.

---

<sup>2</sup> Even though, as Chabrol's *L'Oeil de Vichy* (1993) and Marboeuf's *Pétain* (1993) have shown recently, filmmakers themselves are also beginning to become involved in studies of the period and using elements of the more readily available material in their own work. Their output has met with mixed critical reaction, which has been more historiographic than filmic.

<sup>3</sup> Cf the Channel 4/INA Co-production *Propaganda* (tx 1988)

<sup>4</sup> Barsam, p5



This potential for persuasion had not been lost on the Germans. Outlining spheres of influence of the National Socialist Revolution on 21 March 1933, Germany's Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment Josef Goebbels, declared that

la Révolution nationale ne se limitera pas à la seule politique. Elle touchera également les domaines de l'économie, de la culture en général, de la politique intérieure et extérieure et aussi du cinéma<sup>5</sup>.

That cinema should be singled out as a separate sphere of influence - why distinguish it otherwise from "la culture en général"? - shows clearly the importance of the role of film perceived by the Nazi Party. Goebbels was to make his intentions clear at the International Film Chamber of 1941:

Le film est, sans aucun doute, le moyen le plus efficace pour influencer l'opinion des peuples<sup>6</sup>.

Evidence of this belief in the propagandistic utility of film can be found in the blatantly political and often virulently anti-Semitic 'documentaries' such as *Hitlerjunge Quex*, *Jud Süß* and *Der ewige Jude* (cf p84). So keen were the Nazis to encourage film in general and the documentary in particular that they banned the cinema double bill and made cinemas screen a documentary with every programme, in addition to providing subsidies to the producers of certain documentaries (cf Welch on Nazi Germany and its film production). These measures predate similar moves made by the Vichy government during the Occupation, although in France there was a further aim, that of providing a short-term solution to the loss of French production as a result of studio damage and other factors (cf below).

---

<sup>5</sup> Courtade, p182

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *op cit*

The Vichy authorities were as aware of the power and role of film as the Nazis, for the January 1942 issue of the official review *Documents français* states openly:

Industrie de propagande sans rivale, et dont la portée dépasse de loin celle de la radio et de la presse, le cinéma français méritait, dans le mouvement de la Révolution nationale, d'être rapidement organisé<sup>7</sup>.

The (re-)organisation of the French film industry had been considered in the past, and in the opinion of many in the industry was long overdue<sup>8</sup>. Filmmaking had been disrupted in the run-up to the war and subsequent defeat by the mobilisation and imprisonment of many actors and technicians. There was also material damage: a quarter of studio space had been lost in the battle for France<sup>9</sup>. Cinemas, too, had closed, but the authorities lost no time in reopening them. This was not just for the benefit of the civilian population: certain Parisian cinemas became *Soldatenkinos* for the exclusive use of the German troops. Whatever the motivation, from mid-June to December 1940 the number of cinemas open in Paris increased twenty-five-fold<sup>10</sup>. The films shown had obviously been completed before the outbreak of hostilities, and it was not until late 1940 that the first French feature film since the outbreak of war was completed, when Pagnol finished *La fille du puisatier* which had been interrupted by the events of September 1939. Telling the story of a typical provincial family, the film ends with the contemporary generation grouped around the radio listening to Pétain's broadcast of 17 June 1940. With an eye to history (and, no doubt, for reasons of political expediency) De Gaulle's broadcast of 18 June 1940 was substituted for this part of the sequence once the war was over.

---

<sup>7</sup> Courtade, p182

<sup>8</sup> Interview with André Tadié, April 1987

<sup>9</sup> Lapierre, p265

<sup>10</sup> Léglise, p29

Whatever the desires of directors to fit in with their political masters, neither the Vichy government nor the Occupying Authorities could allow matters in the film industry to continue as before. Prior to June 1940 successive French governments had pursued an almost *laissez-faire* attitude. The *Front populaire* had commissioned a report on the film industry from Guy de Carmoy in 1936, but had not acted upon its recommendations for film financing. Practically the only pre-war legislation with regard to film had concerned itself with censorship: a decree-law of 29 July 1939 passed the role of censor to a committee of the newly-created General Commissariat for Information headed by Jean Giraudoux, its cinema and photography section headed by Yves Chataigneau who had hitherto been responsible for the promotion of French film interests abroad<sup>11</sup>. The first use of this new legislation came with France's entry into the war, when certain films were withheld from screening on the grounds of content. They fell into three categories: war films; those seen as "morbides, déprimants, immoraux et fâcheux pour la jeunesse"<sup>12</sup>; and films depicting military characters not covered by the first category. Nor was censorship confined to films intended for screening in France, for any film that could be seen to show France in a bad light or to portray 'uncharacteristic' Frenchmen, thereby capable of use against the country - especially in view of "officieuse et insinuante propagande allemande"<sup>13</sup>, was prevented from export. These measures affected some 56 films in all<sup>14</sup>.

Once the Armistice was signed, however, government embarked upon legislation within the film sphere, with the intent of establishing further control over the media. 13 October 1940 saw the creation of a new General

---

<sup>11</sup> Courtade, p160

<sup>12</sup> *La Cinématographie française*, 14 October 1939. It is interesting to note that certification to protect the under-18s was also introduced, something that has certain resonances with Vichy's protective attitude towards the family (cf p66)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Courtade, p161



Secretariat for Information directly attached to the *Présidence du conseil*, the highest government body. With this move, the government was in a position to work directly and effectively on questions concerning policy towards film, and so it was that the industry fell under the remit of a law passed on 16 August 1940 setting out Vichy's provisional policy for the whole of industry. All branches of French industry were henceforth to have their own Organising Committee (CO), with members elected by their peers; a government Commissioner also sat on each CO. In the case of film, the establishment of the CO was to have a radical effect, as this was the first time that the industry was seen by Government as an industry and not an art form as had been the case in the past. This shift in emphasis underlines the authorities' perception of the film industry as a means of arriving at a product, and one that they were determined to put to their use.

A decree published on 2 November 1940 established the Organising Committee for French Cinema (*Comité d'organisation de l'industrie cinématographique* or COIC, known in the industry as 'couac'). It consisted of a Director and twenty other members and was divided into five sub-committees, one for each of the five branches of the industry as defined in the decree:

1. Industries techniques (pellicule, industrie mécanique, studios, laboratoires)
2. Producteurs de films (production générale, productions spécialisées)
3. Collaborateurs de création de film (acteurs, metteurs en scène, techniciens)
4. Distributeurs et exportateurs
5. Exploitants de salles de spectacle cinématographique<sup>15</sup>

The government's Commissioner was to be Guy de Carmoy who had compiled the *Front populaire's* report on the industry four years previously. His role

---

<sup>15</sup> L'église, p44



was to be chiefly consultative, said the decree, although he could chair any meeting *ex officio*. COIC's first Director was Raoul Ploquin, a film director who had been responsible for French films produced for the German-owned Alliance cinématographique européenne (ACE) from 1934 to 1939.

In addition to inheriting the functions of a CO as defined in the decree-law of 16 August, COIC was entrusted with the mission of creating a framework within which the industry could undergo a renaissance. It was empowered to take all such steps germane to this aim in the technical and financial spheres of the industry, and especially in the recruitment, training and placement of personnel. The committee itself met in plenary session or individual sub-committees as determined and convened by the Director. Having received the advice of the committee, the Director was empowered to take executive decisions once he had consulted the Commissioner informing him of his intentions. Forty-eight hours were allowed for the Commissioner to consider any such proposal. If no objection came, approval was deemed to have been granted. A rejected proposal was referred upwards to the Minister for Information, whose decision was final. Such an arrangement enabled the government to control major decisions within the film industry whilst neatly leaving general administration to another body. Furthermore, it appeared to the casual observer that the government's role was chiefly consultative, thereby giving the appearance of lack of government interference. The speed with which COIC was established may seem surprising, yet a note internal to the civil service places it in context:

L'intérêt tout particulier que les Autorités  
allemandes prennent à l'industrie  
cinématographique exige que [l'organisme  
établi pour celle-ci] puisse fonctionner dans  
le plus court délai possible...<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Archives Nationales, F41/21

The Germans' interest in the establishment of COIC was presumably inspired by their own knowledge of the political role of film in Germany and a desire to see similar moves in France<sup>17</sup>; the immediate advance of 66 500 000 francs for COIC's annual budget is indicative of Vichy's willingness to match German interest so that the entertainment medium could be kept under close control.

The administration of a body such as COIC was wide-ranging by virtue of the committee's remit, and was the job of a general secretariat under Robert Buron. The Secretariat was divided into four groups, responsible for:

1. General services, *ie* administrative, financial and miscellaneous matters
2. The five COIC sub-committees
3. Statistics and box-office receipts
4. Regional centres - Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux and Alger, with an administrative secretariat at Toulouse<sup>18</sup>.

The third section of the general secretariat brought to fruition the idea of a system of regulation and assessment of statistics and box-office receipts that had been considered before the war, when a decree-law of 29 July 1939 made such control dependent upon the establishment of an "organisme professionnel de contrôle et de statistique de l'industrie cinématographique"<sup>19</sup>. This measure went on to suggest the printing of special tickets approved by the central body for use in all cinemas; the statutory declaration of receipts by cinema managers; and a greater liaison between Government tax offices, performing rights societies and producers to regularise the tax position of the industry, hitherto beset with a cinematic *système D*. With its *arrêté* of 7 February 1941, Vichy built upon these foundations. COIC was henceforth to issue all tickets to cinema managers. Weekly returns of ticket sales and box-office receipts were to be made to COIC, and any shortfall between the two figures after

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf Welch

<sup>18</sup> L'église, p46

<sup>19</sup> L'église, p51

deductions of taxes became the responsibility of the cinema manager, thereby removing the possibility of fraud.

The financial position of the film industry and the problems of funding had been the main reason for Guy de Carmoy's report to the *Front populaire* government in 1936; and it fell once more to de Carmoy to set out the rules of the game post-Armistice. 19 May 1941 saw the publication of a law "relative au régime des avances à l'industrie cinématographique". Based on previous industrial subsidy legislation, the law allowed film producers to raise up to 50 000 000 francs from the *Crédit national* at an interest rate of five per cent. The sum borrowed was to be repaid within three years of the loan being taken out, and was not to represent more than 65% of the cost of the proposed film. Applications for loans were made via COIC, and the *Crédit national* reached its decision after consulting a *Comité d'attribution des avances au cinéma* comprised of the Director of the Cinema Service, two representatives from COIC and one from the *Crédit national*.

Despite the seemingly easy conditions of application, the reality of the system was that a producer would provide a guarantee of 50% funding before submitting his request to COIC. Once the loan was agreed, it was matched by the producer together with a guarantee that he would cover excess expenditure. 75% of box office receipts went to the producer with the balance to the *Crédit national*, thereby ensuring steady repayment of the loan. This system had the advantage of allowing smaller film companies, which would not otherwise have been able to find the money, to fund their productions, and was therefore especially valuable to documentary producers since the esoteric value of certain of their films encouraged scepticism on the part of financiers as to the return on their outlay.



This arrangement for the financial security of the film industry followed on from moves already made soon after the establishment of COIC to increase the documentary's chances of commercial success. 24 October 1940 saw a law "portant réglementation de l'industrie cinématographique" which abolished the cinema double bill: henceforth no cinema could screen more than one film of a length greater than 1 300 metres at any one showing. The prime intent here was to give the French industry a breathing space to get production on its feet again. An earlier move banning American films from screening in France meant that a large amount of material was lost; and the debilitated French industry could not fill the gap. Removing the need for two feature films per show halved the deficiency to be made good. However, it still meant a gap in film programmes, and the public expected more for their money than just one feature film and a newsreel. Documentaries met this need. The *film de complément* had an additional advantage for its producer and backer in that it could be made with cheaper fast film stock and required fewer or no professional actors. Studios were rarely needed as filming took place 'on the spot', with dubbing, editing and the addition of a soundtrack being the only technical requirements.

The abolition of the double bill was followed on 21 May 1941 by the withdrawal from circulation of feature films produced before 1 October 1937. This move had been designed to prevent the showing of films made by political undesirables such as Renoir who had fled to the United States, and used the spurious grounds of "imperfections techniques" to do so. Any shortfall was to be made up in the interim by German productions, and the awakening film industry in France was soon to limit the German contribution. *Le Film* saw the 21 May decision as evidence of

l'intérêt extrême qui est attribué, à présent,  
au film culturel, par le Comité d'organisation  
et les Autorités allemandes<sup>20</sup>.

In his article "Le film documentaire va enfin avoir sa place dans les programmes" in the same issue, Pierre Michaut went on to describe the machinery behind the new system of documentary selection, finishing with the comment that

Ainsi, pour la première fois, en France, le  
Documentaire a une situation précise et  
définie, qui lui fait pleinement sa place  
légitime. Grâce à lui, le Cinéma aura sa part  
dans la grande tâche d'information du  
public...<sup>21</sup>

Such a comment serves to remind us of documentary's role of "public instruction and enlightenment" to which reference has been made in our introduction. A further point which is apparent from these comments is the special mention of the Germans' "intérêt particulier" with regard to documentary. We have already touched upon how the French mirrored certain moves already made by the Germans in the documentary sphere. Before proceeding with our discussion of further French moves, we should first pause to consider the ways in which the Germans treated film in the northern zone. Barely a week after the signing of the Armistice, the German Military Command had established a regional Propaganda Office attached to the *Militärbefehlshaber* or Military Commandant. Three weeks later, on 18 July 1940, came the *Propagandaabteilung* or Propaganda Section of German Military Command, within which a specific group for the control and monitoring of film was established. Its first ordinance, issued on 9 September, established censorship of films and guidelines for their distribution. This latter move was to a certain extent the consolidation of what had been accepted

---

<sup>20</sup> *Op cit*, 21 June 1941, p33

<sup>21</sup> *Op cit*, p33



within the industry long before the war, as many films had then been distributed by ACE.

A new development came following advice from Berlin, when the German company Universum-Film-Aktiengesellschaft (UFA), which owned ACE, created a new production company in France, Continental Film. By far the largest single producer of feature films during the Occupation, Continental was to provide some 15% of total output between 1940 and 1944. Although not as prolific a documentary maker, Continental was able to use its unique position to ensure that those documentaries it did make were not governed by the COIC-imposed documentary production quotas for the year: all of its documentaires are marked "HC" for "Hors contingent" on lists of the period (cf Appendix VI). Through a subsidiary company SOGEC (*Société de gestion et d'exploitation de cinémas*), established with the confiscated assets of Jewish cinema interests, Continental also controlled a large proportion of cinemas. Staffed almost entirely by Frenchmen, Continental was headed by the former German film producer Alfred Greven, of whom little is known save that he was acquainted with Goebbels and was a personal friend of Goering, with whom he had served during the Great War<sup>22</sup>. Greven reported directly to Berlin, and early reports of the German Censorship Office in Paris refer to Continental's films as UFA productions. To the cinema-going public, however, Continental and its productions were French. The films it produced were far from being eulogies to Nazism: Christian-Jaque's *La Symphonie fantastique* (1941) described in advance publicity as "Le premier film de la 'renaissance cinématographique française'", tells the story of the life of Berlioz but drew criticism from Goebbels for the nationalism of its content. Writing in his diary on 13 May 1942, he noted that this was not the sort of film to be shown in France: studios there should be concentrating on making films that

---

<sup>22</sup> Ehrlich, p44

were "simples, divertissants, mais nuls"<sup>23</sup>. And yet, despite his opposition to it, the film continued to be shown, perhaps because Greven was able to call upon Goering for support.

Another reason for the apparent lack of action in seeking directly to control filmic content lay in the fact that, although vigilant for direct references to the contemporary situation, and criticism of it, the Germans were content to leave French production much to its own devices. The general opinion was no doubt that as little interference as possible in the scheme of things would mean that the unsullied reputation of French film could be used to the Germans' advantage. If it could be seen that the Nazis were not seeking to dominate French culture, they had at least a tenuous moral victory in their occupation of the country. If such a *laissez-faire* attitude seems strange on the part of the hierarchy of a totalitarian régime that was later to send Frenchmen to work in its factories and that did not hesitate ruthlessly to stamp out any sign of resistance, it must be remembered that at the early stages of the war Hitler still hoped for some move towards a negotiated settlement with the British. Any example of 'liberalism' in a Nazi-occupied country could therefore be used to advantage, especially so in the case of France where links with Great Britain were strong. Such apparent lack of interference also permitted the continuation of the concept of franco-german duopoly in matters filmic (*cf* below, p148).

Although film content was not dictated by the Occupying Powers, they took steps to ensure that the finished product was available only along lines proposed by them. On 17 October 1940 the negatives of all films made after 1 January 1939 were seized and their copying prohibited. COIC was later to arrange for between twenty-five and thirty-five copies of negatives to be

---

<sup>23</sup> Régent p168, *op cit*

available, dependent upon the quality of the film; such negotiations are further proof, were it needed, of the links between the German occupying powers and the Vichy authorities. The seizure of negatives was followed by the prohibition of filming on formats smaller than 35mm. Until this time, various formats had been in use in France - 16mm, 17.5mm, 35mm - and the standardisation of dimensions had several important effects, among them the availability of more film stock since the raw materials previously used for films of smaller format could now be directed towards standard format production. As the Germans controlled film stocks they could easily ensure that the format game was played by their rules. Although the production of non-standard format films was now prohibited, those films already made could be shown provided that two conditions were met: the cinema had to have facilities to show the same film in standard format, and the smaller format had to be 16mm. Rural cinemas were the one exception to this ruling, being exempt from the 35mm requirement. This move privileged the *paysan*, prime mover in the traditional, agricultural society that was the true France in Vichy eyes (*cf* Chapter Two, p71). The 16mm format imposition served a German purpose: since the French had tended to use 17.5mm format most 16mm films were German. The quality of the 'German product' and thereby the implicit superiority of the Occupying power was readily available for all to see (as was the case with colour film; *cf* Chapter Six, p180). Once the French film industry was on its feet, 16mm films of French origin were permitted for educational purposes; the new product was therefore in the service of the new régime (*cf* Chapter Two, p63).

If these and other moves were a subtle way of keeping a German eye on the market, all pretence at technical autonomy was abandoned on 28 November 1940 with the publication of a German ordinance decreeing that



Quiconque collabore à la production cinématographique dans toutes ses formes tant au point de vue intellectuel que technique, à la diffusion, à l'entretien et à la projection de films cinématographiques, ainsi qu'à la vente ou à la location d'appareils de prises de vues, d'appareils de projection, de tous éléments devant servir aux productions cinématographiques, doit obtenir l'autorisation du Militärbefehlshaber en France<sup>24</sup>.

This move was designed to give the Germans apparent superiority over the French, for the law establishing COIC had decreed that only those with the authority of Vichy's Minister of Information could work in the industry. Furthermore,

Les principaux collaborateurs des entreprises rattachées à l'industrie cinématographique, et les collaborateurs de création de film doivent être titulaires d'une carte d'identité professionnelle délivrée par le Comité d'organisation professionnel<sup>25</sup>.

In order to qualify for this card, the applicant had to prove that he was not Jewish; had not been accused of any crime; was known within the industry; and was competent to carry out his job. Application was made to the relevant sub-committee of COIC, whose recommendation was then referred to the Director. The card came up for renewal three times a year and could be withdrawn if the holder was found to have lied to obtain it; if he was the subject of court proceedings; or if he had failed to meet his professional requirements.

The Germans' move served further to reinforce their position, giving them ultimate control over Vichy legislation in matters filmic (a control, however, that was never exercised since Vichy's activities in the film industry met with the approval of the occupying powers). On some occasions the two parties

---

<sup>24</sup> Léglise, p48

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p52

acted in tandem, as was the case with the newsreel. At first the Germans allowed only the screening of their newsreel *Deutsche Wochenschau* in the Occupied Zone. COIC's *décision numéro 5* made compulsory the screening of France-Actualités-Pathé-Gaumont, product of an eponymous company formed by the amalgamation of the Pathé teams with those of France-Actualités (formerly Gaumont-Actualités). It was not until 17 November 1941 that formal Franco-German agreement was reached, and France-Actualités-Pathé-Gaumont came into being, its ownership being 60% French and 40% German, the German share being held by *Deutsche Wochenschau*. The French majority shareholding served the Germans by making an apparent duopoly in the minds of the French, thereby hiding the fact that ultimate control of the newsreel's content lay with the Germans. A jointly-owned newsreel company with a French name served the same purpose as Continental Film did in the feature film sector of the industry, permitting the dissemination of German-backed productions under French guise. The preamble establishing the company makes it quite clear that the broadcasting of a nationwide newsreel was politically desirable:

Les gouvernements français et allemand, reconnaissant l'influence que peut exercer sur l'opinion publique française, la projection cinématographique des événements d'actualité...<sup>26</sup>

In view of this perceived influence, it was obvious that the Germans would wish to ensure that they retained control. The influence exercised could not but be for the beneficial education of the populace (along Vichy/Nazi lines), leading thereby to

. [des] avantages au regard de l'unité nationale, puisque le journal, diffusé dans la France entière, y comprise la zone interdite, fera connaître à l'ensemble de l'opinion française les actes et les intentions du

---

<sup>26</sup> Archives Nationales, F42/118

gouvernement, sous la forme d'un Journal plus influent et plus répandu que la presse écrite<sup>27</sup>.

Subject to vetting by both Vichy and German authorities, the material (some of which was supplied by Deutsche Wochenschau) did not, however, have the desired effect on *l'opinion française*. Because of the blatant propaganda of some sections of the newsreel, the audiences took to booing characters such as Hitler. The Germans reacted by decreeing that such action was an incitement to rebellion; henceforth, newsreels were to be screened in half-lit cinemas so that culprits could be identified. The demonstrations duly stopped, but audiences developed coughs and splutters where they would previously have demonstrated...<sup>28</sup>

The screening of the newsreel across the entire country was a natural progression from the negotiations that had ensured COIC's decisions to be applicable throughout France from February 1941. Although the Committee's headquarters were in Paris, it was represented in all regions of France (*cf* p27). In addition to these regional representatives, the general secretariat kept staff at Vichy (centre of government) and Nice (centre of the greatest concentration of studios outside the capital; Pagnol's *La fille du puisatier* had been completed there). The Algiers office was responsible for all of French Africa. Here as with previous examples (*cf* above, p26), the twin-track approach adopted enabled central control whilst at the same time giving a superficial appearance of autonomy. Having a 'local man' made the regions feel more represented than by simply dealing with a centralised and centralising Paris, even though the reins of power remained firmly in the hands of COIC's central administration. Regional 'representation' performed a further task: the historically redolent *région* was preferred to the modern upstart *département*,

---

<sup>27</sup> Archives nationales, F42/118

<sup>28</sup> The decree survives in that, even today, advertising is screened in half-lit cinemas before the lights go down for the main feature...



and was one more way of appealing to the idea of an organic France; in the eyes of Vichy, tradition was better than innovation.

With the administrative framework established, the authorities could turn to the question of censorship, as moves could now be made quickly and effectively. An *arrêté* of 20 December 1941 in consequence of a ministerial decree of 27 March, set out a new framework for the censorship of film that since the Armistice had been the exclusive prerogative of the Germans (*cf* p30). The General Secretary at the Ministry of Information censored films on the advice of a nine member committee representing the *Présidence du conseil*, the Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry, Ministries of Defence and Youth, and the General Commissariat for the Family - all the major government departments. For the first time in French film history came the concept of films unsuitable for showing to minors, with those under eighteen years of age excluded from seeing certain films. This apparent move to protect the young fell in line with Vichy's emphasis on the family, "l'assise même de l'édifice social"<sup>29</sup>, and the patriarchal overseeing of the wellbeing of its progeny. So it was that permission to screen was granted on grounds of "la défense des bonnes moeurs et du respect des traditions nationales"<sup>30</sup>.

Moves in July 1942 altered the composition of the censorship committee to twelve members, of whom four were nominated by Pétain, one by COIC and the seven remaining, representing government ministers. Despite the seemingly marginal representation of the industry itself, the final decision now lay with the Director of COIC. Save for the lowering of the age of minors to sixteen (it was illogical to keep it at eighteen when 'minors' of that age were

---

<sup>29</sup> Pétain, in *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 September 1940

<sup>30</sup> L'église p61. "Bonnes moeurs" were certainly to the fore, with the 1944 comedy *L'Aventure est au coin de la rue* being licenced on condition that "La scène de la robe déchirée de la chanteuse...soit traitée avec tact".

being sent to Germany on *Service de travail obligatoire*, the compulsory work service undertaken by Frenchmen in the German war machine outside France), little else changed within the field of censorship.

There were, however, changes and reforms within ministries, and 11 April 1942 saw the establishment of a new General Secretariat for Information and Propaganda charged with the administration of radio and cinema. A *Service du cinéma* with its own chief, Louis-Emile Galey, was established with the remit to

encourager, coordonner, orienter et contrôler  
la production et la diffusion du cinéma  
français<sup>31</sup>.

Following on from this, a decree issued on 25 May abolished the post of Director of COIC and replaced it with a three-person management committee. The number of general committee members was increased to twenty-five, and a new post of General Secretary was created, responsible for coordinating and executing COIC directives. In reality the post had existed in all but name since COIC's inception, being held by Robert Buron; and he now received the official title. In November 1943 the management committee was to resign and be replaced by Galey who, as Director General of Cinema, exercised the right of government Commissioner set out in Article 7 of the law establishing COIC back in 1940.

Moves had also been made on the technical/production side of the industry. Although technicians could learn their trade by working for an established company, there was the need for a training school. 1923 had seen the birth of the *Ecole technique de photographie et de cinématographie*, and one of its members, Jean Zay, the founder of *l'Ecole nationale d'administration* and Education Minister from 1936-1939, had mooted a school for cinematography

---

<sup>31</sup> L'église, p61



alone in 1937. Once again the invasion and Occupation provided the catalyst, and Zay's plan was implemented with the formation of the *Centre artistique et technique des jeunes du cinéma* (CATJC). His dream was also shared by the director L'Herbier, who had suggested before the war that money could be taken from box-office receipts to provide funds for the training of young people in the art of cinematography<sup>32</sup>. It was not until 1943 that he was to meet in Galey, the man who would carry out his plans. With L'Herbier as President and the producer Pierre Gérin (who had headed CATJC with Commandant Legros, the man destined to become head of the Army Film Service after the war) as its General Director, the *Institut des hautes études cinématographiques* (IDHEC) opened for courses on 6 January 1944. The first intake of thirty students was the start of a tradition in cinematographic training that continues to this day; CATJC and IDHEC were eventually to merge. Zay's innovative flair in making such suggestions was not new to the cinema world, for in 1938 he had set up national Grands prix for cinema. Taking this and André Robert's Grand prix du film documentaire as its inspiration (cf Chapter Five, p145), the Grand prix du film français was created in late 1943. Awarded to the best feature film, its first recipient was Carné's *Les visiteurs du soir*, with the retrospective award for 1943 going to Bresson's *Les anges du péché*.

The establishment of prizes and the creation of IDHEC did more than acknowledge the efforts of hard-pressed advocates of cinema to set the industry on its feet. These moves can be seen as an intended reward for the desired reply by industry to the rallying call of those in authority. The authorities, French or German, knew full well what film could do when used to political ends. Pétain himself was aware of the power of the moving image: during the Great War he had been filmed partaking of the rations of common

---

<sup>32</sup> *Le jour*, 10 October 1938



soldiers as a morale-boosting exercise. The vinegar-like wine caused him to grimace, and that sequence was cut from the film on his insistence<sup>33</sup>. Some pre-war censorship of film had concentrated on the adverse effect of a bad French image (*cf* p24); the new order was determined that its films should have the opposite effect, promoting all that was best in France. Writing in *Ciné-Mondial* on 14 November 1941, Galey had stated that

le cinéma est un outil de propagande de la pensée française ou, pour être plus clair,...chaque film est un ambassadeur<sup>34</sup>.

Ploquin went further, drawing a parallel with German propaganda films:

Il serait absurde de nier l'importance de productions telles que...*Le Juif Süss* et *Le jeune hitlérien*, par exemple... Nous aimerions que le cinéma français produise à son tour des films d'une haute tenue, *au service de la nouvelle politique française*<sup>35</sup>.  
[My emphasis]

Both of these comments display a wish on the part of government and its representatives to take film and use it for the purposes of serving the country (which, at the time, meant the new order of the Vichy régime). As we have already seen (*cf* above), Pétain was aware of the power of the moving image, as pre-War governments had been. We have already mentioned that film *qua* film falls into two main categories - fiction and non-fiction - with non-fiction film essentially diverging into newsreel and documentary. Since the French went to the cinema as a form of escapism from reality<sup>36</sup>, they would not take kindly to a feature film attempting to impose that reality through propagandistic means<sup>37</sup>. So it is that with the exception of Gance's *Vénus*

---

<sup>33</sup> Reader, p116

<sup>34</sup> Courtade, p202, *op cit*

<sup>35</sup> *Ciné-Mondial* 1st May 1942

<sup>36</sup> Marcel Carné, quoted by Jeancolas, p58

<sup>37</sup> *Cf* p36. For further discussion on propaganda, see Chapter Two, p53 *et seq*

*aveugle* (1940) which begins with a dedication to Pétain<sup>38</sup>, there is little explicit attempt to use the feature film for these ends (*cf* Introduction, p12). As we have seen from references to reaction to the newsreel (p36), a more open attempt to present what audiences should see was rejected outright.

This leaves us with the documentary. As the Introduction has discussed, the historical development of documentary film had, by this period, given it the role of informing and educating the public, bringing them into contact with events and experiences that they would otherwise never know. This didactic aspect reinforced the French perception of it as a neutral medium, even one that was uninteresting to the point that the documentary element of a programme was always timetabled first so that latecomers missed nothing 'essential'<sup>39</sup>.

Under Vichy, however, this situation changed. Legislation providing for the compulsory screening of a documentary with each feature film, and government subsidies to the private sector increased documentary output. Scrutiny of the figures (given in the table on p194) reveals how the documentary branch of the industry gradually became more able to fend for itself, whilst the feature film required ever more money. In addition, the work of André Robert and his 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and associated material, changed the perception of documentary through screenings of high quality product.

If we take the legislation and promotional screenings together with the perceived image of documentary - by the authorities as a means of influencing the public, by the public as a dully truthful and informative 'lesson'

---

<sup>38</sup> "Je voulais dédier ce film à la France, mais puisqu'elle s'incarne en vous, Monsieur le Maréchal, permettez-moi que, humblement, je vous le dédie"

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Michel Ailhaud, March 1987

- it is tempting to posit Vichy's interest in the genre as less than altruistic. In time of war, government moves could not be driven by the simple fact that the documentary proved itself *plus rentable* after initial outlay.

The reorganisation we have observed cannot be evaluated without reference to more general changes undertaken by Vichy in its efforts to reshape society post-Armistice. So it is that, in our next Chapters we move on after a discussion of the communications process to the examination of wider areas of government policy. We shall also discuss further how the perceived didactic and 'truthful' role of documentary could be argued to make it the ideal vehicle for the palatable promotion of policy.



## CHAPTER TWO - Myths, Cults and Theories of Communication

Comment est née cette mystique? Il est assez difficile de le démêler avec précision<sup>1</sup>.

In the previous chapter we saw how the film industry was reorganised to provide a sounder financial footing; we also touched on the perceived didactic qualities of documentary within this new framework and the potentiality that it could be seen as the ideal vehicle for the palatable promotion of policy. Since the role of communication to serve ideological ends is one of the subjects of study of this thesis we shall devote the first pages of the present chapter to an examination of the communications process, after which we shall explore ideology and the iconographical framework which serves it in that process with particular reference to Vichy.

Let us begin by setting forth some definitions which will serve in our discussion. **Communication** can be seen as the transmission of messages through a specific channel from an individual or group to another individual or group (of whatever number of individuals or size - *cf* below, p47). Transmission of the message relies to a certain extent upon the fact that its recipient shares and recognises roughly similar codes and signs to those of the generator of the message. The more these codes and signs are shared - for example, if the generator and recipient of the message are members of the same political or social grouping - the easier it becomes to understand the message since their individual appreciation of the meanings approximate. Moreover, 'readers' of the message help to imbue meaning through bringing their own experiences, attitudes and emotions to

---

<sup>1</sup> Pétain, p xix

the message received<sup>2</sup>. In other words, a reciprocal or mutual knowledge of generator and recipient enters into the calculation of message, as well as shared codes.

**Signs** consist of a signifier and a signified, the signifier being the sign's image as we perceive it and the signified the mental concept to which it refers. This mental concept is broadly common to all those members of a same culture sharing the same language. The sign of a man on a door, for example, indicates to the great majority of readers that the door leads to a Gentlemen's toilet (here, the 'signified'). Signifieds permit us to categorise reality in order to understand it; they are created by people and determined by the culture or subculture to which they belong<sup>3</sup>. As such, there is no enshrined relationship between sign and signified: rather, this is determined by convention, rule or agreement among the users.

**Convention**, then, is the social dimension of signs, the agreement among the users of the sign about the appropriate uses of and responses to it; it sets the rules by which arbitrary signs work. Signs are in turn organised into **codes** governed by rules consented to by all members of the community using the code. We can therefore see that codes have a great part to play in the social dimension of communication. Signifying codes are systems of signs; no signifying code can be divorced from the social codes of its users.

For Barthes the first level of signification is known as **denotation**; it is the common-sense, obvious meaning of the sign, the mechanical process or

---

<sup>2</sup> This section of the thesis is indebted to Fiske's clarification of the maze that is communications theory (*cf* Bibliography)

<sup>3</sup> "Meaning is the result of the dynamic interaction between sign, interpretant and object: it is historically located and may well change with time" (Fiske, p46; *cf* Introduction, pp16-17)

reproduction (on film, for example) of the object at which the camera is pointed. **Connotation** is the term he uses to describe the human part of the process, the selection of what is included in the frame. Connotation marks the point at which meanings move towards the subjective - the person interpreting the 'meaning' is influenced as much by the person or conditions framing it as by the object or sign itself, *eg* up- or down-lighting in a film to throw the 'sinister characteristics' of a person filmed into relief<sup>4</sup>. There is also a third way of signifying, the symbolic. An object becomes a symbol when it acquires a meaning that enables it to stand for something else through convention and use. For the resistance, for example, the 'V' painted on walls in France before and during the Liberation became the symbol of eventual triumph over the occupier, and they had their musical equivalent in the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony broadcast by the BBC.

'Meaning' is also reliant on **myth**, which can be said to be a culture's way of thinking about something, of conceptualising or understanding it. If we take a photograph of Pétain with a small child, both Pétain and the child exist before the photograph, but the photograph itself activates a chain of concepts in the mind of the person seeing the photograph that constitutes the myth of Pétain and the child (Pétain as father of the *Patrie*, *cf* below, p68). Barthes argues that myth naturalises history; myths are in fact the product of a social class that has achieved its position of superiority or dominance by a particular history:

“ Myths mystify or obscure their origins and thus their political or social dimension. Myth is [thus] class-based: its meanings are constructed by and for the socially dominant, but are accepted by the

---

<sup>4</sup> *Cf Selling Murder*, tx ITV, June 1991; also camera techniques in *Le péril juif* (p83)



subordinate, even if they go against their interests, because they have been 'naturalised'.

[...]The meanings which myths circulate must carry their history with them, but their operation as myths makes them try to deny it and present their meanings as natural, not historical or social<sup>5</sup>.

Myth is thus essential to any society, and certain myths are shared by all societies. One such shared myth, for example, is concept of nostalgia for a mythical Golden Age, be it Paradise before the Fall of Man, the 1940s and '50s nostalgia of the British Conservative Party's 'Back to Basics', or (more relevant in this case) Vichy's myth of an agricultural, organic France that existed before 1789 and was destroyed by industrialisation. Perpetuation of the myth in a particular shape and form is articulated by, and serves, the ideology of the dominant social or political class. Myths and connoted values are therefore defined and inflected by that ideology<sup>6</sup> and indeed become its usable manifestations. The relationship between the sign and its myths and connotations, on the one hand, and the user/receiver, on the other, is an ideological one. Signs provide a concrete form for myths and values, and in doing so both endorse them and make them public. There is a certain symbiosis to this. Our use of signs maintains and gives life to the ideology using them, but we are also formed by that ideology and by our response to the ideological signs.

When signs make myths and values public, they enable them to perform their function of cultural identification: that is, they enable members of a culture to identify their membership of the culture through their acceptance of common, shared myths and values<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Fiske, p89

<sup>6</sup> Cf below, p64 *et seq*

<sup>7</sup> Fiske, p171

These myths, signs and codes must of course be transmitted, either through general social discourse and social structure, or by other means. It is when assessing potential other means that we can see how important film can be in aiding the transmission of the myth and thereby of the ideology behind it. Film has an appeal to a mass audience, addressing the individual as a member of a crowd. In watching a film, spectators are aware not only of their own emotional reactions to what they are watching, but also to those of the mass of people around them; moreover, there is interaction between their own emotions and those of the mass:

When his enthusiasm is aroused, [the spectator] is like a member of a football crowd, or a spectator or participant at a mass rally.<sup>8</sup>

In order to appeal to a mass audience, any such message transmitted must use what is known as a **broadcast code**, one shared by that audience. As such it must cater for a degree of heterogeneity. Broadcast codes are community-oriented, appealing to what people have in common and tending to link them to their society<sup>9</sup>. We can adapt Fiske's and Hartley's concept of bardic television<sup>10</sup> to film, since this latter medium also enables the articulation of an established cultural consensus about the nature of reality. The broadcast code implicates individual members of a culture into dominant value systems by cultivating those systems and showing them in practice, as well as by convincing the audience that their status and identity as individuals is guaranteed by the culture as a whole<sup>11</sup>. There is also a sense of immediate appeal - the audience does not require an 'education' to use the code, or to 'go away and think about it'; someone seeing a film 'understands' what they are seeing without the need or indeed

---

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, p30

<sup>9</sup> Fiske, p73

<sup>10</sup> Fiske and Hartley, p85

<sup>11</sup> Cf Althusser's concept of ISA, p52

the leisure for training. Whilst a film can be 'read' in specific ways, the audience requires no skills to enjoy its basic narrative line. In doing this, they may also absorb the subliminal narratives or commentaries of filmmakers through their presentation of events. By subliminal we mean

presentation...that denies the conscious processing of...information. The individual may either have awareness of being exposed to something and yet not be able exactly to define what it is, or else be totally unaware<sup>12</sup>.

Subliminal or not, if broadcast codes are to have the mass reception desired for them, they must deal with matters of general concern. A 'good' mass communicator therefore becomes one who is in tune with the feelings and concerns of society at large, and content is therefore not limited to the subject matter of the message, but refers also to the way in which the subject matter is handled. Messages using broadcast codes present patterns of feelings, attitudes and values within a particular culture, which in turn re-enter the culture from which they are originated:

There is a constant, dynamic interaction between audience as source, the transmission of broadcast codes, for example through film, and audience as destination. [There is] a second aspect of audience as source: the way in which the audience itself determines the form of the message<sup>13</sup>.

This point about the dynamic interaction between generator and recipient of communicative acts brings us to the question of **reception theory** (*Rezeptionsästhetik*), a concept which arose from a crisis in German literary theory in the 1960s but has been developed and applied to film. In

---

<sup>12</sup> O'Sullivan *et al.*, p233

<sup>13</sup> Fiske, p74



reception theory, the analytical movement is away from the text *per se* and towards the reactions of the recipient or reader<sup>14</sup>. Essentially it seeks to define a framework within which an interpretation is made based on a careful reading of the text and a thorough reading of the situation within which the reader operates. Essentially

the 'familiar standards' of a given era are verifiable only by assuming that from a present perspective we can make objective judgements of what these standards actually were [...] We are asked...to ignore or bracket our own historical situatedness<sup>15</sup>.

Reception theory tells us that we should attempt to ignore any *post hoc* information we have and instead try to place ourselves in the mindset or conditions - the horizon of expectation - of the time at which the work was made. As we have already noted with the transmission of codes, the text assumes a meaning partly through its recognition of prevalent social and cultural norms as well as of literary/filmic traditions. Readers therefore draw on their own experiences by interacting with the representations presented to them, and that very interaction leads them to reassess their function in 'real life', *ie* the situation (here) outside of the cinema. Moreover,

When we read a text, we are continually evaluating and perceiving events with regard to our expectations for the future and against the background of the past. An unexpected occurrence [in a text] will therefore cause us to reformulate our expectations in accordance with this event and to reinterpret the significance we have attributed to what has already occurred<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> Used here as synonymous with viewer, just as 'text' is synonymous with film

<sup>15</sup> Holub 1984, p60

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p90

Put another way, the theory states that the personal experiences of viewers act upon their interpretation of what they see, and the passage of time therefore means that a *different* interpretation of the *same* text is more than likely in the light of historical development and with due regard for the concomitant development in perception accompanying the development of the viewer. Since the experiences readers bring to bear upon their interpretation of a text are never static, the reception and interpretation of a text can therefore change with time. To take a modern example, someone watching *Philadelphia* who does not know anyone with AIDS will have a different reaction if they see the film again and *have* met an AIDS sufferer. Whilst centring the reader of the text as the subject of study rather than concentrating only on the essentials of the text or its author, reception theory expresses in a different way and reinforces what we already know: there is never any correct and unequivocal 'meaning' of a given text; rather, one is arrived at by convention. What we must do, however, is ensure that *post hoc* interpretation has due regard for the conventions of the time at which the text was produced. This is naturally the approach adopted in this thesis, where the possible transmission of Vichy ideology through the medium of documentary film is investigated in the light of the content of the films themselves within the historical situation, and with regard to myths, signs and broadcast codes prevailing at the time, as well as with reference to contemporary comment on the films themselves.

In order to talk about the transmission of 'Vichy ideology', we must naturally first define what is understood by **ideology** itself. This is a question which is as old as the societies trying to explain the term, which can be traced back to 1801 and Destutt de Tracy's *Traité de l'idéologie*<sup>17</sup>. Ideology was intended to be a philosophical discussion of the concept of

---

<sup>17</sup> Seliger, p14

ideas, and was to examine the reasoning behind ideas, to define definitions and concepts. However, an ideology is much more than this. Although its etymology indeed indicates the study of ideas, by extension it now means the ideas themselves and their application to an end, most often political. Williams gives three main definitions of ideology:

1. A system of beliefs characteristic of a character or group;
2. A system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or false consciousness - which can be contrasted with 'true knowledge';
3. The general process and production of ideas<sup>18</sup>.

The first definition matches the psychological definition of ideology, in which attitudes are organised into a coherent pattern, for example the deregulatory, market-led beliefs of the modern British Conservative Party. The second is perhaps best illustrated by the example from the Vichy period of *la perfide Albion*. Britain had been portrayed as an ally in the run-up to the fall of France, but the actions of the Royal Navy at Mers-el-Kébir in July 1940 showed this allegiance to have been misplaced, and proved that the British and anyone who allied themselves to them could not be trusted. The demonisation of a former ally came about through the intended imposition of false images by the dominant ideology<sup>19</sup>. Inevitably the first two definitions of ideology become conflated. In Nazi Germany, for example, the Nazis' depiction of the Jews as corrupt and squalid inscribed itself fully into the régime's activities at all levels of society, so that this notion of Jews eventually became the 'true knowledge'.

Continuing these definitions of ideology, Seliger argues that ideologies are typically mixtures of analytic and descriptive statements on the one hand,

---

<sup>18</sup> *Op cit*, pp54-71

<sup>19</sup> Cf Wharton, "The Bulldog and the Marshal", *Franco-British Studies* 14.



and moral and technical prescriptions on the other. They combine in a coherent system 'factual' content and 'moral' commitment, and this is what lends them their motivational power. Ideologies for Seliger blend

beliefs and disbeliefs, moral norms, a modicum of factual evidence and a set of technical prescriptions, all of which ensures concerted action for the preservation or destruction of a given order<sup>20</sup>.

A specific set of values or ideas propounded by an individual or group and used by them, ideology therefore allows for those in authority to motivate themselves and others into a way of thinking that enables them to retain precisely that position of authority. In his *Idéologies et appareils idéologiques d'Etat*<sup>21</sup>, Althusser posits that the political order is secured in most societies by consent rather than coercion. This is achieved through what he calls *Appareils idéologiques d'état* (Ideological State Apparatuses or ISA in this thesis), encompassing such institutions as Church, family and the education system; institutions which, as we shall see later, were all to play a prominent part in the Vichy régime and to feature in Vichy discourse. ISA contribute to the unconscious (*ie* not realised) formation of individuals by interpellating them in various ways, summoning them to take up their role in society by delivering messages that listeners can absorb whilst at the same time being given the impression of being consistent, rational and free agents. ISA are therefore articulators of myth, acting as we have seen above in a dynamic relation between originator and recipient of the message (pp 48-49).

To give a concrete example of the propensity of film to convey the messages of ISA to the recipients of those messages during the period

---

<sup>20</sup> Eagleton, p48

<sup>21</sup> *In* Althusser, pp67-125

under study here, the effectiveness of the Nuremberg Rallies in influencing those present could be taken throughout Germany and beyond by the simple expedient of filming the event and showing it to cinema audiences. Here, the concept of a strong leader, seen swaying a mass audience in thrall to the message of the leader's broadcast codes, could be expected to produce similar effects when replayed before other mass audiences (in cinemas) sharing the same codes and myths. The Nazis' takeover of the German film industry (together with the majority of press interests) in the 1930s amply illustrates their knowledge of film's effectiveness as a means of transmitting a message, and Leni Riefenstahl's work, for example in *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will, 1936), commissioned by the Nazi Party, exemplifies the use of film as propaganda medium. By controlling the production machinery and implementing restrictions on film standards and content on a more general scale, the Nazis were in an excellent position to manipulate the audience into their way of thinking<sup>22</sup>, the politically and socially dominant ideology. The press and film therefore become ISA in themselves, consolidating the position of that very ideology.

This leads us to consider the means by which such manipulation might be assured and consequently, to an investigation of what is meant by "propaganda". In its original form - the word appears for the first time in 1622 in a religious context, the *congregatio de propaganda fide* - the term means dissemination (in this case, of the Catholic faith)<sup>23</sup>. In the modern context, propaganda is a method of communication designed to evoke a specific response in its recipient, most usually the acceptance or the continuation of a *status quo* that is advantageous to the propagandist.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf Welch

<sup>23</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell, p15

It seeks to send out a specific ideological message with a definite objective.

Propaganda as persuasive discourse to a specific end relies upon one of three methods: creation of response, reinforcement of response, and change of response. With **creation of response**, the discourse is usually articulated from a position of authority. As its name suggests, it seeks to establish a course of action or conduct, to inculcate certain behaviour. At its most simple level, creation of response comes from parents or teachers, seeking to set the ground rules by which systems - families, governments, groups - operate. **Reinforcement of response**, on the other hand, will seek to comfort recipients of the message that they are correct in their conduct of adhering to the propaganda and its ideology; a present-day example would be government messages aimed at encouraging 'blood donation, or support for the lifeboat service. **Change of response** seeks to alter previously held behaviour or beliefs into a pattern which is favourable in the view of the propagandist's ideology; again a modern example would be the government's AIDS campaigns, where a recent shift in emphasis has been to encourage condom use with the message that the disease holds dangers for the heterosexual population.

Turning now to examples of these techniques for the period under study, we can now investigate how Vichy attempted to portray some of its policies with these forms of propaganda. Creation of response came at the earliest opportunity. Children in the ISA comprised by schools were given books tracing the history of *La vie d'honneur du Maréchal Pétain*, and toys and games changed their traditional forms:



Le jeu de l'oie se transforme en jeu des 'obstacles de la vie' où les prisons qui font rétrograder le joueur se nomment bavardage, malpropreté, maladies, prétextes, paresse, mensonge, tricherie. Les cartons du loto, au lieu de porter des numéros, représentent les provinces françaises et leurs richesses. La maison Witho [fabricants] souhaite 'élever toujours plus haut' l'âme des enfants en leur inculquant que

le Travail, c'est la France  
d'aujourd'hui  
la Famille, c'est la France de demain  
la Patrie, c'est la France de  
toujours<sup>24</sup>.

Children's alphabets ran from A (Arc de Triomphe) to Z (Zouave) *via* B (Baton de Maréchal and blé) through K (Képi du Maréchal) and P (Paysan et Philippe Pétain), U (Union de tous les Français) and V (Vive le Maréchal)<sup>25</sup>. These few letters become codes enabling communication of the Pétain myth to children, demonstrating to us an attempt to interlink a myth of Pétain to the discourse validating agriculture, peasantry and teamwork, all of which, as we shall see in the next chapter, feature as Vichy themes.

Reinforcement of response was most in evidence around the cynosure of the *Révolution nationale*, Pétain himself. Be it in the anthem, *Maréchal, nous voilà!* which came to replace the Marseillaise<sup>26</sup>, his statue in the local *Mairie*, his appearance on the Almanach des PTT, or the poster, *Le Maréchal a dit...le Maréchal a fait*, Pétain's image became a ubiquitous and benevolent sign denoting leadership and his status as exemplar, connoting patriotism, wisdom, fatherly warmth, etc. Posters asked the doubting such questions as, "Connaissez-vous mieux que lui les problèmes

---

<sup>24</sup> Rossignol, p145

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp4-6

<sup>26</sup> Although the Marseillaise itself was rewritten, with the refrain becoming "A l'oeuvre, Français, dans la sainte Union!/A l'oeuvre! A l'oeuvre, pour le Salut de notre Nation!" (Gervereau and Peschanski, p144)

de l'heure?" or "Etes-vous plus français que lui?" (Figure 1, next page); instantly recognisable as "lui", there is no need to give his name. He is therefore the only possible model for Frenchness. The French were comforted in their belief that Pétain was a wise and benevolent leader; as a poster of 1941 had it, "J'ai été avec vous dans les jours glorieux [1918], je reste avec vous dans les jours sombres [1940]"<sup>27</sup>. The faithful leader who has made the ultimate sacrifice, is ready to serve his people, who must in turn serve him through their obedience to his message.

Change of response may best be illustrated with STO, the *Service de travail obligatoire* or compulsory work service in German factories. STO had been preceded by *la relève*, whereby French workers abroad guaranteed the release of French prisoners of war still held by the Germans. As time passed, the 'exchange rate' of workers to prisoners constantly increased in the Germans' favour, and the measure, never popular, required ever more promotion. Besides the posters and pamphlets made available (with slogans such as, "Je travaille en Allemagne, mes économies vont en France" and "Grâce à ceux qui sont partis en Allemagne, 250 000 prisonniers deviennent travailleurs libres"<sup>28</sup>), general attitudes were lukewarm. As we shall see later, the solution to the problem was to make a documentary, *Travailleurs de France* (1944), which sought to paint a rosy picture of the situation (p78 *et seq*). This was accompanied by a special brochure which declared

Ceux qui verront le film verront *vraiment*  
des ouvriers de chez nous. Ils pourront, au  
passage, reconnaître un des leurs<sup>29</sup>.

---

<sup>27</sup> Rossingol, p106

<sup>28</sup> Marchetti, p200

<sup>29</sup> *Op cit*, p3 (F41 300)



**Figure 1:** "Etes-vous plus français que lui?"  
*Source:* Gervereau and Peschanski, p238



This latter comment demonstrates a further point in addition to those already illustrated above, that of verisimilitude. For propaganda to be successful, it must be credible. Credibility comes from the ability of the propagandist to make the recipient of the message identify with the propagandist, for example through the use of a discourse which is already familiar to the recipient of that message; in this case, anyone watching the film has their fears allayed because we can see the idyll that is life in the camp, and are told that it is true. But whether the precise aim of the propaganda is creation, reinforcement or change of response, there is a basic 'pool' of techniques on which propaganda can draw. The methods used by propagandists vary according to the medium used, but in film we tend to find the use of generalisation, insinuation or opposition/juxtaposition.

**Generalisation** involves the use of (often false) syllogism, inviting the recipient of the message to agree to an (often uncontroversial) generality before moving to a more specific element; because agreement has been reached with the generality, refutation of the specificity is thus rendered more difficult, if not impossible:

La force du syllogisme de propagande réside dans sa simplicité de raisonnement et dans son apparence de netteté logique. Ensuite dans le fait que, sa proposition initiale une fois acceptée, l'esprit est obligé, par l'engrenage logique, d'accepter également la conclusion<sup>30</sup>.

To take the Witho example quoted above, the statement that "la Patrie, c'est la France de toujours", if accepted, validates the preceding statements and serves further to drive home the message of the inherent logic of the Vichy *devise* (cf below, p67).

---

<sup>30</sup> Rossignol, p45

With **insinuation**, a 'fact' is mentioned in such a way as to sow a seed or to recall an event that may be perceived as being linked to the matter under discussion even if this is not in fact the case after greater scrutiny; the scrutiny, however, rarely occurs<sup>31</sup>. With **opposition/juxtaposition**, however, we are provided with greater emotional intensity than through insinuation. Indeed, it is precisely this emotional intensity that is aimed for, as it blinds one's normally rational responses to a situation. In film, the techniques of opposition and juxtaposition abound in examples of choices between good and evil, order and chaos, with the juxtaposition that this presents pushing the individual towards the firm commitment desired by those inspiring the film. The use of juxtaposition can also meet the basic human psychological need in times of stress to respond to situations - particularly unfamiliar and/or threatening ones - in terms of black and white. In times of war or crisis involving the entire nation, (over)simplification of the issues involved becomes ever more necessary. In such a situation,

the other side becomes totally malevolent, one's own cause indisputably just, and everyone gathers around the symbols of unity<sup>32</sup>.

In the case of Occupied France, these symbols of unity are precisely the manifestations of Vichy ideology examined in our next chapter. At the same time, however, there is a paradox whereby the apparent 'Frenchness' of Vichy ideology has parallels with German and Italian Fascism. In order to sustain such a paradox and to protect it from close scrutiny, Vichy ideologues developed techniques of misinformation which, as we shall see

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf below, p85

<sup>32</sup> Furhammar and Isaksson, *Politics and Film*, in Welch, p238

below, used syllogism<sup>33</sup> and built upon the inherent fears and uncertainties of its populace in order to further its aims.

"Gathering round the symbols of unity" at times of crisis serves to divert attention from the actual *status quo* (and was, indeed, a method used by Vichy through an emphasis on 'pulling together', a theme which conspicuously recurs throughout Vichy propaganda). At the same time there are elements of society which will oppose such an idea on political, moral or other grounds. Their opposition can manifest itself in many ways, and in the interests of the preservation of the *status quo*, the State needs therefore to find ways of challenging this defiance. Extrapolation of the concept of 'pulling together' gives us the natural opposite: the individual, the one (or group of ones) whom the propagandist will therefore seek to show as wishing to destroy what is achieved through 'team effort'. The way to deal with these people is to adopt yet another weapon in the propagandist's armoury, the politics of inclusion and exclusion. These were clearly expounded by Pétain himself:

Il existe un choix très clair entre le bien et le mal, la santé et la maladie, l'ordre et le chaos, la France et l'anti-France<sup>34</sup>.

Such a clear delineation of the choices on offer leaves the waverer in no doubt whatsoever. We should also note, *en passant*, the use of juxtaposition within this series of antitheses, whereby "La France" becomes associated with "le bien..., la santé... et l'ordre", "l'anti-France" with "le mal..., la maladie... et le chaos". The process of delineation in this way

erects an unmistakable and fortified frontier between the realms of permissible and

---

<sup>33</sup> For a prime example of modern-day false syllogism, see footnote, p141

<sup>34</sup> Aron, p209



impermissible conduct to stop people from drifting casually across the border into deviant behaviour... [Such] stereotyping segregates the deviants or defectors [and] isolates their behaviour<sup>35</sup>.

Vichy's stereotypical 'enemy of the people' manifested itself in many ways, according to the message the propagandist wished to put across. The slogans and labels of gross generalisation - rich and grasping Jews, conniving Communists - form a part of the people's cultural upbringing and, when turned to advantage by the propagandist, give the recipients of the message the convictions or opinions they thus no longer need to work out for themselves. In Nazi society, for example, where the Jew and the communist had become, as a result of inculcation from earliest age through the messages of the Nazi propaganda machine, natural pariahs to the majority of Germans. The regular provision of images reinforcing these themes (*cf* Appendix V) made the position of the propagandists providing the images ever more secure by keeping the fears and prejudices of the general populace alive. Building on Nazi examples, Vichy was also to undertake such a programme, designating Jews and Freemasons for particularly unsavoury treatment in books, posters, other print and film material (*cf* below, pp 84, 87).

The use of film as a means of propaganda diffusion certainly had the attraction, as we have said, of a wide audience, but the particular genre of film used posed certain problems. The reaction of the general public to the newsreel (*cf* Chapter One, p36) had demonstrated that they did not take kindly to crude or overt propaganda; and the feature film was regarded by audience and industry alike as a *moyen de distraction*. Any attempt to alter the *status quo* in this area would have been counterproductive since it would have destroyed the mythical concepts of feature film as the provider

---

<sup>35</sup> Davenport-Hines, p56

of an element of escapism in a world otherwise fraught with privations and problems.

Setting aside the cartoon (not specifically part of France's filmic genres), this left only the documentary. As the medium with the message, its instructional and educational role made it ideally placed for the task, its situation within the mythological perception of film being one of truth as opposed to the obvious fiction of the feature film and the *truqué* newsreel. Since "the more 'realistic' a programme is thought to be, the more trusted...it becomes"<sup>36</sup> and the documentary was perceived as truthfully presenting 'facts' to an audience, it could therefore 'explain' matters with far more subtlety than bland written statements. Provided that no references within the production were overtly propagandistic, the educational mantle of the documentary could be used to promote a specific policy without undue suspicion falling on producer or sponsor. The question of sponsorship has always been an important one with documentary, because the genre

has never enjoyed commercial success, so sponsorship usually has been essential to its very existence...As Richard Griffith stated at a crucial point in the history of the documentary movement, 'documentary can survive...only so long as it knows how to confront the sponsor with the necessary identification of his own interests with the public interest'<sup>37</sup>.

Since Vichy was determined to ensure the identification of public interest with its own interests, does documentary provide government with the means to do so? This was certainly the wish of the authorities:

---

<sup>36</sup> Fiske and Hartley, p160

<sup>37</sup> William Hughes, "The Evaluation of Film as Evidence", in Smith, p60

Le court métrage est jugé par le régime de Vichy [comme] un des plus puissants moyens d'action pour exercer sur le public une influence certaine... Auxiliaire de la Révolution nationale, il [son discours] vise à créer les structures d'une société nouvelle et à dénoncer les responsables de l'effondrement<sup>38</sup>.

We have seen in this Chapter how a propaganda message was most likely to be successful if transmitted subtly, and it may be argued that the documentary is well-placed to meet this need by virtue of its perception as truthful and didactic medium. Moreover, we have seen that Grierson, amongst others, certainly perceived such a role as possible (*cf* Introduction, p9). But what are the principal elements of the "Révolution nationale" to which we have seen Bertin-Maghit refer above, and does documentary in fact respond to the Vichy régime's apparent perception of it in the same quotation? It is to this question that we turn in our next chapter, which will discuss the thematic base of Vichy ideology together with filmic propaganda treatment of those themes.

---

<sup>38</sup> Bertin-Maghit, J-P: "Le cinéma et les actualités filmées" *in* Azéma & Bédarida, p200



## CHAPTER THREE - Ideology and Propaganda under Vichy

Il importe...de nous rendre maîtres du cinéma  
pour le soumettre à nos intentions.  
Abel Bonnard, Minister of Education,  
*Brochure du Premier Congrès...documentaire*

In the previous Chapter we indicated the interrelationship between the communications process and ideology, how propaganda - itself a part of the communications process - could serve ideology through techniques such as inclusion and exclusion, and creation, reinforcement and change of response. This Chapter will discuss the ideological themes of the period under study before passing to an investigation of the filmic presentation of these themes in propaganda material. We are of course interested here in the direct propaganda message. In such cases the intent is to be more forceful with the message, to drive it home. This message could be either directed at the public generally on a point that was perceived by the government to merit such direct treatment, or it could be targeted at more specific groups inclined already to the thinking of the government and its policies. The communication would then seek to reinforce the response of such a group.

We have already observed in the previous chapter how the Nazis were in an excellent position to manipulate the audience into their way of thinking through their gradually increasing control of the film industry and other means of communication. Nazism was of course but one manifestation of the Fascism prevalent in Europe in the 1930s, others being exemplified by Franco in Spain and „Mussolini in Italy. Pétainism as it was to appear in France during the *Etat Français* was redolent of Fascism in certain of its policies, but showed the typical French trait of developing its own interpretations in others. This thesis is not the place to trace the histories of the respective 'four

Fascisms', but we can draw thematic parallels and obvious conclusions. As both Fascist state and occupying power, Germany will serve as our point of comparison in seeking to define essential characteristics of the dominant ideology in Vichy France which we can expect to be served by Vichy propaganda.

In *Mein Programm* (1932), Hitler stated that

The family is the smallest and most valuable unit in the complete structure of the State<sup>1</sup>.

More precisely, in Fascist ideology the value of the family as ISA lies in the authority of the father and the hierarchy this imposes and perpetuates:

The interlacing of the socio-economic structure with the sexual structure of society and the structural reproduction of society takes place within the first five years and in the authoritarian family... Thus, the authoritarian state gains an enormous interest in the authoritarian family: it becomes the factory in which the state's structure and ideology are moulded<sup>2</sup>.

We can see from this that the ultimate Fascist concept is to perceive the nation as a large-scale family by stressing the value of the patriarchal family. By providing a dominant ideology in which the family and authority of the father was extolled, Nazism implied the extension of this to a situation in which all families were the children of one father (*das Volk* instead of *die Familie*, *der Führer* instead of *der Vater*), and the position of Fascism was thus more secure. At the same time, the mother had to be seen as vital, but subordinate, to the greater goal that was the family. This was achieved by praising her for her capabilities in rearing children and in running a family:

the mother is the homeland of the child, just as the family is the nation in miniature<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Reich p95, *op cit*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p64

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p91

This led to the obscurity of the woman's role in society, relegating her from individual member to child-bearing machine. And if the mother could be persuaded that she was simply that, subsuming her identity to the authority of the father, then the societal base so desired by the ideologues was all the more certain of success. These ideals were translated, in policy terms under Vichy, into an improvement in prenatal conditions and postnatal care so that women were given credit for a function that society had previously taken for granted. And in terms of the régime's discourse supporting and surrounding such policies, in all its eulogies to the mother, the government was at great pains to limit her role in society to that of childbearing. This discourse, as we shall see, built on the idealised image of a peasant life in which the mother worked on both the land and in the home, feeding the chickens and nurturing her large family (*cf* Figure 2, p127).

The nation these families constituted was automatically involved in another cause dear to the ideologues and susceptible of exploitation, that of nationalism. The experience of the proletariat's reaction to the Great War had proved that the Marxist ideal of class struggle, whereby the bourgeoisie would be overthrown at a time of major conflict, had been defeated by the nationalism and jingoism of all classes in the participating nations<sup>4</sup>. Nationalism also provides a basis for the *apparent* solution of any problems between state and society by providing a common aim or goal (the nation) towards which all must strive for the common good<sup>5</sup>. The idea of pulling together serves this purpose and by its very nature marks any dissenter as an enemy of the people. In this way political opposition of the mildest form may be excluded from the arena of political debate, leading eventually in its most extreme forms to a one-party state.

---

<sup>4</sup> More recently with the Falklands, we in the United Kingdom have seen how the notion of nation can override other political factors

<sup>5</sup> *Cf* p60



There has naturally to be a focus for the 'oneness', the 'us' which is the apparent goal of this pulling together. In line with the idea of the authoritarian family, the unified state is headed in fascist ideology by a 'father figure' who can be either demagogic (Hitler or Mussolini) or reverential (Pétain, the father of the state in the sense that he founded - or engendered - it). In both the former and latter cases the relationship between the father figure and his people was neatly summarised in the mnemonically powerful slogans *ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer* and *Travail, Famille, Patrie*. The difference in slogans betrays the difference in interpretations of Fascism: unity through slavish following of one man in Germany, and unity through working together in France.

In this change of state motto from the traditional *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, the slogan to *Travail, Famille, Patrie* we are provided with the encapsulation of the values of the new Etat Français. It was argued that all links with the corruption of preceding Republics (which had weakened France and led to her defeat) had to be swept away. In particular the motto *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, symbolic of that Revolution which had begun the rot, was no longer appropriate. Whilst the new State did not seek openly to deny anyone their liberty, it was maintained that each member of society had a responsibility to the other that may best be acknowledged through work, hence *Travail*. The ideology of the family expounded above relies clearly on a hierarchical model of authority, and the question of *Egalité* must therefore be excluded, to be replaced by *Famille*. If this is the case, then by extension *Fraternité* has been replaced by patriarchy, embodied by Pétain, the Father of the *Etat français* and symbol of national unity: *Patrie*.

The new state motto served as the cornerstone for the *Révolution nationale* (as opposed to the *Révolution française* of previous Republics), something that Pétain preferred to call a *rénovation*. This choice of words betrays a linguistic

programming of the recipient of the message, since the idea of *renovation* rather than *révolution* implies the keeping of certain key features or ideals from the past instead of merely sweeping all away in the face of a new order. These ideals or traditions played a key part in Vichy ideology and propaganda providing for acceptance of the group in control

by providing...images of itself and the  
past...which can be shared by all members  
[of society]<sup>6</sup>.

Such an instrument of unity and community is not without importance in the context of shared myths, on which we have already commented (p46); such ideals or myths - including the myth of *renovation* - become artefacts of ideology, aiding the articulation of the messages of ISA.

In addition to his roles of Father of the *Etat français* and of national unity and *renovation*, as *vainqueur de Verdun*, the man who had saved France from defeat by the Germans in the Great War, Pétain was also able to call upon the comforting image of himself in the minds of the French as a proven leader, someone who could be relied upon in time of crisis. The changes he proposed for society seemed in rhythm with the mythical past of France which he sought to promote through ISA, in schoolrooms, pamphlets, on posters, in books and film, and were in line with the ideological theories mentioned above: strong hierarchical authority; honouring of hard work, the family and *Patrie*; and renewal of traditional values rather than wholesale adoption of new ones. In the name of *renovation nationale* Vichy discourse therefore overlapped with its own ideological emphasis on the virtues of the nation, the family and of hard work and pulling together. For example, Pétain saw the family as

---

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, p192

l'assise même de l'édifice social. C'est sur elle qu'il faut bâtir, si elle fléchit, tout est perdu; tant qu'elle tient, tout peut être sauvé<sup>7</sup>.

The family thus becomes a perfect metaphor for renewal (generation upon generation) within a stable and reassuring framework that is *renovation*; the 'best elements' of what has gone before are to be preserved and incorporated. The ensuing cult of the family, as we have already indicated (p65) was emphasised and reinforced by the mother's place in the home with her family, denying her any practical role other than the support, nurture and renewal of the family unit (*cf* p127).

The ideological and propaganda mechanism of the creation of the cult also deserved our attention here. The importance of a cult is to mythify its object - thereby removing it from close scrutiny - despite any concrete manifestation it may have. Whereas a religion will concentrate on the worship of a physically absent and invisible God, the existence and acknowledgement of which depends upon faith, a cult can work along the same lines yet provide a physical manifestation of what is to be worshipped. And so, with our example of the Vichy cult of the family, the mythical creation of an idealised mother and the annual *Fête des mères*, which provided an optimal ritual framework within which the ideal mother could be worshipped deflects attention from her real, rather lowly, and certainly secondary position in society (*cf* p66). By thus elevating the mythical mother to a status beyond the actual experience of real mothers, Vichy encourages reinforcement of response to the *status quo* which kept women in the home as guardians of the hierarchical family.

A carefully controlled cult therefore enables those in authority to retain that position of authority and to consolidate it by fostering a series of syllogisms in

---

<sup>7</sup> *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 September 1940



which the provision of an ideal of the mythological diverts attention from reality. The process may be taken one step further by postulating a mythical problem and at the same time providing its solution (*cf* below, p141).

The *culte du Maréchal*, the nearest the country came to unity in defeat and therefore a vital element of Vichy ideology and propaganda, enables us to perceive precisely the efficacy of this mechanism, particularly through the mythical and religious connotations of a cult. Pétain was alluded to as the saviour of his country just as Christ was the saviour of humankind. Moreover, Pétain himself contributed to this message by using, in his broadcast of 17 June 1940 which ushered in the *Etat français*, the famous words, "Je fais à la France le don de ma propre personne", a phrase which echoes the New Testament words of the Last Supper: "Nul n'a plus grand amour que celui-ci: donner sa vie pour ses amis"<sup>8</sup>. By activating these reminiscences of Christian sacrifice (in a society, moreover, where they would have some resonance), Pétain implied a personal sacrifice just as Christ had sacrificed himself, and linked himself thereby to the single most powerful symbol of heroic suffering which exists in the western world. This identification served further to enhance his status to the French and made him all the more *apte* as the subject of a cult.

The notion of the sacrifice of *Le Maréchal* for the better good of *la Patrie* would be expected to rally the populace all the more since this was a time of general self-sacrifice. In particular, self-sacrifice was not unknown to the traditional peasant stock of France in its struggles on the land, and this was an image which appealed to Vichy as an especially promising vehicle for the dissemination of reinforcement of response. The peasant, embodying the essential qualities of determination and hard work which inextricably linked

---

<sup>8</sup> John 15:13

"Travail" and "Patrie", therefore featured prominently within Vichy discourse as a living example of a rural culture resting on generations of experience within a continuity of tradition. This was itself part of the myth of an agricultural France (*cf* below) whose economy was reliant on the peasant; the interdependence of "Patrie" and "Travail" is reflected in the interdependence of the agricultural myth and the peasant as icon of that myth. Both also overlapped with the myth and cult of *le Maréchal*. Son of a peasant family, Pétain could call on this discourse and imagery in any portrayal of himself as hard-working; indeed, one of the unofficial titles he sanctioned was that of *Maréchal-Paysan*<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, however, Pétain could also call on his soldierly image as *Vainqueur de Verdun* in the same breath further to valorise his position:

Il faut que le *paysan* soit hautement honoré, car il constitue avec le *soldat* les garanties essentielles de l'existence et de la sauvegarde du pays [my emphasis]<sup>10</sup>.

As iconic manifestation of these "garanties essentielles", Pétain's portrait figured prominently in homes throughout the country, occupying pride of place in the role of father of the new *Patrie*. Pétainolatry also extended into schools, where his portrait was prominent in every classroom and children were encouraged to follow his example of duty and sacrifice. Once it had completed its schooling, however, French youth required further orienting into the scheme of things. National Service was out of the question owing to the terms of the Armistice, and a demonstration of what the undirected energies of the young could lead to was provided by the experience of some of the young soldiers who, no longer serving any military purpose, wandered around uncertain of what to do. In some cases, the answer had been the vandalism of

---

<sup>9</sup> Barral & Boussard, *in*: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, p211

<sup>10</sup> Pétain, p202

property<sup>11</sup>. In order to redirect the energies of the young to the common good (and to keep them off the streets), Vichy therefore introduced work camps in the countryside. Where they had previously performed military service, young men now became eligible for these *Chantiers de la jeunesse* for between six and eight months, undertaking projects to help the local community while there. As an ISA, the Chantiers served a purpose over and above the practical outcome which was immediately apparent, by contributing to a myth and cult of an idealised, healthy, respectful and hard-working youth, and by inculcating in the youths themselves the sense of working as a team in line with the ideology we have just seen. Pulling together was to be a way of helping France rise from the *débâcle* of defeat. Jean Borotra, the Minister for Sports and Youth and a former tennis champion, saw the Chantiers as a preparation for the ultimate recovery of France. His very title shows how interdependent Vichy perceived his joint responsibilities to be: healthy mind and body + healthy youth = a healthy future for France.

However, within the thematic canon supportive of Vichy ideology, the interest in health and the health-giving properties of the countryside extended to all ages of society. The countryside itself represented the organic France, the pure country that had been lost owing to the urbanisation and industrialisation of the previous two centuries:

La terre, elle, ne ment pas. Elle demeure  
votre recours. Elle est la patrie elle-même<sup>12</sup>.

If France could return to these values that still survived in rural areas, the nation could not but benefit. And it was precisely these values that enabled France to retain her links with the glories and heroes of the past.

---

<sup>11</sup> Kedward, p27

<sup>12</sup> Pétain, p51



Pétain was in many respects the contemporary incarnation of this movement, as shown by his renown as *Vainqueur de Verdun*. He was but the latest in a long line stretching back to Vercingétorix, the leader of Gaul. Other such characters and elements included Joan of Arc and her liberation of France from English clutches, and France's military glories (Louis XIV, Turenne, Napoleon). As the ultimate incarnation in this noble lineage, Pétain's very existence provided the certainty that was needed in the aftermath of the *débâcle* of defeat.

A la confusion, aux divisions, aux ressentiments, aux interrogations et aux doutes répondent des lignes de partage rigoureuses, des jugements tranchés, des opinions catégoriques, des consignes précises, des interdits, des valeurs traditionnelles: l'ordre, le travail, la discipline, l'autorité du chef... sans oublier les vertus d'un retour au bon sens d'une culture de la ruralité identifiée aux racines de la nation<sup>13</sup>.

According to Vichy ideology and as represented in Vichy propaganda, then, the immediate past, *ie* since the Revolution, has been divisive and indecisive. With the arrival of Pétain and his beliefs, the return to an organic (and mythical) France augured well for the future prosperity of the country. In the new thinking, only by applying the lessons of the past to the present could France hope to build a secure future for herself; these lessons were conveyed to the people through series of propaganda instruments, including books and posters (*cf* above, p54 *et seq*).

Let us now therefore look at examples of acknowledged propaganda films which perform<sup>14</sup> precisely those roles discussed above, starting as Vichy ideology would dictate, with its cynosure, *Le Maréchal*. As reinforcement of response, films such as *La journée du Maréchal Pétain* (?1942) during which

---

<sup>13</sup> Laborie, "Vichy et ses présentations dans l'imaginaire social" in Azéma & Bédarida, p507

he was seen patting the heads of children in Vichy's public parks, and later *La journée de travail de Pierre Laval* (?1942), showed the country's leaders to be good, hard-working, everyday sort of folk, a process of rationalisation to trivialise what they truly represented. The difference in emphasis in the titles of the two films provides a clear indication of the way in which their content in turn was presented to the French public. Laval, the true holder of political power (especially after the German invasion of the southern zone in November 1942), is seen at his desk exercising that power. In effect, he represents the "Travail" of the motto of the Etat français (cf p67). In contrast, here as elsewhere the filmic iconography of Pétain, with its titles such as *Les discours du Maréchal* (?1942), *Le Maréchal à l'exposition des chef-d'oeuvre espagnols* (?1942), and *L'Anniversaire du Maréchal au pouvoir* (1941), show Pétain as the incarnation of *Patrie*, with the further implication of his parenthood of the *Famille* that is France. In *L'Anniversaire...* we see Pétain speaking from his office on 17 June 1941. His words of the previous year, he tells us, were spoken in "une voix cassée par l'émotion"<sup>14</sup>. They are played to us with shots of refugees and battle. Now, however, Pétain tells us, all has changed for the better. Things may not yet be perfect, but they are changing all the while. "L'épreuve est dure. Beaucoup, y compris les paysans, [s'y mettent]". Everyone must work together, for in that way

Nous sortirons ensemble de la nuit où nous a  
plongés la triste aventure.

With these final words Pétain is faded out to be replaced by a low-angle shot of a flying tricolour with its denotation of the superiority of the image, while the *Marseillaise* plays in the background.

This seven-minute film, which could easily be inserted into a cinema programme after the newsreel, is a propaganda masterpiece. The visual

---

<sup>14</sup> This and other quotes from the film held by SCA, FT35

contrasts between the *débâcle* of defeat and the burgeoning agriculture of the new France, symbolic of *renouveau* and *renaissance*, are reinforced by Pétain's words. His use of personal appeal - "Il me faut des hommes et des femmes" - serves to underline the idea of pulling together in defeat, in addition to implicating the audience in that appeal; moreover, it identifies Pétain as the incarnation of France. It is precisely the teamwork to which he refers that has achieved a new prosperity, teamwork which by implication can only continue if everyone maintains their efforts, a message reinforced by his final words and followed immediately by the essential symbols of *la patrie*, the flag and the Marseillaise.

This theme is taken up again in the 1942 propaganda film *Chefs de demain* which tells of a school for cadres and in which Pétain also features indirectly. It opens with the following declaration:

Images vraies, images sincères de la vie des jeunes dans les écoles de cadres, de leurs efforts et de leurs joies, ce reportage ne peut dépeindre cependant une réalité plus intérieure, celle de la métamorphose profonde qui s'opère au cours de ces stages<sup>15</sup>.

We see young men of differing backgrounds arriving at the school for cadres. Some of them show willing to 'muck in' while others seem more self-centred. One by one they are interviewed by the Principal, and it is here that Pétain is seen, on the wall behind and above the Principal's desk: the *mise-en-scène* creates a conflation of the two signs (Pétain and the Principal) signifying that the Principal is acting as a delegate of Pétain's authority. He reminds the *stagiaires* that "le principe de cette école, c'est l'esprit d'équipe", and their future training will include

---

<sup>15</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at the Centre national de la cinématographie (CNC)



les leçons d'histoire pour rendre à notre pays  
les notions d'ordre et de discipline qu'il avait  
oubliées.

Vichy ideology made it clear that France's defeat had come about precisely because the country had forgotten the legacy of history, lapsing into disorder and indiscipline (as displayed in the turmoil of the *Front populaire* period) and sowing thereby the seeds of her own defeat. The education of the *cadres* as outlined by one who speaks in the name of *le Maréchal* will contribute towards redressing the balance. One of the exercises for these servants of the new order is the performance of a comic play to the inhabitants of a small provincial village in the mountains. A few old people sit and watch as the performance starts, but the majority of the seats are empty. Storm clouds gather on the horizon, and an old man rushes up to his colleagues; it is obvious that the harvest has not been fully gathered in and will be lost in the approaching tempest. The play is abandoned as the *stagiaires* lend a hand, and with their help the harvest is saved just as the storm breaks. Once it is over, they perform to a packed audience - their efforts are recognised and rewarded.

The film then returns to the school, where having completed their training, all are asked: "Etes-vous prêts à vous mettre au service de la France?" The response to this and to the question "Etes-vous prêts à vous mettre au service de la jeunesse?" is a resounding "OUI!". Then comes the oath-taking, at which they swear

de servir la France jusqu'à la mort, de tout mon  
coeur et de toutes mes forces.

From its very beginning, this film puts in place the Vichy tenets of teamwork, discipline and service to the nation. Only a re-education of the nation (inspiration for the cult of children) that was morally and physically healthy

(hence the cult of sport and the open air<sup>16</sup>) could help it to rise from the ashes of defeat. The system of the new order must be staffed by those knowing the true way, which is why schools such as those filmed here were created. The self (the character who showed unwilling to 'muck in' at the beginning of the film) is subsumed into the team, and in working the hardest during the saving of the harvest he has clearly understood the message of *esprit d'équipe* and humble hard work extolled by the Principal. The harvest saved also stands as a metaphor for Vichy's agricultural policies and the cornucopia of the New Order (*cf* above, p72), and the storm may be seen as an apocalyptic metaphor for threats from outside, in the face of which all must pull together. Nor is it a coincidence that it is old people who are served by the actions of the *stagiaires*: the old as a personification of the legacy and experience of the past, are deserving of respect and aid. The inheritors of their legacy, the youth whose service is pledged at the end of the film, will be served by those who have dedicated themselves to this task. This establishes a perpetual two-way debt: towards the future and to the traditions of the past. The film has therefore performed the role of reinforcement of response, with the message that *écoles de cadres* succeed in training the leaders of tomorrow, dedicated to the service of the state in the knowledge that the values they are to defend include the self-sacrifice and teamwork we have seen to succeed.

Reinforcement of response with regard to the importance of sacrifice and the success of teamwork is also made clear to us in the propaganda film *La garde de l'Empire de l'Atlantique au Tchad* (1942)<sup>17</sup>, telling of France's efforts to defend her far-flung colonial possessions. It opens in Dakar at a parade, where the narrator informs us that

---

<sup>16</sup> *Cf* also Chapter 5, p141

<sup>17</sup> "Ce film à travers un véritable panégyrique de la Garde de l'Empire participe à la propagande pétainiste de l'époque; c'est donc un document précieux" (*Fichier de l'Etablissement cinématographique et photographique de l'Armée (ECPA)*)



Les fils sont là où les pères ont fait les plus  
grands sacrifices, [montrant] une volonté de se  
défendre à Dakar comme dans toute l'Europe<sup>18</sup>.

The mention of Dakar, scene of the abortive Franco-English attempt to regain power in West Africa in 1940, touches a contemporary chord in the audience<sup>19</sup>, implicating them in the storyline, and evoking the myth of attack from outside (in this case the English and their allies such as De Gaulle).

This theme of unity in the threat of adversity is reinforced as teamwork comes to the fore in the film: we see natives working with the troops, loading guns and training in defensive readiness, to background military music. Teamwork is further in evidence when action passes to the air: we see shots of the airmen on parade whilst their aircraft are made ready by the loyal natives as the soundtrack tells us of the defence of Dakar by the Air Force. We are then taken to Bamako ("créée par la France") where a wreath-laying ceremony on the monument to fallen colonial troops takes place to sombre musical accompaniment. Again, the theme of renaissance, with every 'fall' followed by rebirth, is present here, echoing the Maréchal's professed goal of *renouveau* for France. Shots of the ceremony are followed by those of new barracks and defences being constructed, with a soundtrack change to more rousing music. With these images of defence fresh in our minds, we pass to Niger. Here, on the border with perfidious Albion's Nigeria,

les troupes du Maréchal seront prêtes à  
défendre notre Empire.

This defence extends to the indigenous population when action passes to Chad in the film's next sequence: troops are sent out to find rustlers and the sheep they have stolen. As some off-duty officers wander around the bazaars, a 'spontaneous' song and dance show is put on for them by the natives, showing

---

<sup>18</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at ECPA, FT204

<sup>19</sup> Cf comment on reception theory, p49



l'attachement cordial des indigènes aux  
représentants de la France.

The 'attachment' is helped by the capture of the rustlers and recovery of the sheep, which closes this sequence of the film. The final sequence shows off-duty soldiers fishing in the evening sun and, "fidèles au Maréchal", grouped around the radio listening to a speech in which Pétain stresses the need to defend the empire; the film finishes with strains of the Marseillaise.

This film sets out with a dual aim, to display to those at the heart of the empire how its outer reaches are defended by teamwork, and to flatter and reinforce the viewers' patriotism through emphasis on the friendly relationship between colonialist and native. The theme of benevolent colonialist was one already in use in *Pèlerins de la Mècque* (p117), and in mentioning the sacrifices made by previous generations of troops, the film takes this theme and reinforces it with the notions of historical legacy and the duties that this imposes to which we have already referred (pp68, 72); French colonialists are therefore noble and righteous, contrasted with the territorially aspiring British<sup>20</sup>; within the propagandistic concept of inclusion, the former are part of the team, the latter (and their allies, working against France) are to be excluded. The application of a specificity to a generality takes the determination with which this small patch of sand on the west coast of Africa is defended, and extends it by insinuation in the commentary to the defence of Europe (and more importantly, France). The familiar motif of renaissance in the sight of the monument to fallen colonial troops followed by shots of reconstruction creates obvious parallels with messages employed in motherland France, *ie* those at the heart of the empire must also (re)build in order to repay the sacrifices made for them. The rallying point of Pétain - whose speech reinforces the message of the film - and the Marseillaise at the end underline the efforts made to

---

<sup>20</sup> Cf *Franco-British Studies* 14, p24

defend not just the empire but "*notre* empire": the film's closing words stating this personalise what is happening and identify each individual member of the audience as the reason for the troops' presence. Moreover, the concept of "nous" reiterates the feeling of inclusion and unity, of pulling together, to which we have referred above. Just as the audience is gathered in the cinema watching the film, the troops are gathered around the radio 'over there'. This establishes a further and implied two-way deal: if 'our lads' (as they would be perceived by the audience) are over there, runs the subtext, we must do all we can to give them something worth defending. Althusser's concept of the ISA and their coercion of recipients of the propaganda message is obviously at work here; the audience becomes directly implicated in the narrative line of the film, and thus in its message.

Turning now to propaganda film as means of change of response, we noted in the previous chapter (p56) how government made great efforts to change the public's attitude to STO. Griboff's 1944 film *Travailleurs de France* played a key role in attempts to change the response of the population to such a proposal, and sought right from the start to convince audiences of the verisimilitude and credibility of what they saw:

Pour la première fois, un film documentaire vient nous apporter des nouvelles de la vie des travailleurs français en Allemagne. Ce film n'a d'autre ambition que de montrer quelles sont leurs conditions dans les heures de peine comme dans les heures de loisir, et de souligner la communauté de tous les travailleurs européens<sup>21</sup>.

Shots of a departing train filled with men cut to the home of M and Mme Durand, who have just received a letter from their son, at a work camp in the

---

<sup>21</sup> This and other quotes from the film at CNC

mountains. As his voice-over reads the letter to us, we see the various stages of his arrival at the camp, signing in, his medical and other such procedures described in the letter, creating a one-to-one situation between visual and spoken imagery. Having obtained an identity card, he starts work the following day, where he meets a fellow Frenchman. A narrator now takes over, telling us that young Durand is typical of the Frenchmen who, once off-duty, has the opportunity to relax with friends in his accommodation, to play games, make music or write; "souvenirs de la patrie lointaine" surround him here. We then see examples of the tasks undertaken by Frenchmen, for example in the Deutsche Reichspost, and the transportation of workers to and from work by 'bus. These tasks are part of the

gigantesque industrie d'Europe avec ses  
millions de travailleurs [qui font] des tâches  
imposées par une guerre sans précédent.

However, these efforts do not go unrewarded: the men live in good conditions with tailors, showers and barbers representing just a few of the services at their disposal. There are newspapers (in a variety of languages), libraries and canteens (everyone eats together at midday). The bakery is almost totally staffed by Frenchmen, as is the margarine-making team. In the factories, men are seen at work in the armaments industry, "un hommage à la qualité de notre main-d'oeuvre".

Another task is printing, and in the next sequence we see a Frenchman and former boxer setting up the programme for the (winning) fight he is to have later that evening with a Belgian. Told that sport provides a great form of relaxation, and football matches often take place, we are shown a game between French and German teams. Although we are told the match is later drawn, we see a Frenchman scoring the first goal. Relaxing in the bar after the



game, the players are joined by recently-released prisoners who have chosen to work instead of returning to France, men who are welcomed with open arms.

This last sequence, we are told, shows the "communauté fraternelle" that develops while working in Germany. And the task is not just industrial, for there is also "la paix du village", the chance to work in the fields replacing those who have gone to war. Wherever they work, this coming together of nations proves that "la loi du travail est un lien entre les hommes"; where weapons had previously kept them apart, they are now working together, forming "la grande famille européenne". Nor is this the first time that Frenchmen have worked in Germany, for French architects were brought in to work on German palaces in the last century, "le premier rapprochement franco-allemand". If they are there now, however, it is because of a "bataille sans précédent pour la sauvegarde de la civilisation". Although they started as enemies, Frenchman and German have finished as friends, and thanks to the efforts of Frenchmen, Germans are able to fight their true enemies. "Le destin de l'Europe, le sort des siècles à venir, en dépend".

The visual and spoken texts are united in their portrayal of the situation of French workers abroad as quasi-idyllic. Everything runs smoothly for the archetypal Durand, who is seen with his compatriots as a vital cog in the German war machine working for the defence of Europe; again, the concept of unity and defence is present. The sequence involving boxing cleverly pits Frenchman against Belgian, traditional butt of jokes (who, naturally, loses). As for the football match, political discretion did not permit of a German defeat - having allowed the making of the film in order to increase acceptance of STO, for the Germans to have lost to their subject nation would have undermined their claim to be the master race. The match is therefore drawn, but it is represented by a *French* goal, the first to be scored; those watching the

film are therefore able to bask in the reflected glow of a French 'victory'. The unpalatable truth of Frenchmen working in the arms industry is rendered sweeter by the justification of pride in the work of Frenchmen. Here again, "*notre main d'oeuvre*" emphasises collective pride whilst at the same time pointing out the uniqueness of France's contribution to the task in hand. The audience is once again implicated into the narrative by this "nous" and becomes part of the team. In case there are still any doubters, the importance of the work is stressed not only through the need to defend the future of Europe, but also by the appearance and self-sacrifice of the very prisoners of war whose release the workers on STO were supposed to provide. Realising the important work they can do in German factories, they elect to stay rather than return to France. Indeed, the brochure accompanying the film seeks to make this very clear:

A Karlsruhe, un dimanche, le metteur en scène, l'opérateur et le photographe chargés de tout leur matériel entrèrent à l'improviste dans une brasserie...Les ouvriers d'une entreprise voisine avaient fait de la salle de ce café leur lieu de réunion pour une Amicale. Et l'après-midi de ce dimanche, ils avaient organisé une réception en l'honneur de quelques-uns de leurs compatriotes prisonniers. Le chef de l'Amicale avait préparé un petit discours de bienvenue. Il était en train de le lire quand les cinéastes entrèrent. Aussitôt, la caméra fut braquée, la scène enregistrée. Rien n'avait été préparé, prévu. Ouvriers et prisonniers n'avaient pas été prévenus qu'ils seraient, cette après-midi là, vedettes involontaires d'un film<sup>22</sup>

Here again, credibility is emphasised, and given further weight in the narrative of the film by calling upon History: once it has been established that Frenchmen have worked in Germany before this fact can, with the Vichy eye to historical precedent, be used to justify present-day actions. Be it with the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Travailleurs de France*, p2 (F41 300)



prisoners or with historical precedent, all of this goes to reinforce the message of working together. By extrapolation of the desire for pulling together so often expressed by Vichy and Pétain (*cf* pp58-60), the *Zusammenarbeit* of the European nations against a common enemy cannot but succeed; and failure, as the closing words remind us, would be a disaster. The German enemy becomes the ally in the struggle for the future of Europe; the tables are turned.

Failure of this mythological ideal would of course, according to Vichy mythology, mean victory for Bolshevism and Jewry and the destruction of the Aryan race. Although Nazi Germany stood supreme as the embodied anti-semitic nation, elements of French society lost no time in using the Jewish question to their advantage. Historically, the French are strongly anti-Semitic, as was the case throughout all countries of Christian tradition (and was evinced in France by the Dreyfus Affair), yet such views were pushed to the backs of the minds of the average Frenchman owing to the situation in which he found himself and his country. In reinforcement of (latent) response, therefore, what had to be done was to remind the Duponts and Durands of the country that the Jew could be held responsible for precisely the current situation; and so began a systematic campaign of disinformation. The Institut des questions juives used many methods including the documentary to revive consciousness of the 'problem'. During exhibitions at which the full extent of Jewish 'depravity' was on view, propaganda films such as *Le péril juif* were shown. This is the French version of the notorious German film *Der ewige Jude*, and is used here as then, as a model for others. It employs simple imagery of Jews in the ghetto, cutting to hordes of rats, with a commentary talking of the dangers of plague. The juxtaposition of these images provides precisely the immediate and emotive response which we have already discussed (p59). The cameramen are praised for venturing into the squalor to bring back images of the depravity - a Jewish home, for example, is filthy and



infested with flies. By contrast, some Jews live in splendour at their expense but also at the expense of non-Jews, and we are then told the story of the Rothschild family, the Central European Jews who spread their banking tentacles throughout the world. Once in control of banking, they are able to control the finances of business and industry, thereby influencing governments. More recently, we are told, they have implanted themselves into the cinema, controlling production and the movie theatres. This is just one way in which they have contributed towards the degeneration of art in all its forms. Now, at last, we see the dawning of a new era - the notion of renaissance is once again foregrounded. Alerted to the dangers of rampant Jewry, people are coming together to stand against it. The spoken text is matched by low-angle shots of young, Aryan men, which denote their authority and importance; of grain sacks being filled; and of hammers striking the anvils of industry. From such vigorous physical work, in contrast to the debased tasks carried out by wily or unclean Jews, "L'artisan, le paysan et l'ouvrier vont bénéficier".

The use of opposition in simplistic, non-verified or -verifiable statements, with sharp cuts to short sequences containing stark and indeed horrifying and repulsive imagery, imposes its message on the mind of the viewer in such a way that it will not be forgotten, yet at the same time does not bear further scrutiny (*cf* above, p59). Contrasting the miserable squalor of the ghetto and the cleanliness (in all senses) of the New Order, the film leaves no choice as to which may be preferred. Those who will benefit from the New Order are, of course, the simple folk, that is, those amongst the audience most likely to react instinctively to what they have just seen. On another level, the film expounds three clearly-defined opposites: Jew/non-Jew (Aryan); squalor/cleanliness; implied decadence/New Order. These three opposites set in motion the following semiotic chain: the first (the sign) denotes the second, which in

turn connotes the third; combined, we have the myth of Jewry's responsibility for the decline of civilisation, which may only be rectified by the establishment of the New Order.

France's attempts to follow in Nazi footsteps borrow heavily from this example, and no more so than in another piece of clear propaganda, *Les corrupteurs* (1942). Beginning by warning that the Jews are everywhere, for example in the press/radio/cinema world which is 95% Jewish-run<sup>23</sup>, the film goes on to reveal three ways in which their conspiracies are propagated: CRIME, DECHEANCE, SCANDALE. In the first, a young man is influenced by the content of American (= Jewish) gangster movies into a life of crime<sup>24</sup>. The *transparence* on 'Déchéance' occurs when an innocent girl's wish to become a film star leads her to fall prey to a Jewish producer who, having subjected her to the casting couch, forces her into a life of prostitution. The 'Scandale' is financial. Taking his brief from the masterpiece of *Le péril juif*, the director tells us that Jewish manipulation of the stock market and financial institutions means that businesses can be ruined. What is worse is that the old are particularly hard-hit as their savings diminish in consequence of such unscrupulous action. The semiotic chain engendered here lays the blame for the Depression squarely at the doors of the Jews, who become the "threat from without" (and even within) against which the French must pull together.

These generalities are made more specific, more urgent, more *actuel* as the audience is warned that since measures in the northern zone are making it difficult for the Jews to carry on their insidious trade there, they are flocking to the southern zone to exploit the people. It is at this point that Pétain is brought

---

<sup>23</sup> An obvious pre-war figure, for had not the Vichy government's first moves been to cleanse the cinema industry?

<sup>24</sup> It is heavily ironic that *Les corrupteurs*, seeking as it does to influence the opinion of its audience should impute such nefarious motives to the enemy it describes!



in to support the claims. A speech of his about the defence of the realm in general terms, stressing (once again) the need for vigilance, is used in such a context that it glosses over any true meaning with the result that the perceived role of Pétain's speech becomes a call to be on guard against the Jews *even though no such reference to them is made by Pétain at any time*. Continuing the momentum of the film and allowing no time for the audience to ponder this, the commentary says that such vigilance and pulling together will lead to the expulsion of Jews, and all will be well (with a cut to a shot of youths harvesting: "notre jeunesse va forger une vie nouvelle"). Here again as with *Le péril juif*, rebirth from the ashes will ensue if all heed the propaganda message.

With juxtaposition and insinuation to the fore, this closing sequence builds on the fears and scandals of the rest of the film and banishes them through the use of the icons of Pétainism. Thus, the old people threatened by the Jews and their machinations in the earlier sequences of the film are implicitly helped by the youth of France (in whose hands the future must lie), shown in the final sequences filling sacks with grain. Not only does this give a *transparence* on the agricultural myth; it also represents the fruition of Vichy ideology, the end of privation and the ensuing cornucopia that is and will be thanks to the New Order in France. Moreover, it reinforces exactly the images we have seen in *Chefs de demain* (p75).

Although there were cases like the one above of heavy borrowing from Nazi propaganda mythology, one production now well-known for its propaganda content was a uniquely French show. Riche's portrayal of a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy to drag France into the Second World War, the "documentaire sobrement romancé"<sup>25</sup> of *Forces occultes* (1943), was produced by Nova

---

<sup>25</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 March 1943, p2



Film, the same company that had made *Les corrupteurs*. With a screenplay by Marquès-Rivière, himself an ex-Mason who edited the virulently anti-Masonic publication *Documents maçonniques*, the film purported to reveal the full extent of Masonic corruption.

It opens with a shot of a relief map of France. The shadow of a spider falls upon it, growing larger until the creature itself is seen sitting on the map; on its back are the square and compasses, traditional symbol of Masonry. After the titles, we pass to a sitting of the Assemblée nationale, where the young *député* Avenel (hero of the story) is accusing his fellow MPs of corruption. The capitalists, he says, exploit; the Communists divide: "la trahison de la France à des intérêts particuliers"<sup>26</sup>. He is discussed by two députés who are Masons; they decide that he should be in a Lodge. When approached, Avenel is sceptical, not least because of the secrecy of the organisation. This evokes the response that

la Franc-maçonnerie n'est pas une société  
secrète, c'est une société discrète.

Action then cuts to 16bis, Rue Cadet, seat of the Grand Orient de France, largest of the French Obediences, where Avenel's candidature is discussed: a non-practising Catholic, he is 'safe'. When he once more explains his unease at what he may be doing, he is reassured that "le milieu maçonnique est terriblement médiocre" and nothing sinister is going on. Avenel's fears dispelled, the cinema audience is then treated to a 'reconstruction' of the Masonic initiation ceremony, prefaced by his sitting in the *cabinet de réflexion* adorned with Stars of David; Avenel's words, "Pas rigolo, leur truc," sum up the thoughts of the viewer. Once he has been accepted, a Jewish 'Brother' offers him his card and tells him to get in touch if ever he needs

---

<sup>26</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

anything. A second reveals how he should by rights have the Légion d'honneur; if Avenel could have a word with the right people... The Masonic handshake, he is told, opens all doors.

Et ce fut pour Avenel le terrible engrenage des  
compromissions et complaisances auquel il  
tenta désespérément d'échapper.

Examples are given of how the newest 'Brother' is called upon, helping fellow Masons Lévy and Cerf when they are in trouble over financial scandals. Further events in which Masonic involvement is indicated are the Stavisky Affair and the circumstances around the coming to power of the Front populaire in 1934. The catalogue of pre-Vichy disasters orchestrated by the Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy is such that war is the only solution the Masons can see, with all agreeing save Avenel.

Action now passes to May 1939 and a meeting at the Rue Cadet. To applause from his fellows, a 'Brother' is giving a report on how Masons have arranged over two thousand air accidents; the fate of Europe will be decided within a fortnight. Avenel, who is now a member of the Parliamentary Defence Committee, rises to his feet to dispute this, berating his 'Brothers' and telling them that "tout chez vous n'est qu'une sinistre comédie". Whilst he does this, a Mason slips out of the room to make a 'phone call, returning to tell the departing Avenel that he can take him to incriminating documents in support of his stand. He is lured to an ambush, stabbed and left for dead. However, he survives, and hears mobilising troops from his hospital bed...

Meanwhile, back at the Lodge, the 'Brothers' are congratulating themselves on a job well done, agreeing that "il faut que le monde soit subi à notre ordre". The final sequence of the film shows the earth seen from space bursting into

flames as a 'Jewish-looking' Mason is faded in; the word "Fin" appears in fiery letters.

Riche's intentions are clear from the very beginning of the film. Not only do the size and shape of the spider inspire revulsion in the audience (a revulsion to which Masonry will be joined by the insignia on its back; the juxtaposition of imagery creates emotional intensity blinding rational response, *cf* p59), but we have also the implication of a predatory spider's web of intrigue from which there is no escape: France is seen as the helpless victim. The hero Avenel stands as the average Frenchman and more subliminally, Pétain, rejecting the divisions of capitalism and Communism and calling for all to work together. The "intérêts particuliers" he identifies - not pulling together for the greater common good - recruit him to their number in an obvious attempt to silence him. The presence of Stars of David in the *cabinet de réflexion* - a faithful reproduction of the lodges got up for anti-Masonic exhibitions - serves to underline the supposed Jewish involvement and provides a *point de repère* for any members of the audience who have visited the exhibition, enabling them to assimilate what they are seeing on film with what they have themselves experienced. That Avenel is not a practising Catholic can only be to the Masons' advantage. Were he practising, not only would his religion prevent him from joining such a society, masonry being anathema to any practising Catholic, but in addition the Church itself had come down firmly on the side of Vichy (preaching Luke 14:31-32<sup>27</sup> on the first Sunday after the Armistice, for example) and in its doctrines espoused causes such as the family that were at the centre of Vichy ideology<sup>28</sup>.

---

<sup>27</sup> What King, going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

<sup>28</sup> More recently, the Paul Touvier trial has shown how eager the Church was to help collaborators.



Real political scandals of the recent past are woven into the story so that they appear to be the result of this Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy and confer falsely syllogistic credibility on otherwise non-credible elements. At this point in the film an even more subtle reference drags the Communists, the other great enemy of the Vichy state, into the fray. The two thousand air accidents serve to awaken the memory that communists were directly responsible for the sabotage of French fighter aircraft on the production line before the war. With this masterstroke, Marquès-Rivière has brought together all of Vichy's enemies, identified them with recent scandals and affairs that touched all Frenchmen in one way or another, and established the theory of a grand design, a great plot intended to drag France into another war, a war she cannot win because she has been sabotaged. More chillingly, her betrayal is just the first step in the threatened domination of the world by Judaeo-Masonry, which cannot but mean the destruction of the planet as is so graphically portrayed in the final frame.

The press lost no time in making potential audiences aware of the film and its message. *Le Petit Parisien* described it as

une date politique...C'est une anecdote plus que vraisemblable, calquée à quelques détails près sur tous ces crimes maçonniques demeurés chaque fois impunis et qui ont jalonné chez nous l'histoire du régime défunt<sup>29</sup>.

These words show the wish of the press to reaffirm the conspiracy theory, and go even further, laying the blame for all pre-Armistice disasters at the door of the Masons. Implicit in these pronouncements was the statement that with the *épuration* of the State<sup>30</sup>, the new Etat français could never find itself in such a position (especially if staffed by those represented in *Chefs de demain...*).

---

<sup>29</sup> *Op cit*, 13 March 1943, p2

<sup>30</sup> Cf Keith Doney's doctoral work on French Freemasonry of the German Occupation (Aston University, forthcoming)

The present chapter has shown us how Vichy attempted to establish certain themes in its policies and supporting material: Leadership and *le Maréchal*; a return to traditional values that had been lost with detrimental effects for the country as a whole; *le paysan* and the agricultural myth; teamwork and pulling together; sport and the open air; and youth and motherhood. This has been achieved by adapting techniques of persuasive discourse and harnessing the emotions of the people through juxtaposition, syllogism and generalisation to respond to criteria government has already established in its ideology. We have also seen that, by extrapolation, these processes can be mimicked in film: the problem (the motivating idea behind the film) is posed, investigated, and resolved in the filmic process. Suitably adapted, film could therefore provide a *transparence* for the myths of Pétain and Vichy France, enabling the audience to perceive what they see on the screen as reality by comparing it to their own experiences. At the same time they are prepared in the belief that other such messages received from sources other than film, *eg* press or direct propaganda material, are also 'true'.

This chapter has indeed shown how the *court* or *moyen métrage* film can be used either directly or as "documentaire sobrement romancé" in order to communicate a propaganda point or to reinforce an element of ideology that the authorities wished to see promoted; it was, after all, perceived by its audiences as a truthful and didactic medium.

But although we have now seen how Vichy relied on certain themes for the propagation of its policies and how documentary could be used to portray those policies "in quite a blatant and propagandistic way, we have already noted in our Introduction how direct references to the contemporary situation were rebutted by the French since they went to the cinema as a form of *divertissement*. And so, if a film was to woo the average cinema-goer into

accepting its message, subtlety was a more likely key to success. Moreover, documentary needed in addition to become popular in the eyes of the audience (*cf* Chapter One), or they would not come to see it.

Indeed, it is not until 1942/43 that we see the use of the *court* or *moyen métrage* as direct propaganda in mainstream cinema programmes in such blatant attempts as *Forces occultes*. What is of interest here in view of the preceding point, is that the projection of *Forces occultes* had come after two years of exclusively documentary screenings at precisely the cinema at which it was now shown. Moreover, there is no doubt that

The cumulative effect of filmic propaganda is  
greater than any individual film<sup>31</sup>.

As the discussion of Reception Theory in Chapter Two has shown us, however, it would of course be foolish immediately to jump to a conclusion based on our knowledge of prevalent historical trends, funding providers, and the filmmakers themselves irrespective of any questions of subtlety and popularity. The following Chapters themselves will therefore give critical attention, drawing on the theoretical aids set out in Chapter Two, to certain of the documentaries themselves (and, necessarily, to the screenings of those films<sup>32</sup>).

As already indicated in the Introduction, we shall be basing our analysis on those documentaries featuring in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and the Premier congrès du film documentaire. The Introduction has indicated how the 'Arts; Sciences, Voyages' programmes have been chosen since they provide an encapsulation of all that was deemed at the time to be the best in

---

<sup>31</sup> Jowett & O'Donnell, p81

<sup>32</sup> Details of the films in each screening are given in Appendix II (p220)



documentary of the period. As such they also provided circumstances in which audiences could be persuaded that the documentary was worth viewing in its own right (*cf* Chapter One, p41). As for the Premier congrès du film documentaire, a government-sponsored event, its choice will enable us to compare any thematic recurrence in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes with those of a series of screenings that could well be argued to seek to support the régime.

This done, our Conclusion will enable us to place the findings in the context of the films' screenings and historical climate in order to establish, with the help of elements of reception theory and analysis outlined in Chapter Two, whether documentary of the Vichy period can be said to be *Au service du Maréchal*.

## CHAPTER FOUR - Themes and Variations

Il existe de magnifiques documentaires et il ne  
faut pas cesser d'en tourner.  
André Robert,  
*Le Petit Parisien*, 21 March 1943

Chapter Two showed us how Vichy attempted to establish certain themes in its policies and supporting material: Leadership and *Le Maréchal*; a return to traditional values that had been lost with detrimental effects for the country as a whole; *le paysan* and the agricultural myth; teamwork and pulling together; sport and the open air; and youth and motherhood. Chapter Three showed us filmic manifestations of some of these particular themes for propaganda purposes.

The present chapter concentrates on a description and thematic analysis of the content of films of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings in order to ascertain whether the themes referred to above are in fact present and if so, whether there is any similarity to their treatment in propaganda material<sup>1</sup>. Our description and analysis will follow the thematic order expounded above, and reference will be made to films by ASV $n$ , where  $n$  refers to the programme number (see Appendix II). We can start by stating that *Le Maréchal* himself does not feature in the films of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages', and this may best be explained by a desire to avoid elements of controversy (*cf* Chapter One, p40). We therefore start our discussion and analysis with tradition, stability and perpetual values.

---

<sup>1</sup> Events around the particular screenings, and government and press reaction to the screenings and the films themselves, are discussed and evaluated in Chapter Six.

### **Tradition, stability and perpetual values**

The theme of tradition allied to religion (arguably seen by the society of the time as a perpetual value, *cf* Chapter Three, p90) is present in *Rouen, naissance d'une cité* (1940; ASV3), a travelogue showing the modern city and contrasting it with that of old. Opening in the Normandy countryside with shots of cows, orchards and traditional architecture and framing the town of Rouen firmly within a traditionally rural setting, the first section of the film gives us a brief tour of the city's history, its "héritage du passé"<sup>2</sup>. The vocabulary of its soundtrack seeks clearly to establish the concept of lineage and inheritance through an insistence on such vocabulary. Passing to Rouen itself - birthplace of Flaubert and Corneille, great (and indeed institutional and paternalistic) figures of literature, yet another French heritage - we are given a view of the old parliament building, now the Palais de Justice; a reminder of the beneficial adaptation of ancient form to modern use. *La justice* is also, of course, a central institution invested with authority and symbolism of the principles of the state, time-honoured with a lineage going back through the Revolution to more traditional and classical times.

Another representative of aged tradition is the cathedral, an architectural gem. The camera stands for the viewer as we enter it and see women and children at prayer. On 30 May 1431, we are reminded, it was this very cathedral's bells which rang out the victory of Joan of Arc. The scene then changes as the camera takes the place of Joan at a later date, looking skywards as she stumbles through the narrow streets towards her death in the market square. Viewers, who have already become implicated in the film by viewing its treasures through the lens of the camera, are further involved by *transparence* as they now take the place of Joan. Sombre music emphasising the tragedy of the event, combined with a high-angle shot of the square denoting Joan's

---

<sup>2</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC



subjugation by the English, reinforce the message of *la perfide Albion* in the mind of the viewer, building as they do on the lessons of French history with which every French schoolchild was and is familiar<sup>3</sup>. Further shots show us the stake, the torch committing Joan's body to the flames, and a slight low-angle shot of a statue of the heroine Joan (privileging her in the eyes of the viewer) with flames superimposed whilst the soundtrack becomes suitably dramatic; the flames are replaced by stars and choral music as the Saint reaches her apotheosis. We are then shown the monument to the four hundredth anniversary of the event. Many members of the audience will have attended churches in which statues of Joan are present if not prominent, and the use of the statue in the film therefore provides for audience identification of the film's action with their own experiences. In this sequence, the stake becomes not a death but an initiatory trial by fire. It is not flames but stars that finish this particular sequence, and the viewer therefore sees images of heaven rather than hell, height rather than depth; effectively, Joan dies in order to be reborn. And so in a short sequence, present-day viewers are reminded of the past and the need not to forget its lessons; they are subtly reminded of the debt owed to Joan's sacrifice; moreover, they are reminded that sacrifice may lead to glory, an obvious wartime reference. This sacrifice, exemplified by Joan, can in some respects be repaid by the "puissance actuelle" of the bustling port that is modern-day Rouen; combined with what we have seen from the past, we know that the city will have "un avenir digne de son passé". Extrapolating from Joan's situation, Rouen has taken the lessons of the past and applied them to the present in order to forge a successful, even triumphant future. An appreciation of past traditions and the application of the lessons learned, will benefit the person hearing them and acting accordingly. The sequence may also be seen as establishing a formulaic model that greatness may be achieved through sacrifice. Joan's 'initiation by fire' also raises the question of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf Wharton, *Franco-British Studies* 14, p24; also above, Chapter One

archetypal nature (in the Jungian sense) of an initiatory scenario, structuring as it does great narratives from classical mythology (eg Hercules) through Christianity to modern literature. Many *mythologues* have noted its stirring, emotive qualities which never fail to touch a chord in audiences. The identification of the audience with Joan therefore further suggests that the audience can triumph over suffering if it bears sacrifice nobly<sup>4</sup>. The film therefore shows evidence not only of 'Vichy' themes of tradition (allied to religion) and perpetual values, but it is also suffused especially through the icon of Joan, with the notion of *renouveau* so closely associated with *le Maréchal* (cf Chapter Three, p67). Moreover, its filmic exploration of these themes is highly emotive.

Past tradition, this time with a musical bent, also serves as the starting point of Maudru's *Vieilles chansons de France* (1942; ASV7), which traces the story of singing through the ages. As "Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre" and "Plaisir d'amour" play over the titles, the film opens with a shot of a child in a cradle to the words, "Dès le berceau, la chanson nous appelle ou nous console"<sup>5</sup>. The camera pulls back to show us a large kitchen wherein the child is in its cradle; nearby stand its attentive mother and a little further off, grandmother: a visual encoding of the maternal and generational idyll much favoured in this period, and a reference, once again, to the theme of lineage and inheritance. As the child grows older, "Des rondes, des chansons populaires guident ses jeux à l'école". Not only does the vocabulary ("ronde") conjure up images of tradition and indeed working together - learning songs at mother's knee or at school, rounds requiring input from everyone participating in order to be effective - it also contains a further concept, that of the circular form, the idea of rebirth and continuation. The verb "guider" is also an interesting choice,

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf Vierende

<sup>5</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC



suggestive of control: the traditional art of song, we gather, is something on which reliance can be placed, carrying authority and leading forwards.

Knowledge of this authority can also come from knowing the history behind these songs. The narrator tells us, for example, that "Cadet Roussel" is based on Louis XI's minister Jean de Nivelle, and Lully is credited with the writing of "Au clair de la lune". Such songs pass the test of time, we are reminded: "Auprès de ma blonde", for example, has seen its singers change, though the message - of love and devotion to that love - remains the same. The song itself has a stirring refrain performed on the soundtrack, encouraging participation; it is essentially masculine, and indeed no women are seen (or indeed heard) singing during the entire film. Where women do feature, as for example with the opening sequence or indeed the next sequence of the film, their role is essentially passive; they are either reverential parents (as in the former case) or in this latter case, the object of adoration, the inspiration for the melody. We are shown, from pre-Revolutionary times to the present day, precisely how little has changed throughout the life of "Auprès de ma blonde". In a sequence illustrating this immutability, a young, smiling blonde sits in her upstairs room, a banner beneath the sill - the very positioning requires us to look up to her in this idealised state - and watches the soldiers pass as they sing the song. With the passage of time the message on the banner (to which the camera has panned down, though it remains in low-angle shot) changes from "Vive le Roy" through "Vive la Nation" and "Vive l'Empéreur", to "Vive la République" in 1848. We then pass to more modern times, with a group of *poilus* departing; the slogan is now "Vive la France". This sequence therefore ties in the themes of love and devotion (here, to an idealised and unchanging human object) and transposes them to a common, patriotic and equally idealised and unchanging cause (France), thus creating a sense of community and shared values, symbolised by the unison of the song. In addition, the more



explicit military context in which these images are set carries further interpretations of nationalism and patriotism.

"Une fois libéré, l'homme retrouve la chanson de tous les métiers", we are told as images of tree-fellers, harvesters, cattle-drovers and shepherds are juxtaposed with the previous shots of soldiery. This short sequence moves on from the potentially negative imagery of war (and as recent history has shown, defeat) to more traditional crafts, and serves to link song to a more traditional agricultural theme whilst also showing rural pursuits requiring devotion to the task in hand. It should also be noted that the concept of "retrouver" implies that something has been lost; parallels may perhaps be drawn here with the message prevalent at the time of the damage wrought to the country in general by failing to heed the traditions and messages of the past. Maintaining this concept of a continuation from the past, we are reminded that these new workers are the latest in a long line, just as "le ménestrel du moyen-âge [a] ses ancêtres modernes, de Montmartre et Ménilmontant". The vocabulary here lends further credence to the ancient qualities and pedigree of song, whilst situating the concept within a modern location (Montmartre and Ménilmontant) familiar to all. Further, although Paris has been mentioned, the legacy of song is not confined to the capital: we are reminded that "les chants les plus célèbres d'une province accompagnent ses jeux favoris" as we are given examples and images from the Basque country, Savoy, Normandy ("la douceur de la vie en fleur"), Brittany, Languedoc (Rouget de l'Isle and the Marseillaise)... This last point (as we are shown a shot of the carving on the Arc de Triomphe) leads us into a sequence which goes from images of Revolutionary soldiers to *poilus* and the French flag. The whole sequence again shows us in its choice of subject - a choral overview of the country - a desire to include all parts of France in the message of the film; no-one must be left out. In demonstrating the immutable and all-encompassing characteristics

of the song through the ages, the film reminds us that this heritage may be enjoyed (and must indeed be perpetuated) by all in happy and patriotic communion. Although women may only sing if their contribution is limited to nurturing the tradition (*cf* the early nursery sequences), song becomes the rallying point for the (male, active) community which, if it learns the lessons of the film, cannot but benefit. Once again, we are faced with a treatment of the theme of tradition and pulling together which is so positive, and so harmonises with similar treatments elsewhere as to appear almost didactic (*cf* Chapter One and the role of documentary film, p41).

These lessons are not however confined to song in the arts: dance, too, relies heavily on tradition, as is made clear in *Symphonie en blanc et la danse éternelle* (1942; ASV9), "l'un des efforts les plus considérables faits à ce jour pour honorer sur l'écran la danse classique"<sup>6</sup> and made with the help of the great stars of the Opéra de Paris and their director, Serge Lifar. It is these modern-day *balletistes* we see after historical representations of dance from Greek vases and similar artefacts: dressed as Greek maidens, they dance to pan pipes in shots reminiscent of the opening sequences of Riefenstahl's *Olympiad* (1936). These images are juxtaposed with shots of an ancient statue of a child playing with a goose, as the soundtrack tells us that "L'enfant qui joue, danse"<sup>7</sup>. And so audiences are given two examples of present-day activity from ancient inspiration, with the presence of antiquity lending authority to the message. Whereas the initial sequence led us from stasis to movement, the second gives us movement (alluded to in the soundtrack) with images of stasis. In both cases, the message of tradition and immutability is the same, and the invocation of youth matches the opening sequences of *Vieilles chansons...* Moving on historically, we see how tribal dancing, with its religious

---

<sup>6</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 5 December 1942, p4

<sup>7</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC



connotations, has given way over the ages to more stylised representations, from the tarantella through gypsy dancing, flamenco, polonaise and mazurka, minuet, waltz and polka. As we move inexorably towards the present, we are reminded that in France, the State has long been aware of the benefits of dance, be it through Louis XIV's support of composers such as Lully and the court dances and masques he created, to the modern-day encouragement of the art through the Académie nationale de musique at the Opéra. The film clearly seeks to establish that France's present-day efforts are merely the latest in a long line of tradition stretching back to the ancient Greeks, and establishes the authority and wisdom of the State in recognising and providing for this through a central institution whose very title (Académie) connotes the authority of the Classical period.

At this point in the documentary we enter the Opéra's training rooms, where young dancers are hard at work. Their older colleagues, now qualified, perform more examples of dance for the camera; one particular sequence, again on a Greek theme, is once more reminiscent of Riefenstahl in its presentation of the dance. We see afresh a theme already present in *Rouen...* and *Vieilles chansons...*, that of inheritance, of the older generation passing on advice and technique to the younger; the legacy and lessons of the past nurture the present and are not to be ignored. The narration of the final sequence reminds us that what we have seen in the rest of the film, the appreciation and passing on of inheritance in dance, is part of the *Symphonie en blanc*, a general purity evident in everyday objects such as a white rose or snow which appear to us on film. Interestingly, the sequence showing snow is a straight lift from *Trente jours au-dessus des nuages* (cf below, p113); we might perhaps see in this the director's oblique reference to the latest manifestation of taking from the past, that is a borrowing from documentary predecessors acknowledging the documentarist's heritage by bowing to the craft of the metaphorical 'fathers'



of the genre<sup>8</sup>. As with the theatrical theme of *Etoiles de demain* (1942; ASV8 - a look behind the scenes of a training school for young actors and actresses, demonstrating France's great theatrical traditions being passed on to its youth, its future greatness), the twin aspects of great tradition handed down and of future security through well-trained youth, are in evidence.

We have thus seen in the films chosen so far, that tradition and its legacy are of prime importance to the narrative of those films, and that this may be ascertained both from the soundtrack and the images used. In addition, the treatment of these themes is unrelentingly and unquestioningly positive, as we have been able to conclude from our analysis of filmic techniques such as *transparence* and juxtaposition. Having established the presence of a traditional theme, let us pass now to another element present in films studied, the agricultural motif, incorporating the figure of the peasant in the role of guardian of the mythical rural idyll of the past.

### **Agriculture and Peasantry**

These themes are present in the fusion of agriculture and tradition found in *Manosque, pays de Jean Giono* (1943; ASV12), telling of the countryside and life of the well-known contemporary author<sup>9</sup>. The film opens with a simple dedication from the director, Georges Regnier:

Ce film est dédié à Jean Giono. Puisse-t-il y  
retrouver le visage d'une terre qu'il a  
magnifiquement chantée<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Such *homages* are common in filmic presentations, for example the appearance of a train in some form during many feature films (cf *L'entrée d'un train en gare*), or more open acts (Mel Brooks' *High Anxiety* and its dedication to and straight lifts from, Hitchcock); cf also below, p121

<sup>9</sup> "[His novels depict] in rich poetic language...a way of life that is not only simple and idyllic, but hard and close to primitive Nature, seen as a living and healing force. [...] His work shows deep distaste for the modern world, especially urban society" (Reid, p261)

<sup>10</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

After establishing shots of Giono out walking in the countryside and identifying him with his *terre*, we pass to shots of a ploughman going about his business as the soundtrack gives us quotations from Giono's voluminous work. When the ploughman stands upright from bending to inspect and touch the newly-turned soil - a tangible *retour à la terre* - we see him in low-angle shot, privileging him in the eyes of the viewer who has literally to look up to this icon of *paysan* tradition embodying pride in the land of France<sup>11</sup>.

Next we see "ruines des villages morts", followed by shots of a graveyard - Giono's work deplores the decline of rural life, and this is clearly reflected in the images of decay the audience sees. But as we can observe in one particular ruined farm, all is not lost: a young man and woman are hard at work rebuilding the property. This is followed by shots of a blacksmith at work, a woman spinning - "des gens qui réapprennent" - a potter, a tanner, a shepherd and his flock. As if to bring the wheel full circle from the ploughman seen towards the beginning of the film - the circular theme of recurrence is prevalent in all of the films studied so far in this chapter - we are shown shots of harvesting to the commentary "La vie repose sur le blé et sur le travail qui fait pousser le blé"<sup>12</sup>. And so the tilling of the soil at the beginning of the film, indicative of the start of any arable agricultural process, will reap its rewards in the forthcoming harvest<sup>13</sup>; the traditional cycle of the seasons continues ever on simple needs and simple pleasures and - as in the more dramatic Joan of Arc sequence of *Rouen...* - the possibility of renewal and rebirth. This continuation is ever present in the film: having followed country life through the day, it naturally ends after shots of the village at night, when the camera enters Giono's house and looks over his shoulder

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf below, p131

<sup>12</sup> Nor should the parallel with the saving of the harvest in *Chefs de demain* be forgotten (p76)

<sup>13</sup> Cf also "Notre jeunesse va forger une vie nouvelle" in *Les corrupteurs*, Chapter Three p87



(implicating the viewer in the action of the film) as he writes the words full of reassuring simplicity, "Tout le bonheur des hommes est dans les petites vallées". And so the sequence establishes a clear semiotic chain: the abandonment of the countryside from ignorance of the past has led to death; those who are willing to listen to the past and "réapprendre" provide (new) life; so that all is resolved with "tout le bonheur des hommes...". And in this film as with *Vieilles chansons...*, the use of the prefix *re* in relation to the verbs has two major effects: on the one hand, it reminds audiences that what they are seeing is merely an actual way of life that they already know and have temporarily lost; and on the other, it activates that myth of the *éternel retour* which draws on human nostalgia for the Golden Age of the past (*cf* p46). Their emotions thus awakened, the audience is likely to be receptive to the film's didactic message - which *ne ment pas* - that they may *retrouver* the happiness of the past.

A demonstration of the benefit of heeding tradition is present in Rouquier's *Le tonnelier* (1943; ASV11), which takes the viewer through a day in the life of M Valentin, the eponymous cooper, and the *métier artisanal* that is his trade. Following the coopering process step by step and providing diagrammatic illustration of various aspects of that process, the film shows the skill and care that goes into making the finished product. The audience is reminded that the present work is merely the latest in a long and unbreakable line of tradition handed down. An apprentice, in the atelier to learn, personifies the need for and the perpetuation of the succession of skilled coopers and the handing on of traditional skills; as we see rings being placed around the barrel, the shot of a medieval stained-glass window illustrating that very process is faded in to the accompanying commentary "un geste traditionnel"<sup>14</sup>. Such juxtaposition of imagery allied to the soundtrack, reiterates the legacy of the trade under

---

<sup>14</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC



investigation here, and is suggestive of hallowed tradition, with the dignity of the cooper's art and inherited knowledge raised to a status of near religious importance.

M. Valentin has clearly learned his lessons whilst himself an apprentice; his reward has been reaped in that he is now the master. We are further reminded of this legacy of knowledge and training as he looks along a timber to ascertain its trueness for use in the barrel, when we are told: "Ce coup d'oeil; quarante ans de métier". Pausing in his labours, M Valentin catches a wind-blown scrap of paper. This permits a biographical flashback - having done his duty in the Great War, he has also been *diplômé* for his coopering efforts - before we are reminded that it is the present task that is important. Throughout the film we therefore see an interest in the traditional skills of a *métier artisanal*, stressing the value of unpretentious hard work and application to the task; and we also see that such work has its rewards. This is made clear to us by Pierre Chatard of *Le Cri du Peuple* when he succinctly defines Rouquier's goal:

le dessin de M Rouquier n'était pas de nous enseigner une technique. [Il] a voulu nous donner le sentiment de ce que représentait de science, d'application et d'habileté *l'humble métier du tonnelier* [my emphasis]. Ce film sans phrases est d'une rare élégance<sup>15</sup>.

This commentary places emphasis not only on the *humilité* of this traditional *métier* (with its allusions to the quiet, agricultural types who were the backbone of France), but also on the application and skill that it requires. *Manosque* has already reminded us of the need not to forget the skills of the past, and *Le tonnelier* gives us concrete manifestation of how these skills can be seen to succeed whilst at the same time elevating the humble soul exercising his *métier* to a status beyond the social position he actually occupies.

---

<sup>15</sup> *Op cit*, 15 June 1943, p2

*Humilité* and the handing on of traditional skills are not confined to their representation in *Le tonnelier*; they are taken up with the agricultural motif in Laffont's *Naissance de la soie* (1943; ASV12) made for the Ministry of Agriculture and telling the story of the "industrie artisanale rurale" that is the production of silk, from its beginnings with the worm to the weaving of cloth by "familles paysannes". Opening with shots of people going about their business in a romanticised "Provence ensoleillée", the film explains how silk production has fallen to around eleven per cent. of its 1894 level. Now, however, government aid is helping the industry: the new order is building on past achievements in the present, to forge a new future. The government's sponsorship of the film has already been mentioned in the titles, and their appearance by reference in the soundtrack serves to remind the viewer that government is proactive in support for those areas of society with a humble, traditional role to play. Moreover, at this point in the film the message of the soundtrack is further reinforced by a visual encoding of governmental authority: a low angle shot of the postman delivering government leaflets and explaining their content to a peasant clearly in need of advice, privileges the government agent over that peasant, who is framed in a high angle shot. If this were not enough, the postman is physically taller than the peasant, who must perforce look up to him as we the audience have already done through the use of low camera angle. The two shots together denote clearly the power, intelligence and superiority of institutional authority over the individual whilst also implicating the audience in that very denotation.

The film goes on to show us the various processes of silk harvesting: some is used by surgeons in operations, and by fishermen for their nets; but there is also the production of haute couture. The humble silk worker is therefore seen to be of vital importance to the French economy from the most simple and traditional *métier* to the most skilled. The film concludes by telling us firmly



that, "En ce moment...la France doit se servir de toutes ses ressources", a comment not without relevance at a time when rationing pressed home the need for economy and pulling together, and points out that aid to the industry not only helps rural families (support for one of the "éléments essentiels de la sauvegarde du pays"<sup>16</sup>) but also helps through its end-product to spread French taste and all that is best in France throughout the world. Providing a visual reinforcement of the spoken commentary and contributing to the patriotic tone of this concluding sequence, the film's final shots (in slight low-angle) show the elegance and culture of French couture at a fashion show to stirring background music. Most members of the audience will already be aware of the importance of French *haute couture*, and the film enables them to identify with this through the images on screen whilst at the same time demonstrating how it is reliant on a traditional rural industry. By extrapolation, then, all levels of society benefit from the work of the humble silk farmer, whose efforts are rewarded; everyone pulls together with the aid of the silkworm.

This juxtaposition of modernity and tradition in the agricultural sphere can also be seen in Lallier's *Alerte aux champs* (1942; ASV9) which reminds audiences of the dangers posed to agriculture by the Colorado Beetle. However, science is able to defeat this pest, be it through pesticides or the use of predatory insects against the beetle. Here again, present-day discoveries applied for the benefit of past traditions triumph over the adversary and forge a new and glorious future. The sacred earth is preserved for handing on to the next generation, who will naturally be aware of the lessons to be learned from its predecessors

The countryside has a different role to play in *Hommage à Georges Bizet* (1943; ASV10), which tells of the composer's life, his trials and tribulations,

---

<sup>16</sup> Pétain, p202



but its lessons when learned are seen to be beneficial. Bizet's initial success and rewards lead to disillusionment and a vow never to compose again. However, he moves to the south of France where he is once more inspired by the surroundings and local peasants to take up his pen again, writing *L'Arlésienne*:

C'est de cette leçon de la nature qu'il retiendra  
plus tard sa définition si française de l'idée  
musicale<sup>17</sup>.

We should note here that the definition is not merely "française" but "si française"; again, the accent is on a patriotic pride in what is discussed. The images accompanying these sequences are allied to the soundtrack of Bizet's own music, rising to a frenzy of increasingly quick cuts of the *Arlésienne* herself and crashing waves as the music reaches its climax; the audience is totally implicated into the action by the stirring, transporting music and its visual representation. Bizet's greatest triumph is of course *Carmen* - "une musique de retour à la nature, à la santé, à la jeunesse...". Here again we see an emphasis on a return to simple virtues which have presumably been overlooked or ignored with detrimental consequences, a theme we have already remarked upon with reference to the films previously discussed in this chapter. Moreover, it is interesting to note here that whereas a musicologist would argue that the narrative line of the opera rests on the essential dichotomy between a rigid lifestyle (that of the soldier) and the freer lifestyle of *Carmen* and the gypsies, for the purposes of the film's director both this dichotomy and the essentially fateful theme of tragic passion is obscured in a reinterpretation of the driving forces behind the storyline - "santé, nature, jeunesse". The director prefers to ignore the scandalous and unchaste side of the *Carmen* story in favour of euphemistically positive attributes - "santé, nature, jeunesse" - which also have the benefits of simplicity (a recurring

---

<sup>17</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

theme) and fashionable approval at the time of making the film (sport and the open air). And so the film sets out the inherent Frenchness of Bizet's work, his inspiration from precisely those forces to which all must inevitably return, and the resultant benefits reaped, be they for Bizet or the musical reputation of France.

The films analysed so far have clearly demonstrated a thematic recurrence in the treatment of their subject, be these the themes of agriculture/the soil and tradition; the handing on of skills or crafts, or of the wisdom of the ages to youth; or of continual renewal, from past to present and future generations.

The inheritance derived from this intergenerational legacy can also be literal, as is the case (this time in the literary sphere) in *Sur les chemins de Lamartine* (1942; ASV7), whilst still retaining the agricultural theme. The film is divided into three parts, of which the first, "Les sentiers de l'enfance", begins in the village of Milly-Lamartine, "le modeste nom d'un village maconnais associé à celui d'un des plus grands poètes français"<sup>18</sup>. As in *Le tonnelier* and *Naissance de la soie*, the soundtrack immediately juxtaposes the concepts of humility and grandeur, with the resolution of any apparent dichotomy being achieved through the insinuation, powerfully vehicled by this paradox, that France values the common man; to be humble *is* to be great<sup>19</sup>. We are shown the family home ("C'est à ce foyer chéri que la mère de Lamartine l'éleva dans la piété") and the countryside around which he played ("L'enfance de Lamartine est une pastorale vécue dans ce décor harmonieux [...] Il a partagé la vie et les jeux des petits paysans [...] son coeur est attaché à cette terre natale"). Again, the vocabulary, reinforcing the images of rural tranquillity in the film, places

---

<sup>18</sup> This and other quotes from the film also held at CNC

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly enough, this is reminiscent of the Christian principle of the meek inheriting the earth, thereby reinforcing the indirect presence of religious imagery in the complex of themes under discussion here.

emphasis on the rurality and purity of the film's location whilst also underscoring the importance of the family and respect for authority (here through piety). In the second part of the film, "Les rivages de l'idylle", we follow Lamartine through his youth, to the shores of Lake Annecy, where we learn of the love that inspired him to his great works; the images here serve again to underscore the inspirational qualities of the tranquil French countryside. In part three - "Les chemins de la gloire" - the death of Lamartine's father requires his return to the family home ("la demeure féodale"), where he undertakes his "travail enthousiaste et passionné" whilst living "une vie seigneuriale". Here again the vocabulary drives home the *ancienneté* of the situation, the traditional duty that falls to Lamartine. But Lamartine is willing to recognise other duties, acting in defence of his country on 25 February 1848 when he takes part in the Revolution. This over, he can return to his château and his work, surrounded by "la sublime nature qu'il a chantée de la voix la plus pure". The hyperbole of this sentence serves again to drive home the message of the purity of the countryside, and parallels can also be drawn here with the message behind Joan of Arc in *Rouen...*, in that some form of duty and sacrifice (here, participation in the 1848 Revolution and a recognition of his seigneurial duty) is not only beneficially character-forming but also leads ultimately to a condition which is "sublime". The vocabulary here as throughout the film, is clear: the individual's life must be one of *progress*, the following of a clear itinerary ("les sentiers") which may rest awhile on "les rivages de l'idylle", but will necessarily lead eventually through sacrifice if "la gloire" is to be achieved at the end of the journey. The willing acceptance of a role imposed by duty (and indeed inheritance - something of which we have already made mention frequently in this Chapter), the recognition and acceptance of the inspirations of nature (whose message has been so often ignored in the past) can, when heeded, be seen to reap rewards which surpass all human expectation. The hyperbole of the film's



narration in describing Lamartine's virtually transcendent entry into a realm of "sublime nature" recalls the stars emerging from the flames of Joan of Arc's pyre, and implies, once again, a didactic intent, or desire for persuasion on the part of the filmmaker.

*Rodin* (1942; ASV7) continued the theme of inheritance within the individual itinerary of a great Frenchman, telling the story of the sculptor and his work, and the prestige conferred on France by such art. The film begins in the "rues populaires"<sup>20</sup> of Paris where the sculptor was born, following his career from his inspiration by ancient masters and the more recent work of Baudelaire, in particular *Les fleurs du mal*, to latter-day success. Here again we see the reference to the artistic inheritance in the plastic arts which we have already seen underscored in *Symphonie en blanc* and *Etoiles de demain*. Rodin's desire to work did not prevent "[le] partage du temps entre le travail et sa famille"; and as with Lamartine, nor was *patrie* neglected, for in 1870 "il fait son devoir". During the course of the film we therefore see Rodin evoked as an incarnation of the Vichy *devise* of *Travail, famille, patrie*, able through inspiration from past masters to apply his efforts towards bringing glory and prestige to the country.

### **Open air, mountain pursuits, and sport; teamwork and pulling together**

Such rewards as Lamartine's need not be limited exclusively to the benefits of the countryside *per se*, for a more general interest in the open air, together with mountain pursuits, and sport also made its way onto film. Nor should we forget that in many cases sport is often also reliant on teamwork, a pulling together.

---

<sup>20</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

These themes of teamwork and mountaineering are combined in *Trente jours au dessus des nuages* (1942; ASV7), made with the patronage of the Secrétariat général à la jeunesse and telling the story of a trip around the Alps, from Argentières to Chamonix *via* Mont Blanc. The trip is a pioneering one: "ce raid n'a jamais été tenté"<sup>21</sup>. The film opens in Alpine countryside, with shots of peasants, cows and the surroundings, its soundtrack a dialogue between one of those making the trip, and a friend. When asked "Qu'est-ce qui vous a pris de partir comme ça?", there is but one reply:

La joie de l'effort...le désir de montrer que les  
Français sont capables de se lancer dans l'audace  
de ce rude sport d'alpinisme..."

The reply moves from the initial and deceptively simple "joie de l'effort" to the more complicated "désir...", marking out the proud *Frenchness* of the team in question - echoes of the "idée si française" of *Hommage à Georges Bizet* - while their determination and "audace" is indicative of the desire to achieve what is beyond most (non-French) mortals. As for the constitution of the six-person team - "Nous ne sommes pas six personnes mais une équipe" - there is a woman present; but as we have seen from the prevalent desire of the time to ensure that women limited themselves to the more routine and domestic tasks in the 'family unit' (*cf* Chapter Two, p64; also Figure 5, p230), it is she, and she alone, who performs the domestic tasks during the trip.

We see the team set off and scale hitherto unconquered peaks, for example when a 20-year-old, the youngest of the team, climbs a granite peak and christens it "L'aiguille de la jeunesse". Just as Borotra had wished to see *mens sana...* inculcated in the country's youth<sup>22</sup>, that very youth has heeded the message and is seen here devoting itself to the task. Of course, the needle's renaming as "L'aiguille de la jeunesse" is entirely appropriate in view of the

---

<sup>21</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

<sup>22</sup> *Cf* Chapter Three, p72

person responsible for conquering it. But also, more than simply a mountaineering challenge, this "aiguille" (not a *mont* or *sommet*) represents a peak of achievement, pointing upwards and onwards, just as youth, the film implies, contains the promise of ever higher achievement. Viewers are placed in awe of the rocks in question as the camera pans up them from their base. By the same token, youth is elevated by its association with the rocks. There is therefore a further possibility for the younger members of the audience to identify with this, and for the whole audience to be stirred by the literal scaling of heights performed in their name. The team follows the route of the original climbers up Mont Blanc, and where the going is tough, they follow literally in each other's footsteps. Not only is their direction (naturally) upwards (indicative also of a striving for a goal), but they are reproducing the route of pioneers; they are aware of the tradition, and doing their best to learn from that lesson. Be they teams or individuals, others in the past have given up in the face of hardship; but not these youngsters. Their determination to succeed enables them to display resourcefulness: where things are difficult, the group splits into two to find the best route because "l'esprit d'équipe n'ordonne pas de toujours rester en troupeau". Being part of a team and working together to achieve a common goal does not preclude individual effort, but such moves are obviously made with the different members respecting the authority of the leader; whatever the action, the common goal is still there. Having made their way successfully around the circuit, we see the team coming back down into sun-kissed wooded countryside, the woman bringing up the rear, as we are reminded by the soundtrack:

Goûter la joie de l'effort, le plaisir du risque. La  
fierté de triompher, c'est là le miracle de l'esprit  
d'équipe. Vous partez six, aussi différents que  
vous pourrez l'être. Vous vous unissez pour une  
tâche commune, et vous n'êtes qu'une seule  
arme...une équipe.



And so, on this itinerary, the *équipe* itself is the goal at the end of the quest. This casting of perfect teamwork as the desired outcome of the trip elevates the status of teamwork *per se*, insinuating that this achievement surpasses even the great heights which have been conquered during the journey. As with the opening explanation of the reasons behind their adventure, the closing words of the film repeat the application to the task in hand, with the application here being served here by teamwork. In coming together to meet a common goal, six individuals have subsumed their individualism into the team that wins, and the parallel with a nation needing to come together in time of crisis are clear.

This question of teamwork linked to mountaineering was again to the fore in *Les hommes de la neige* (1942; ASV13), which told of the National Ski School. The aims of this sports training body were obvious, as the official review for COIC tells us in highly emotive terms:

A sa sortie de l'école, le moniteur diplômé ne devra pas se borner à enseigner le ski, mais à le faire aimer. Il contribuera ainsi à la formation d'une jeunesse éprise de vie claire et sportive, robuste et dressée à vaincre les difficultés<sup>23</sup>.

The vocabulary of this review is clear, with its emphasis on "faire aimer", "dressée" and "éprise" - these monitors are clearly obedient and well-trained, but they are also human in that they indulge their (healthy) passion for the sport. Such a message was also clear to the critics. Speaking of the guides, *Le Film* commented that:

Le sentiment du devoir et de l'honneur professionnels, le sens d'entr'aide, leur font affronter le risque quotidien aussi bien que le péril des courses de sauvetage<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>23</sup> Archives nationales, F41/368.35

<sup>24</sup> *Op cit*, 14 February 1942, p26

Here again the vocabulary of the *critique* of the film, besides its obviously emotive tenor, matches precisely what we have seen present in another film on the same subject: teamwork, respect for authority, the training of youth to follow the correct path. These elements were perhaps most evident in *L'appel du stade* (1941; ASV4) by Marcel Martin and Jean-Georges Auriol. It opens with shots of artisans and peasants at work, in their workshops and in the countryside:

Dans les villages, les paysans et artisans  
vivent à l'air libre.... Même s'ils travaillent  
dur, ils mènent l'ouvrage de leur vie<sup>25</sup>.

The juxtaposition of the film's opening words and images gives us a clear exposition of the health-giving properties of the pure countryside we have seen evoked so often already in this chapter (eg p103, 110). But hard work is not confined to the countryside: in towns too workers have the best working conditions, with crèches and other facilities (shown to the viewer) provided for children because "il faut assurer la santé de l'enfant". The vocabulary of this sentence points up the requirement to look after the future generations of the country coupled with the concept of assurance: the government is proactive in its provisions. Moving generationally on from the crèche, at school level facilities are provided for children to exercise because "une heure de soleil vaut trois heures de lecture", this comment being made as we see images of children frolicking. But it is not enough for children merely to sit in the sun: rather, they should exercise in a way that will make them good citizens. Tug of war, for example, is not only good exercise but also teaches the value of (literally) pulling together. Nor are adults excluded: they must keep fit and learn to balance work and play. "L'éducation physique *tant qu'elle est conçue dans la doctrine nationale*, doit être menée avec souplesse" [my emphasis].

---

<sup>25</sup> This and other quotations from the film held at CNC

Not enough is yet being done, and all must work hard "pour contribuer tous à la force de la France".

Yet again, then, we have here not only a reiteration of themes which were dear to Vichy in terms of both policy (health and physical strength, education, childcare), and propaganda (unity, working together, suppressing laziness and individualism), but a treatment of those themes which is openly didactic and sympathetic to the government, as is shown by the appearance of words such as, "tant qu'elle est conçue dans la doctrine nationale" and the verb "doit" in the quotation above.

### **Inclusion and exclusion, Empire and France as benevolent colonialist**

Finally, this desire articulated towards the end of *L'appel du stade* takes to a national level the concepts of teamwork referred to both in the film and elsewhere in this chapter. What is more, it provides an element of the theme of inclusion and exclusion to which we have alluded in Chapter Three, and is present in films on the Empire and France. At the same time it does not exclude allusions to themes of peasantry and agriculture.

Ichac's and Ruffin's *Pèlerins de la Mècque* (1940; ASV5), demonstrates this French colonial benevolence quite clearly by depicting the events of the 1939 Haj for which France provided transport for the muslim natives of her colonies. A project of the Service cinématographique de l'armée with a provisional budget of 90 000 francs (subsequently exceeded by some 64 000 francs)<sup>26</sup>, the film served to show how the Empire had benefited its indigenous population, improving their lives and providing defence. A visual example of this is provided when, to suitably martial background music, a French battleship is seen to accompany the travellers, carrying "le salut de ceux qui

---

<sup>26</sup> Archives nationales, F41/21



veillent aux frontières de l'Empire"<sup>27</sup>. De Lessep's Suez Canal - a feat of French engineering - means a short trip by boat for those who before were forced to travel across inhospitable desert. The film therefore becomes an exercise in self-congratulation, showing "ce que la France a fait pour ses sujets" by reference to images that cannot but instil pride in France's colonial achievements in any audience. We can in fact draw parallels between what we see here and the "attachement cordial des indigènes" observed in *La garde de l'empire...* (Chapter Three, p79): the respect in which the colonialists are held is clearly in part due to all that they have done for the natives. There is a further, double and subtler implication: the ostentatious fulfilling of duty towards subject populations, the film insinuates, reinforces the obligations and duty towards authority on the part of the subjugated - but grateful - *indigènes* (cf p167). The relationship between coloniser and colonised is sentimentalised and idealised as one of mutual obligation and respect, while, at the same time, the superiority and condescension of the French colonial power is never placed in doubt. This flattering portrayal of French colonial achievement invites French audiences to participate in the (inclusive) dynamic of an identification with the colonialists on screen, revered by the natives for their fairness, generosity and superior culture. Indeed, this dynamic of inclusion is reinforced by the film's portrayal of the natives themselves: different as they are by their culture, religion and the colour of their skin, even they are bound to *la Patrie* by their respect for the virtues of Frenchness<sup>28</sup>.

By contrast, it is the dynamic of exclusion which drives De Cavaignac's *Au pays des buveurs de sang: une evocation d'Afrique* (1943; ASV10), a journey through Africa to the lands of the Masai, the film's eponymous blood-drinkers.

---

<sup>27</sup> This and other quotations from the film held by National Film Archive

<sup>28</sup> This portrayal is, of course, in line with the French colonial tradition of *assimilation*, that is, the expectation that colonial subjects and their culture 'become' French through their colonial annexation by France.

Here, through the technique of opposition, the accent is more one of privileging France's colonial role against that of the British, who are implicitly seen as exploitative and unfit to govern. The first demonstration of this comes on the team's arrival at Djibouti after a trip along the Canal ("saluons notre collègue De Lesseps"<sup>29</sup>). Shots of the natives showing them taking water from taps are immediately contrasted in the next sequence with a long-distance shot of Aden, the arid British colony of the team's next stop. And so, whereas the viewer has been in proximity to the natives of French colonies who are clearly seen to benefit from colonial rule, they are kept at more than arm's length and merely informed by the soundtrack of the aridity of Aden. Use of the camera in this way to provide a juxtaposition of images of (French) proximity and (British) distance helps to underline the anti-British message we have seen implicit in *Rouen...* and elsewhere<sup>30</sup>, facilitating the viewer's implication in the film by appealing to that human desire of *belonging* which contributes to such emotions as patriotism and the will to teamwork.

This opposition of inclusion/exclusion with colonial France and Britain as its focus continues in Pretoria itself, where the main square has a statue of Kruger, "héros de la guerre des Boers" and shown in low-angle shot, denoting the superiority of the subject to the viewer, who is reminded of these "fondateurs réels", the "hardis défenseurs" defeated by the colony-grabbing British. In the context of the popularity of the anti-British German production *President Kruger* then on release in France, the audience would have been well aware of the underlying critique of Britain and her Empire, especially in view of poster material which since the very start of the Occupation had told of Britain's plans for colonial expansion at France's expense<sup>31</sup>. Most of the rest of the film is taken up with a wildlife tour of

---

<sup>29</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

<sup>30</sup> Cf Wharton, "The Bulldog and the Marshal" *Franco-British Studies* 14, p27

<sup>31</sup> Cf idem, p24



Africa including shots of the Masai in action, but the concluding sequences serve once more to show anti-British sentiment. Now on the west coast of Africa, the team makes its way to the "île aride" of St Helena which, as every Frenchman knows, is where Napoleon died; Longwood House still flies the French flag (shown in low-angle shot, denoting the importance of what is on view). This part of the film has an added piquancy because De Cavaignac was descended from one of Napoleon's generals at St Helena. Leaving this "rocher inhospitalier" to return to France, the commentator reminds the audience of the great and glorious past known in Napoleon's time as the sun is seen setting over the afterdeck. The film has taken viewers the length and breadth of Africa, contrasting France's benevolence on the continent with the more exploitative attitude of the British. Sentiments evoked by this evidence of the actions of *la perfide Albion* can then be transposed onto viewers' direct implication in the action of the film by the trip to St Helena, enabling viewers as it does to draw on their knowledge of the Emperor's history from their schooling. Again, the lessons of the past can be applied immediately to the present.

Finally, Napoleon's sacrifice is transposed into that of French explorers generally (including them in a powerful, leading but ultimately benevolent role) in *Sortilège exotique* (1943; ASV8), a sort of 'around the world in eighty reels' which recorded the sights, sounds and impressions of a journey undertaken by the husband and wife team, Alfred Chaumel and Geneviève Chaumel-Gentil<sup>32</sup>. Divided into five sections - *Les Iles, Extrême Orient, Les Indes, Tableaux malagaches* and *Continent noir* - the film covers areas of the globe where France has colonial interests and influence. Ostensibly anthropological in their outlook, the sections of the film do not lose the opportunity to remind the viewer of a French presence in the area: *Continent*

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf also chapter Six, p174



*noir*, for example, pauses at a deserted fort to recount the story of père Charles de Foucault who was assassinated by natives; and *Extrême orient* pauses at a monument to dead sailors on the Tonkin River "morts pour la France"<sup>33</sup>. It is interesting to note that a sequence from *Continent noir* on the making of salt is a straight lift of one from *La grande caravane* (ASV4). As we have already observed with *Symphonie en blanc* and *Trente jours...*, even as their work contributes to the advance of France's documentary history, the filmmakers pay due attention to their filmic past and apply its lessons to the present.

Past, present, future: this chapter has shown that the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' documentaries discussed here clearly display thematic similarities with the more openly propagandistic documentaries we have discussed in Chapter Three, and categorising that thematic treatment (*cf* Table 1, next page), shows that the concept of teamwork features in every film discussed, and that agriculture and peasantry also feature highly. But in the technical treatment of those themes and in their juxtaposition to other themes which we have discussed here, it is difficult not to see at least the traces of certain elements of propagandistic manipulation. For example, the ostensibly historic treatment of song in *Vieilles chansons...* reinforces not only the unsurprising (for the times) secondary role of women in society, but also a further theme of community, war and soldiery which, in the context of the time of its screening, would have struck a chord with audiences. Similarly, the contrasting of benevolent French colonialism with British aridity and implicit subjugation in *Au pays des buveurs de sang* within the context of French poster material and other film material damning British colonial expansionism<sup>34</sup>, made a further message quite clear to viewers.

---

<sup>33</sup> Quote from the film held at CNC

<sup>34</sup> *Cf* Wharton, "The Bulldog and the Marshal", *Franco-British Studies* 14, p24

<i>Title</i>	Tradition	Agriculture/ Peasant	Youth	Sport/ Open Air	Duty/ Teamwork	Empire
<i>A l'assaut des Aiguilles du Diable</i>			X	X	X	
<i>Alerte aux champs</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Appel du Stade</i>			X	X	X	
<i>Au pays des buveurs de sang</i>	X				X	X
<i>Hommage à Georges Bizet</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Les hommes de la neige</i>			X	X	X	
<i>Manosque</i>	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>Naissance de la soie</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Pélerins de la Mècque</i>					X	X
<i>Rouen, naissance d'une cité</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Sortilège exotique</i>		X			X	X
<i>Sur les chemins de Lamartine</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Symphonie en blanc</i>	X	X	X		X	
<i>Le tonnelier</i>	X	X			X	
<i>Trente jours au-dessus des nuages</i>		X	X	X	X	
<i>Vieilles chansons de France</i>	X	X	X			

Table 1: Thematic similarities within propaganda film

Above all, though, we should note the highly metaphorical and emotive treatment accorded to many of the subjects of these documentaries. The sentimental and anthropomorphic dedication of *Manosque* is one example, in which the "terre" of France assumes a "visage" (p103) inviting the viewer's sentimental involvement in the film; again, Lamartine's itinerary along "sentiers" and "chemins" via "rivages de l'idylle" (p111), reveals a romanticised metaphorical treatment which 'programmes' the viewer's response by inviting him or her to interpret Lamartine's life not only as the chaotic, chance occurrences of a mundane existence but, as an ordered progression along a clearly defined path. Most dramatically of all, perhaps, the sequence of Joan of Arc's journey to the pyre in *Rouen...* (p96), by inviting the viewer to participate in the film from the perspective of its doomed (but later triumphant) heroine, encourages an emotional response on the part of the viewer who is almost forced to identify with Joan. It may of course be argued at this stage that such metaphors and associations are no more than the clichés of their time. Nevertheless, when we consider their effect, together with that of juxtapositions, oppositions, and *transparences* that we have observed in other documentaries discussed above, it is striking that this genre - despite its claims to veracity and, therefore, implied commitment to objectivity - should be so dependent on extremely manipulative filmic devices.

As we have already mentioned, the importance of contextualised discussion will be examined more fully in our final chapter. However, it is possible even now to observe that we should retain the impression - which the evidence strongly suggests - that certain aspects of documentary films in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' series display deep similarities with Vichy propaganda material, not only in terms of themes and content, but also in terms of the didactic control exerted by the films themselves over the audience's reading of them.



But the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes were not the only occasion for audiences to observe and appreciate documentary other than as the *film de complément* of a particular programme. The Premier congrès du film documentaire of 5 to 22 April 1943 under the patronage of the Ministries of Information and Education and of the General Directorate for Cinema supported by COIC and organised by 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages', was to provide another showcase for the medium. Before passing to our concluding chapter, therefore, we should first examine the content of those screenings to see whether thematic similarities are also present in this government-sponsored forum. Our next chapter therefore moves to the Congrès itself.

## CHAPTER FIVE - *Lettres de noblesse: the Premier congrès du film documentaire*

Le cinéma a désormais son Prix  
Goncourt... et ses lettres de noblesse  
*Le Petit Parisien*,  
20 April 1943

With the advent of 1943, almost two years of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes had shown by their content and by audience and critical acclaim, that documentary now held a role within the filmic canon as more than a simple *film de complément*. From 5 to 22 April of that year Paris hosted the Premier congrès du film documentaire, an event held under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, the General Directorate for Cinema and the Ministry of Education with the support of COIC with 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' and marking official recognition of this more elevated status. For the first time in its history, the work of documentary producers in France was celebrated, and rewarded with the Grand prix du film documentaire decided by a jury whose honorary President was none other than Louis Lumière, pioneer of cinema.

This chapter will discuss the events and themes of the Congrès<sup>1</sup>, referring back to those themes we have already seen discussed in previous chapters: Leadership and *Le Maréchal*; a return to traditional values that had been lost with detrimental effects for the country as a whole; *le paysan* and the agricultural myth; teamwork and pulling together; sport and the open air; and youth and motherhood. As may be observed from Appendix III, many screenings during the Congrès were openly dedicated to these themes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The daily events of the Congrès themselves are given in Appendix III

Does this official recognition enable us to recognise similarities in the treatment of those themes with the ones already indicated in our last chapter?

Before embarking upon an investigation of these questions, let us first examine some presentational aspects of the Congrès. The events of the Congrès were detailed in a 114-page brochure, of which 3 150 copies had been printed<sup>2</sup>. 150 of these were numbered for special distribution, with a further one printed expressly for Pétain. *Le Maréchal* himself figures prominently in the brochure after its cover and titles, where he is at the forefront of a print (see Figure Two, next page). To elucidate the role of Pétain as it emerges through the events and literature of the Congrès, the iconography of the apparently simple print must first be considered in conjunction with the thematic elements we have already indicated. Pétain figures prominently in the centre beneath the quality of *patrie*; the *francisque* - symbol of the new régime and decoration for merit *décerné* by Pétain to those who served that régime - shines out above his head and his famous words of 17 June 1940 - "Je fais à la France le don de ma personne" - appear below his title. Pétain's positioning at the very centre of the picture not only ensures that he alone dominates it, but also divides it into three. Such a division is entirely appropriate, for it assigns roughly equal space to all three aspects of the ternate *Travail, Famille, Patrie* motto whilst foregrounding and centring Pétain as *the* sign and its connotation ("la pensée que nous servons") of the abstraction of that motto. Since such a positioning also links him directly and vertically to *Patrie*; Pétain effectively becomes the earthly manifestation of the celestially placed *Patrie*, a visual reinforcement of his Christ-like sacrifice ("le don

---

<sup>2</sup> Total cost of printing, 295 300 francs. Unless otherwise credited, figures and quotations are taken from the *Brochure* for the Congrès, Archives Nationales F41/283





**Figure 2:** "La Pensée que nous servons"  
*Source:* *Brochure* for the Premier congrès du film documentaire, p3  
(Archives Nationales, File F41/283)

ma propre personne"). It is not stretching the imagination to regard this central representation much as religious representations show divine power coming to Christ through the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, though here the Christ figure is Pétain and the haloed dove, the *francisque*. What is more, the very word order of the motto has been manipulated from *Travail famille patrie* to ensure that its cynosure features as centrally and particularly identified with the personification of *Patrie*.

Of the other two elements, to the left lies *Travail*: the traditionally-dressed agricultural worker/peasant father returns and crosses the threshold of the family home. Behind him are oxen, before him a basket laden with fruit (symbol of plenty) and a cockerel, traditional symbol of France. To the right of Pétain and beneath *Famille*, the man's emblematic wife and children turn to welcome him with beaming faces. They are soon to eat; mother is cutting bread, the staff of life, and one child is already eating her slice. To complement the image begun with work, man and cockerel, a mother hen and her brood are visible in the centre foreground of this third of the picture. Through the arch behind the mother, we see a church; on the hill in the distance lies a 'grand château', and a man bends to an ox-drawn plough. But for the foreground, this section of the picture could be taken from *Les très riches heures du duc de Berri*, again demonstrating the theme of inheritance of long-standing traditions to which we have so often alluded. The reader is reminded, however, that there is a new saint in the canon: Pétain and all he stands for (and all that is encapsulated in the print's microcosm of France) is "La Pensée que nous servons". There is therefore a clear suggestion from the very catalogue of the events of the Congrès, that what we are about to see will confirm the remark made here; documentary films presented will be seen to serve Pétain and his thought.

The *Brochure* continues after a series of introductions by Bonnard (Minister of Education), Galey (Director of the Cinema Service) and Robert himself by giving the reader details of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes to date, a timetable of the events of the Congrès, and a breakdown of the Jury for the Grand prix du film documentaire to be awarded for the first time at the end of the Congrès (*cf* below, p145).

Robert informs the reader that his inspiration for the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings had been the chance meeting with colleagues *en route* to a prisoner of war camp after capture. This re-evocation of prisoners of war works in two ways: it enables Robert to develop a theme in line with the practice of the time of reminding the country that Frenchmen were still prisoners in Germany but could be released by volunteers for STO (*cf* Chapter Three, p56), and also made Robert's experience appear an apparently altruistic inspiration for 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages':

Chaque prisonnier quand il est libéré contracte une dette vis-à-vis de ceux qui restent là-bas, une dette d'honneur: *entretenir leur présence* [my emphasis]. Qu'Arts, Sciences Voyages soit donc pour tous ceux qui vont suivre ce Congrès une illustration de la devise du Camp de Meaux: "E Clade Resurrectio" - de la défaite naîtra notre résurrection<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to being a personal statement on his part (for he had come from Meaux to establish his 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes, thereby ensuring himself of commercial success that would provide him with an income), Robert's words echo the Vichy tenet that the lessons of defeat may be applied to the present situation in order to lay the foundations for the future. The "entretenir leur présence" reminds readers of a message

---

<sup>3</sup> p12



often articulated by government at the time<sup>4</sup>, that the prisoners were not to be forgotten (with the further subtext that they would be released if French workers went over to German factories). As with the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings in support of prisoners (*cf* p169 *et seq*), such comments also directly implicate the reader in the situation and press home to them the need to become involved and play their part since nearly every French family had a relative in the camps and would be naturally anxious to see them return. In articulating this argument, Robert shows not only how in tune with Vichy ideologies he is but also suggests why Vichy support for the screenings was so readily available: their thematic content had potential for creation, reinforcement and change of response among the public in relation to the political and ideological aims of the government (*cf* p48, 58).

Robert's idea that "de la défaite naîtra notre résurrection" is again evident in a series of photographs that follow the terms and conditions for the Grand prix and indicate "Le destin du documentaire". The title shows a bell - continuing the religious metaphor of Pétainolatry referred to in Chapter Two - and reminds the reader that

C'est [au documentaire] qu'il appartient  
demain:

D'EXALTER LA FAMILLE  
[superimposed on a photograph of a  
young girl looking lovingly at a doll; the  
mother figure of Vichy must be  
inculcated at the earliest opportunity]

DE SOUTENIR LE TRAVAIL  
[superimposed on a photograph of stooks  
being loaded onto an ox-drawn cart; the  
agricultural theme is here reinforced by  
the harvest, symbol of the plenty to be  
had under the new régime and the

---

<sup>4</sup> *Cf* Marchetti, pp117, 126

glorious future to be had by heeding the messages of the past]<sup>5</sup>

DE CONTRIBUER AU RELEVEMENT  
DU PAYS [superimposed on a low-angle  
photograph of a traditional, peasant-like  
character who, once again, reinforces the  
agricultural motif while appealing openly  
to French patriotism]

DE FAIRE PROSPERER LA SCIENCE  
[superimposed on a photograph of a  
surgical operation, giving a theme of  
*santé* as well as technological progress].

We can conclude from this that the documentary was intended to be seen here as not merely didactic but overtly partisan and political, since the first three of these duties of the documentary correspond with the motto of the *Etat Français* (cf Chapter Two, p67), and the fourth is an elaboration of Robert's introductory passage in which he speaks of lessons to be learned from defeat, *ie* application towards a greater goal. In addition to the low-angle photographs with their denotations of authority, upper case 'instructions' underline the importance of the task in hand and drive home the subliminal message of the accompanying images. As if this were not enough, the image of the peasant referred to above is similar in presentation to that of the ploughman appearing in *Manosque* (p104), and that of the surgeon has parallels with the sequence in *Naissance de la soie* on the modern application of silk. The first pages of the brochure can therefore be seen to reinforce on paper and ally to overtly political ideological discourses, certain thematic representations present in films shown not only during the Congrès but also during 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf Chapter Three, pp69, 71

As for the rest of the brochure, much of it is taken up with articles on subjects covered by the daily events of the Congrès, *eg* educational film and microscopy; but two articles are of particular interest in view of government policy as we have seen it here, and of the influence of German precedents on French actions within the cinema industry (*cf* Chapter Six, p159-160). Leni Riefenstahl, director of the reports on the 1936 Berlin Olympics made expressly for the Nazis and whose work we have already seen featured in the screenings of the Congrès, contributed an article entitled "Sur la raison d'être et la conception du documentaire". In it she explains the motivation behind the making of a documentary - to put across an

idéal, que ce soit la FOI d'un rassemblement de parti ou les thèmes de combat et de victoire de films comme dans les Jeux Olympiques.

In the light of the set pieces of the Nuremberg Rallies - themselves indicative of the triumph of 'faith' in Nazism - recorded on film as *Triumph des Willens* (1937; triumph of the will), and Hitler's belief that the Olympics would show the superiority of the Aryan race, the "idéal" of which Reifenstahl speaks is clear. As her attributed comment after recording the Nuremberg rallies has it:

A truly and genuinely powerful national expression can be kindled through the medium of film...<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, such an expression can involve the audience in what it sees (*cf* Chapter Two, p47). This theme of motivation and expression is reinforced by the words of Karl Melzer, General Secretary of the German International Film Chamber, in his article on "Le Documentaire Allemand":

---

<sup>6</sup> Barnouw, p103



Le film devient un puissant véhicule d'idées éducatrices.... Dans l'ensemble des programmes cinématographiques allemands, le Documentaire et les Actualités [constituent] une base solide pour l'éducation et l'édification du peuple...

Reactions to the newsreel (*cf* Chapter One, p36, and Welch) have indicated that the Nazis intended such education to be along Party lines<sup>7</sup>. From an analysis of the material taken from the Congrès *Brochure*, it certainly appears that the Vichy government has similar designs upon documentary film. Let us pass now to a closer examination of the films themselves to see whether this is the case.

#### **Tradition: In the beginning...**

The opening of the Congrès on 5 April was certainly thematically appropriate in the context of tradition. As befitted the Seventh Art that was cinema, the ceremony was held in the Conservatoire des arts et métiers. André Debré of COIC's Management Committee - responsible for the elaboration and implementation of policy (*cf* Chapter One, p38) opened the proceedings, and after his speech guests toured the Conservatoire's collection of old cinema equipment. After the usual thanks and appreciation, the speech itself makes the government's motivation with regard to its support of cinema quite clear:

Vous savez quelle formidable puissance représente le Cinéma comme instrument de propagande nationale et internationale, comme instrument de diffusion. Plus que tous les autres arts, plus que tous les autres moyens d'expression de la pensée humaine, il touche la masse, le peuple tout entier<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Cf* Chabrol's recent film, *L'Oeil de Vichy* (1993), tx BBC1 16 July 1994

<sup>8</sup> *Le Film*, 17 April 1943, p5

Debrié's speech displays what we have already observed in Chapter One and elsewhere, namely the government's recognition of the wide-ranging power and potential influence of film. Moreover, it expresses a desire for working together, for involving everyone - a desire we have already touched on in Chapter Two in our discussion of the theme of inclusion and exclusion (p60). The sense of involvement of all concerned, combined with an accent on tradition, was certainly the motivational force behind the first day's programme, held on 7 April and devoted to a retrospective of works officially dubbed "chefs-d'oeuvre du cinéma documentaire"<sup>9</sup>. Opening with Zuber's *Qu'est-ce que le temps?* (1943) which dealt with man's conception of time throughout the ages, the programme went on to show the Lumière classics of *Un train entrant dans la gare de La Ciotat* and *L'arroseur arrosé*. Further past greats such as Sauvage's *Croisière jaune* (1934) were shown before passing to contemporary documentaries such as Painlevé's *L'hippocampe* (shown in ASV8). In the interests of Franco-German duopoly<sup>10</sup> and just as it had launched the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' series, UFA's *Rayons X* - "magnifique film"<sup>11</sup> - figured here. The evening was sponsored by the Ministry of Education, and the Minister himself, Abel Bonnard, presided over events, thereby lending the official government *cachet* to proceedings. As with the Lumière honorary presidency of the Grand Prix jury, the use of *Un train...* and *L'arroseur...* was a declaration of the importance of France's pioneering role in the history of filmmaking, and of the country's establishment of a (now) great tradition. In line with the prevalent desire of the time to acknowledge French heritage and to take the lessons of the past and apply them to the present for the future, the programme itself on this first day patriotically

---

<sup>9</sup> *Le Film*, 17 April 1943, p5

<sup>10</sup> Cf above, Chapter One p35; below, p148, and Chapter Six, p175

<sup>11</sup> *Le Film*, 17 April 1943, p5

underscored France's past glories and pointed to future potential achievements. Moreover, as the first event of the Congrès, the screening establishes the screenings that follow as the next steps in the lineage of (specifically French) greatness; the films become valorised by the chronology we see unfolding here.

### **La soirée du Secrétariat général à la jeunesse**

The following evening (8 April) saw a screening of documentaries at the Palais de Chaillot arranged by the Secretariat for Youth. Five films were shown, of which three were available throughout France - Chanas' and Lasseaux' *Monnaies de France* (1941) telling of the evolution of French coinage (tradition and the application of lessons from the past to the future), Lafond's *Deux blanches une rouge* (1943) on billiards and Missir's *Branly*; the other two films were seen for the first time in the Occupied Zone. Of these latter two, the LATAC/CATJC<sup>12</sup> production *La maison du soleil* (1942) was an "émouvant reportage" about the military sanatorium at Mont-des-Oiseaux; and Clément's *Grande pastorale* (?1942), the very title of which reflected its leanings towards the agricultural theme popular at the time, told of sheep droving in Provence,

la persistance de vieilles coutumes et  
de...traditions<sup>13</sup>.

Of these two films, the second is clearly of appeal to, and described by, the critics by virtue of its thematic consonance with the agricultural motif and stability of traditions to which we have already referred, and the first reminds us of the theme of soldiery which we have also mentioned (p99). Further, this film also incorporates the notion of duty: the soldiers have expended effort on behalf of the nation, which in its gratitude makes health

---

<sup>12</sup> Centre artistique et technique des jeunes du cinéma

<sup>13</sup> *Le Film*, 17 April 1943, p6



improvement facilities available to those who require them.

Effort and its rewards are also a theme of *Branly* which, as its title suggests, recounts the life of the French scientist and discovery of wireless telegraphy:

Ce film a été réalisé entièrement aux lieux mêmes où s'écoula la vie de l'illustre savant... Ses collaborateurs immédiats ont consenti à revivre ici certaines des heures qu'ils passèrent à ses côtés<sup>14</sup>

As the reverential tone of this commentary, allied to its claim to use first-hand *témoignages* suggests, from its very outset the film clearly casts its central "character" in the role of *grand Français* and High Priest of science while at the same time seeking to establish the utter veracity of the events and personalities it records. Following closely on its protagonist so as to place Branly the man at the privileged centre of the narrative, it traces his illustrious career from birth at Asnières through education at Lycée and University to his great experiments, carried out as they were in the humble surroundings of a convent, thereby evoking the concepts of humility and the greatness arising from it which we have seen so clearly documented in *Sur les chemins de Lamartine* (cf above, p110). Reinforcing ostensible veracity, the camera takes us into the very room in which Branly's major discovery, the principle of wireless telegraphy, took place, turning the location into a sort of shrine to French technological progress. After diagrammatic representation of Branly's experiment, it is practically demonstrated to a group of students - male and female, referred to as "Messieurs" by the lecturer concerned. The camera stands obliquely behind the lecturer, overseeing the events described and providing a *transparence* for the cinema audience; having seen the diagrammatic representation, the audience relives the moment *sur place*, from the (to the

---

<sup>14</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

audience) flattering perspective of the authoritative figure on the lecturing podium. The scope here for the viewer to identify with the greatness and achievement of an illustrious compatriot is doubtless a significant factor in the film's power to appeal to - and thereby to instruct - its audience. The location and its student audience reinforce the idea of legacy we have already seen: the lessons of the past (Branly's history) are taken, his superior knowledge is passed on to the eager neophytes (the students) and applied to the present to forge a better future (their acting wisely once initiated into the message of his work). And rewards there are, as the film reminds us: Branly's own efforts brought him membership of the Institut and the Légion d'honneur (symbols of the approving and authoritative State), but these honours did not stop him from continuing his work in the same humble surroundings in which he started; no-one, the film suggests, must deny their past<sup>15</sup>. Finally, whilst the soundtrack tells of the successes of Branly's later life, we see a distant present-day shot of someone approaching the new laboratories which were built for him in the grounds of the convent and are still used by modern French scientists: although Branly died (ironically) at the height of a great electrical storm in 1940, the film suggests that his pioneering work lives on to the glory of his country and his values. At the same time, and as if to appear as a commentary on the distant action in the left foreground of the screen, we see a mother hen and her young. These creatures, so deliberately included in the shot, can be seen as symbolic not only of the simple rural life and of the changing generations, but perhaps also of *le coq français*. (Indeed, this motif apparently pleased the organisers enough for it to appear in a similar form in the *Brochure* for the Premier congrès du film documentaire, where it occupies a place at the left shoulder of *le Maréchal* (cf Figure 2, p127).

---

<sup>15</sup> Parallels with the *Maréchal-paysan*? (Cf above, p71)

Emphasising as it did the greatness of French scientific and technological skills and the legacy such pioneers left to the whole world, this emotionally manipulative film could be depended upon to instil pride in its audiences and remind them that great efforts brought great rewards. From a technical point of view in the film, the perennial problem of any director - how to make a 'biopic' without actually having an actor portray the subject - was solved either by showing Branly from behind, in shadow, or by showing 'his' legs, arms or hands. The 'presence' of the principal character again provides a means for the audience to identify with and become implicated in, the action of the film. Moreover and as we have observed with the mythologising actions of a cult, there is a distance from the object of worship here so that Branly's face is never seen<sup>16</sup>. Critics were unanimous in their praise for this film as a "chef-d'oeuvre du genre"<sup>17</sup>.

Taking its cue from the pioneering **traditions** of French film, an evening on *l'Artisanat* (14 April) placed great emphasis on various traditional occupations, including coopering, the subject of Rouquier's *Tonnelier* (cf Chapter Four, p105). In order to provide for a *transparence* between the situation on film and in reality, a live element of the traditions shown was provided by a group of singers and dancers from the Massif central, singing lays appropriate to the various occupations depicted in the films. If we consider the use of false syllogism referred to in Chapter Two (p58), the evening's presentation may further be seen as an enactment of a theory dear to the government and essential to government policy which it desired

---

<sup>16</sup> As Flaubert says in *Madame Bovary*, "Il ne faut pas toucher aux idoles: la dorure en reste aux mains"

<sup>17</sup> *Le Cri du Peuple*, 5 and 6 December 1942, p2



to see accepted by its people<sup>18</sup>. We have already observed (p76) how it had been argued that the pre-Armistice unwillingness to be aware of past traditions and history and to apply those lessons to itself, had been responsible for France's defeat; and we have seen that many of the documentaries under discussion promoted the view that only by being aware of and taking note of its heritage could the country hope to aspire to future greatness. The false syllogism articulated here is clear: we are seeing the great and historic traditions of French filmmaking; such traditions and their lessons must be (and are being) applied by present filmmakers (whose work we shall see as the Congrès progresses); France's filmic future is assured. There is of course a further subtext that the lessons can be applied nationwide.

In respect of this latter interpretation, the future of France was clearly in the hands of (well-educated) young people, and it was for them that film screenings arranged by the Ministry of Education on 15 April when nine cinemas opened their doors for children from Parisian schools as part of the Congrès. The programmes varied slightly from cinema to cinema, but that of the Gaumont-Théâtre, scene of the rescreening of the first 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programme in 1941 (*cf* Chapter Six, p172) can be taken as indicative of offerings as a whole. The five films on offer - *Coupeurs de bois*, *Naissance d'un bijou*, *Les ombres de la ville*, *Une voie impériale française*, and *Mazout végétal* - provided in their subject matter filmic treatment of the now familiar subjects of traditional crafts, scientific advancement, and imperial duty (*cf* Chapter Four). It was to this cinema that the press was invited to see the "personnalités diverses"<sup>19</sup> that had come to view the show with the youngsters, demonstrating the importance

---

<sup>18</sup> *Cf* also below, p141

<sup>19</sup> *Le Film*, 5 June 1943, p10

of the screening in the eyes of its organisers. The films are clearly didactic in nature, especially when we consider that they were intended here for an audience of children.

Whilst on the subject of children, our discussion of the ideological myth of the family (*cf* p69) has already touched upon the question of the provision of the very future generations themselves since, with the family as "l'assise même de l'édifice social,<sup>20</sup>" children are its building blocks. Three days after the *Artisanat* screening, the General Commissariat for the Family offered a series of films within the framework of the Congrès - *Compagnons du Tour de France, Jeux d'Enfants, Dans les Canyons du Colorado*<sup>21</sup> and *Sur un air d'autrefois* - and a cartoon (*Le capitaine Sabord s'appareille*) which ranged over the themes of teamwork, sport and music before culminating in the natal allegory of *Jardins sans fleurs* (1942). Commissioned by the General Commissariat for the Family, this film was designed to put across the national doctrine of childbirth. Taking the flowerless garden of a childless couple, the film allegorises on flowers and children: both bring happiness and enjoyment to others as well as to the people who have them, so why be selfish and have none? Extrapolating from the concepts of teamwork and exclusion we have previously discussed (*cf* Chapter Three, p66), the purpose of this screening could be argued to lay emphasis on teamwork through the theme of a sense of community and collective responsibility and mutual benefit, contrasting fertility (floral in the film, but evidently child-bearing) with the selfishness of those who do not have children and are therefore unwilling to play their part in the "regeneration of the country.

---

<sup>20</sup> Pétain, in *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 September 1940

<sup>21</sup> *Cf* Chapter Six, p164

The following day (18 April), youth was allied to sport in an event sponsored by the General Commissariat for Education and Sport. Students and teachers from the recently-filmed Antibes school for sports monitors disported themselves for the audience at the Palais de Chaillot to complement a screening of films with a sporting theme. Marcel Martin's *Appel du stade*, made for the General Commissariat for Sport in 1941 and shown in ASV4 (*qv*, p116), now appears to serve a useful purpose in the context of its screening here. Two years previously, it had preached the need for and benefits of, healthy and fit youngsters in the rebuilding of France. Those benefits were now to be seen in the flesh and on the stage, as vibrant youths displayed their prowess, with the result that the government was seen to respond to the needs of the people. The film offers a simplified exposition of a problem - the need for inculcation of a spirit of health teamwork and outdoor pursuits - and then suggests the solution to that problem ("la doctrine nationale"<sup>22</sup>), formulated by the government. By juxtaposing the film and the young sports monitors on this occasion, the authorities appeared to provide living proof of the success of this "doctrine nationale". And yet the need for such a doctrine has been deliberately created and fostered by the very government proposing the solution<sup>23</sup>.

In the interests of duopoly<sup>24</sup>, Vichy's healthy youngsters were contrasted at this screening with the German model courtesy of two films by Leni Riefenstahl, cinematographer of the Reich. *Le saut* (1937), from her film of the 1936 Olympics, showed Aryan youths disporting themselves gymnastically, and their prowess passed from air to water with *Comme un*

---

<sup>22</sup> Quote from the film held at CNC

<sup>23</sup> A present-day British example of this would be the government's 'widening of access' to Higher Education: We need to increase access to universities - we make the polytechnics universities - more people go to universities - problem 'solved'.

<sup>24</sup> Cf below, also Chapter Six, p176, 180



*poisson dans l'eau* (1937). Lest the more traditional of the audience tire of all those adolescent athletics, *Une Journée avec Cerdan* (1943) provided them with a glimpse of the famous French boxer's day, thereby responding to the interests of a large proportion of the sporting public (for, next to horse racing, boxing was one of the most popular spectator sports in France). Yet again, the events and personalities chosen enable the audience to identify with what they see, implicating themselves into what is happening (*cf* above, p47). The organisers of the Congrès were clearly at pains to ensure that no particular section of society was omitted from their attempts to promote enjoyment of the documentary.

#### **Duopoly and teamwork/pulling together**

This desire for inclusion extended, for rather different reasons, to the Occupier and other Axis powers (*cf* below, p148), and resulted, for example, in the "soirée de la presse filmée" at the Palais de Chaillot on the evening of 15 April, which provided the opportunity to compare French and German production in an area of film in which they were already clearly collaborating (*cf* Chapter One, p35). Courtesy of France-Actualités-Pathé-Gaumont, the newsreel was to the fore. With the accent once more on tradition, the event opened with a compilation of news items from 1905 to 1909, before passing to the present with France-Actualités-Pathé-Gaumont's documentary *La machine à écrire l'histoire* (present also in ASV13) and the day's newsreel. To programme the films in this manner provided for the direct implication of the audience in the process they have just seen in action - they become involved in the newsreel making process by watching it on film, and then see the finished product immediately afterwards. The interests of duopoly and balance in the newsreel sphere were further served by the projection of the *Deutsche Wochenschau*, a selection which, according to *Le Film*, "a fait sensation et a été longuement

applaudi"<sup>25</sup>. No other event of the Congrès is reported on from the point of view of audience reaction, and such a comment in the trade press therefore takes on a particular significance, especially since, as the organ of COIC, *Le Film* was the indirect mouthpiece of the government. Since it can be argued that the Congrès provided, in its concentration of the best of French documentary, a symbol of French success, the Congrès could have served as a means of increasing the potential for nationalism of a kind that could be turned against the occupying forces (*cf* Goebbels' disquiet at *La symphonie fantastique* mentioned in Chapter One, p32). As such, it had to be diluted in some way, and just as the reports of the use of colour at the screening of German documentaries on 13 April had underlined the Germans' technical superiority, the reports of applause here can be seen as providing a way of toning down any nascent anti-German feelings by stressing the Germans' popularity at what was an otherwise French event.

The theme of inclusion/teamwork was alluded to in the remaining events of the Congrès, which were intended to display precisely how documentary could be of use and interest to the public in all fields. No use of documentary or interest group was excluded, be it with a demonstration of Microscopy by the *chef du laboratoire* from the Institut Pasteur on 10 April; the use of *format réduit* (*cf* Chapter One, p33) on 13 April; Microfilms at the Bibliothèque Nationale on 16 April; Art (in the Louvre on 17 April); cartoons (again at the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées) on 18 April; in the service of education (including *Rodin*) at the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées on 20 April; or tourism with a Parisian slant (14 April at the Hôtel de Ville - *Matins de France, Les chevaux de Vercors, Le tortillard, Moulins d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, Les ombres de la ville* and *A l'assaut des Aiguilles du Diable*), or more generally, though this time

---

<sup>25</sup> *Op cit*, 8 May 1943, p5



with the support of an art and folklore group, on 16 April at the Palais de Chaillot (note again here the presence of *folklore*, with its implications of tradition and inheritance). The films on tourism can again be seen to cover precisely those thematic areas to which we have already alluded, be it through their depiction of the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside or an interest in the open air. Moreover, this home-grown material could be seen in parallel with the films from Germany and Roumania - *Images de Roumanie*, *Bucarest*, *Au pays des Motzi*, and *Les monastères de Bucovine* - shown elsewhere in the programme. The subject matter of this latter film was certainly not new to documentary audiences, as *Solesmes* (1942) on the ancient abbey, its traditions and the tranquillity of the surrounding countryside had featured in a special screening of government-sponsored films in February 1942<sup>26</sup>.

We have therefore seen that the thematic content of the films of the Congrès follows exactly the framework we have hitherto seen explored in both propaganda films and the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes. One other theme popular at the time, and which we have already seen alluded to in propaganda (p56), was that of prisoners. Interestingly enough, it was the films on tourism, with their thematically reassuring treatment of the subject matter, that were screened in aid of prisoners on 20 April at the Paramount cinema. The 'Paris' screening of 14 April was repeated, targeted this time at an audience of released prisoners and the families of those still in captivity. Prisoners played a vital part in the reasoning behind STO (cf pp56, 80), and to have excluded them from a government-sponsored Congrès that otherwise demonstrated examples of thematic portrayal prevalent at the time would perhaps have been an unforgivable lacuna. At this screening, the Head of the City Council Charles Troche

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf Chapter Six, p192



and General Commissar for Prisoners André Masson both gave speeches, as did André Robert. All other speakers at the event were from the government, and, although not directly accredited, Robert's attendance and participation indicate him to be clearly identifiable with those in authority<sup>27</sup>.

### *Le grand prix du film documentaire français*

Just as on 20 April and at the opening two weeks previously, Robert was present again at the awards of the Grand prix du film documentaire, presented at the end of a Gala Evening at the Palais de Chaillot on 21 April. The prize was the first to be given in the documentary field and, although government funded, was awarded by a special jury of thirty-two men representing all branches of the industry and government. *Le Film* of 8 May 1943 gives us the jury's composition:

Galey (Director of the Cinema Service),  
de Segogne (Commissar for Tourism and  
originator of *Pélerins de la Mècque*),  
Giraudet (from the Education Ministry),  
Buron (COIC's Secretary General)

Beydts and Honegger (film press),  
Thibaud, Lifar (ballet), Belmondo,  
Despiau, Janniot, Le Breton, Oudot,  
de Waroquier, Morane, Hébertot, Bérard,  
Colin, de Baroncelli and Carné (film  
industry and press)

Bricon and Demaria (Cinema Service),  
Vincens (COIC), Autré, Bessy,  
Cheronnet, Hallé, Michaut (advocate of  
documentary in *Le Film*), Régent,  
Vinneuil (editor of *Je Suis Partout*)  
Vuillermoz and André Robert.

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf Chapter Six, p171

It is interesting to note that the division of the list places Robert with civil servants from COIC (whose corporate magazine *Le Film* had so often praised his efforts in promoting the documentary) and Vinneuil (real name Lucien Rebatet), the rabidly anti-Semitic editor of *Je Suis Partout* and eager toer of the party line. Vinneuil also wrote for *Le Petit Parisien* that had provided the initial sponsorship for the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and had credited itself with sponsoring the Congrès in its edition of 8 April 1943. Robert's appearance among such men is a clear indication of his proximity to the government machine and the government's perception of his work, and explains the apparent ease with which he was able to arrange both promotional events for his shows and the screening of the seventh 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' series to prisoners of war (*cf* Chapter Six, p169). It was a fitting acknowledgement of his role in the Congrès and his efforts for the success of the documentary in general that he was honoured by being chosen to announce the prizewinners.

Before this announcement and the prize-giving, however, the General Directorate for Cinema screened a series of films. Opening with *Images et pensées du Maréchal* (?1942) - the mainstay of society and, as the *Brochure* reminded readers, "La pensée que nous servons" - the first half of the programme then passed to films from each of the foreign countries whose products had been on display during the fortnight. As with the *Brochure* for the Congrès (*cf* below, p126 *et seq*) and the retrospectives we have seen both here and in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes, Pétain's presence at the beginning of this particular screening validates and valorises all that is to follow. The father of the state is seen to give his approval to the work in hand, and presides over the award given in recognition of documentary's role in didacticism, the "moyen d'instruction" to which Bonnard has already referred at the opening of the Congrès, when

he spoke of the educational role of film<sup>28</sup>. After the interval, André Robert presented the five Grand prix winners to the audience before showing the films that won the joint first prize.

The quality of the twenty-four documentaries shortlisted was such that the jury could not but award a joint first prize: Robert announced that Rouquier's *Le tonnelier*, Ichac's *A l'Assaut des Aiguilles du Diable* and Lucot's *Rodin* were the recipients, with the fourth prize going to Coppinger's and Missir's *Branly* and the fifth to Cuny's *Hommage à Georges Bizet* - all films which had been screened during 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and of which three (*Hommage à Georges Bizet*, *Rodin* and *Le Tonnelier*) had received government subsidy.

The politics of the situation went further than the content of some of the films when Cuny, director of *Hommage à Georges Bizet*, revealed that his prize money was to be given to the *Caisse de la cantine des élèves du Conservatoire*, a body whose very name betrays proximity to the régime in its support for youth, the future of France<sup>29</sup>. With this gesture of Cuny's the wheel had come full circle: not only had the traditional values of the countryside inspired Bizet to the benefit of music and through this to the reputation of France, but the inspiration behind the film and the rewards it had reaped, were in turn to benefit present-day France and her future musicians. The screening of prize-winning films provided a fitting climax to the events of the Congrès, and the following day 22 April, Galey declared it closed at a simple ceremony in the Mairie de Paris. The venue chosen for this occasion contrasted with that of the opening, and could be argued to reveal how open the government now felt it could be in its

---

<sup>28</sup> *Le Film*, 17 April 1943, p5

<sup>29</sup> Cf Chapter Two, pp71, 76



declaration of support for the documentary and the political role it wished to see played. Whereas the arts were clearly intended to be seen as the inspiration for the Congrès - underlined by the use of such venues as the Conservatoire and the Archives nationales in the first instance - the shift towards the political use of the documentary and indeed the politicisation of the medium, was apparent as the Congrès progressed, as we can see from the appropriation of the Palais de Chaillot for the Grand Prix awards (cf Chapter Six, p171). Use of the Mairie de Paris betrayed a wish for the nominal seat of local government to be perceived as representative of the role of the administrator, the central driving force behind the administration and implementation of policy. The Hôtel de Ville thus became a local manifestation of the authority of Pétain himself, "La pensée que nous servons".

We have now examined preparations for the Congrès and thematic recurrences and the treatment of those themes within the Congrès. The most recent remarks about the *cérémonie de clôture* indicate that there were also external factors which played a role in the events of 5 to 22 April 1943. Let us now turn to these and the acknowledged motivations behind them, in order to contextualise the thematic treatment we have discussed.

### **Duopoly**

A desire on the part of the organisers of the Congrès to portray the notion of parallels and duopoly has already been indicated (p141). Although a French-run show intended to show the importance of the documentary medium to France's filmic *genres*, the Congrès needed also to make provision for the screening of Axis productions from Germany and Italy. Not to include the Germans could have laid Vichy open to charges of exclusive nationalism by the Germans, but their inclusion served also to

bring France and Germany together under the pretence of a duopoly. If the two could be seen by audiences as separate entities in matters documentary as they already were in the feature film (*cf* Chapter One, p31), then the underlying reality of France's relying on German approval for access to film stock and permission even to proceed with film production could be more easily concealed. Thematically, the Axis films shown at the Congrès portrayed similar themes between the countries. The Italian documentaries shown on 19 April, for example - *La côte des Poètes*, *Vertige blanc* on skiing, *Crinières au vent*, *Galilée*, *Trois Quartiers* on ancient and modern Rome, *Cinq terres* on the clifftop villages of Genoa and *Commachio* - contained no overt political message other than that their screening was an implicit declaration of support for the Axis. However, their thematic message, be it the timeless qualities and tranquillity of the countryside and the benefits this conferred or sport, obviously resonated with French audiences accustomed to seeing similar home-made material. We have already commented on the thematic similarities between the films from the Romanian tourist office a week previously (12 April), politically innocuous in contrast to Romania's actual domestic political situation.

The Germans' dominant role in this implied duopoly was evinced by the fact that the screening of German films on 13 April - given, ironically enough, at the Le Français cinema - was in the original language, a demonstration that the language and culture of the conqueror were not being dominated by that of the conquered despite any impressions that the Congrès might give as to the power of French production. The screening was prefaced with a speech from Kaufman, head of UFA's scientific film section and responsible for German cultural films. The appearance of such a high-ranking figure in the German filmmaking hierarchy at an event designed primarily to display the wealth of documentary riches in France

shows clearly the importance of the Congrès in German eyes. It fulfilled Goebbels' wishes that the French film industry be seen to be independent whilst at the same time allowing the Germans to demonstrate their superiority in matters filmic through allowing this screening. *Les passagers de la Grande ourse* (qv, p180) was to reinforce the message that technical superiority could only be achieved through collaboration. In his speech, Kaufmann reminded the audience that documentary offerings must differ from those of feature film programmes:

Il insista...sur le fait que le cinéma documentaire doit être à la fois instructif et récréatif, car il s'adresse au public habituel, venu au cinéma pour se distraire et que l'on rebutterait avec des films d'un caractère trop pédagogique<sup>30</sup>.

Such a comment shows parallels with Goebbels' "simple, divertissant...." (p32), but here any apparent *nullité* in the documentaries' message is replaced by a didactic role which should also entertain. Kaufmann seeks to suggest that documentaries presented in this form would be successful, and the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and the present Congrès, appear to bear him out.

The recreational aspect of which Kaufmann spoke came to the fore during the second half of this programme demonstrating German documentary, which showed colour documentaries for the first time in France. Colour film was not new to French audiences - Painlevé had used it for his *Barbe Bleue* (1937; ASV3), and more recently, UFA's film *Les hallucinations du Baron de Munchhausen* (1943), in celebration of the studios' tenth anniversary, had been very popular with French audiences - but its

---

<sup>30</sup> *Le Film*, 8 May 1943, p5



application to the documentary field was an innovation and made a favourable impression with audience and critics alike. The use of colour here was another symbolic signifier of the occupying power's supremacy, demonstrating to the audience that the Germans still held technical advantages over the French despite the great progress that had been made in the French film industry, now the leading industry in the country. Again the progress was visible, but the political message that duopoly made it possible was also clearly articulated as a subtext.

### **Instruction**

Moving on from duopoly, Melzer's comments on the recreational yet instructive power of the documentary (*cf* p133) must have been in the minds of the General Commissariat for Sport. A week after the Congrès, *Le Film* was to report on "L'activité cinématographique" of precisely this organisation. Not only was the Commissariat a wide-scale user of film, readers were told; the recent screening of films at the Palais de Chaillot during the Congrès

a consacré l'apport du Commissariat  
Général dans la production  
cinématographique française<sup>31</sup>.

Unlike the immediate events of the Congrès, the Commissariat's brief was not limited to Paris:

24 départements et quatre  
arrondissements de Paris ont été visités.  
Plus de 250 000 spectateurs ont été  
groupés au cours de 320 séances<sup>32</sup>.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Op cit*, 25 September 1943, p11

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*

In addition, it loaned films to

des groupements officiels étrangers au département: Police, Chantiers de la jeunesse, groupements de jeunesse, etc<sup>33</sup>.

The article clearly indicates how the message of the documentary was not intended merely for use in 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' and the Premier congrès du film documentaire: it is perceived by government as diffuser of thematically important material. Indeed, discussing *L'appel du stade* at that time, *Comoedia* described it as the first realisation by the government of the propaganda use of film<sup>34</sup>. Two years on and after the Premier congrès, the Commissariat, forming one of the key areas of the original thrust of the Révolution nationale with its emphasis on '*mens sana...*', appears determined to use the filmic medium to transmit its message to as wide a young and receptive audience as possible, and has in fact presented the benefits of its work to the public during the Congrès in the form of practical demonstrations by youngsters (*cf* above, p135). It is interesting to note that besides the youth groups, only the Police are mentioned in this article, the one group that in the latter years of the Occupation was seen to devote itself to the authorities' cause with great fervour. Explaining the government's perception of the films shown, this article reveals the degrees of emphasis the government wished to place on those areas of particular interest to Vichy we have already outlined (*Cf* Chapter Three, p64 *et seq*).

Moreover, by September 1943 the government was in fact to decide on the screening of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes throughout France: *Le Film* of 25 September reported that the Vichy-based General Commissariat for the Family had signed an agreement with Robert to show the programmes in the principal towns and communes of France, "dans le

---

<sup>33</sup> Idem

<sup>34</sup> *Op cit*, 1 November 1941, p7

but de propager en France le cinéma éducatif, notamment auprès de la jeunesse". Not only then were these films now being openly described by an organ of government as "éducatifs": the screenings were to be organised by the General Propaganda Office which was responsible for the coordination of the Commissariat's propaganda, a clear indication that the Vichy régime was now very much aware of the potential of these particular films to disseminate Vichy's ideals among the populace. Eighty screenings were envisaged for 1943-44 - one per month in the chief towns of Departments and once every six weeks in other places, and were seen as contributing

efficacement au développement  
intellectuel et artistique des parents et de  
la jeunesse<sup>35</sup>.

In view of Melzer's comments, we may posit that any such *développement intellectuel* would be along the ideologically acceptable lines we have already discussed in Chapter Two. It is also to be noted that the accent placed on the youth of France, the future of the country as the repository of the message, does not exclude the parents who are expected to ensure the correct inculcation of the new order in their children. The family unit so desired by Vichy ideology is acknowledged as having its part to play, and documentary can be seen to give that unit and its members the advice government perceives them as needing.

This comment from *Le Film* is perhaps an appropriate point with which to end this chapter and its discussions of the events and themes of the Premier congrès du film documentaire. Previous chapters have shown us how certain themes - *Le Maréchal* and authority/leadership; tradition; agriculture; sport and the open air; youth and regeneration - were important to Vichy, being also applied from time to time in the cause of

---

<sup>35</sup> *Le Film*, 25 September 1943, p11



prisoners; and how the themes have been presented on film. This chapter has demonstrated how these themes were present during the Congrès, with specific days for each theme and an underlying desire to promote Franco-German duopoly (as France fell increasingly under German sway). The appointment of Lumière - father of cinema - as Honorary President gave proof of the legitimacy of what was undertaken, and events were situated in settings specifically chosen either to underscore the authenticity of the task in hand - the Conservatoire, Archives nationales, Mairie de Paris - or to reclaim the setting from previous and corrupt régimes (Palais de Chaillot<sup>36</sup>). Screenings can also be said to seek to prove the validity of Vichy's policies, as for example the sporting evening (*cf* p135), thereby reinforcing faith in those behind the message as well as the message itself.

In similar vein, the award of the Grand prix du film documentaire gave the government the opportunity of being seen to reward the achievements of documentary producers; producers who were themselves in a better position to make films as a direct result of government moves and reforms within the industry. The judicious composition of a jury with approximately half of its members linked to government directly and more indirectly, enabled the government to retain influence whilst displaying an outward show of independence; a situation having parallels with the establishment of COIC and control of the administrative and legal framework surrounding cinema generally (*cf* Chapter One, p26). Nor is it perhaps coincidental that we can trace thematic consonance between the award-winning films and the desires of the régime (60% of those films being government-sponsored): certainly, it is clear from the concluding pages of this chapter that the Vichy government saw great benefits in the

---

<sup>36</sup> *Cf* below, p171

promotion of documentary film and was ready to express praise of the documentary industry in terms of its didactic potential.

We have now seen how the government sought to influence film production in France through legislative and administrative reforms, how the particular ideological and thematic forces behind the régime can be seen to manifest and transmit themselves, and how film can be used to serve precisely that need. The 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes have demonstrated how the documentary medium was able to gain popularity with audiences that had previously disregarded it, and the Premier congrès du film documentaire can be seen to mark government recognition of that popularity and arguably thereby to ensure the projection of material thematically consonant with Vichy propaganda, at least during those two weeks in April 1943.

This still leaves us with a fundamental question posed in the title of this thesis, that of André Robert's claim in the *Congrès Brochure* that 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' (and, by extrapolation, documentary), was "Au service du Maréchal". We have hitherto examined the films and their presentation and treatment of themes, but reception theory requires us to examine such material also in the context of the time in which it was viewed. So it is in our next and final Chapter that we examine the material discussed hitherto with a view to assessing its probable reception in the context of the screenings and the arrangements and critical/press commentary surrounding them. Even before the Premier congrès, Robert's work was acclaimed 'as an

initiative qui a su allier et harmoniser la  
cause du régime à celle du cinéma<sup>37</sup>.

---

<sup>37</sup> *Le Film*, 27 September 1941, p4

Let us now examine the extent to which documentary film under Vichy might indeed have served "la cause du régime".



## CHAPTER SIX - *Au service du Maréchal?*

In this research...we must often be content with educated hypotheses based on the accumulation of the best available information<sup>1</sup>

Our two previous chapters have shown how in both 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and the Premier congrès du film documentaire we are able to trace similarities of theme and treatment of that theme with the propaganda material discussed in Chapter Three. Those themes - of Leadership and *Le Maréchal*; a return to traditional values that had been lost with detrimental effects for the country as a whole; *le paysan* and the agricultural myth; teamwork and pulling together; sport and the open air; and youth and motherhood - were all in evidence, either in the films themselves, or in events around them.

This thematic consonance of material naturally does not preclude the corollary that such material was also consonant with other ideologies, nor indeed that any consonance with other ideologies of the period in question is excluded, just as we have noted that some filmmakers themselves continued the lyrical chronicling of artisanal tradition which they undertook before the Armistice (*cf* above, p11), and the general presence of such themes in films and literature of the time might only serve to make them more palatable, less obviously propagandistic. However, we have already noted in our Introduction, Reader's comment that events in film are "rooted in the economic and political conjunctures...of their time"<sup>2</sup>, and so directors' action arguably reflects the period in which a film is made. And yet, we have seen from Daquin's comments, also in our Introduction (p16), that even the makers of the films

---

<sup>1</sup> Holub 1983, p111

<sup>2</sup> Reader, p116

themselves cannot be precise as to *how* their films reflect their times, and in particular as to the ideological impact of their work viewed in relation to prevalent conditions at the time of the making of a film. Interpretations of films can, then, alter. However, if reception theory requires us to examine reactions at the time of the screening and subsequently in order to appreciate the work and its message, our task in this particular instance is rendered all the more difficult in that the research leading to the present thesis is the only work since 1948 on French documentary of the Occupation that has been undertaken; and even in 1948 the attention paid was scant<sup>3</sup>. In consequence, parallel work demonstrating evolutions of appreciation of that documentary film does not exist. In this chapter, we shall therefore refer to critical appreciation of the films at the time, together with contextualisation and comment upon the events around 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' and the Premier congrès du film documentaire with the aid of press commentary of the time. We shall also investigate the role and actions of André Robert, the prime mover for documentary and progenitor of both 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' and the Premier congrès du film documentaire. Having thus assessed the general climate and political spirit in which the documentaries were screened, we shall be in a position to evaluate their likely reception by the public of the time and to suggest how the films relate to propaganda *au service du Maréchal*, that is, in the service of the Vichy régime.

No work examining the Occupation can ignore the repercussions of the Armistice, which came to signify France's defeat at the hands of her traditional enemy. The ensuing re-evaluation by the authorities of France's future direction and their attempts to find scapegoats for defeat, meant in the minds of the Vichy ideologues that France's own New Order must reshape society and return to a mythical pre-Revolutionary France. The task was undertaken

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf Introduction, p12

by all organs of government and principally articulated by the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, but no aspect of French society escaped the Ministry's work. Communicative conventions were adapted to articulate the messages of the new régime. As a result, a new mythology developed around the Marshal; the family and youth; and the purity and sublime nature of the country, *la terre*, to which all must return in order to be reborn. Only those recognising and devoted to the message - that is, participating in the use of the communicative codes - were to be part of the New Order (*cf* pp62, 70), and the regular use of direct appeal by *Le Maréchal* on the radio, or the transmission of filmic messages in tandem with those articulated in other media, harnessed broadcast codes to the service of the new régime within a wider context.

We have seen that, as part of this general reshaping of society, the specific reshaping of the film industry is clear. Government's creation of a framework within which film in general and documentary in particular could flourish, indicated a desire that the art form that had previously been used by such political undesirables as Renoir to attack those in authority (*La Vie est à nous!*) would now be applied as an industry to the greater good that was the new *Etat français*. We have already discussed the establishment of mechanisms enabling indirect government control of moves within the industry (p26, 34), and it is interesting to note that Vichy's moves in this direction paralleled those in Nazi Germany. Since 1933 a *Filmkreditbank* had provided funding for independent producers in line with criteria defined by the German Government<sup>4</sup>, and as France was to have its IDHEC and CATJC, so Germany already had its *Deutsche Filmakademie* in 1938.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Cf* Welch



A point worth noting here, however, is that Vichy's mechanisms for the control of the industry should have taken as their inspiration the report compiled by Guy de Carmoy for the *Front populaire* of the 1930s (p24), even though the *Front* itself was partly blamed for the weakening of France that had led to the country's defeat in 1940. Of course, the implementation of de Carmoy's ideas in France came about during the Occupation and therefore betoken a certain likeness of mind between Vichy and the Nazis in matters filmic, but it is interesting to speculate that Guy de Carmoy's proposals were perhaps not as original as at first they seemed; the irony of Vichy borrowing from the *Front populaire* perhaps had echoes in the *Front's* own borrowing from the *Neue Ordnung*.

### **Appropriation**

This comment brings us to the question of appropriation, the use of material in a way not originally intended by its creator in order to lend credence to another (even diametrically opposed) interpretation.

We have already observed how propaganda as persuasive discourse used the mechanisms of creation, reinforcement, and change of response; and we have also indicated that, with documentary film perceived as a didactic and truthful medium, there is a potentiality for its use to aid any dominant ideology wishing to inculcate or evoke specific responses in a way that would not be rejected by audiences.

Of course, whether creation, reinforcement or change, the response itself must occur because a specific ideological context, with concomitant expectations on the part of the public, has already been established. As we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, Vichy set about creating a social and political context within which it could operate generally and would naturally not

exclude the appropriation of anything which could serve its purpose. In the following sections of our conclusion we shall examine ways in which the predatory discourse of the Vichy authorities appropriated the popular notions, themes and icons of the day which we have observed at work - such as the fashionable love of the open air, or the restriction of women to the spheres of family and home - in order to reshape the French public's horizon of expectations with regard to documentary film screened at that time. Let us therefore set out categories under which appropriation could fall: time, programme, place, opinion, personalities, and theme.

### **Appropriation: Time**

We have already observed at several points in the present work how Vichy placed emphasis on the concept of tradition and handing down of wisdom through the generations. Such a concept is to the fore in both the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and the Premier congrès du film documentaire, where France's cinematic heritage is foregrounded, providing at once both proof of the *ancienneté* of the country's role and therefore the authority this conferred. (Cf also below, p184).

Robert himself arguably adapted such a concept with the establishment of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages': the idea of screenings exclusively comprised of documentaries was not new, for Jean Painlevé and Doctor Claoué had organised documentary screenings on scientific subjects at the Palais de la découverte for some years up to the war. And yet, whilst his aim is to continue an already established tradition - a theme which, as we have seen, was a constant one during his work - Robert's method was to differ. He chose to show documentaries on a wide range of subjects, as reflected in the title chosen for the programmes, 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' - documentaries

designed to appeal to audiences across a broad spectrum through their combination of material which was both entertainment and education.

### *The appropriation of film*

It is true, of course, that Robert's first efforts in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings naturally used films made prior to the outbreak of war, for in the initial stages of Occupation, studios were incapable of producing material (irrespective of end use)<sup>5</sup>. However, the rescreening of this material in a new, post-armistice context allowed the public of the *Etat français* to bring to their "reading" of these films a set of ideals and iconography drawn mainly from the prevailing apolitical preoccupations of the time, but shaped - appropriated - by government propaganda to endow each ideal and each icon with the potential to trigger a semiotic chain leading to reinforcement of a favourable response to Vichy<sup>6</sup>. The utilisation of pre-war material in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes therefore served two purposes. First, as we have already observed with the *rétrospectives* within the Congrès and elsewhere (p133, 142), the concepts of tradition and heritage so beloved of the authorities of the period were clearly exploited in a process valorising film. Moreover, the interest in France's heritage when extended to film, gave the medium a defined role in the rhetoric of the period, establishing it in the minds of viewers with regard to France's cinematic heritage whilst also enabling audiences to compare the messages in films with material they would have seen in posters, books and print, contributing thereby to reinforcement of response. On a filmic level, pre-war documentarists' interest in the lyrical qualities of traditional, artisanal activities was not contradictory to the messages of traditional skills the government wished to promote; the pre-war desire to chronicle those activities fitted particularly well with government's

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf Chapter One, p23

<sup>6</sup> We shall enter into a detailed analysis of this effect in our examination of the cult of Pétain and its relation to the theme of *redressement*, below.



post-Armistice desire to place the accent firmly on the inheritance of such tradition.. In addition, other propaganda material extolling the virtues of tradition helped to establish the context within which the films were viewed by the public (see, for example, the poster of a craftsman making a table aided by his young son, with the caption "Donne à ton fils l'amour de ton métier", Figure 3, p228).

Secondly and in addition to the concept of tradition, certain other imagery of pre-war documentary harmonised well with the messages of stability and reconstruction the new order wished to propagate, and could be used to the government's advantage when screened within the wider context of Vichy propaganda; when shown in places which had been appropriated to carry the stamp of the régime (see below); or when attended by 'official' personalities.

The message of *Géant de la vallée*, for instance - "une étape du progrès" - is made clear in the film's titles. Made during the *Front populaire* government, its role of articulator of the message of ISA - technological progress harnessed under government auspices for the mutual benefit of all - fits well with the desires of the new régime in 1941. Be it of left or right, therefore, government is seen as benefactor to all; but more importantly here, in screenings post-Armistice, it is the right that appropriates the left's message to its advantage. Moreover, the film asserts that any technological advances do not gainsay traditional skills but aid them, just as in *La cathédrale de Chartres* (ASV1) we observe that, although "Autour de la cathédrale, la ville a gardé son visage d'autrefois"<sup>7</sup>, technology has progressed in juxtaposition with apparent architectural immutability, a fact brought home to us with a shot

---

<sup>7</sup> Quote from the film held at CNC

1

filmed for the first time thanks to a telephoto lens. Parallels may also be drawn with the alliance of tradition and progress used in *Alerte aux champs* (p108).

Similarly, the benevolent colonialist message of a pre-war *Aux greniers...*, with its exposition of government recognition of a problem (here, the decline in rice production) and its application to the solution of that problem (the *Office indochinois du riz* and its work to breed stronger stocks), shows a two-way benefit similar to that seen in *Pèlerins de la Mècque* (p117); the colonialist is comforted that colonialism is beneficial to the native (France is therefore fulfilling her world destiny of carrying *la civilisation française* across the globe), and natives are reassured that colonisation is not exploitative of them. But the appropriation of this pre-war film speaking of scientific advancement aiding the population has a particular resonance when it is realised that at the same time as the films were on display in early 1941, a Vichy poster campaign with images accompanying the caption, "L'Empire réclame des hommes d'élite, des savants, des techniciens" (Figure 4, p229) was encouraging overseas aid work. Viewed within the context of this campaign, the film's images of scientists at work in the laboratories would hardly have failed to recall Vichy's references to the Empire as a rallying point, and to reinforce awareness of the need for a reciprocal commitment between colonisers and colonised (*cf* p167).

Remaining with ASV1, aspects of *Dans les canyons...*(1936) can be seen to be consonant with the role of the woman in Vichy society in that it is Mme de Colmont and she alone who performs the domestic tasks. This similarity provides the opportunity for appropriation by reminding women that their place was in the home, serving thereby this particular aspect of the *culte de la mère*. This particular message is once again brought home to the 1940s viewer

when viewed in the context of the government's desire to articulate the message, (pp69, 140), and strikingly evident in the poster from 1941 in Figure 5, (p230).

Finally, the Vichy message of sufficient application to the task eventually reaping the necessary reward is present in ASVI's main feature *Karakoram*, winner of the Grand prix at the Paris Exposition of 1937 and the Grand prix du documentaire at the 1938 Venice *Biennale*. Although the team is not successful in its bid to scale Hidden Peak, the film's final words that "Il ne nous reste qu'un seul espoir: recommencer et vaincre"<sup>8</sup> can be seen as ripe for appropriation by the Vichy régime as part of the lexicon of *redressement*. What is more, they are further developed in *Dans les canyons*.. where triumph over natural forces is to the fore<sup>9</sup>, and match the message evident in the Occupation documentary *Trente jours...*, "La joie de l'effort, ...la fierté de triompher" (p113). Here, then, is evidence to show an appropriation by the period and government of Vichy of filmic material created in a previous era.

By the same token, the ordering of these and later films of entertainment and education within screenings, or of the very screenings themselves, could establish conditions in which a particular message could be well-received. During the Premier congrès du film documentaire, for example, the events of the first two days of this two-week government-sponsored celebration of documentary (*cf* Chapter Five) saw the establishment of France's cinematic heritage through a retrospective of great French documentary films; this event was immediately followed the next day by a series of didactic documentaries shown to the youth of France, the country's very future. The chronological

---

<sup>8</sup> This quote from the film copy held by Atlantic Film at their Paris headquarters

<sup>9</sup> "Pour Geneviève de Colmont, c'est aussi la fierté bien naturelle d'être *la première femme ayant triomphé* de la rivière la plus meurtrière du monde, le Colorado" [my emphasis]; quote from the film.



context of the screenings thus reflects the content of many of the films shown: Past and future are juxtaposed in the present; the messages are handed down across the generations, and the cinematic heritage of Lumière *et al* is consequently recuperated by the Vichy authorities, whose propagandistic insistence on the French heritage and whose sponsorship of the Premier congrès provide the context of these screenings. This appropriation of the past in the context of film of course paralleled that which took place on the national, political level by the very nomination of Pétain to lead the country: the mythology of 1916 was called upon and applied to 1940 in order to provide a rallying point for the country, with the juxtaposition providing reassurance for those in receipt of the message of leadership (*cf* p68, 73).

### **Appropriation: Programme**

It was not only the order in which films were screened that could be used to construct a meta-text in support of Vichy ideology, however. The authorities frequently orchestrated events surrounding or accompanying screenings in order to appropriate them and harness their message to that of the régime. We have already commented in Chapter Five on the presence of officials and the presentation of the programme *Brochure* of the Premier congrès, both of which indicate the type of appropriation intended. We shall examine below the appropriation of venue. Here, let us summarise briefly, under the subheadings of colonies, sport and prisoners, the sort of events which might aid reinforcement of response to Vichy when constructed to appropriate the message of documentary film.

#### *Colonies*

The theme of collaboration within the colonial context and allied to the themes of hard work and application to the task, has already been observed in our discussion of Manuc's *Aux greniers d'Extrême Orient* (p164), and we can draw

a further parallel with *Naissance de la soie* in the film's cognisance of the duties of colonial power. But it is the contemporary presence of posters with the slogan, "Trois, couleurs, un drapeau, un Empire" (Figure 6, p231) which allows us to interpret probable audience response to these films, which would be complemented by the appearance of films with a colonialist theme in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes. On the poster, seen side by side in front of the tricolour, the noble faces of Black African, Arab and Asian or *anamite* represent French colonial influence across the globe. Moreover, this very setting of three heads was used by the Colonial Ministry on its letterheadings for the period of the annual *quinzaines impériales* around April/May from 1941 onwards<sup>10</sup>. During the *quinzaines*, trains with displays on the colonies toured the country, and films were also screened<sup>11</sup>. These supporting events, surrounding screenings of the films in question, invited audiences to view the films through a prism made up of Vichy ideals and iconography. For example, an extrapolation of the theme of pride in the Empire could extend to Empire as metaphor for the motherland, with a further subtext that duty and effort have their rewards, as we have seen (pp79, 118). And whilst it may at first sight appear unlikely that such an open appeal to patriotic sentiment in its evocation of Empire would be tolerated by the Germans - why would the occupying authority allow its client state to display scenes of that client state's own (apparently independent) might? - the situation may best be explained by the following description of a British pre-war film concerning the colonies:

The film...states that [the] right to govern colonies is determined by the extent to which [the mother country] fits them to govern themselves. In articulating this idea, [we transform] the film from an apology of the

---

<sup>10</sup> Marchetti, p64

<sup>11</sup> Rossignol, p123

Empire into an inculcation of...  
responsibility towards subject populations<sup>12</sup>.

And so, in the context of its time and in a context framed by the promotion of duopoly (see below), the projection of this film may be seen to articulate the argument that an expression of colonial power displays duty towards others in addition to providing for reinforcement of pride and interest in the Empire (a parallel drawn by *La garde de l'Empire*, cf p78), thereby reinforcing the concept of inclusion and exclusion to which we have referred (p60). It also demonstrates that it is clearly in the interest of the subject power not to protest at its lot since the natives cannot but benefit from this reciprocal occupation, a message to which the Germans would have no objection.

### *Sport*

The conjunction of poster and filmic material is also present in a sporting context as part of ASV4. The film *L'appel du stade* commissioned by the General Commissariat for Education and Sport was clearly acknowledged as being

destiné à illustrer et vulgariser la doctrine  
nationale de l'éducation physique<sup>13</sup>.

*Comoedia* further acknowledges that the film marks the government's first realisation of the propaganda value of the documentary<sup>14</sup>. We have already observed how the soundtrack of the film, with its comments such as "L'éducation physique tant qu'elle est conçue dans la doctrine nationale..." (p116), encourages the implication of audiences into the situation by demonstrating the worth of exercise and reminding them that this is part of "la doctrine nationale." In the context of Pétain's message of the time exhorting the nation to pull together (cf above, p74), such comments as these in the film would have appealed to the 'team spirit' of the audience, urging them literally

---

<sup>12</sup> Rotha, p240

<sup>13</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 4 November 1941, p2

<sup>14</sup> *Op cit*, 1 November 1941, p7



to pull together for the common good in response to the message of ISA articulated here by Borotra's Commissariat. This particular comment is a clear underscoring of the régime's desire to ensure that the nation was fit and healthy at all levels and generations. The film's message is that not enough is yet being done, and all must work hard "pour contribuer tous à la force de la France". Again, application to the task of acquiring individual "force" will provide precisely those healthy specimens who will contribute to *redressement* through their efforts. At the same time, posters such as that in Figure 7 (p232) were part of a concerted campaign to remind parents and children alike of the need to exercise and maintain a healthy balance between work and play. As if this were not enough, the film was to play a further role, reinforcing the false syllogism of solving a specially created 'problem', as we have seen from its appearance during the Premier congrès du film documentaire in 1943 (p141).

### *Prisoners*

'Resolution' of a 'problem' with regard to prisoners was foregrounded in ASV7, a screening which is particularly important with regard to the use of film within a prevalent social and political context. Comprising exclusively French material, the five films of the programme began with Méliès' *Les hallucinations du Baron de Munchhausen* giving a taster of the country's great filmic history, and went on to represent all that was best of France: Arts (*Rodin* and *Sur les chemins de Lamartine*), the purity of the Alps (*Trente jours au-dessus des nuages*), and the traditions of the French *chanson* (*Vieilles chansons de France*).

But what is of particular significance with regard to this programme is that a week before it opened, Robert had travelled to Vichy to present the five films of this programme to government representatives. Abel Bonnard, Minister for National Education, General Bridoux, Secretary of State for War, Paul Marion,

Secretary of State for Information and Georges Lamirand, Secretary General for Youth, attended personally or sent representatives. Consequently, Robert was able to arrange for 16mm copies of the programme to be sent to prisoners in Germany

où elles apporteront un peu d'air de France et  
la preuve de notre pays et de sa volonté de  
redressement<sup>15</sup>.

Again, the vocabulary of this quote - with its "redressement" touching on a theme we have so often seen articulated in films, for example the "réapprendre" of *Manosque* (cf p104) - underscores the theme of rebirth and rising from the ashes of defeat articulated in the poster material of the time and exemplified in Figure 8 (p233). The ministries represented comprise the central planks of Vichy ideological reprogramming - those involved with the country's youth, its education, general information (and propaganda) to the public, and prisoners - ministries therefore most aware of the use of the need to transmit the message of tradition, rebirth and pulling together to those groups in its most palatable form. The screening - either at Vichy or subsequently in the camps - would never have been permitted unless the content of the films was deemed ideologically sound in both Vichy and German eyes. Nor can the timing of this particular screening, coming a little over three months after Laval's announcement of *la relève* be coincidental, for the films serve a further purpose. Taken into the camps, their messages of stability and the desire to rise again from the ashes of defeat 'inform' the prisoners that all is well despite occupation. At home, the knowledge that prisoners are allowed to see such things in the camps enables the public to perceive life in those camps as 'normal'; this was certainly how it was to be shown in *Travailleurs de France* and its supporting material (cf above, pp56, 83). We can therefore see the documentary in this context as an ideal

---

<sup>15</sup> *Le Film*, 8 August 1942, p4

artefact of ISA, implicating all those who watch it in its transmission and absorption of the message.

Moreover, Robert had also ensured the installation of cinema equipment at the Palais de Chaillot<sup>16</sup> where, on 18 July, a special presentation of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programme was mounted as part of a gala benefit in aid of prisoners. This was attended by representatives of the French and German embassies and high-ranking government officials. Moreover, the films were interspersed with performances by dancers from the Auvergne - harking back to tradition and the countryside and presaging a similar display during the Premier congrès, p138 - and an organ work in honour of the prisoners was also played. Occupier and occupied, officials and fee-paying public, traditional dancers and modern audience, all are observed here pulling together for the prisoners, whose importance can, once again, be seen articulated in poster material of the time (cf Figure 9, p234).

### **Appropriation: Place**

The use of the Palais de Chaillot, a venue popular with Robert and used for the Premier congrès du film documentaire as well as these 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings in aid of prisoners, shows us appropriation of place. Rebuilt under the government of the *Front populaire* for the Exposition of 1938 and therefore a symbol of the ideology of the left that had, according to Vichy thinking, undermined the strengths of France and led to her defeat in 1940, the Palais de Chaillot is reclaimed by what can only be defined as a counter-ideology to the *Front populaire*. The gesture of holding screenings at the Palais thus becomes one of the staunchest defiance and rejection of precisely those leftist/Republican ideologies.

---

<sup>16</sup> After the War, the Musée du cinéma would be established there.



Nor should it be forgotten that the very name given to the régime of 1940-1944 is itself an appropriation of place, of the unassuming spa town of the Allier *département* occupied by the government of the period. And we have seen how the Hôtel de Ville becomes the *locus* of Pétain's authority for the closing ceremony of the Premier congrès du film documentaire (p148).

Elsewhere in the (abandoned) capital, Robert's choice of venue for the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings was itself a masterstroke of appropriation: the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées at 118 Avenue des Champs-Élysées adjoined the Normandie cinema, itself formed from expropriated Jewish cinema interests and appropriated under the control of SOGEC (Chapter One, p31). It was the Normandie that was to show so many German films during the Occupation. But the Champs-Élysées were more than the traditional centre of Paris night life: COIC's offices were at number 95, and the *Propagandaabteilung* was at number 72. Robert's choice of venue and his decision to leave the more mundane aspects of cinema management to the cinema's general manager, Arthur Aubin, left him free both to exploit the Avenue's reputation for business and pleasure and to concentrate on the interface between the cinema and those in authority.

But appropriation can also involve the use of locations connected with the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings themselves. Prior to the launch of ASV3, for example, journalists were invited to join Robert on a trip to Rouen on 2 August; what could be more natural for a programme whose main feature (*Rouen, naissance d'une cité*) was thematically in tune with the mood of the time? For a mere film promoter to arrange such a trip in occupied territory is indicative both of the contacts Robert had with the authorities and the regard in which they held his ideas. Moreover, in addition to the arrangements with administrative authorities, Robert had negotiated a visit to the monastery

featured in the film with the religious bodies concerned, and the problem of transporting journalists around the city was solved by the provision of a special trolleybus. Only one thing appeared to be against the party as it set off from St Lazare: the misty, grey weather. However, by the time they arrived,

outré les autorités administratives et religieuses de la ville, le soleil, ce souverain très intermittent de Rouen, était de la partie<sup>17</sup>.

We may draw a parallel here between the account of the visit and the message in some of the filmic narratives themselves: perseverance in the face of (here literally) grey weather will eventually lead to sunshine; the question of perseverance and eventual reward serves as a further parallel with Pétain's "nous sortirons ensemble de la nuit où nous a plongés la triste aventure" (cf Chapter Three, p74, and below). The film was shown at Rouen's Studio 34, the sole surviving building in an area damaged by fighting on 10 and 11 June 1940, an act which could arguably be seen as another attempt to show *renovation*, the cultivation of past greatness and rebirth at the heart of decimation. On their return to Paris the critics praised this and the other films in the programme. Special praise is reserved for Robert in *Le Film*, which congratulates him for

son intelligente initiative qui a su allier et harmoniser la cause du régime à celle du cinéma<sup>18</sup>.

As corporate journal and thus indirect government mouthpiece, *Le Film* gives us here the direct acknowledgement that Robert's work, as he himself had made clear in his words after the screening of *Le géant de la vallée* and *Dans les canyons...* (p200), combined his desire to promote the documentary with the desire of the Vichy government to promote their policies ("La cause du

---

<sup>17</sup> *Les Nouveaux Temps*, 9 August 1941, p2

<sup>18</sup> *Op cit*, 27 September 1941, p4

régime"). More particularly, in the context of our thesis, this comment shows the authorities' readiness to interpret Robert's foray to Rouen - and indirectly the documentary which this trip promoted - as a form of appropriation, a physical reclaiming of territory to be recuperated by the new *Etat français*.

Robert's organisational flair and contacts in this connection were again demonstrated prior to ASV5 and *Féerie blanche*, when he arranged another treat for journalists, taking them to the Palais de Glace where they saw the French champion Mlle du Bief in training. This duopolistic spin on the screening - German world champions on film, French champion in the flesh - was followed by a dinner after which Robert Buron (COIC's General Secretary) and Jean Luchaire (President of the Corporate Group of Parisian Press) spoke on the importance of the documentary. The evening was completed by a visit to the Opéra, eponymous subject of *L'Opéra de Paris*. Once again, the setting of the film - elements of which reproduce the message of the handing down of tradition as we have seen in *Symphonie en blanc* and *Etoiles de demain* - can be interpreted as an appropriation of place to serve the régime.

ASV8 provided Robert with a further opportunity to display his gift for *coups publicitaires* when, before presenting his new programme to the press, Robert presided at a banquet in the Museum of Colonial Wood at which one of the co-directors Mme Chaumel-Gentil was guest of honour. The first female recipient of the Légion d'honneur after the Armistice, Mme Chaumel-Gentil represents the incarnation of vichyssois political correctness, a woman who has contributed to the honour of her country; moreover, the setting evokes in its very title, the theme of empire present in the film itself; thus, appropriated place indirectly reinforces the film's message with an official *cachet*.



And so audiences are subtly programmed by the very place in which the films they watch are shown, as well as the appropriation of those films and their characters.

### **Appropriation: Influential Opinion**

#### *Critical reaction*

This question of official *cachet* raises a further strand of appropriation. Within the context of the desire for reinforcement of response, any critical reaction to films invites potential audiences to visit screenings since it offers a view on what is seen and suggests what may be present thematically. In addition, with all the authority of the written word and his status as expert, the critic is able to programme the reception of a film (future or retrospective) by expounding or privileging of a particular interpretation.

An illustrative example of this form of programme is the critical reaction to duopoly. The presence of both French and German documentaries in ASV1 constituted "un programme d'une exquise variété"<sup>19</sup> for the critics, "une réussite du premier ordre"<sup>20</sup>, "établie avec autant de soin que d'intelligence"<sup>21</sup>. Their acclaim, whilst praising the quality of the selection, inscribes the notion of duopoly to which we have referred whilst also displaying a desire to imply that German supremacy was in reality not limited to the battlefield. *Le Petit Parisien*, for example, reminded its readers that *Vie des abeilles* and *Rayons X* came from UFA and that "le cinéma scientifique est indiscutablement une des spécialités où l'Allemagne triomphe"<sup>22</sup>. The critics' apparent anxiety to play up the skills of the Occupier had found a (rather feeble) counterbalance in the words of Nino Frank of *Les Nouveaux Temps*, who was not content to allow

---

<sup>19</sup> *Les Nouveaux Temps*, 15 March 1941, p2

<sup>20</sup> *Le Cri du Peuple*, 20 March 1941, p4

<sup>21</sup> *Je Suis Partout*, 14 March 1941, p7

<sup>22</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 March 1941, p2

the Germans to rest on their laurels. And yet the tone of even his comments showed him as unwilling to dispute German technical superiority in this field: he reminded readers that Atlantic Film's *Le vol à voile* (1936), was part of their 'Trois minutes' series, "la seule série d'ouvrages que nous puissions opposer aux bandes allemandes"<sup>23</sup>. And so, whilst most writers were willing to curry favour by extolling German producers of documentary, even those who tried to stand up for the quality of French productions felt the necessity for cautiously modest language. It was left, paradoxically, to Doriot's *Le Cri du Peuple* - normally rabidly pro-German in its message - to endorse the first 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programme in 'conciliatory' fashion, underscoring the perceived duopoly in his praise for an

anthologie franco-allemande [qui] représente,  
avec un constant plaisir visuel, un  
enrichissement d'esprit<sup>24</sup>.

Furthermore, this "enrichissement d'esprit" has clearly arisen from the demonstration to the audiences of French and German products side by side. Coming some six months after Pétain's meeting with Hitler at Montoire, the wider application of such a critical message to the general situation is clear: collaboration can work. This comment contextualises, in the films of the very first 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screening, the Franco-German duopoly already extant in the newsreel (this time, however, explicating German superiority; *cf* also p180). And German productions continue to feature in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings, either with French ones in the early programmes or later by themselves (ASV6). They appear also during the Premier congrès du film documentaire, be it through specific screenings or the participation of the German contributors to the *Brochure* (*cf* pp132-134).

---

<sup>23</sup> *Op cit*, p2

<sup>24</sup> *Op cit*, 20 March 1941, p4



We can see, then, from this brief example of critical reaction to filmic duopoly that the influence of critical opinion was exerted in favour of the Vichy line. This state of affairs could only be favourable also to the appropriation by Vichy propaganda of filmic material which might be seen to support the duopoly.

It is in this light, for example, that we might see *Hommage à Georges Bizet*. As we have already seen (p109), this film, winner of the Grand prix du film documentaire at the Premier congrès and featuring also in ASV10, tells of how the purity of the countryside serves to inspire a musical "idée si française"; but the film also mentions the benefits to Bizet of a trip to Germany to visit his contemporary Wagner. The actions of this historical personage are therefore open to appropriation to serve the régime, with a musical visit to a German counterpart becoming an implicit metaphor for Franco-German relations in light of the political situation of the time. Just as Wagner and his beliefs in a traditional and indeed romanticised Germany were themselves appropriated by the Nazis, Bizet and his work are, in an officially sponsored event at an appropriated venue (see above, p171), appropriated by the régime to serve its own ends, demonstrating that Franco-German collaboration in the 1940s is nothing new. Further parallels with the "premier rapprochement franco-allemand" of *Travailleurs de France* (p82) and its indication of historical precedent for collaborative actions are also clear. These factors serve again to underscore the concept of duopoly the government was anxious to propagate.

#### *Opinion: didacticism versus entertainment*

*Hommage à Georges Bizet* was a film which, together with *Manosque* and *Sur les chemins de Lamartine* (cf p110-112), benefited from the presence of the dancers alongside the films of ASV7 at the special screening for prisoners and their families (cf above, p171). The dancers' presence helps to remind the



audience of the curative message of the countryside which is seen articulated in the films, for example (p109), but it serves also to provide an "élément de détente"<sup>25</sup> outside of the didactic message of application to the task observed in the films themselves. Why, though, would such elements be required? If they are present, *ie* if documentary can be seen to entertain, how are such films perceived by authority when, as we have observed, it was as "moyen d'instruction" that government saw documentary?

ASV12, which opened on 18 September 1943, provides us with an answer to this question. In addition to the main feature, CATJC's *Manosque* (p103), the programme contained a second CATJC production, *Mémoires des maisons mortes* (1943) by Paul Gilson. *Mémoires...* saw the lives of three great Frenchmen from the point of view of their houses, hence the title. In contrast with the reception of *Branly* (p138), however, this attempt at innovation in film biography drew criticism for attempting to be too much like "le cinéma divertissant". There was nothing wrong with innovation, it was argued, "à condition qu'il n'oublie point sa fonction première"<sup>26</sup>, that of education; as the critics could see no valid educational points, they dismissed the work. Such a comment reminds us of Melzer's and Bonnard's words on the educative value of film made at the Premier congrès, and further underscores the didactic role for documentary we have already observed in action (p152). Another (critically) controversial element of this programme was Guy-Grand's *Premier prix du Conservatoire*, which was the director's personal view of the famed French institute. Technically sound, the film drew criticism for its closing sequence in which the female winner of the Grand prix for Piano is seen playing in a bar. Whereas Champeaux described this as

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf below

<sup>26</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 18 September 1943, p2

un épilogue mélancolique, d'un tact exquis, [qui]  
complète heureusement cette solide étude<sup>27</sup>,

the official view (as expressed in *Le Film*) is a criticism of the negative aspect of the scene. It moralises that

la conclusion... est une note pessimiste qui n'est pas d'une parfaite justesse. Ce diplôme, comme tous ceux qui consacrent une 'fin d'études', laisse ensuite au titulaire à faire sa carrière<sup>28</sup>.

This last comment in the official view reiterates the accent placed on application that we have seen articulated elsewhere, for example during the Premier congrès, whose *Brochure* contained the simple exhortation from Lumière: "Persévérez!". It is also clear, as we shall observe from the interest of the General Secretariat for Youth (p185 *et seq*), that the authorities perceived documentary as having a moral, didactic role, and that anything critical of the régime (for the failure of the pianist to get a good job implies criticism of the system) was not 'a good thing'. That *Le Film* should take time to criticise such a view in a film which begins with a statement by the director that it was a personal view of the Conservatoire, demonstrates its espousal of the desire for morally and ideologically sound films. Textual comments such as, "méfiez-vous de la tradition; elle a souvent été faite par des médiocres", even when applied to methods of acting tragedy, must have rankled in a system in which great emphasis was placed on tradition not only by authority but filmically, as we have seen from *Etoiles de demain* and *Symphonie en blanc*. The dominant discourse about documentary under Vichy, then, had it that the ideal documentary must be educational. It follows, therefore, that the public of the time might expect an educational, even moralising, content which was didactic not just in general terms, but in terms it knew to be favoured by the producers of the dominant discourse - the Vichy authorities.

---

<sup>27</sup> *Le Cri du Peuple*, 27 September 1943, p2

<sup>28</sup> *Op cit*, 9 October 1943, p8



This contextualisation permits us to place a political complexion on things when we turn, for example, to the question of the didactic content of screenings in ASV13, the last programme, which followed on immediately from its predecessor and ran until 26 November 1943. Here Robert went as far as he could to show a full cinema programme without actually showing a feature film, for both newsreel and cartoon were present. The cartoon, Grimault's *Les passagers de la Grande ourse* (1943), was a technical triumph, a French colour production (courtesy of the German company Agfa; as to be expected in a situation where duopoly was often succinctly to the fore<sup>29</sup>, French advances could only be achieved with German support). The film drew praise from the critics:

Nous sommes enfin en présence d'un dessin animé sorti de mains françaises...Certaines panoramiques feraient même envie à l'école américaine. La couleur est plus fine que celle de Disney<sup>30</sup>.

The comment underlines the wish to portray French progress under the new régime as better than what has gone before. Disney had reigned supreme in the cartoon field prior to 1940, and the apparent French technical superiority referred to here by the use of colour and animation reminds the reader that the new order has enabled France to surpass her competitors in filmic production (cf also the importance of the film industry, p202). In addition, poster material of the time blaming America and Anglo-American aviators for French deaths during bombing raids over France and the short propaganda film *Nimbus libéré* (1944) showing Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy piloting those bombers<sup>31</sup>, works together to denigrate the house of Disney, helping thereby to underscore the quality of this evidently French film under discussion. Even in some of the images of *Les passagers...* there is a clear ideological iconography

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf Chapter Five, p142

<sup>30</sup> *Je Suis Partout*, 5 November 1943, p7

<sup>31</sup> Cf Marchetti, p133; and *L'oeil de Vichy*



which demarcates it from being a mere cartoon. First, the hero is blond and blue eyed (how many *mômes* meet those qualifications?), and when he and his dog are swept on board with the baggage, the bags dumped on the dog leave it wearing a bowler hat and carrying an umbrella. As the dog provides the comic element of the cartoon in addition to being responsible for their adventure in the first place, we may see here - as audiences of the period would have been expected to do by the authorities who thus appropriated the film - as an implicit critique by ridicule of *le bulldogue* Churchill and his compatriots.

*Paperasses* (1942), another element of the same programme, is an amusing look at how "papiers, papiers" dominate a Frenchman's life from cradle to grave...and beyond. We are clearly told that all forms of paper, from birth certificate through schoolbooks, gift-wrapping for girlfriends, paying their bills, reading, writing, &c., dominate the lives of all of us. The film ultimately contains the subliminal message that the system cannot be beaten: paper (= administration = authority) will always win in the end, and such a message is visually encoded within the narrative when, during a sequence which makes passing reference to the everyday situation (the ration cards seen as the film's protagonist checks through his wallet), the protagonist is shown from behind and in high-angle shot, indicating the subjugation of the 'little man' by red tape. The film's tone is essentially humorous, and in view of the desire of the authorities for documentary to be didactic, this is probably the reason behind *Le Cri du Peuple's* criticism of it as "un peu long à notre gré"<sup>32</sup>. Once again, influential opinion is exercised in support of Vichy propaganda, here in criticism of a film which, by its nature and content, resists appropriation more than others may have done. By attempting to programme viewers *against* such a film, the dominant discourse of Vichy here suggests the corollary of those films which *do* suit its purpose.

---

<sup>32</sup> *Op cit*, 23 & 24 October 1943, p2

### **Appropriation: Person**

We have now seen how Vichy's appropriation of time, programme and place worked within the context of the period under study. We shall now examine an even more complex type of appropriation, that of people; more exactly, of two individuals. André Robert, founder of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and organiser of the Premier congrès du film documentaire, will be discussed in the light of his central involvement. His probable sympathy with authority in general and his particular desire to get closer to that authority make him an important character in documentary film of the period. This done, we shall pass to an analysis of the figure of Pétain, cynosure of the *Etat français*.

We start, then, by examining Robert himself, the central figure of the activities described in the thesis and recognised promoter of the documentary cause, in order to ascertain whether any aspect of his character or actions can throw light on any perceived role during the Occupation. Since there is, to date, no existing accurate biographical research on this crucial personality, our exposition here will be fuller than would otherwise be necessary.

Born on 12 April 1912 in the sixteenth *arrondissement* of Paris, André Robert's early education is unknown, and his "études inachevées"<sup>33</sup> at the Ecole nationale de sciences politiques and the Faculté de droit de l'Université de Paris were such that no file on him remains in their respective archives<sup>34</sup>. According to the *Annuaire*s, his career started in cinema advertising in 1932 (which probably led to his incomplete higher education), he had apparently risen to membership of the Association de la presse cinématographique in 1936, holding the post of General Secretary of the Association's pension fund.

---

<sup>33</sup> These and other biographical details from *L'Annuaire biographique du cinéma*, 1951, 1962. Cf also Appendix IV

<sup>34</sup> Visit to Archives by present author, April 1987



These biographical details are however strangely at variance with the results of the present author's recent research. 1939's *Annuaire de la presse* lists Robert merely as a Committee Member, and no previous or subsequent volume lists him in any of the posts he claims to have held. His journalistic career also differs from that listed in the *Annuaire biographique*. Describing himself as "Chef de rubrique 'cinéma'" for *Marianne* in 1936, he supposedly passes to the same post with *Le Figaro* the following year. However, his only contribution to the former newspaper was an article written on 30 September 1936<sup>35</sup>, and the cinema critic for the period is described elsewhere as Marcel Achard<sup>36</sup>. That Robert wrote for *Le Figaro* is certain: from 15 September 1937 until late 1938 he contributed regular articles on general cinema topics, but he is never mentioned in any administrative capacity. Consultable material at the Archives nationales<sup>37</sup> does not mention him as a journalist during the Occupation. He is, however, cited as such in the 1942 edition of *Le tout cinéma*, published by COIC<sup>38</sup>, the only time that he features in any official publication. Such a rewriting of his history to enhance pre-war activities suggests at the very least a desire to embellish reality, and could also be argued to be part of a selective process, a sifting of the 'truth', to ensure that only the writer of his own history is seen in the best possible light.

And yet during that very period and indeed afterwards (*cf* Appendix IV), Robert himself acknowledged his role. If we are to believe his own version of events, the onset of the war saw Robert participating in the defence of his country, with subsequent capture and imprisonment by the Germans. It was while on the road to the Meaux prisoner of war camp that the germ of an idea

---

<sup>35</sup> Bibliothèque nationale, Pér Micr D36, p11

<sup>36</sup> *Le Figaro*, 17 February 1937

<sup>37</sup> Archives nationales, files F41/108 to F41/112 inclusive

<sup>38</sup> *Op cit*, p184



was planted by discussions with friends in the cinema world who had suffered the same fate as he:

Pourquoi ne pas présenter au public des programmes entièrement composés de documentaires, des programmes qui l'élèvent sans pourtant le lasser grâce à des éléments de détente judicieusement répartis?<sup>39</sup>

As we have seen, Robert's inspiration was to keep him busy between 1941 and 1943 with the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and the Premier congrès du film documentaire. But his involvement in documentary promotion was not limited to these two areas, for his efforts were redirected when these events had finished. Only a week into 1944, for example, he was arranging a special 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screening with a more educative thrust for the *Groupement artistique des Escholiers* which came in the form of a retrospective. Beginning with Méliès' famous *Hallucinations du Baron de Munchhausen* (1904) as an example of traditional documentary, the programme went on to show modern-day greats such as Guyot's *Pluie sur la ville* (1943; ASV12), Marty's cartoon *Callisto* (ASV10) and Joinville's *Attention aux vipères* (1943). And yet here again, as with other programmes, there is a clear desire to underscore the role of tradition, the handing down of skills which, if accepted, benefit the recipient of the traditional message, within a context marking out the pioneering and therefore respected role of documentary film within the canon. A further 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programme in all but name ran from 12 February 1944 to 10 May when ACE hired the cinema to show *en exclusivité*, Schlaefler's *Mystères du Thibet* (1941)<sup>40</sup>. Although Robert is not explicitly credited with this screening, nor with the arrangements for the "Soirée des Beaux-Arts" given by the journal *Beaux-Arts* on 4 February, the scope of the films shown - *Le restauration des*

---

<sup>39</sup> *Brochure* for Premier congrès du film documentaire, 1943 (cf Chapter Five)

<sup>40</sup> *Le Film*, 5 February 1944, p8

*oeuvres d'art* (a German production), *Peintres d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, *Nos tailleurs d'images*<sup>41</sup> and *L'Ecole de Barbizon* - points to his involvement. Again, these films demonstrate the themes of tradition, artistic skill and inheritance we have already seen so often articulated both in the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and in other material.

Robert's accredited swansong, however, was to be on May 1944 when a "grande soirée rétrospective de films documentaires sous le patronage du Ministère de l'Education Nationale"<sup>42</sup> was held at the Palais de Chaillot. Under the general title of "Mission du Documentaire", the best of old and new documentary was shown to a large and attentive audience. Robert was at the forefront of the show,

rappelant les efforts officiels et privés qui  
avaient été accomplis en France depuis  
l'Armistice, en faveur du documentaire, *dont  
l'intérêt est essentiel sur le plan national*  
[my emphasis]<sup>43</sup>.

The sponsorship of the event and Robert's comment are indicative of the importance of the documentary in the transmission of the messages which suit the controlling régime. The accent is once again clearly on tradition, a theme which, as we have already seen many times in this thesis, was of singular importance. So it was here. As with the Grand prix night during the Premier congrès du film documentaire, the importance of tradition was fully inscribed in the programme, opening as it did with the 'old' half of the retrospective showing Marey's experiments before passing via the famous *Sortie des usines Lumière* to the scientific documentaries of Cohl and Chaumel<sup>44</sup>. Guitry's

---

<sup>41</sup> A film whose "vrai sujet...reste le travail d'art des *artisans* de la sculpture", (*Comoedia*, 1 May 1943, p5 [my emphasis])

<sup>42</sup> *Le Film*, 1 July 1944, p5

<sup>43</sup> *Idem*

<sup>44</sup> The same man who had made *Sortilège exotique*

silent film of 1914, *Ceux de chez nous*, was shown with the bonus of a commentary from the director. 'Newer' documentary came in the shape of Poirier's and Sauvage's *Croisière jaune* (1934; showing at the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées together with *Pèlerins de la Mècque* and *Les dieux du stade* (1937)), Tedesco's *Enquête du 58* (1943) - "un court métrage de propagande sur l'héroïsme des cheminots"<sup>45</sup> made with the help of the SNCF - and Zuber's *Suite Française* (see below, p201).

This was, however, to be Robert's last appearance for some four years. Although his name appeared on a provisional list of potential *épurés* in September 1944<sup>46</sup>, nothing further appears to have come of it and he was to disappear from public life for four years. The circumstances of this apparent disappearance during the years 1944-48 are shrouded in mystery, although we may speculate that his disappearance was an attempt to avoid any repercussions of his "alliance de la cause du régime à celle du cinéma" acknowledged in 1941<sup>47</sup>. And he would not have been alone: André Harle, for example, editor of *Le Film*, disappeared in 1944 - avoiding thereby any repercussions of the *épuration* that was to deal with collaborators at the Liberation<sup>48</sup> - only to emerge after the war as editor of *La cinématographie française*. And it was to this very magazine that Robert, still a champion of the documentary genre in the post-war press, contributed articles on French documentary successes abroad. But this was only one of his activities. On 2 February 1948 he founded the Société documentaire publicité, a limited company with capital of one million francs. This company was to produce over twenty-five documentaries on a multitude of subjects over the next

---

<sup>45</sup> *Comoedia*, 10 June 1944, p4

<sup>46</sup> Bertin Maghit 1989, p317

<sup>47</sup> Cf p155

<sup>48</sup> There were, however, calls at the time for him to be tried for collaboration (Bertin-Maghit, 1989, p318)



fourteen years<sup>49</sup>. The 24 November 1962 edition of *La cinématographie française* announced that Robert had died eight days previously. Here again, research by the current author appears to show a disparity between the description of Robert's death as reported in the press and as it was remembered by someone actually present at the time<sup>50</sup>. Even in death, André Robert remains an enigmatic embodiment of the contradictions of so many people during the *années noires* of Occupation, rewriting his own history or ensuring that he was not present for part of it.

We have already observed that Robert himself stated that, "Arts, Sciences, Voyages est au Service de la France et du Maréchal"<sup>51</sup>. We should not however dismiss him merely as a *sale collabo*<sup>52</sup>, for his enthusiasm lay for the greater part with the documentary cause rather than with those forces that wished to ensure the documentary's place in their propaganda machine; Robert's espousal of the documentary cause, warmly welcomed by all in the industry as well as those in government, provided the ideal 'driving force' behind which motivations less altruistic than his could shelter. His belief in the documentary can be seen from his post-war championing of the genre through lobbying, writing, and his own productions<sup>53</sup>. Wartime filmmaker André Tadié<sup>54</sup>, now a film producer, is not alone among his contemporaries when he states that Robert's enthusiasm for the documentary and his work during the Occupation was to validate the documentary genre among

---

<sup>49</sup> Cf Appendix IV

<sup>50</sup> The concierge of the building in which Robert died suggested that he was far from "seul, souffrant [et] isolé" as described in *La cinématographie française* (p12, *op cit*)

<sup>51</sup> *Brochure* for the Congrès, p65

<sup>52</sup> Ironically enough, a term used by the director Jacques Schiltz to describe Robert; Schiltz himself was prosecuted for collaboration after the war (Telephone conversation with present author, March 1987; Bertin-Maghit, 1989)

<sup>53</sup> Eg "Enorme succès des journées du court metrage à Oberhausen: la sélection française la plus remarquable", *La cinématographie française* 1759, 1 March 1958, pp5-6; "Éclatant succès français à Mannheim", *La cinématographie française* 1822, 6 June 1959, p9. Cf also Appendix IV

<sup>54</sup> The diagrams in *Trente jours...* are his work

filmmakers and to ensure its survival after the war. Indeed, Robert attempted to revive the concept of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' on his return to everyday life in 1948, falling victim to the changing tastes of a French cinema-going audience starved of American output during the occupation and eager to make up lost time<sup>55</sup>.

It is true that, even today, the mention of André Robert among certain sectors of the French film world evokes feelings of anger as to the role played by him during the Occupation<sup>56</sup>. What is conveniently forgotten by such people is that, were it not for Robert and his efforts the documentary's chances of survival post-war would have been considerably diminished. Bertin-Maghit's words on film in France generally - "la régénération du cinéma français date de 1940"<sup>57</sup> - are certainly true in the case of documentary, thanks to Robert's interest in the medium and the attention and subsidy it received 1940-44. This attention and interest validated documentary in the mind of producers, lifted it beyond the label of the *film de complément*, and gave it the chance to prove itself as a valid means of cinematographic (and arguably political) expression. Robert's words of 1943, "*E clade resurrectio - de la défaite naîtra notre résurrection*," which could have served as the motto of the *Etat français*, were never truer in the case of documentary film.

Nevertheless, we have already seen in operation the comprehensive appropriation by Vichy of all that could be pressed into service as ISA, or as other support for the communication of Vichy ideology. Let us now turn, therefore, to Vichy's treatment of Robert and its use of him as a "seal" on its endeavours in filmic appropriation.

---

<sup>55</sup> Conversation with André Tadié and Michel Ailhaud, March/April 1987

<sup>56</sup> The present author's interviews with André Tadié, Jacques Schiltz, Michel Ailhaud, demonstrate the wide variation of opinion, from praise to condemnation.

<sup>57</sup> Bertin-Maghit 1989, p288



Vichy's desire to become involved with "moralisation collective" suggested by Régent (see Introduction, p12) may be observed from the very beginnings of the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' series. Robert's scheme, a radical departure from the norm (*cf* above, p161) required sponsorship, and so it was that he approached *Le Petit Parisien*. This newspaper had been in print since the beginning of the Third Republic, and its editorial board had been changed soon after the Armistice so that it was now a paper that toed the Vichy line. The new editorial order was more than willing to back the experiment, and readers of the 11 March 1941 edition saw a front-page advertisement for "Huit chefs- d'oeuvre du cinéma...à partir du 12 mars. C'est une formule *Le Petit Parisien*"<sup>58</sup>.

We have already noted critical reaction to the screening (p173); in addition, *Le Film* of 10 May 1941 singled out 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' as "une initiative hardie"<sup>59</sup>, *la hardiesse* and *initiative* being, as we have observed, prized by the régime. As corporate journal and mouthpiece of government, *Le Film*'s comment underlines the approval for Robert's work, and that approval was clearly matched by the public. Such was the popularity of this "initiative" - receipts for the screenings were greater than any taken before<sup>60</sup> - that when the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées met previous commitments and showed *Les trois valses* (?1938) after three weeks, the programme transferred to the Gaumont-Théâtre at 7 Boulevard Poissonnière where it continued to play to packed houses for a further week. Reduced prices were on offer here as they had been in the original venue, an evident move designed to bring in audiences whose interest in documentary would need to be aroused in light of the prevalent attitude to the genre<sup>61</sup>.

---

<sup>58</sup> *Op cit*, p1

<sup>59</sup> *Op cit*, p20

<sup>60</sup> *Les Nouveaux Temps*, 15 March 1941, p2

<sup>61</sup> See Introduction, p41



Subsequent events give us further evidence of government support for Robert and his work over and above the comments in *Le Film*. On 10 April 1941, for example, no less a personage than Georges Lamirand, Secretary General for Youth, presided at a screening for 6 500 children for Vichy's *Centres de la jeunesse*, and the next two 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings were to benefit from the same patronage. And even before this on 23 March, Parisian students were able to see the programme for free. The youth of France, the country's very future whose inculcation into the New Order was deemed vital to *rénovation nationale*, is here given free access to the didactically sound messages of the films shown. The *imprimatur* of the authorities was thus clearly given, by presence as well as in print, and the target audience and its implications are clear.

Less than six months after the opening of ASV1, special screenings were arranged in provincial centres such as Tours, Chartres, Blois, Rouen and Orléans from August to November 1941. Again, the launch of ASV4 in November 1941 also saw the projection of an 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programme in the thirty-three largest towns and cities of the Occupied Zone in conjunction with the government's *Journées nationales de la jeunesse*. We have already seen how the content of that particular screening included a film (*L'appel du stade*) acknowledged as the first use of film as propaganda by the government and destined to resurface during the Premier congrès du film documentaire. Once again, the aim of making the filmic message of traditional inheritance is made didactically clear to the younger generation. The filmic event is directly implicated into wider and national government action, and as we have already seen, 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' presentations were eventually to be repeated and made available across the whole country (cf Chapter Five, p152).

In addition to these moves to ensure the projection of documentary to special audiences, direct general publicity for the documentary and the government support it received came on 7 February 1942, when five films made with government subsidy were shown to the press. *Comoedia* commented favourably on the government's interest in this field:

L'Etat français, par le truchement d'un organisme spécialisé, favorise la production documentaire... Son intervention implique...un droit de regard dont on ne peut nier l'heureux effet<sup>62</sup>.

Again, the interest and involvement of government in documentary, its *favoritisme* of the genre, are clearly explicated; and the critics are evidently pleased with "l'heureux effet". The films themselves - Laffont's *La pierre française* (1942), Maudru's *Port-Royal* (1942), Missir's *Le cirque* (?1941), Tedesco's *Paysages lamartiniens* (aka *Sur les chemins de Lamartine*) and Delafosse's *Guides de montagne* (aka *Les hommes de la neige*, a "film de plein air destiné à encourager le métier de guide"<sup>63</sup> [my emphasis]) - were well-received by the critics. We have noted in Chapter Four (pp115, 106) the opinions of *Guides de montagne* and *Sur les chemins...* and their themes of teamwork, duty and tradition. By the same token, we are informed that *La pierre française* tells of

le dur labeur du carrier, les méthodes de travail anciennes...il prend un air spécial au moment où les grands travaux de reconstruction rendent à la pierre sa valeur et son prestige<sup>64</sup>.

The vocabulary here places the accent once more on tradition and application to the task in hand - parallels with Rouquier's *Tonnelier* - together with the concept of reconstruction and rebirth, the forging of a new future through the skills of the past (cf p199). In the context of the time, when poster material

---

<sup>62</sup> *Op cit*, 21 February 1942, p5

<sup>63</sup> Archives nationales, F41/83.A3

<sup>64</sup> *Le Film*, 14 February 1942, p26



such as that in Figure 8, p233 underscored hard work, it is impossible for the mention of reconstruction not to have struck a chord with the audience. A second group of three films was shown the following week - *Solesmes* (1942) on the ancient abbey, its traditions and the tranquillity of the surrounding countryside; *Le Golfe latin* (1942); and *Rodin* (1942). Over two weeks, then, these screenings enabled the public to be apprised of what could be done with the government's help. Moreover, the screenings were acknowledged as a success by the press, because they marked

la renaissance du cinéma documentaire en France [et mettent] en valeur les excellents résultats du travail effectué par le Service d'Etat du cinéma du COIC<sup>65</sup>.

Whilst reiterating the earlier comment on the government's efforts in film promotion and making those efforts clear, this comment works with the screening to demonstrate in concrete form that the renaissance of cinema with which COIC had been charged (*cf* above, p26) was being achieved. Taken with other commentaries (p170) it also demonstrates how Robert's efforts in this field are in tandem with those of the government.

Two years later, the accent on subsidy had disappeared. On 22 February 1943 Pétain and the Maréchale accompanied by members of the Council of State and other ministers and members of government, attended a screening of three major documentaries at the 'Paris' cinema in Vichy fronted by Bricon, head of the documentary film section of the General Directorate of Cinema. The three - Cuny's two films *Matins de France* (1942) and *Hommage à Georges Bizet* (1943) and Rouquier's *Le tonnelier* (1943) - were described as "trois des meilleurs films produits en France depuis l'Armistice"<sup>66</sup>; two of them have been discussed previously (*qv*, pp105, 108). This time, however, no mention

---

<sup>65</sup> *Le Film*, 31 January 1942, p29

<sup>66</sup> *Le Film*, 6 March 1943, p5



was made of the films' government subsidy. This may seem surprising in view of the situation we have just observed of two years previously, but there are two explanations. The most important aspect of the screening for the press was Pétain's attendance and the approval of documentary it conveyed. At the same time, attempts were being made centrally to scale down subsidies: the total paid out in 1943 was in fact less than five per cent. of the combined payments for 1941-42 (*cf* Table 2, next page), with documentary receiving no government money at all in 1944. Qualms about the sums paid out had been expressed as early as November 1941 when the Inspecteur des finances wrote to Galey refusing to subsidise six films. His interpretation of subsidy is quite clear:

il s'agit d'une mesure transitoire destinée à faire démarrer une industrie, laquelle devra être ensuite en mesure de vivre par ses propres moyens. (...) [Ceci dit], il est du rôle de l'Etat d'encourager chercheurs et expérimentateurs, toujours soumis à des aléas particuliers<sup>67</sup>.

Two years on, then, it is reasonable to assume that documentary producers had heeded the Inspecteur's comment with regard to living by one's own means; indeed, they were about to be rewarded with the Grand prix du film documentaire (*cf* Chapter Five, p145-148). The small amount of money now given over to documentary subsidy indicates that documentary film was *rentable* by itself, and its position in both film programmes and the minds of the cinema-going audience was by now fully established thanks chiefly to Robert and his efforts. As if further proof were needed, the Premier congrès du film documentaire - another fruit of Robert's efforts - was about to open, and Robert was later to see his screenings made available throughout the country (*cf* Chapter Five, p152). The thematic underscoring we have seen in

---

<sup>67</sup> Archives Nationales, F41/83.A3

Year	Type of Film	Funds Committed	Paid Out	Repaid	Percentage Repaid (For Year)	Percentage Repaid (In Total)
1941	Documentary	4 372 300	4 094 300			
	Feature Film	230 000	123 000			
	Cartoon	630 000	630 000			
1942	Documentary	3 910 730	3 727 300			
	Feature Film	16 173 000	16 173 000			
	Cartoon	4 683 000	4 043 000			
1943	Documentary	369 000	303 200	2 349 242	635	28.91
	Feature Film	24 223 000	24 023 000	1 186 086	4.93	2.96
	Cartoon	2 319 420	1 844 190			
1944	Documentary			1 077 669	42.17	
	Feature Film	18 300 000	13 481 800	4 306 601	31.54	14.36

**Table 2:** Subsidy to the French Film Industry, 1940-1944

*Source:* Archives Nationales, F41/369

both the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' programmes and the government's support for documentary, were to be taken even further within six months of the Premier congrès du film documentaire itself.

### *Pétain*

We now turn to a personality of a very different kind to Robert, one who is the agent and focus of appropriation rather than its object: *le Maréchal* himself. We have already touched, in Chapter Three, on the *culte du Maréchal*, at which time we also mentioned the Pétainolatrous appropriation of the Christian imagery of sacrifice "de [sa] propre personne", a phrase so clearly foregrounded in the *Brochure* of the Premier congrès du film documentaire (pp 70, 122). Let us insist upon the absolute centrality of the figure of *le Maréchal* in Vichy society. By so closely associating himself with the Christian model of Christ's sacrifice, Pétain makes *himself* exemplary; his is the model sacrifice and it will bring about France's *redressement*. The new national anthem of 1941, *Maréchal, nous voilà!*, continued the Christian association by applauding Pétain's endless struggle "pour le *salut* commun" [my emphasis], and the religious appropriation was carried still further with the replacement of the Lord's Prayer in which Pétain is associated not merely with the notion of "Father of the nation" but with *the* Father of creation:

[...] Redonnez  
L'existence  
A la France  
Ne nous laissez pas retomber  
Dans le vain songe  
Et le mensonge  
Et délivrez-nous du mal  
O Maréchal!<sup>68</sup>

Nothing could be better calculated to cultivate the *culte du Maréchal*, nor to elevate the status of the subject. Nor was Pétain's role limited to the

---

<sup>68</sup> Georges Gérard, in Paxton, p149, *op cit*



appropriation of divinities in support of his quest for exemplary status: as Chapter Three has shown us, various historical military leaders were also used to draw parallels with his work<sup>69</sup>.

This unashamed reiteration of the divine properties of Pétain's leadership, and of his position within the heroic canon of France's history, seek to establish him as the present-day incarnation of traditional virtues. Through the images they saw in posters and on film, through Pétain's *Appels* on the radio, and the reverence with which society was encouraged to treat him, the French public was invited - not to say obliged - to regard Pétain as *the* central and model manifestation of all that Vichy ideology and the *culte du Maréchal* deemed to be desirable. With Pétain thus established as exemplar not only of qualities such as authority, leadership, valour and the will to work but also as archetypal Father, *paysan*, *Français*, he naturally becomes the unavoidable point of reference for all such qualities and for all avatars of such archetypes which appear in public discourses like documentary film. That this process of reference is bound to be unconscious on the part of most of the audiences (and perhaps of most filmmakers) is largely irrelevant. The important point to note is that Vichy had so appropriated these qualities and images on behalf of *le Maréchal* that their appearance in association with didactic authority such as that deployed by documentary film of the period could not but have the same effect as propaganda material seeking reinforcement of response towards Vichy. Thus, for example, when audiences of the day saw repeatedly positive and didactic images of *paysans*, it would be impossible for them not to relate - however involuntarily - these icons of intrinsic Frenchness, humility and greatness to the *Maréchal-paysan* Pétain himself, and thus, indirectly, to the authoritarian régime of which he was leader. And since the themes of hard

---

<sup>69</sup> A filmic manifestation of this comes in *Suite française* (cf below, p201) to give but one example.

work, the outdoors and the hierarchical family are also clustered around and inflected by Vichy's portrayal of Pétain, they too become tinted with ideological colour whenever they appear on screen.

Similarly, though perhaps more obliquely, a particularly powerful appropriation, that of renaming, has already been touched upon in Chapter Four, where we examined the episode of the "aiguille de la jeunesse" of *Trente jours...* (p113). The claiming of the needle here in the name of "la jeunesse", however, does have more general and political echoes when we consider the centrality of Pétain as an organising principle of Vichy's political thought. For we should not forget that, in 1940, the largest tree in the *forêt du Tronçais* was renamed "le chêne du Maréchal"<sup>70</sup>, with the appropriation of the sturdy qualities of oak transposing those qualities onto the great leader after whom the tree has been named. The baptism of "l'aiguille de la jeunesse" quoted in the film, in mimicking this naming process, seems (albeit unconsciously) to conjure up the ritual it imitates, recalling its mythical - but also its political - significance. Such imagery therefore serves as reinforcement of response to the *culte du Maréchal* which we have already seen discussed in Chapter Three (p70).

We shall see more detail of this oblique appropriation of the themes and narratives of documentary film in our study of the theme of *redressement*, below. Let us conclude our remarks on Pétain here, however, as we began them, by pointing to the quite deliberate appropriation of documentary film effected by the prominent foregrounding of the icon of *le Maréchal* on the *Brochure* of the Premier congrès (p122) together with direct representation of three filmic themes - *Travail, Famille, Patrie* - thereby establishing the

---

<sup>70</sup> Gervereau and Peschanski, p46

ideological horizon of expectation which audiences could be expected to bring to their reading of the films.

### **Appropriation: Theme**

Having noted the extent to which the patriarchal figure of Pétain dominated Vichy discourse, let us here trace in some detail one of the themes which permeate documentary film of the period and whose appropriation by Vichy can best be revealed through the links between these themes and the persona of *le Maréchal: redressement* within the confines of *la tradition française*.

#### *Tradition, rebirth, redressement*

Throughout the present chapter and in Chapters Two and Three we have observed the constant repetition of the themes mentioned at the start of this chapter, either through reiteration of the themes within the films themselves or through the order in which the programmes are screened. We have already noted, for example, that not only did many documentaries of the period insist on the themes of inheritance and lineage, but the programmes of the Premier congrès themselves re-enacted this theme by beginning with Lumière, father of cinema and founder of its (French) heritage.

Amongst the most resonant themes most relentlessly repeated was that of perpetuation of the traditional lineage through rebirth and *redressement*, which we have seen accomplished in 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' films such as *Manosque* (p103) and in those of the Premier congrès such as *Branly* (p136). Certainly, as we have noted, such themes are not uncommon in all literature and film throughout the ages. Indeed, in Vichy ideology, the Armistice was to herald the rebirth of the nation that was the *Etat français*. In a more specific context, we should not forget that COIC itself was established to provide the



conditions for the renaissance of cinema (p26), something which by 1943 was seen to have been achieved (p202).

André Robert himself, the man responsible for the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and Premier congrès du film documentaire, gave as his guiding force the motto of the prisoner of war camp he had left to start the screenings: "*E clade resurrectio* - de la défaite naîtra notre résurrection", another clear echo of the theme of *redressement*. Rebirth, mentioned as part of the commentary on *La pierre française* (p191) and alluded to, for example, in the poster extolling the virtues of work arising from the ashes of destruction (Figure 8, p234), is again present through appropriation in the pre-war film *Le géant de la vallée*, marking as it does "une étape du progrès"<sup>71</sup>, where the very images of reconstruction in the film match the concept of phoenix-like or initiatory rising from the ashes desired as an aspect of *renovation nationale* by that new régime. Even without the historical particularities of the general situation in post-Armistice France, such thematic messages of *redressement* and *restauration* necessarily impart a metaphorical import to what is seen. Allied to the message of "sortir ensemble de la nuit"<sup>72</sup> articulated by the powerful mythical persona of Pétain himself, these messages of *renovation* awaken explicitly political resonances allowing the identification of the reconstruction of *Géant de la vallée* with the *redressement* of France through the works of Pétain and the authorities.

And for the critics, *Géant de la vallée* seen in conjunction with *Dans les canyons...* constituted "des succès français qu'il est assez réconfortant d'évoquer"<sup>73</sup>. (We should also note here the *réconfort* of the imagery, reassuring audiences that all is well with Vichy's New Order.) Taking up the

---

<sup>71</sup> This and other quotes from the film held at CNC

<sup>72</sup> Cf Chapter Three, p74

<sup>73</sup> *Op cit*, 2 June 1941, p9

theme of hard industry and technological achievement as presented in *Le géant de la vallée* - the alliance of ancient techniques and modern 'science' to assure the future - *Le Cri du Peuple* praised the film for its celebration of "l'audace intellectuelle de nos ingénieurs et le tranquille courage de nos ouvriers"<sup>74</sup>. And Robert himself confirmed these sentiments when he spoke of *Greniers d'Extrême Orient* and *Le géant de la vallée* as "[exaltant] respectivement la France et son Empire et la construction de la France de demain dans l'ordre nouveau"<sup>75</sup>. In making this pronouncement, Robert echoes the desires of the authorities to place emphasis on the values of hard work and building for the future. Moreover, his acknowledged aims in choosing and screening the films show a wish for them to be perceived as more than merely prime examples of documentary excellence; they were intended rather to reinforce the government message of the benefits of application to the task as part of the *renouveau* of the *rénovation nationale*.

Again, within the thematic framework of *redressement*, *L'enquête du 58*, shown as part of the Retrospective that was Robert's last organised screening under Vichy (p186), can be seen to articulate precisely this message. It was described in its opening *carton* as

Ce film, dédié à tous les cheminots français, illustre la valeur morale et les qualités professionnelles quotidiennement exigées d'eux dans leur rude métier, ainsi que l'héroïsme dont il leur faut souvent faire preuve, particulièrement dans les dures circonstances présentes<sup>76</sup>.

The film's introduction makes it clear that *valeur morale* and *qualités professionnelles* are to the fore - a devotion to duty and pride in the task in hand are the guiding forces, and passing reference to the contemporary

---

<sup>74</sup> *Op cit*, 11 June 1941, p4

<sup>75</sup> *Le Petit Parisien*, 28 May 1941, p2

<sup>76</sup> From the film held at CNC

situation - "les dures circonstances présentes" - enables the viewer to identify with what is seen and recalls the poster material referred to above. It tells the story of a train driver involved in a crash because he returned to help his colleague; in helping him, he missed the signal to slow, but his quick action saved everyone concerned from a worse fate. What is interesting in this film - *sobrement romancé* as it is, like *Forces occultes* - is that the messages in question are those of devotion to duty and to colleagues; the injured colleague is more worried by the implications of losing his arm - *ie*, losing his job - than by losing the arm itself; integrity in *travail* wins over corporeal integrity. But, even more than this, the film's theme of ritual trial and initiatory mutilation followed by triumph could be argued once again tacitly to signify its own model: the sacrifice of *le Maréchal* who "fait don de sa propre personne" in order to effect the *rénovation* of France.

But *redressement*, as we have seen, came also from a heeding of the messages of the past. And one particular film was to show that it was not just these messages that were immutable. *Suite française*, another film of Robert's last appearance under Vichy, tells of

la continuité des types entre nos glorieux  
ancêtres et nos vagues contemporains<sup>77</sup>

- a concept we have already seen articulated elsewhere in the films of 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' and the Premier congrès du film documentaire. As was explained at the beginning of the film, it was to be a tribute to

la stabilité des valeurs françaises à travers  
toutes les vicissitudes de notre histoire<sup>78</sup>.

The film begins with shots of the medieval carvings of Rheims cathedral, showing as they do "les bons gens de l'époque - paysans, bûcherons, chasseurs: le peuple de France". And so within two minutes of the film's

---

<sup>77</sup> From the film held at CNC

<sup>78</sup> This and other quotations from the film held by CNC



action we have seen a clear statement of the stability of French values and traditions together with the identification of peasants, part of the thematic canon of the régime, as the good people of the country. Throughout the film, be it through similarities with De Guesclin<sup>79</sup> or a resemblance to Henri IV - great leaders, individuals and Frenchmen, and therefore exemplary characters - physiological similarities are seen to continue as we pass through the ages. Reduced to a passport-photo-sized snap, for example, Turenne bears a remarkable resemblance to a modern-day Marshal of France; again, the contemporary context is alluded to in the film, striking obvious chords. As with the contextually unambiguous "Lui" of poster material signifying Pétain and implying his equation with God (p57), a modern Marshal of France can refer to only one man. Now, says the narrator, film has taken over from photography in

le processus d'enregistrer ces inaltérables aspects de la physionomie française.

Of course, runs the subtext of the film, it is not only the physiognomy of the French but their greater characteristics - the centuries of French tradition to which reference has been made here and so often elsewhere, particularly in poster material aimed at the country's youth such as that in Figure 12 (p236) - that continue *inaltérablement*. They are recorded here as in other films of the period, as a reminder of how application of past greatness to present situations can forge future greatness, providing for the inculcation of Vichy ideology at all levels and ages of society. As was stated in September 1943 when it was revealed that film was now France's largest industry, having been third before the war:

Il [appartient] au cinéma français...de nous créer de nouvelles relations, de nouvelles amours, de nouvelles sympathies. C'est à lui

---

<sup>79</sup> A 14th-century historical character whose defeat of the English provides for parallels with Joan of Arc in addition to his role as "un type permanent de paysan".

seul désormais qu'incombe le soin d'animer nos rêves. C'est dire son importance morale<sup>80</sup>.

We have already touched on the 'morality' of the filmic message (pp40, 133) and it is clear from this comment that *animer nos rêves* is a reference to the desire not only that film implicate its viewer in what is seen, but also that it do so in such a way as to articulate the messages of ISA (*cf* Chapter Five, p132). This revealing comment might have been intended for the so-called 'didactic' documentary film of 1940-1944, much of which, as we have seen, was so emotive as to "animer les rêves" at least as much as it increased knowledge and understanding. Moreover, this question of "importance morale" serves to remind us of Régent's comment (Introduction, p12) and Vichy's "Voeux de moralisation collective".

#### **Conclusions: *Au service du Maréchal?***

This last point of "Voeux de moralisation collective" reminds us of the question posed in the Introduction of our thesis, and serves as the starting point of our conclusion. Do we have grounds to assume this "moralisation" took place or was at least intended, and is documentary of the period therefore *Au service du Maréchal?*

In the course of the thesis we have observed how the defeat of June 1940 provided an ideal starting point for the remoulding of national consciousness to achieve the rebirth of the country along new political lines, and how Vichy attempted to use certain themes in order to achieve this remoulding whilst also providing mechanisms through which the themes could be disseminated. We have shown, too, that in view of Robert's passion for documentary film (and indeed his personal foibles as outlined above), the events of 1940-1944 made him perhaps especially vulnerable to exploitation by the régime, whilst

---

<sup>80</sup> *Je Suis Partout*, 3 September 1943, p7

achieving for documentary the very rebirth that the régime wished to see for the country.

We have certainly observed that the government's message of rebirth and *redressement*, *inter alia* through the *culte du Maréchal* and in other fora, sought to articulate further actions aimed at consolidating the position of the régime and using all possible media - print, poster, radio and film - to achieve this aim. With regard to film and more particularly documentary, we have observed the appropriation of films themselves together with the presentation of themes prevalent in dominant government discourse in such a way as to transfer the audience's favourable reaction to the films to the political actors and objectives which appropriate them. We have further noted that this occurred to a certain extent through parallel exploitation by the government of other factors aiding a political reading of those films, *eg*

explicit references in film to politics or political figures of the time (p202);

screenings in venues redolent with political connotations (p171);

accompanying literature, speeches and other material (p55, and Appendix V);

events around the screenings (p172 *et seq*);

the presiding genius of Robert and his links to Vichy (pp169, 173); and

critical reaction which served further to programme audiences' interpretation *post facto* (p89, 175).

Certainly, from the material studied in this thesis we can clearly observe that besides those documentaries made and acknowledged as propaganda which we have examined in Chapter Three, the 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages' screenings and Premier congrès du film documentaire, allied to the general messages of propaganda from the period 1940-1944, indicate that government's desired role



for more mainstream documentary to function *au service du Maréchal* was almost inevitably realised. This realisation no doubt stems in part from another factor which we have noted, namely the manifestly un-documentary-like emotive manipulation of didactic films which derive much of their appeal for a wartime audience from the promise of apotheosis following on sacrifice (pp74, 97). In the context of Pétain's "don de [sa] propre personne", such a promise cannot but remind audiences of the myth of political and national sacrifice and apotheosis, thereby contributing to the reinforcement of response directly linked to Vichy's political/national agenda.

"Definitive" authorial statements by directors of the period are to an extent invalidated by the very fact that those directors themselves cannot agree on the thematic influences on their films (*cf* above, and Introduction, p16). Reception theory does however show us that, whatever chronicling filmmakers such as Rouquier may have intended, their films could be and were indeed appropriated to aid the régime in the dissemination of its message within a wider context. As part of that context, and since the authorities felt them to be of value when thus appropriated, documentary films produced between 1940 and 1944 constitute an invaluable resource when attempting to evaluate the political and social conjunctures of that time.

But let us not forget the crucial role of the interpreter in any such evaluation. For we know that the horizons of expectation of the 1940s post-Armistice audience told them that documentary film was educational and 'true'; we know too that both political and critical comment of the time reinforced this message. We in the 1990s, however, having evolved new paradigms for the interpretation of film (paradigms to which this thesis makes its own contribution), cannot escape the certainty that documentary film is not and has never been 'true', and, furthermore, that the 'veracity' experienced by Vichy

audiences was - partially at least - deliberately manipulated. It is ironic, then, that when we apply our late twentieth-century vision and interpretative paradigms to the following comment from *Comoedia* in 1942, we are able so thoroughly to agree with it:

Dans les années futures, quand, avec le recul nécessaire, on étudiera en détail l'Histoire de la Nouvelle Grande Guerre, des films comme ceux-ci apporteront une documentation irremplaçable...<sup>81</sup>.

---

<sup>81</sup> *Comoedia* 16 May 1942, p5

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archive sources

Archives Nationales, Paris F1a 3739-3742  
F17 13373  
F41 series  
F42 series  
Public Records Office, Kew FO 1082/9

### Newspapers, periodicals, etc

*Action Française* (Occupation; Lyon-based newspaper)  
*Au Pilon* (Occupation; Right-wing journal)  
*Avant-Scène du cinéma* (1970s critical journal)  
*Ciné-Mondial* (Occupation; 'fanzine')  
*Comoedia (Nouvelle série)* (Occupation arts journal)  
*Le Figaro* (Pre-war and Occupation editions)  
*Le Film* (Occupation, corporate magazine)  
*Le Film Français* (post-Occupation)  
*Je Suis Partout* (Occupation, pro-Nazi journal)  
*Le Cri du Peuple* (Occupation)  
*La Croix* (Occupation, organ of Catholic Church)  
*Le Journal* (Occupation)  
*Marianne* (Pre-war)  
*Le Matin* (Occupation)  
*Les Nouveaux Temps* (Occupation, to 1942)  
*Oeuvre* (Occupation)  
*Pariser Zeitung* (Newspaper for German occupying troops)  
*Le Petit Parisien* (Occupation)  
*Le Temps* (Occupation)



## Books

- Abel, R (ed.) *French film theory and criticism, 1907-1939*  
*Vol II: 1929-1939*  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988
- Althusser, L *Positions*  
Paris: Editions Sociales, 1976
- Amoroux, H *La France et les Français de 1939 à 1945*  
Paris: Armand Colin, 1970
- Annuaire biographique du cinéma* 1953-54, 1957, 1962  
Paris: Contact Organisation
- Annuaire de la presse* 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1942
- Armes, Roy *French cinema*  
London: Secker & Warburg, 1985
- Aron, R *Chronique de Vichy*  
Paris: Fayard, 1954
- Azéma, J-P *La collaboration 1940-1944*  
Paris: PUF, 1975
- Azéma, J-P & Bédarida, F *Vichy et les Français*  
Paris: Fayard, 1992
- Barral, P and Boussard, I "La politique agrarienne" in: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques (qv)
- Barrot, O *"L'écran français" 1943-1953: histoire d'un journal et d'une époque*  
Paris: Les Editeurs Français Réunis, 1979
- Barsam, RM *Nonfiction film: a critical history*  
New York: Dutton, 1973
- Barthes, R *Le plaisir du texte*  
Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973
- Mythologies*  
Paris: Collection Points, 1964

- Batty, L *Retrospective index to film periodicals 1930-1971*  
New York: RR Bowker, 1975
- Bazin, A *Le Cinéma de l'Occupation et de la Résistance*  
Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975
- Bennet *et al* (eds) *Popular television and film*  
London, BFI, 1981
- Bertin  
-Maghit, J-P *Le cinéma français sous Vichy: les films français de 1940 à 1944*  
Paris: Albatros, 1980
- "1945, l'épuration du cinéma français. Mythe ou réalité?", in Ferro 1984 (qv)
- Le cinéma sous l'Occupation: le monde du cinéma français de 1940 à 1946*  
Paris: Olivier Orban, 1989
- Billig, M *Ideology and social psychology*  
Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982
- Birmingham  
University Centre  
for Cultural Studies *On ideology*  
London: Hutchinson, 1978
- Bonnel, C *Le cinéma exploité*  
Paris: Seuil, 1978
- Borel, J "Du documentaire à la fiction" in *L'Ecran Français* 57, 31 July 1946, p10
- Boudon, R: *The analysis of ideology*  
Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989
- Capdenac, M "Le triomphe de l'ambiguïté" in *Ecran* 74 number 25, May 1974
- Chalais, F "A la croisée du documentaire" in *Soirées de Paris* (Paris: Horizons de France, 1945), pp71-73
- Chirat, R *Le cinéma français des années trente*  
Renens: foma, 1983

- Chirat, R *Le cinéma français des années de guerre*  
Renens: foma, 1983
- Cook, P (Ed) *The cinema book*  
London: BFI, 1985
- Courtade, F *Les malédictions du cinéma français*  
Paris: Editions Alain Moreau, 1978
- Courtade, F  
& Cadars, P *Histoire du cinéma nazi*  
Paris: Terrain vague, 1972
- Coutrot, A "La politique familiale", in *Fondation nationale  
des sciences politiques (qv)*
- Daudelin, R *50 ans d'Archives du Film*  
Brussels: FIAF, 1988
- Davenport-  
Hines, R *Sex, Death and Punishment*  
London: Collins, 1990
- Diamant  
-Berger, H *Destin du cinéma français*  
Paris: Imprimerie de Paris, 1945
- Eagleton, T *Ideology: an introduction*  
London: Verso, 1991
- Ehrlich, E *Cinema of paradox: French filmmaking under  
the German Occupation*  
New York: Columbia University Press, 1985
- Ellis, JC  
*et al* *The film book bibliography 1940-1975*  
Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1979
- Ferro, M *Film et histoire*  
Paris: Les Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes  
Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1984
- Pétain*  
Paris: Fayard, 1987



- Feuer, LS *Ideology and the ideologues*  
Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975
- Fédération  
Internationale des  
Archives du Film  
(FIAF) *Cumulative index of film periodicals 1972-1981*  
FIAF, London, 1983
- Fiske, J *Introduction to Communication Studies*  
(2nd Edition)  
London: Routledge, 1990
- Fiske, J &  
Hartley, J *Reading television*  
London: Methuen, 1978
- Fondation  
Nationale des  
Sciences Politiques *Le gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942:  
institutions et politiques*  
Paris: Sciences Po, 1972
- Freidman,  
RM *L'Image et son Juif: le Juif dans le cinéma nazi*  
Paris: Payot, 1983
- Gabriel, J *Histoire du cinéma à St-Etienne*  
St-Etienne: Imprilux, 1984
- Garçon, F *De Blum à Pétain: cinéma et société  
française (1936-1944)*  
Paris: Les Editions du Cerf (7e Art), 1984
- Garçon, F "La tardive tentation fasciste du cinéma  
français septembre 1942-septembre 1943", in  
Ferro 1984 (qv)
- Gervereau, L &  
Peschanski, D *La propagande sous Vichy 1940-1944*  
Paris, BDIC, 1990
- Gregor, AJ *The ideology of Fascism: the rationale of  
totalitarianism*  
Paris: The Free Press, 1969
- Grenville, JAS *Film as history: the nature of film evidence*  
Birmingham: Birmingham University, 1971

- Guynn, W                    *A Cinema of Nonfiction*  
Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990
- Halimi, A                    "Occupational hazards" in Lloyd (qv)
- *Chantons sous l'Occupation*  
Paris: Olivier Orban, 1976
- Hardy, F (Ed.)              *Grierson on Documentary*  
London: Faber & Faber, 1979
- Heath, S                    *Questions of cinema*  
London: Macmillan, 1981
- Holub, RC                   *Crossing Borders: Reception Theory,  
Postmodernism, Deconstruction*  
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992
- Holub, R C                  *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*  
London: Methuen, 1984
- Images du cinéma français*  
Lausanne: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1945
- Jacobs, L                    *The Documentary Tradition*  
New York: W W Jacobs, 1979
- James, K  
(ed)                          *International index to film periodicals 1974*  
London: St James Press, 1975
- Jeanne, R &  
Ford, C                      *Histoire encyclopédique du cinéma français.  
IV: Le cinéma parlant*  
Paris, SEDE, 1958
- Jeancolas,  
J-P                            *15 ans d'année trente: le cinéma des français  
1929-1944*  
Paris: Stock, 1983
- Jeancolas,  
J-P &  
Jay, D-J                    *Cinéma d'un monde en guerre, 1939-1945*  
Paris: La Documentation Française, 1976

- Jowett, G and  
McDonnell, V      *Propaganda and Persuasion*  
New York: Sage, 1986
- Kedward, HR      *Occupied France: Collaboration and  
Resistance 1940-1944*  
Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985
- Kedward, R  
Austin, R      *Vichy France and resistance: culture  
& ideology*  
London: Croom Helm, 1985
- Lagny, M      "History, cinema's auxiliary", in  
*Substance 51*  
(Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987)
- Lapierre, M      *Les cent visages du cinéma français*  
Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1948
- Laqueur, W      *Fascism: a reader's guide*  
London: Wildwood House, 1976
- Léglise, P      *Histoire de la politique du cinéma français.  
II. Entre deux Républiques*  
Brive: Filméditations, 1977
- Le Goff, J  
& Nora, P      *Faire de l'histoire III: Nouveaux objets*  
Paris: Gallimard, 1984
- Le Tout Cinéma*  
Paris: COIC, 1942
- Lloyd, A  
(Ed)      *Movies of the Forties*  
London: Orbis, 1982
- Lucot, R      "Le drame du documentaire", in *Le Film  
Français 97*, 18 October 1946
- Maine, P<sup>“</sup>      *La propagande nazie, par le cinéma, en  
France 1939-1945* (Master's Thesis)  
Paris: Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1972



- Mandion, R                    *Cinéma, reflet du monde*  
Paris: Publications Paul Montel, 1944
- Marchetti, S                    *Affiches 1939-1945: images d'une certaine France*  
Lausanne: Edita SA, 1982
- Martin, M                      *Le cinéma français depuis la guerre*  
Saint-Armand-Montrond: Edilig, 1984
- Mast, G and  
Cohen, M (Eds)                *Film theory and criticism*  
New York: Oxford University Press, 1974
- Metz, C                         *Langage et cinéma*  
Paris: Larousse, 1971
- Michaut, P                      "Les films documentaires ont devant eux un  
grand avenir", in *Ciné-Miroir-Almanach*, 1945
- Miller, G                        *Les pousse-au-jour du Maréchal Pétain*  
Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975
- Mineur, J                        *Balzac 00.01*  
Paris: Plon, 1981
- Mitry, J                         *La sémiologie en question*  
Paris: Editions du Cerf (7e Art), 1987
- Les monographies de la production française 5: l'industrie du cinéma*  
Paris: Société Nouvelle Mercure, 1954
- Morel, J-M  
& Gendron, F                    *1938-1944: les écrans des Français de Munich  
à la Libération*  
Montreuil: Danguy, 1982
- O'Sullivan, T  
*et al*                                *Key concepts in communication*  
London, Routledge, 1983
- Paxton, RO                      *La France de Vichy 1940-1944*  
Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973
- Pétain, P                        *Appels et messages du Maréchal*  
Vichy: Lardanchet, 1942

- Pithon, R "Le film comme document historique et social: quelques reflexions méthodologiques et critiques", in *Revue européenne des sciences sociales et Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto*, XI 1983, Numéro 30
- Pivasset, J *Essai sur la signification politique du cinéma*  
Paris: Editions Cujas, 1971
- Popper, K *The poverty of historicism*  
London: Ark, 1986
- Prédal, R *Le documentaire français*  
Paris: Cerf, 1987
- Qualter, TH *Propaganda and psychological warfare*  
New York: Random House, 1962
- Reader, K *Cultures on celluloid*  
London: Quartet Books, 1981
- Regent, R *Cinéma de France*  
Paris: Editions Bellefay, 1948
- Reich, W *The mass psychology of Fascism*  
Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1975
- Reid, Joyce M *The concise Oxford dictionary of French literature*  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976
- Robinson, D "Business as usual", in Lloyd (qv)
- Rossignol, D *Histoire de la propagande en France de 1940-1944: l'utopie Petain*  
Paris: PUF, 1991
- Rotha, P *Documentary diary: an informal history of British documentary film 1928-1939*  
London: Secker & Warburg, 1973

- Sadoul, G                    *Chronique du cinéma français 1939-1967*  
Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1979
- Sadoul, G                    *Histoire générale du cinéma VI: le cinéma  
pendant la guerre*  
Paris: Denoël, 1956
- Le cinéma français*  
Paris: Flammarion, 1962
- Sarris, A                    *Politics and cinema*  
New York: Columbia University Press, 1978
- Seliger, M                   *The Marxist conception of ideology*  
Cambridge: CUP, 1977
- Siclier, J                    *La France de Pétain et son cinéma*  
Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1981
- Smith, P (ed)               *The historian and film*  
Cambridge: CUP, 1976
- Stam, R *et al*               *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*  
London: Routledge, 1992
- Taylor, R                    *Film propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi  
Germany*  
London: Croom Helm, 1979
- Thompson, JB              *Studies in the theory of ideology*  
Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984
- Thorpe, F (ed)              *International index to film periodicals 1975:  
an annotated guide*  
London: St James Press, 1976
- International index to film periodicals 1976:  
an annotated guide*  
London: St James Press, 1977
- International index to film periodicals 1977:  
an annotated guide*  
London: Macmillan, 1978



*International index to film periodicals 1978:  
an annotated guide*  
London: FIAF, 1980

*Travailleurs de France*

Montrouge: La Platinogravure, 1944

Vedres, N

*Images du cinéma français*  
Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1945

Vermorel, C

"Vers la renaissance du documentaire", in  
*Pour Vous* 582, 10 October 1940

Vierne, S

*Rite, roman, initiation*  
Paris: PUG, 1973

Virilo, P

*Guerre et cinéma I: logistique de la  
perception*  
Paris: Editions de l'Etoile, 1984

Walford, G

*Ideologies and their functions: a study in  
systematic ideology*  
London: George Walford, 1979

Ward, B

*Nationalism and ideology*  
New York: WW Norton and Company, 1966

Welch, D

*Propaganda and the German cinema 1933-1945*  
Oxford: OUP, 1983

Wharton, S

"Le Bulldog et le Maréchal: French Perceptions  
of the British, 1940-44" in  
*Franco-British Studies* 14 (Autumn 1992), pp21-30

"The Square and the Reel: *Forces Occultes* as  
Vichy Propaganda" in *Quinquereme* 13, 1990-91,  
pp46-52

"Vichy: Zone sud as Nation/Patrie" in Kelly, M and  
Böck, R (Eds), *France: Nation and Regions*, pp31-35  
Southampton: Southampton University Press, 1993

- Willard, G *et al* *De la guerre à la Libération: La France de 1939 à 1945*  
Paris: Editions Sociales, 1972
- Williams, F *La propagande et le travail en France*  
(BSc dissertation)  
Birmingham: Aston University, 1983
- Williams, R *Culture and society*  
London: Chatto and Windus, 1960
- Marxism and literature*  
Oxford: OUP, 1977

## APPENDIX I

### *Arts, Sciences, Voyages*

Programmes at the Cinéma des Champs-Élysées, 1941-1944

#### 1941

To January 31	<i>Louise</i>
12 March to 4 April	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages I</i>
5 April to 26 May	<i>Les Trois Valses</i>
27 May to 1 July	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages II</i>
2 July to 6 August	<i>La Vierge Folle</i>
7 August to 10 September	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages III</i>
11 September to 3 November	<i>Volpone</i>
4 November to 27 November	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages IV</i>
28 November to 22 December	<i>Gueule d'Amour</i>
23 December onwards	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages V</i>

#### 1942

14 January to 10 February	<i>Tarakanova</i>
11 February to 26 May	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages VI</i>
27 May to 7 July	<i>Le Roy</i>
8 July to 24 July	<i>L'Enfer Blanc/Siva</i>
25 July to 10 September	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages VII</i>
11 September to 26 November	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages VIII</i>
27 November onwards	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages IX</i>

#### 1943

28 January to 9 March	<i>L'Appel du Silence</i>
10 March to 9 April	<i>Forces Occultes</i>
10 April to 4 June	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages X</i>
5 June to 14 July	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages XI</i>
15 July to 17 September	<i>Goupi Mains-Rouges</i>
18 September to 14 October	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages XII</i>
15 October to 26 November	<i>Arts, Sciences, Voyages XIII</i>
27 November onwards	<i>L'Inévitable Monsieur Dubois</i>

#### 1944

12 January to 9 May	<i>Les Mystères du Thibet</i>
10 May to 8 June	<i>La Nuit Fantastique</i>
9 June to 23 July	<i>La Croisière Jaune</i>
24 July	All screenings banned



## APPENDIX II

### Arts, Sciences, Voyages Screenings: Films shown

NB: Titles appearing in **bold type** have been viewed for the purpose of the Thesis. German films and French cartoons are noted by [UFA] and [cartoon] respectively.

#### Programme 1 (12 March to 4 April 1941)

*La cathédrale de Chartres*

*Karakoram*

*Rayons X* [UFA]

*36 Chandelles*

*Deux chansons de Fred Addison (Variétés)*

*La vie des abeilles* [UFA]

*Le vol à voile*

#### Programme 2 (27 May to 1 July 1941)

*Aux greniers d'Extrême Orient*

*Les championnats du monde de ski*

*Dans les canyons du Colorado*

*Le discobole*

*Le géant de la vallée*

*Les plantes ont-elles des sens?* [UFA]

*La valse brillante*

*La vie des fourmis* [UFA]

*Le violon*

#### Programme 3 (7 August to 10 September 1941)

*Atlantique-sud*

*Autour du zéro absolu*

*Barbe-bleue* [animation - clay models]

*Nages et plongeurs*

*Rouen, naissance d'une cité*

*Les saisons*

*Le vaisseau fantôme*

#### Programme 4 (4 to 27 November 1941)

*Appel du stade*

*Cinq minutes de cinéma 1900*

*Dans les mers du sud*

*La grande caravane*

*Le monde des automates*

Programme 5 (23 December 1941 to 13 January 1942)

*Féerie blanche*

*L'Opéra de Paris*

*Pèlerins de la Mècque*

*Le petit poucet* [cartoon]

*La voie triomphale*

Programme 6 (11 February to 26 May 1942)

*L'Enfer de la Forêt vierge* [UFA]

*Rubens et son temps* [UFA]

*L'Univers infini* [UFA]

*La vie cruelle des insectes* [UFA]

Programme 7 (25 July to 10 September 1942)

*Les Hallucinations du Baron de Munchausen*

*Rodin*

*Sur les chemins de Lamartine*

*30 jours au-dessus des nuages*

*Vieilles chansons de France*

Programme 8 (11 September to 26 November 1942)

*Etoiles de demain*

*L'Hippocampe*

*Sortilège Exotique* [incomplete]

Programme 9 (27 November 1942 to 27 January 1943)

*Alerte aux champs*

*Branly*

*Fantaisies de la pellicule*

*La joie de vivre*

*Symphonie en blanc*

Programme 10 (10 April to 4 June 1943)

*Callisto* [cartoon]

*Hommage à Georges Bizet*

*Au pays des buveurs de sang*

Programme 11 (5 June to 14 July 1943)

*A l'Assaut des Aiguilles du Diable*

*Anatole fait une partie de camping* [cartoon]

*Danse macabre* [cartoon]

*Le tonnelier*

Programme 12 (18 September to 14 October 1943)

*Manosque, pays de Jean Giono*

*Mémoires des maisons mortes*

*Naissance de la soie*

*Premier prix du Conservatoire*

**Programme 13** (15 October to 26 November 1943)

*Les Hommes de la neige*

*La Machine à écrire l'histoire*

*Paperasses*

*Passagers de la grande ourse* [cartoon]



### APPENDIX III

#### *Programme du Premier Congrès du film documentaire, 1943*

##### Mardi 7 avril

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
Soirée offerte par M. le Ministre de l'Education Nationale à la Jeunesse  
RETROSPECTIVE DU DOCUMENTAIRE

##### Jeudi 8 avril

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
Soirée du Secrétariat général à la Jeunesse avec le concours général de  
la Chorale du Secrétariat général à la Jeunesse et de M. André  
MARCHAL

##### Vendredi 9 avril

20h Cinéma des Champs-Élysées  
Première du 10e programme ARTS-SCIENCES-VOYAGES

##### Samedi 10 avril

17h30 Maison de la Chimie, 28 rue St-Dominique  
Conférence du Dr COMANDON, Chef du Laboratoire de l'Institut  
Pasteur: la CINEMATOGRAFIE MICROSCOPIQUE

##### Lundi 12 avril

10h30 Cinéma des Champs-Élysées  
IMAGES DE ROUMANIE

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
GALA DE L'AVENTURE, organisé en collaboration avec le Club des  
Explorateurs, soirée présentée par MM. Jean DE GUEBRIANT,  
Marcel ICHAC, Jean-Paul LEBEUF

##### Mardi 13 avril

15h Cinéac, 264, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré  
LE FORMAT REDUIT AU SERVICE DU FILM DOCUMENTAIRE

20h Le Français, 31 boulevard des Italiens  
NOUVELLES ETAPES DU CINEMA DOCUMENTAIRE et  
CULTUREL  
(soirée organisée par l'ACE et la TOBIS avec trois films inédits en  
couleurs)

Mercredi 14 avril

- 16h Hôtel de Ville  
Les films de "Paris"
- 20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
L'ARTISANAT, avec le concours de M André MARCHAL et du  
groupe ART et FOLKLORE de FRANCE

Jeudi 15 avril

- 9h30 Matinée gratuite offerte aux écoliers parisiens par le Ministère de  
l'Education nationale: Victor-Hugo, Lutétia, Métropole, Capitole,  
Pathé-Orléans, Saint-Michel, Palais d'Avron, Danube-Palace, Pax-  
Sèvres
- 20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
Soirée de la PRESSE FILMEE

Vendredi 16 avril

- 16h Bibliothèque Nationale (galerie Mazarine)  
Les MICROFILMS
- 20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
PORTRAIT de la FRANCE (films touristiques) avec le concours du  
groupe ART et FOLKLORE de FRANCE

Samedi 17 avril

- 14h Grande salle Pleyel  
Séance du Commissariat général à la Famille, avec le concours de  
Mme DUSSANE, Sociétaire honoraire de la Comédie-Française
- 17h30 Musée du Louvre (Salle de l'Ecole du Louvre): LES FILMS D'ART  
(RODIN, LE MONT ST-MICHEL, MICHEL-ANGE)

Dimanche 18 avril

- 11h Cinéma des Champs-Élysées  
Les DESSINS ANIMES FRANCAIS
- 20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
Soirée du Commissariat général à l'Education générale et aux Sports,  
avec les concours des Moniteurs d'Antibes.

Lundi 19 avril

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
PANORAMA du FILM DOCUMENTAIRE ITALIEN

Mardi 20 avril

14h Cinéma des Champs-Élysées  
LE CINEMA EDUCATIF

20h Paramount  
PORTRAIT DE LA FRANCE (répétition de la soirée du Tourisme)  
Soirée offerte par la Ville de Paris aux prisonniers libérés et aux familles de prisonniers en captivité.

Mercredi 21 avril

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
(Gala de clôture)  
LES GRANDS PRIX 1943 du FILM DOCUMENTAIRE

Jeudi 22 avril

16h Hôtel de Ville: Cérémonie de clôture

20h Théâtre National du Palais de Chaillot  
Grand concert de Gala avec l'orchestre des Concerts du Conservatoire,  
dirigé par Charles MUNCH, avec le concours de M André  
MARCHAL, organiste de St-Germain-des-Près et de M Serge LIFAR,  
maître de ballet au Théâtre National de l'Opéra

Adapted from: *Brochure* for Premier congrès du film documentaire, 1943



## APPENDIX IV

### **ROBERT, André**

Producteur et publicitaire

Né le 12-4-1912 à Pairs. Etudes secondaires; Sciences Politiques et Droit (études inachevées)

Début dans le cinéma en 1932

Journaliste et publicitaire: Ex secrétaire-général Association de la presse cinématographique; Ex-président, Caisse de retraite de la presse cinématographique (1936-1940); Ex-chef rubrique cinéma à *Marianne* (1936) et au *Figaro* (1937; Ex-membre du Comité directeur, Association des directeurs de publicité cinématographique (1936-40); etc.

Fondateur, 'Arts, Sciences, Voyages'; organisateur, Premier congrès du film documentaire

Fondateur en 1947 [sic] Société documentaire publicité devenue Société documentaire

Production ou co-production: *Lyautey bâtisseur d'Empire* 1946; *Epargnez la France* (1947); *Antoine Bourdelle* (1949); *Nos cousins les îles* 1950; *Images d'Ethiopie*, *Pages d'exil*, *Les grenadiers de Lessach* 1951; *Alger le cap* (1951-52; *E comme Europe*, *Saint Hélène petite île* (1952)

Adapted from *L'Annuaire biographique du cinéma*, 1952, p627

## APPENDIX V

Vichy Poster Material  
(Figures 3-12)

(For details, see page 6)

Pages removed for copyright restrictions.



## APPENDIX VI

### *French documentary films produced June 1940 to June 1944*

NB This list concerns only those titles intended for general release in France and excludes documentaries made specifically for the cinémathèques of Ministries *eg* Agriculture.

An asterisk indicates films known to have received State subsidy.

Title	Date	Producer	Director
<i>A bloc</i>	1943		
<i>Abricots en boîte</i>	1943		
<i>L'accordéon</i>	1942	Société Lémovix	P Duvivier
<i>Acetylène</i>	1943	La France en Marche	
<i>L'âge de la matière plastique</i>	1943	J-C Bernard	J-C Bernard
<i>L'âge du plastique</i>		Je Vois Tout	Paul de Roubaix
<i>Air, source de la vie</i>	1944		
* <i>A la poursuite du vent</i>	1943	Films du Compas	Leenhardt
<i>A l'assaut des Aiguilles du diable</i>	1943	Ichac	Ichac
<i>Alerte</i>	1942	Mineur	M Cantagrel
<i>Alerte aux champs</i>	1942	Lallier	Lallier
<i>Algérie au travail</i>			
<i>Algérie, terre de lumière</i>	1942	Nadoux	Barrois
<i>Allô! allô!</i>	1941	Films Darius	R Lucot
<i>A l'ombre du Canigou</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>L'aluminium dans les lignes d'électrification rurale</i>	1943		
<i>L'aluminium dans les lignes aériennes</i>	1943		
<i>L'âme de l'Auvergne</i>	1942	Discina	Vittet-Orain
<i>Aménagements et grands travaux de Marseille</i>			
<i>L'amour est entré dans la ville</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	Paul de Roubaix
* <i>L'amour maternel chez les animaux</i>	1943	Mineur	Mineur
<i>Analogies</i>	1943	La France en Marche	
* <i>Anatole fait une partie de campagne</i>	1941	De Cavaignac	

<i>Les animaux de la ferme</i>	1943	De Cavaignac	M de Gastyne
* <i>A nous, jeunes</i>	1944	De Cavaignac	Perdrix
<i>Les antiquités égyptiennes</i>	1943	Films d'Art et d'Histoire	H Membre
* <i>A pleines ondes</i>	1943	Films du Compas	Leenhardt
<i>L'appel du stade</i>	1941	UTC	M Martin
<i>Apprendre connaître et voir</i>	1944	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir
<i>Apprendre un métier</i>	1944		
<i>Aptitudes</i>	1943		
<i>Ariège, rivière de France</i>	1941	Films de France	R Delacroix
* <i>L'art dramatique et les jeunes</i>		Pathé	
<i>L'art du luthier</i>	1943	Films de France	R Delacroix
<i>Artères de France</i>			
<i>Artisanat indigène au Maroc</i>			
<i>Artisanat rural</i>			
* <i>Artisans du bijou</i>	1943	Films de France	E Floury
<i>Attention aux vipères</i>	1943	ACE	Dr Thevenard
<i>L'Atmosphère et ses courants</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>A travers Paris</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	Pieuchot
<i>Aubagne en Provence</i>	1943		
<i>Au bord de la rivière</i>	1944	ACE	Arcy-Hennery
<i>Au coeur de l'Atlas</i>	1942		
<i>Au delà du visible</i>	1941	Artisans d'Art	P Lafond
<i>Au-dessus des Alpes en avion</i>	1941	Mineur	De Fort-Bacourt
* <i>Au pays des cratères</i>	1943	Artisans d'Art	H Caurier
<i>Au pays de la fantaisie</i>	1944	De Gioanni	Griboff
<i>Au pays de Sylvie</i>	1944	Celia Film	Regnier
<i>Au pays où fleurit l'oranger</i>	1942	Mineur	Mineur
<i>Au royaume des jouets</i>	1943	De Gioanni	De Gioanni
<i>Au royaume du tastevin</i>	1942	Carmina	D'Olivier
<i>Au temps du bien-aimé</i>	1944	Sirius	P Hardts
<i>Au temps du fiacre</i>	1944		P Laffont
<i>Autour de la piste</i>	1942	Artisans d'Art	P Laffont
<i>Autour d'un clocher</i>	1943		
<i>Autour d'un film de montagne</i>	1944	Pathé	A Pol
<i>L'Auvergne</i>			
<i>Aux portes du désert</i>	1941	La France en Marche	
<i>Avant garde blanche</i>	1942		
<i>L'avenir de notre race</i>		Films de France	Leroux-Floury

<i>Baie des oiseaux</i>	1942		
<i>Bananes séchées</i>	1941	Société Alcyna	PE Decharme
<i>Barrage hydro-électrique de laCère</i>	Pathé		Ardouin
<i>Basse cote</i>	1943		
<i>Bâtir</i>	1942	Atlantic	Gillet
<i>Batteries aux macreuses</i>	1942	Ciné-Journal	
<i>BCG sauveur</i>			
<i>Le Béarn</i>	1942	Rénaud	L Vaillant
<i>Beaune, capitale du Bourgogne</i>	1943	Discina	R Hervouin
<i>Bergerie nationale de Rambouillet</i>	1944		
<i>La Bièvre</i>	1941		
<i>Bloc-Note Film</i>	1941	Bloc-Note Film	De Gioanni
<i>* Le bois</i>	1943	Atlantic	R Verdier
<i>Les bouchons</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>Le bourbonnais</i>	1942	J-C Bernard	J-C Bernard
<i>Le boxe en France</i>	1944	Ermina	Ganier-Raymond
<i>Edouard Branly</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir
<i>La Bretagne</i>		CFFD	Cloche
<i>Le briquet magique</i>	1942	Société Nouvelle Labor	Zoubowitch
<i>Burnous et chechias</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Cabaret montmartrois</i>	1943	Films Azur	P Ramelot
<i>Cadre noir</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Cale sèche</i>	1941		
<i>* Callisto, la petite nymphe de Diane</i>	1943	De Cavaignac	
<i>Camargue, île inconnue</i>	1943		
<i>Camargue, terre inconnue</i>	1944	SDAC	P Lafond
<i>Cambrai</i>	1942	Carmina	
<i>Camp 1088</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Le canal des deux mers</i>	1941		
<i>Cap'taine Sabord s'appareille</i>	1943		
<i>Caraïbes</i>	1941		
<i>Carambolage</i>	1943		
<i>Cartes et cartiers</i>	1942	Films G Coutable	P Harts
<i>190° au-dessous de zéro</i>	1943	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir
<i>* Le centenaire quotidien</i>		Films du Compas	
<i>Ceux du rail</i>	1943	CATAC	J Loos
<i>Le Champagne</i>	1944		
<i>Les champignons qui tuent</i>	1942	AAC	Dr Thévenard
<i>Chansons d'hier et d'aujourd'hui</i>	1941	Sirius	Perdrix



* <i>Chansons illustrées</i>	1943	Films de France	Maudru
<i>Chants et chansons</i>	1944		
<i>Le charbon</i>			
<i>Les charmes de l'hiver</i>	1941		
<i>Le chariot de Thespis</i>		Films Wartet	
* <i>Le charron</i>	1942	Celia Film	
* <i>La chasse infernale</i>	1942	Giaume	
<i>Chasseurs du ciel</i>	1942		
<i>Chasseurs du sommeil</i>	1942		
<i>Châteaux francs en Tunisie</i>	1941		
<i>Le chaudronnage de l'aluminium</i>	1944	Ichac	
<i>Le chemin de l'azur</i>	1942	De Cavaignac	L Emon
* <i>Le chemin de Noël</i>			
<i>Les chemins du ciel</i>	1943	CFFD	Merky
<i>Chemins sans ornières</i>	1943	Institut du Caoutchouc	Cantagrel
<i>Le cheval trotteur</i>	1943		
<i>Les cheveux du Vercors</i>	1944	CATJC	
<i>Chez nous en France: le Languedoc</i>		J-C Bernard	J-C Bernard
<i>Les chiens qui rapportent</i>	1943	Selb Film	J Gourget
<i>Le cinématographe Lumière</i>	1943	Société Alcyna	P Decharme
<i>Cinexpress C1-C12</i>	1943		
* <i>Le cirque enchanté</i>	1943	De Cavaignac	Tedesco
<i>Le cirque</i>		Ciné-Reportages	
<i>Circulation et transfusion du sang</i>	1941	Atlantic	De Hubsch
<i>La cité fantôme</i>	1943		
<i>La cité du muscle</i>	1941	France en Marche	
* <i>La Cité, origine de Paris</i>	1941	Pathé-Cinéma	R Chanas
<i>Clair de la lune</i>	1942	Société Nouvelle Labor	Zoubowitch
* <i>Cloches de France</i>	1943	MAIC	A Guyot
<i>La coiffure à travers des âges</i>	1943	De Gioanni	De Gioanni
* <i>Colbert vous parle</i>	1943	Pathé Film Consortium	R Hennion
<i>Colliour</i>		HC Continental	
<i>Comédiens à la tête de bois</i>	1944	Je Vois Tout	PG Thiéry
<i>Comme une chanson</i>	1942	Compagnie Générale Cinématographique	PG Thiéry
<i>Les compagnons de l'espoir</i>	1942	Compagnie générale Cinématographique	PG Thiéry
<i>Les compagnons du tour de France</i>	1942	Mineur	R Brunet
<i>Confidences d'un micro</i>	1944	Artisans du Film	M Courmes
<i>Conseils aux Français de bonne volonté</i>	1944		

<i>Contrebande de luxe</i>	1941	Mineur	Mineur
<i>Coprahs</i>	1941		
<i>Corps harmonieux</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir
<i>Les corrupteurs</i>	1942	Nova	Ramelot
<i>Côte des Maures</i>	1941		
<i>Les coulisses de la radio</i>	1941	De Gioanni	Thiéry
<i>Coup d'oeil sur le Roussillon</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>Coupeurs de bois</i>	1943	Société Alcyna	PE Decharme
* <i>La Crau, jardin des Hespérides</i>	1942	Films de France	E Nadoux
<i>La Creuse ignorée</i>	1942	Atlantic	Mahuzier
* <i>Cri cri Ludo et ses moutons</i>			Risacher
<i>Crinières au vent</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Croisade de l'air pur</i>	1941	Artisans d'Art	R Lucot
<i>Croisière d'espérance</i>	1942	Société Alcyna	PE Decharme
* <i>La croisière vert</i>	1943	De Gioanni	
* <i>Croisieres extra muros</i>	1942	Celia Films	L Cuny
* <i>La Croix-rouge française</i>	1942	Films de France	P Maudru
<i>Ceuillettes des abricots</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>Le cuir</i>	1943	Selb Film	.
<i>Dakar</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Danse éternelle</i>	1943	Pathé	Chanas
<i>La danse macabre</i>	1943	J & A Giaume	
<i>Dans les montagnes valaisannes</i>	1941		
<i>Deglet nour</i>		Mineur	Letour
<i>De la draisienne au dérailleur</i>		Griboff	Griboff
<i>De la mélodie au jazz</i>	1941	Sirius	Perdrix
<i>De l'Etoile à la Place Pigalle</i>	HC	Continental	Honecker
<i>Deux reconstruteurs: Henri IV et Richelieu</i>	1943	Sirius	P Harts
<i>De la musique avant toute chose</i>		Celia Film	L Cuny
<i>La découverte du globe</i>	1942	Atlantic	De Hubsch
* <i>Défense passive</i>	1943		Perdrix
<i>Depuis Babel</i>	1942		
* <i>Les deux rivières</i>	1943	AAC	R Ginet
<i>Dick, l'ami des soldats</i>	1942	France en Marche	
* <i>Le dieu hasard</i>	1942	AAC	P Lafond

<i>* Deux blanches, une rouge</i>	1943	AAC	L Rigaud & J Régnier
<i>Divertissement</i>		1943	
<i>La Dombe au pays des étangs</i>		Selb Film	G Coutable
<i>Drainage</i>	1943	Atlantic	P Lafond
<i>Du sous-marin au submersible</i>		France en Marche	
<i>Du vénin au sérum</i>	1941	Discina	H Lepage
<i>Du visage à l'âme</i>		Réalisateurs/ Producteurs	Wagner
<i>Eaux vives</i>	1942	De Cavaignac	M de Gastyne
<i>* L'école de Barbizon</i>	1944	De Cavaignac	M de Gastyne
<i>L'école des mousses</i>	1942		
<i>* Ecoles de comédie</i>		Pathé	
<i>Economie des métaux</i>	1942	Lallier	Lallier
<i>Ecoutez-vous parler</i>	1943	Paris-Méditerranée	Labre
<i>En Condée</i>	1942		
<i>Energies de demain</i>	1943	Atlantic	R Verdier
<i>Enfant est né</i>	1942	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>Les enfants s'amuse</i>	HC	Continental	Lefebvre
<i>L'enfer de la forêt vierge</i>	1941	Tobis	Kampfhaenkel
<i>* Engrenages</i>		MAIC	
<i>En Morvan</i>	1941		
<i>Les enseignes de Paris</i>	1943	AAC	R Lucot
<i>Entr'aide</i>		Secours National	Schiltz
<i>Les ermites du ciel</i>	1943	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir
<i>Epaves</i>	1944	Cousteau	
<i>Les espadrilles</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>* Esprit d'équipe</i>	1943	Pathé	P Delannoy
<i>Essais</i>	1943	Mineur	M Cantagrel
<i>Etage</i>			
<i>Etoiles de demain</i>	1942	Pathé	R Guy-Grand
<i>Expedition en Alaska</i>	1944		
<i>Fabrication de la monnaie</i>	1943		
<i>Face à la vie</i>	1942	Pathé	R Chanas
<i>Fantaisie sur une vieille légende</i>		Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Fécondité</i>	1943	Atlantic	R Verdier
<i>Féeries nocturnes</i>	1944	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>La femme et le sport</i>	1944	J-C Bernard	
<i>* La feuille blanche</i>	1943	Films de France	A Guyot



<i>Feu</i>	1942	Gallia Cinéi	B Kovalenko
* <i>Les feux qui meurent</i>	1942	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>La fidélité de l'Empire</i>	1941		
* <i>Filles de France</i>	1942	AAC	H Cavier
<i>Fils des terres lointaines</i>	1943		
<i>Fleurs et parfums de France</i>	1942	Sirius	M Théry
* <i>La flûte magique</i>		Les Gémeaux	
<i>Forces occultes</i>	1943	Nova	P Riche
<i>Forces sur le stade</i>	1944	Pathé	M Martin
<i>La forêt au service de la mer</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>La forêt brûle</i>	1943		
* <i>Forêts de France</i>	1943	AAC	R Mariaud
<i>La forêt vivante</i>	1943	Celia Film	L Cuny
<i>Fouette cocher</i>	1944		
<i>Français souvenez-vous</i>	1944		
<i>Fred Mistral</i>	1942	France en Marche	Verdet-Kléber
<i>Frères inconnus</i>	1944		
* <i>Le froid</i>	1944	Films de France	A Guyot
<i>Les galegeurs de la mer</i>	1941		
<i>La garde de l'Empire, de l'Atlantique au Tchad</i>	1942		
<i>Gens et coutumes d'Armagnac</i>	1944	Films R Millet	J-K Raymond-Millet
<i>Le glacier asservi</i>	1942	France en Marche	
* <i>Les glaciers</i>	1943	Mineur	H Decae
* <i>Le golfe latin</i>	1942	De Cavaignac	Tedesco
<i>Gosses d'Indochine</i>	1942		
<i>Goussainville nouveau</i>	1944	Films du Compas	Leenhardt
<i>La grande Chartreuse</i>		Optimax	
<i>La grande lueur</i>	1942	J-C Bernard	Bernard
<i>Le grand jardinier de France: Le Nôtre</i>	1944	Films de France	Tedesco
* <i>La grande meute</i>		Société Industrielle Cinématographique	
<i>Grand roi, grand siècle</i>	1943	Sirius	R Harts
<i>Grands nomades de l'Armée</i>	1942		
* <i>Grands travaux de Marseille</i>		Ichac	
* <i>Grenoble, cité du tourisme</i>	1942	Films de France	E Nadoux
<i>Groupements 13</i>	1942		

<i>Gueules noires</i>	1942	CC Lumière	E Rombeau
<i>Guignol, marionnette de France</i>	1942	Optimax	
<i>Haras de Pompadour</i>	1941		
<i>Harmonies de France</i>	1943	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>Harmonies tunisiennes</i>	1943	A Mahuzier	Tedesco
<i>Le haut Amazone</i>	1942		
<i>Haute vallée de la Garonne</i>	1942		
<i>Les hautes vallées de l'Ariège</i>	1942	Atlantic	Mahuzier
<i>L'heure à Paris</i>	1943	AAC	R Mariaud
<i>Les heures qui passent</i>		J-K Raymond-Millet	
<i>Histoire du gant</i>	1942	Selb	G Coutable
<i>Histoire du tennis</i>	1944	J-K Raymond-Millet	
<i>Histoire du timbre poste français</i>	1941	Sirius	R Gavault
<i>Histoire merveilleuse de vieux chiffons</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>* Hommage à Georges Bizet</i>	1943	De Cavaignac	L Cuny
<i>Les hommes de la houle</i>		Jean d'Esme	
<i>Les hommes de la neige</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Hommes et bêtes</i>	1944	Mineur	
<i>L'hortillonnage</i>	1943	CC Lumière	G Mazeline
<i>L'hôtel des trois canards</i>	1943	Sirius	Perdrix
<i>Hué, cité impériale</i>	1942	Fasquerelle	Thomasset
<i>Hyères pour demain</i>	1941		
<i>L'île de rêve</i>	1942		
<i>L'île inconnue</i>	1941	Ciné-Journal	
<i>Images et paroles du Maréchal Pétain</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>* L'Industrie du verre</i>	1943	AAC	L Gaudard
<i>* L'Institut Pasteur</i>	1944	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Jadis - Vichy</i>	1943		
<i>Le jardin des étoiles</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Jardins de Paris</i>		De Cavaignac	Messier
<i>Jardins sans fleurs</i>	1942	Cinéma et Publicité	L Merlin
<i>Jean le chanceux</i>	1942	Sirius	
<i>Jeune marine</i>	1942		
<i>Jeunes en montagne</i>	1942	CATJC	G Regnier
<i>Jeunes filles de France</i>			

<i>Jeunes Françaises d'aujourd'hui</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Jeunesse au travail</i>			
<i>Jeunesse de la mer</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Jeux d'enfants</i>	1943	Selb	Gourguet
<i>Jeux nautiques</i>	1942		
<i>Je Vois Tout Magazine 1-4</i>	1941	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>5 &amp; 6</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>41</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Jouets du Jura</i>	1942	CATJC	
<i>Journée à l'Opéra</i>	1941	Artisans d'Art	
<i>Journée avec Cerdan</i>	1943	Films Jean d'Esme	D'Esme
<i>Journée avec Desclaux</i>	1943	Films Jean d'Esme	D'Esme
<i>Kenadza</i>	1941	Société Alcyna	Decharme
<i>Légende de Saint-Nicholas</i>	1942	Sirius	J Devivre
<i>* Lettre voyage</i>	1942	Films de France	E Nadoux
<i>Le Limousin</i>	1943	Celia Films	L Cuny
<i>* Le lit</i>			
<i>Locomotion 42</i>	1942	SDAC	J Legrand
<i>La lumière des hommes</i>	1942	Films de France	A Guyot
<i>La machine à écrire l'histoire</i>	1943	Pathé	
<i>Machines à essais</i>	1944	Delafosse	
<i>La magie du film</i>	1943		
<i>* Maillol</i>	1942	CATJC	J Lods
<i>La main de l'homme</i>	1943	Pathé	Dr Ardouin
<i>Mains françaises</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>La maison du soleil</i>	1942	CATJC	J Lods
<i>* Le Malibran</i>	1942	Sirius	
<i>Manosque, pays de Jean Giono</i>	1943		
<i>Marche et Limousin</i>			
<i>Marches et batteries de l'Empire</i>	1942		
<i>Marine</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>La matière caoutchouc</i>		Institut Français du Caoutchouc	Cantagrel
<i>* Matins de France</i>	1942	Celia Films	L Cuny
<i>Mazout végétal</i>	1942	Société Alcyna	Decharme
<i>Le médecin des neiges</i>	1942	CFFD	Ichac
<i>Mémoires des maisons mortes</i>	1943	CATJC	



<i>Mermoz</i>			
<i>La mûrle</i>	1943		
<i>Merveilleux voyage</i>	1943	R Mariaud	Mariaud
<i>Messagers du sport</i>	1941		
* <i>Métamorphoses de la matière</i>	1941	Films de France	E Floury
* <i>Le métier de sculpteur 1895-1941, du cinématographe au ciném</i>	1943	AAC	R Lucot
<i>Mieux vaut prévenir</i>	1944	France en Marche	
<i>Les minutes</i>	1942	Atlantic	
<i>Le miracle de l'eau</i>	1941	Atlantic	
<i>Miracle quotidien: les Halles</i>	1942	France en Marche	
		Compagnie Générale Cinématographique	S Griboff
<i>Missions aériennes</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Moisson 1941</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Monastères et abbayes de Provence</i>	1941	P Duvivier	Duvivier
<i>Moniteurs d'Antibes</i>	1943	Jean d'Esme	D'Esme
* <i>Monnaies de France</i>	1941	MAIC	Chanas et Lescaux
<i>Monsieur Girouette</i>			
<i>Montagne</i>	1942		
<i>La montre</i>	1942	Atlantic	Verdier
<i>Le moulin enchanté</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Moulins d'hier et d'aujourd'hui</i>	1943	Ciné-Reportages	S Griboff
<i>Musée du Louvre</i>	1941	CFFD	Membré
<i>Mystères du Thibet</i>	1941		Schlaefer
<i>Mystères des ondes</i>	CFFD		Kovalenko
<i>Nages et plongeurs</i>	1941		
* <i>Naissance de la soie</i>	1943	Artisans d'Art	P Lafond
<i>Naissance d'un port</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Naissance d'un spectacle</i>	1943	Films J-K Raymond-Millet	J-K Raymond-Millet
<i>Le navire blanc</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Nécessité fait roi (impôt métal)</i>	1944		
* <i>Nids d'aigles</i>	1943	Sirius	Delafosse
<i>Nimbus libéré</i>	1944		
<i>Noëls de France</i>	1942	Société Lemovix	Duvivier
<i>Normandie de Flaubert</i>			
<i>Nos tailleurs d'images</i>	1942		Lucot
<i>Notre-Dame de Paris</i>	1942	Discina	R Hervouin

<i>Nuages</i>	1942	C Brive	
<i>La nuit des temps</i>	1943	Atlantic	De Colmont
<i>L'Océanie française</i>	1941		
<i>L'oeil et la cellule photographique électronique</i>	1942	Atlantic	De Hubsch
<i>Les oléagineux</i>	1943		
* <i>Les ombres de la ville</i>	1943	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>On demande des hommes (rebâtir)</i>	1943		
<i>Les ondes Martenot</i>	1943	Films du Compas	R Zuber
<i>L'Opéra de Paris</i>	1942	AAC	Pannenleux & Hervoin
* <i>L'orchestre symphonique</i>	1942	Films de France	De Fort Bacourt
<i>L'orient à Paris</i>	HC	Continental	Gareau, Léandre, Méjat
<i>Orientation professionnelle</i>	1944		
<i>Origines des superstitions</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
* <i>Orgues de France</i>	1943	MAIC	R Chanas
<i>Orléans</i>	1942	J C Bernard	E Tayar
<i>Où va l'argent</i>	1943	Atlantic	.De Andria
<i>Pain des neiges</i>		Société Lemovix	
<i>Paix sur la terre</i>	1944	J-K Raymond- Millet	Raymond- Millet
<i>Paperasses</i>	1942		
<i>Par 18 mètres de fond</i>	1943	Cousteau	Cousteau
<i>Parc à plonger</i>	1942		
<i>Parfums</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Paris de Zola</i>	1941		
<i>Paris sur Seine</i>	HC	Continental	Le Febvre
<i>Paris vu par un chien</i>	1942	Sirius	M Théry
<i>Parures modernes</i>			
<i>Les passagers de la Grande ourse</i>	1943	Painlevé	Painlevé
<i>Le passé vivant</i>	1942		
<i>Patriotisme</i>	1944		
* <i>Paysages lamartiniens</i>	1942	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>Paysan noir</i>	1943		
<i>Pêche aux anchois</i>	1943		
<i>Pêches niçoises</i>	1941	Optimax	Raymond- Millet
* <i>Pêche en Méditerranée</i>	1942	Mineur	Mineur
<i>Pêche sportive</i>	1944	Pathé	R Chanas
<i>Peintres d'aujourd'hui</i>	1943	J-J Delafosse	Delafosse

<i>Pélerins de la Mecque</i>	1940	SCA	Segogne
<i>Pensons à eux</i>	1944		
<i>Permissionnaires n'oubliez pas</i>	1944		
<i>Perouges</i>	1943	Films G Coutable	Coutable
<i>Pescagel</i>	1941	Films du Compas	R Zuber
<i>Piste du fer</i>	1941	Société Alcyna	Decharme
<i>Le petit poucet</i>	1941	Sirius	Cerrutti
<i>Petits artisans, grands artistes</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Petits cailloux, grands chemins</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Petits chanteurs de Vienne</i>	1944		
<i>Petits hommes courageux</i>	1943	Sirius	Cerrutti
<i>Les petits pavés</i>	1942	MAIC	
<i>La petite reine</i>	HC	Continental	Le Febvre
<i>Phares de France</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Le phonographe</i>	1943	Regina	H Lepage
<i>Le piano</i>	HC	Continental	Le Febvre
<i>* La pierre française</i>	1942	AAC	P Lafond
<i>Piste impériale</i>	1942		
<i>* Pluie sur la ville</i>	1943	MAIC	A Guyot
<i>Poissons crabes et compagnie</i>	1943		
<i>Les porcelaines de Limoges</i>	1943	Société Lemovix	Duvivier
<i>Les porcelaines de Sèvre</i>	HC	Continental	Le Febvre
<i>* Les portes et leurs mystères</i>	1941	Celia Films	L Cuny
<i>* Port Royal des Champs</i>	1942	Films de France	P Maudru
<i>Poste N° 1</i>	1943	Films Azur	R Bisch
<i>Postillon de Limousin</i>	1941		
<i>Poterie provençale</i>	1941	CATJC	
<i>Pour demain</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Pré-hominiens</i>			
<i>Premier envol</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>* Premier prix du Conservatoire</i>	1943	AAC	Guy-Grand
<i>Prestidigitation</i>	1941	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Prochainement inauguration</i>	1942	Compagnie Générale Cinématographique	Cerrutti
<i>Profil de la France</i>		CFFD	Tedesco
<i>* Pullman N° 1</i>	1942	Films de France	
<i>Qui es-tu?</i>	1944	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>* Qu'est-ce que le temps?</i>	1943	MAIC	R Zuber
<i>Qui perd gagne</i>	1944		



<i>Quart d'heure au Musée océanographique</i>	1943	De Gioanni	De Gioanni
<i>Quart d'heure avec les équipages de la flotte</i>	1942	Bloc-Note-Film	
<i>Quart d'heure avec les mousses</i>	1942	Bloc-Note-Film	
<i>Quart d'heure avec les scaphandrines</i>	1942	Bloc-Note-Film	
* <i>Les quatre saisons</i>	1942	Lallier	Lallier
<i>Le Ramadan en Tunisie</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Le rat, ennemi public n°1</i>	1944	De Cavaignac	Mazeline
<i>Ravitaillement par l'Empire Record</i>	1944	Pathé	Ardouin
<i>Regards sur le Japon</i>	1942		
<i>Régiments modernes</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Relativité des temps</i>	1942		
<i>Relève des jeunes</i>			
<i>Renaître</i>	1942	Atlantic	A Gillet
<i>Repartition 43</i>	1943	Lallier	Guy-Grand
<i>Résistance!</i>	1944		
<i>Ressources de l'Afrique équatoriale française</i>	1941		
<i>Retour de manivelle</i>	1943		
<i>Le Retour des revenants</i>	1943	Sirius	Perdrix
<i>Rhapsodie artisanale</i>	1941		
* <i>Le Rhône</i>	1942	Atlantic	A Gillet
<i>Le rythme dans la vie</i>		MAIC	Carlus
<i>Rien qu'une chanson</i>	1943	J-C Bernard	
<i>Rivages lointains</i>	1942	Films R Marriaud	Marriaud
<i>La rivière enchantée</i>	1942	Atlantic	
<i>Le roc Eligoland</i>	1942		
<i>Roquebrun</i>	1942	Films de France	
* <i>Rodin</i>	1942	Artisans d'Art	R Lucot
<i>Rouen, naissance d'une cité</i>	1941	Célia-films	L Cuny
<i>La route de la soie</i>	1943	Ciné-Journal	
<i>RN7 à 3km à l'heure</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Routes mouvantes</i>	1942		
* <i>Rue Bonaparte</i>	1943	Artisans d'Art	R Ginet
<i>Le rugby</i>	1942	Film Art	Thiéry
<i>Saint-Véran - le village endormi</i>	1943	Atlantic	Verdier
<i>Les santons</i>	1943		
<i>Sapeurs-pompiers de Paris</i>	1944		

<i>Le savetier et le financier</i>	1941	MAIC	Delafosse
<i>Savez-vous: maregraphe, lapins et bicyclettes</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Savez-vous: nouste Henric</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Savez-vous: papiers huitres, école de tulle</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Scènes de la vie des métallurgistes</i>	1943		
<i>Les secrets de la pêche à la ligne</i>	1943	Pathé	R Chanas
<i>Secrets de Monaco</i>	1943		
<i>Senteurs de France</i>	1942	Verdet-Kléber	
<i>S'évader (les Parisiens en vacances)</i>	1941	-C Bernard	
<i>Siècle de Paris</i>	1944	SFEC Sarda	M Théry
<i>Signalisations</i>	1944	France en Marche	Tedesco
<i>Sillons d'Afrique</i>	1943		
<i>Singeries</i>	1941	Selb-Film-Production	Gourguet
<i>Sisteron</i>	1941	Duvivier	
<i>Si tu aimes la rivière...</i>	1943		
<i>Sixième dernière</i>			
<i>Le soleil et les fêtes solaires</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	H Missir & J Leclerc
* <i>Solesmes</i>	1942	Pathé P Harts	
<i>Sondeurs d'abîmes</i>	1944	Ichac	
<i>Sortilège exotique</i>	1943		Chaumel- Gentil
<i>Souffleurs de verre</i>	1943	Ciné-Journal	
<i>Sourcellerie et radiesthésie</i>	1943		
<i>Les sources de la ville</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>Sources noires/sous la croix du sud</i>	1941		
<i>Sous le chapiteau</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	Missir
* <i>Soyons polis</i>	1941	Lallier	Lallier
<i>Le sport à l'école</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Sport 42</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	Missir
* <i>Sports de glace</i>	1944	AAC	H Caurier
<i>Sports nautiques</i>	1942	L Rigieux	Rigieux
* <i>Style Henri IV et Louis XII</i>	1942	Sirius	
<i>Style Louis XIV</i>	1942	Sirius	
<i>Style Louis XV</i>	1942	Sirius	
<i>Suez</i>	1943		
<i>Les surprises de la vie</i>	1944	CATJC	
<i>Sur la route transaharienne</i>	1941	Mineur	Théry
<i>Sur la voie d'eau</i>	1944	SDAC	Schiltz
<i>Sur les chemins de Lamartine</i>	1942	Films de France	Tedesco
<i>Sur un air d'autrefois</i>	1942	Sirius	Perdrix

<i>Sur un air de Sardane</i>	HC	Continental	
<i>Symphonie de minuit</i>	1942	M Gascoin	Zoubowitch
<i>Symphonie en blanc et la Danse immortelle</i>	1942	Pathé	Théry
<i>Symphonie gustative</i>	1941		
<i>Symphonie montagnarde</i>	1941	Mineur	De Fort-Bacourt
<i>Les tableaux de la rue</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	Cerrutti
<i>Tapisseries de la France</i>			
<i>Taureaux de combat</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>*La télévision</i>	1942	Films de France	R Peguy
<i>Le téléphone automatique</i>	1942	Atlantic	De Hubsch
<i>Telles qu'elles sont faites</i>	1943	Ciné-Journal	
<i>Terre qui renaît</i>	1942	Bennett	Bennett
<i>Terres du sud</i>			
<i>Terres fécondes</i>	1944	Pathé	Théry
<i>Terres fidèles</i>	1942	France en Marche	
<i>Terres vermeilles</i>	1941	Optimax	Raymond-Millet
<i>Textiles</i>			
<i>Thiers capitale des couteliers</i>	1941		Kalfleisch
<i>* Le timbre poste</i>	1942	AAC	J Vallée
<i>Trotteurs</i>	1942		
<i>* Le tonnelier</i>	1943	Lallier	Rouquier
<i>Le tortillard</i>	1942	Atlantic	Mahuzier
<i>* Toujours prêt (Guides de montagne)</i>	1942	Sirius	Delafosse
<i>Toujours plus haut</i>	1944	Sirius	Delafosse
<i>Toulouse connue et inconnue</i>	1944	Optimax	R Millet
<i>Tournois régionaux</i>	1943	Ciné-Reportages	Missir
<i>Tous petits de la ferme</i>	1944	De Cavaignac	
<i>Traditions basques</i>	1942	Discina	Lepage
<i>* La transmission des idées</i>	1943	Films de France	Maudru
<i>Travail et grand air</i>			
<i>Travailleurs de France</i>	1944	Griboff	Morvan
<i>30 jours dans les nuages</i>	1942	Pathé	Brive & Chanas
<i>* Trésor français</i>	1943	Films du Compas	
<i>Trois chansons, trois époques</i>	1942	Sirius	Perdrix
<i>Trois kilomètres de France</i>	1944	J-C Bernard	Mahuzier
<i>La tuberculose, ses causes, ses lésions</i>	1944		



<i>* Les ultra-sons</i>	1942	AAC	Thevenard
<i>Un an de guerre dans le Pacifique</i>	1943		
<i>Un an de Révolution Nationale</i>	1941		
<i>Un miracle quotidien</i>	1941	Compagnie Générale Cinématographique	Griboff
<i>Un visage cent visages</i>	1942	Films de France	De Fort Bacourt
<i>Urgent sérum</i>	1942	Ciné-Journal	
<i>Le vaisseau amiral</i>	1941	France en Marche	
<i>La Vallée d'Argens</i>	1944	Films de France	Maudru
<i>Le Varon</i>	1942	Pathé	P Harts
<i>Veillons sur l'enfance</i>	1942	Discina	Hervouin
<i>Le verre</i>	1943		
<i>Verre et lumière</i>	1942	Ciné-Journal	
<i>La vie au préventorium</i>	1941	Discina	Lepage
<i>La vie au ralenti</i>	1943	De Gioanni	De Gioanni
<i>La vie de la ruche</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>* Vieilles places de Paris</i>	1943	Artisans d'Art	Rigaux
<i>Les vieux moulins</i>			
<i>* La vie mystérieuse de la matière</i>	1944	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>La vie secrète des visages</i>	1944	Films de France	Guyot
<i>Villes bleues</i>	1942	Melodium	Monod-Herzen
<i>20 ans d'amitié avec les bêtes</i>			
<i>Violons d'Ingres</i>			
<i>Visite à l'Afrique noire</i>	1942		
<i>Vision saharienne</i>	1941		
<i>Vive la mariée!</i>	1943	Société Alcyna	Decharme
<i>Vive la natation!</i>	1942	Compagnie Générale Cinématographique	Griboff
<i>Vivre</i>	1943	Atlantic	Gillet
<i>Voie impériale</i>	1943	Société Alcyna	Decharme
<i>La voile</i>	1944	Aurore	Brunet
<i>La voix humaine</i>	1942	Film Art	Tavano
<i>Voyage au pays du cuir</i>	1943	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix
<i>Voyage autour d'un tapis</i>	1942	Ciné-Reportages	Missir
<i>Voyage dans l'infini</i>	1942	Je Vois Tout	De Roubaix

Compiled from: *Brochure du Premier Congrès du Film Documentaire*  
Archives Nationales, Paris, F42/114 and F42/132  
*Le Nouveau Film*, January 1943