

FILM

## Godard's 'Film Socialisme'

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Jean-Luc Godard's "Film Socialisme" (France-Switzerland, French, 2010, colour, 102 mins) presents a vision of history, following a large passenger ship on a cruise on the Mediterranean, touching Alger, Alexandria, Hajja, Naples, and Barcelona, making a detour on Odessa. Parrots on a tree branch, sharp bustling sounds and sea waves in dark hues lead to a discussion on money, with off screen guffaws and conversation. There are suggestions to allow the money to fall in a public state. A dark coloured girl (Catherine Tanvier) appears, and somebody remarks : "End of house and whatever one has written". The first movement of the film, "Des choses comme ca- Such things" is set aboard the ocean liner, of passengers dancing, eating, gambling and even receiving communion. The pleasure cruise has diverse characters including an ageing war criminal, a former UN official and a Russian detective. The sound of the wind on deck is shrill, reducing conversation to a hush. The wind is forceful upsetting hair-dos and jackets. The sea water is thick and black, like petrol. The camera pierces oceanic fluids to observe the movement of fishes. Between wind and the sea, the ship's passengers are dispersed on deck viewpoints and dance floors. An audi-visual commentary accompanies a man with a phone. Interior stair cases lead to the interior cabin rooms. People are eating at tables in the dining halls. Sun rise appears on the sea horizon. Many of the silhouettes are recurring.

People dance on the dance floors. Outside on the deck it is raining. Women swim in deck pools. Some women jog on deck. It is difficult to discern American, nor French, nor Jewish working men. A grey haired man chases a young boy on the deck stair case. A man holds an Olympus camera. A big screen delivers lessons on aerobatics and swimming. The sea bed is full of fishes. Everybody feels that there is no God. Old Patti Smith is with a girl in a ship's cabin. The girl is in bed with a laptop computer. The PC screens displays cats. Aircrafts appear on the sky. Bombs drop. Some aircrafts are shot down. A Russian tells a girl that he is a friend of the sailor. A harbour, with buildings and small boats, comes in view. People dine at tables. A seminar continues on creation of fear, and creation of terror. There are references to Communist archives in Moscow. It is night at the harbour, with lights on shore, and on ships. A girl sings Bob Dylan's "Written on the wind", with the reflections of light on the sea water. The dark girl walks with the man on deck. There are curiosities: 'Light is for what? For obscurity.'

Television channels display commerce. What happened to the Bank of Palestine, before the Britishers left? A cabin window encapsulates the sun, setting on the seas. An off-screen voice notes that one cannot compare things which are comparable - one could compare things incomparable. Thoughts on Stalin and Hitler end abruptly. The comedy is of no utility. Before invasion of Moscow, Napoleon had initiated the theatre 'Comedy Francaise' in Paris. A girl sighs that she did not wish to die, before seeing Europe happy. People crowd the swimming pool. Children swim with elders. There are TV images of violence by Muslims. Part of a tree bark is floating in the waves. A little boy and a girl play with a ball. As the ship cuts through waves, a Muslim girl cries; "Hey Allah!". Egypt brings red hues on water. Pyramids and statuettes of Pharaohs glide by. Casablanca, Alger and Morocco are caught in the frames. A girl mumbles "To be or not to be a Jew?"

The gales continue. An auditorium with a speaker, has empty chairs and no audience. Readings are to be put in reality. The dark girl reads from books at a the dining table, and poses a matrix. A descending glass lift brings movements to examine reality. Movements can be destructive or creative. References to Louis Aragon's poetry reverabate in Palestine and Britain. An Arab girl reads a postcard from Palestine. The ship is at sea. Stills from Eisenstein's films bring in Odessa. 'Helas-alas' is transcribed as 'Hell as'. Fishes swim in sea bed. A waitress prepares drinks in the bright sunlight of the deck. Dusk

brings dark and flickering lights. The defeat of the Germans in WWI became an insignia for the Nazis. Years later people topple from walls. There is a book of research on the human ego. Somebody mentions Spanish law. Spirits, between materials, perceive from nutrition. On deck, a hand with camera, photos a girl in dance poses. Naples brings pondering for desert and paintings in museums. There have been battles at sea. Children and adults dance. There are paintings in private galleries. German paintings are passionate. In a cinema hall, everyaay looks in the same direction. People pose for group photos. There is bull fighting in Barcelona.

Children raise serious questions in the second movement "Quo Vadis Europa-Notre Europe (Our Europe)". Since 1951, there has been war all around. Why do you not love us? Nightmares and anger bring discussions on liberty, equality and fraternity. A sheep is tied to a petrol filling station. A middle aged girl sits inside her house, with cars moving outside. At the Agrola petrol pump station, Bush and Balzac cross the mind. Tea is served to a woman. There is a shadow of a turning fan on the wall. A girl keeps taking notes. Children are not authorized to vote at local elections in France. A red car is parked on roadside. A man films a girl with hand held camera. A little girls sports a T-shirt with 'CCCP and sycle'. A boy sleeps on a bench. A girl strolls in a room with glass panels, by the sea side. Humanity confronts problems without solutions. Revolution rests with fraternity. A girl is in a room with machine tools. Images glide over TV serials, mathematics and the dark girl, Flo, with a camera, in a red car. Europe is of the French writer, German musician and the Italian writer. Programmes of trade Unions veer on power, society and flour. A black donkey remains indifferent. Orthodox chants resound on the sound track. An old man on a sofa, with a middle aged girl, retells 1789.

The cruise ship, Costa Serena, travels to Egypt, Palestine, Odessa, Hellas, Naples and Barcelona in the final movement "Nos humanites-Our humanities". Individual and law find prominence. A young girl is affectionate for a woman washing clothes. The camera pans along the interiors of a house, with rooms, toilet and wash basin. The dark girl brushes her teeth. There is reason in government at fault, and hope to read. The frontier remains an ancient parody. The black donkey is tied to a staircase in the compound. The question of what do you think arises from the inner portions of the wheels of a watch. A priest, friar Regio says "You are about to see again." The Council of State remains a small domain in the south of France. Everyone is earning. Resistance and fear come from Toulouse. 'Our humanity' encompasses liberation and federation. Egypt, Odessa, Pasadena and Naples glide by. Egyptian sculptures and black slaves comprise Islam in the west. Sunrise focuses arte-facts on sand, reptiles, athletes and women with black burkhas. Title cards written in Arabic glide. An old box camera clicks. Palestine of 1935 is barbed wires on sea shore. Arab girls dance in Jerusalem of 1926. Paintings are displayed in New York. It is impossible to disassociate sound from sense. There is a trapeze at a sea shore. Fast images fade in slow motion, of land against the sky. Jews in Jerusalem vow vengeance against Jesus Christ. Chaplin plays the violin, and there are stock shots of Odessa. A man clicks photos and the band plays, as passengers get off the ship. Costumed women and a white owl greet. The Odessa steps return with firings and dead bodies. People wave goodbye to the sailing ship at port. There are black and white images of sailing boats. Greek letters intersperse, with 'Helas' as 'Hell as'. Democracy and Tragedy are married, with a single infant-civil war. There are period cinema and war soldiers. Thoughts arise on Racine's 'Principles of Tragedy'. War and death cannot be prevented. One cannot prove God's plan. Attention is lifted to a typewriter in Naples. There are structures more profound than life. Images of battleships, firings, Nazi tanks, and 1943, herald liberation by USA. Commerce, prostitution and treason step in. The reality of images stretches to Barcelona, death of Stalin, the victory of Franco in Spain, and Indo-China. A necklace lies on a table. Title card 'No comment' is followed by blank screen. Godard bids farewell to language in "Film Socialisme", made in collaboration with 'direction committee', including Anne-Marie Mieville. The film juxtaposes visuals to a dense collage of sometimes audible texts of Beckett, Derrida, Pirandello and Goethe. Vibrant HD photography accompanies a Mediterranean cruise ship, in compiling an elusive flow of images on the Middle East, geometry, You Tube, the history and future of Europe, and past sites of cinema. Europe was once liberated only to become dependent. The images of the serene sea, the yellow and blue of the ship, the old man Patti Smith and a young girl Lenny Kaye are slapped

with the velocity of the winds at sea, as the film sails from destination to destination. With the alteration of day and night, light and obscurity, Godard's critical fiction shifts from the Mediterranean sea, to the Martin family in France at the petrol station, where children join discussions on Canton elections, to certain moments of the 20th century. "Film Socialisme" was screened at IFFI Goa (Nov/Dec 2010). □□□