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From a National, Realist and Critical Cinema Towards a Third Cinema: *It was in the air.*

Abstract: This paper explores the formation of Third Cinema within the framework of Marxist theory, tracing its ideological and aesthetic lineage from post-war Italian Neorealism through the emergence of New Latin American Cinema. Beginning with key samples such as *Ladri di Biciclette* (1948), *El mégano* (1954), and *Tire dié* (1958), the study examines the contributions of foundational figures including Fernando Birri, Julio García Espinosa, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, and Ruy Guerra. Particular attention is given to *La hora de los hornos* (1968) and the seminal manifesto *Towards a Third Cinema* (1969), contextualized through earlier critical texts such as *Cinema and Underdevelopment* (1962) and *The Aesthetics of Hunger* (1965). Anchored in the socio-political conditions of 1960s Argentina, the study argues that Solanas and Getino synthesized pre-existing cinematic theories and practices into a coherent structure with their formulation of Third Cinema, while highlighting their unique ideas.

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1. Introduction

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino introduced Third Cinema (along with First Cinema and Second Cinema) to the world in 1969 by writing a manifesto entitled "Towards a Third Cinema". This manifesto, which I define as the theory of Third Cinema, was prepared with the experiences during the production and exhibition periods of their film, *La hora de los hornos* (1968) in mind, which I define as the practice of Third Cinema. Although the film and the manifesto are justifiably and famously known as the fundamental sources of Third Cinema, its background is not addressed clearly enough. In this article, I return to the 1950s to examine the process that formed Third Cinema and argue that the beginning was (Italian neo)realism, related to Marxist aesthetics. I evaluate this process through filmmakers, films, and manifestos in particular, in view of the importance of manifestos in the formation of this cinema. I then argue that, by the end of this process, Solanas and Getino had developed and clarified the outlines of an existing idea of cinema through the film and the manifesto.

Italian neorealism, initially emerging in the second half of the Second World War, rejected its predecessors' conceptions of cinema and defended reality as both form and content. Its lifespan extended more than a decade, but in the ensuing years, it has continued to wield great influence on generations of aspiring filmmakers, both in Italy and abroad.[1] This influence can be detected in films in Europe (especially in the French and British New Waves), India, the USA, and Latin America, the latter of which is one of the main subjects of this article.

2. Unhidden Figures

In the 1950s, the Argentine Fernando Birri and Cubans Julio Garcia Espinosa and Tomas Gutierrez Alea studied film at the *Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia* (The Experimental Film Center) in Rome, while the Brazilians Nelson Pereira dos Santos and Ruy Guerra were studying film at the *Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques* (The Institute for Advanced Cinematographic Studies) in Paris.[2] They would later become the leading directors of the New Latin American Cinema, which could be considered the direct antecedent of Third Cinema. Along with this starting point, there were other reasons that neorealism greatly influenced the New Latin American Cinema. Upon their return to their home countries, they encountered a similar "enemy" (Hollywood dominance) and realistic filmmaking was their only option for dealing with this "enemy," which included documentary-style shooting, natural dialogue and language, non-professional actors, natural

1 See Hayward 2006: 228, Nowell-Smith 2013: 43.
2 See Armes 1987: 80–81.

lighting, real spaces, and portable cameras.[3] Most of the neorealistic filmmakers belonged to an urban middle-class and tended to juxtapose the reality and poverty of the people against power.[4] Those aforementioned directors also had a similar social position and to show the reality and poverty of the people was necessary for them, but not enough; they needed more than that in their countries' struggles for national independence. Keeping anti-colonialism in mind, I focus on the Marxist part in this paper.

3. Marxism

Marxism is an ideology based mainly on the interpretations of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The core of Marxism is the historical materialism which takes history as the relationships between powers of production, relations of production, and the superstructure.[5] The development of the productive forces provides the formation of relations of production, and these relations of production form the economic structure of the society in which superstructures such as laws, politics, religion, morality, and so on arise. Capital, in the existing structure,

> *also developed into a coercive relation, and this compels the working class to do more work than would be required by the narrow circle of its own needs. As an agent in producing the activity of others, as an extractor of surplus labour and an exploiter of labour-power, it surpasses all earlier systems of production, which were based on directly compulsory labour, in its energy and its quality of unbounded and ruthless activity.*[6]

And the bourgeoisie:

> has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.'[7]

According to Marxism, liberation is only possible with the proletariat and this is already written in history:

> Since the abstraction of all humanity, even of the semblance of humanity, is practically complete in the full-grown proletariat; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in all their inhuman acuity; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative need—that practical expression of necessity—is driven directly to revolt against that inhumanity; it follows that the proletariat can and must free itself. But it cannot free itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own

3 See Hayward 2006: 228.
4 See Armes 1987: 82.
5 See Marx 1904:11–12.
6 See Marx 1976: 424–425.
7 See Marx & Engels 1988: 211.

> situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of labour. The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. The question is what the proletariat is, and what, consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today.[8]

As the forces of production, the proletariat will become conscious and play a leading role in the overthrow of capitalism and the coming of communism. Because communism:

> as fuly-developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fuly-developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.[9]

In this context, as a part of this world view, I define Marxist aesthetics, in general, as the characteristics that serve this 'expected' end. Although there is not any direct writing of Marx or Engels related to aesthetics in films, through their comments on art and specifically literary works, it is known what Marxist aesthetics has to be. I am going to refer to them while looking at the similarities and especially the political differences between Italian neorealism and New Latin American Cinema through the classics of these two cinemas.

4. Classic Films

The films I discuss are the fictional *Bicycle Thieves* (*Ladri di Biciclette*, 1948) from Italian neorealism and from New Latin American Cinema, the semi-documentary *El mégano* (1954) from Cuba and the documentary *Throw Me a Dime* (*Tire dié*, 1958) from Argentina. All three films focus on a specific community (respectively family, village, and neighborhood) through parents and their children, presenting slices of the lives of the working class, however, what the films have to say is actually relevant to the whole of each respective country. All three films have all of the above-mentioned Italian neorealism content and format features (*Throw Me a Dime* even lacks basic sound equipment, as almost all of the dialogue has been dubbed; audiences may notice the original voices in the background). Mostly from Engels' comments, it is known that realism is an important part of Marxism.[10] The aim is to reflect life as it is, with the details, the political and social conditions, in an objective way, because realism has the power to make the audience conscious and active, by showing and informing them.

8 See Marx 1956: 52–53.
9 See Marx & Engels 1988: 102–103.
10 See Marx & Engels 1973: 105, 109, 113–116.

Considering the other aspects of Marxist aesthetics, the last two films have more of these than the first. Although the directors of *El mégano* and *Throw Me a Dime* appear to be Espinosa and Birri, there were collective production processes; Espinosa shot the film with Alea, Alfredo Guevara, and Jose Massip, while Birri worked with his students from the documentary film school. *Bicycle Thieves* powerfully depicts the lives and struggles of the working class in poverty. In the other two films, however, one might feel negatively toward anyone who isn't poor due to the information presented about the causes of poverty. *Throw Me a Dime* opens with a sequence in which the audience is informed by the narrative voiceover of the potential/richness of the city. The camera then lands in the neighborhood where the inhabitants are all poor people, and one of them, a man, says he wants to work as long as they are not being exploited, adding, "we, the ones who built the tallest buildings in the city, can't even build a shack for ourselves."[11] Towards the end of the movie, a passenger on the train, whom I think is bourgeois, describes the misery he is watching from the window and states that these people are in this situation because they do not want to work. Without these three aspects, I would describe the film as a documentary lacking the political and revolutionary impetus of Third Cinema. In *El mégano*, this bias is clearer: there is a reaction against injustice and inequality. The 'main' characters are the miner protagonist, who is conscious of and tries to inform and organize his friends to address the source of this poverty; the landowner, who symbolizes exploitation; and the bourgeoisie as tourists who visit the harsh living conditions of the workers. While the miner character is about to organize his fellow workers against the landowner and make an attempt to protest, he receives news that his house is on fire and he has to leave. The movie ends before the attempt is completed.

Considering *Throw Me a Dime* and *El mégano* in that order, an exact progress on the basis of realism is clear: they mention the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the capitalist economy in general. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental shortcoming in both: One cannot see any action. The narratives never reach the point of the exploited confronting the exploiter, whether or not it might be successful. This is where *La hora de los hornos* (1968), a 'sequel' to these two films, and also the practice of Third Cinema, comes in.

La hora de los hornos was secretly filmed over three years between 1966 and 1968 when Argentina was under a military dictatorship.[12] It was smuggled to Italy for processing and was secretly watched for five years, until 1973, when a more sympathetic (Peronist) regime came to power.[13] The film was made by *Grupo Cine Liberación* (The Liberation Film Group), of which Solanas and Getino were in the center.[14] The film crew, consisting of Solanas (operating a 16 mm camera), Getino (sound), a director of photography, and a young assistant, traveled about 18.000 km

11 Tire dié: 00:09:48–00:09.53
12 See Nowell-Smith 2013: 332–333.
13 See Hayward 2006: 414.
14 See Chapman 2003: 45.

around Argentina.[15] Solanas' and Getino's ideas about the project changed during the shooting process.[16] Their first idea, as they came from the traditional European, left-wing part of Argentina, was to prepare a short documentary about the working class of the country. However, the production process brought them closer to the Peronist left and changed their minds about the project. I consider this change to be quite critical for the formation of Third Cinema and return to this later. In the film's credits, the filmmakers thank the peasants, workers, students, intellectuals, and revolutionaries for their contributions. And it is written that the film is neo-colonialism and violence in Argentina and Latin America, not about Cuba, because it is seen as the first free country in America. They dedicate the film to Che Guevara and to those who lost their lives in the struggle for Latin America's liberation.

La hora de los hornos runs for nearly four hours and contains three parts. In "New Colonialism and Violence" are information and images (including from *Throw Me a Dime*) about the social, political, and cultural history of Argentina. The second chapter, "The Action of Liberation", which is dedicated to "the Peronist proletariat" that established "the national consciousness of Argentina" calls for unity and solidarity against the imperialist powers among the peoples of Latin America, Africa, and Asia under the name of the Third World. The third section, "Violence and Liberation" opens with Che Guevara's and Jean-Paul Sartre's words on death and violence, and is dedicated to "the new humans who are born during the war of liberation."[17]

The film is free-form and different camera, light, and sound styles are employed, but when considering the film with the three main parts, it emerges as a complete entity. The use of images from different sources and sound oeuvres reveals the weight of the documentary film technique. Moreover, the visual and audio elements which are used to include the audience in the film as well as in history, together with the events and the conversations in the screening process, extend the content of the documentary.

One of the essential features of the film *La hora de los hornos* is the 'active' role of the audience, which would become one of the indispensable features of the Third Cinema, a fact that is mentioned in the Solanas and Getino's manifesto. In the film, questions appear on the screen: "Why did Peron leave power?", "How was the government which took two-thirds of the people's votes overthrown without a fight?", and "How can you initiate a dialogue with the enemy whose mission is to destroy us?", all of which demand audiences' engagement. Along with the direct questions, pictures, songs, and images are all employed to encourage the audiences/participants to think about and, hopefully, discuss the film's subject matter.

Because of its contrarian position and revolutionary purposes, the production, distribution, and screening of *La hora de los hornos* were in danger during the period

15 See Barnard 1996: 44.

16 See Shohat & Stam 2014: 261–262.

17 La hora de los hornos: 03:19:15-03:19:45

of its creation. Presence at one of the film's screenings was considered a political act, but this was not enough for the directors. The film wanted to encourage audience 'participation,' to impel them to act by using violence if needed. Audiences/participants who took action after watching the film were also seen as its heroes. In this regard, another important feature of the film is that it refuses to end: in the last part, "Argentina Today," the film speaks directly to the audiences, who are referred to as the main protagonists in creating their own revolutions. Through text on a black background devoid of any images, the film is left open for testimonies, letters, and comments. The *real* work, the film's creators are saying, will be performed after this experience. Solanas and Getino once again refer to this essential aspect of Third Cinema in the manifesto, evaluated and compared with other manifestos in the following section.

5. Classic Manifestos

"Towards a Third Cinema,"[18] often referred to by those versed in the movement as simply "the manifesto," is subtitled "Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World." The authors introduce and describe the terms "First Cinema" and "Second Cinema" in defining their neologism "Third Cinema," doing so within the framework of the different experiences in processes of production, distribution, and screening of their film, *La hora de los hornos*. I argue that the content of the manifesto has an eclectic nature; the themes previously shared in Birri's 1962 manifesto "Cinema and Underdevelopment"[19] and Glauber Rocha's 1965 manifesto "The Aesthetics of Hunger"[20] are also present here, and form some of its main points.[21]

Solanas and Getino open their manifesto with Frantz Fanon's words:

"we must discuss, we must invent."[22]

And further state that:

> The man of the third cinema, be it guerrilla cinema or a film act, with the infinite categories that they contain […], above all counters the film industry of a cinema of characters with one of themes, that of individuals with that of masses, that of the author with that of the operative group, one of neocolonial misinformation with one of information, one of escape with one that recaptures the truth, that of passivity with that of aggressions. To an institutionalised cinema, it counterposes a guerrilla cinema; to movies as shows, it opposes a film act or action; to a cinema of destruction, one that is both destructive and constructive; to a cinema made for

18 See Solanas & Getino 2014.
19 See Birri 2014.
20 See Rocha 2014.
21 I do not take Espinosa's manifesto, "For an Imperfect Cinema," into comparison for being published in the same year with "Towards a Third Cinema" in 1969.
22 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 230.

> the old kind of human being, for them, it opposes a cinema fit for a new kind of human being, for what each one of us has the possibility of becoming.[23]

In many parts of the manifesto, they refer to the scope as Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The same themes appear in Birri's and Rocha's manifestos. Birri, in the beginning of his manifesto, replies to the question of what cinema in Argentina and Latin America at large needs with:

> A cinema which develops them, […] brings them consciousness, which awakens consciousness; which clarifies matters; which strengthens the revolutionary consciousness of those among them who already possess this; which fires them; which disturbs, worries, shocks and weakens those who have a "bad conscience," a reactionary consciousness; […] which is authentic; which is anti-oligarchic and anti-bourgeois at the national level, and anti-colonial and anti-imperialist at the international level […] Our purpose is to create a new person, a new society, a new history and therefore a new art and a new cinema. Urgently.[24]

Rocha says that:

> Cinema Novo cannot develop effectively while it remains marginal to the economic and cultural processes of the Latin American continent. Because the New Cinema is a phenomenon belonging to new peoples everywhere and not a privileged entity of Brazil. Wherever there is a film-maker prepared to film the truth and to oppose the hypocrisy and repression of intellectual censorship, there will be the living spirit of Cinema Novo. Wherever there is a film-maker prepared to stand up against commercialism, exploitation, pornography and the tyranny of technique, there is to be found the living spirit of Cinema Novo. [...] There will be the living which sets Cinema Novo apart from the commercial industry because the commitment of industrial cinema is to untruth and exploitation.[25]

For Solanas and Getino, it's clear who benefits from a particular thought or cinema:

> Any attempt, no matter how virulent, which does not serve to mobilise, agitate, and politicise sectors of the people, to arm them rationally and perceptibly, in one way or another, for the struggle—is received with indifference or even with pleasure by the capitalist system. [...] Our time is one of hypothesis rather than of thesis, a time of works in progress—unfinished, unordered, violent works made with the camera in one hand and a rock in the other.[26]

Rocha is also clear about the necessity of the violence:

> Cinema Novo teaches that the aesthetics of violence are revolutionary rather than primitive. The moment of violence is the moment when the coloniser becomes aware of the existence of the colonised. Only when he is confronted with violence can the coloniser understand, through horror, the strength of the culture he

23 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 249.
24 See Birri (2014): 211.
25 See Rocha (2014): 219
26 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 243.

> exploits. As long as he does not take up arms, the colonised man remains a slave. The first policeman had to die before the French became aware of the Algerians.[27]

Birri writes about the cinema of the system and the cinema to be used against it:

> those who are consciously or unconsciously in favour of the existing order of things, no problem arises. The superstructure keeps them, pampers them, and gives them official credits, prizes, national exhibition, 'Argentinian Film Weeks' abroad, international festivals, travel as representatives of national culture, and press coverage of their triumphs and supposed triumphs. […] The cinema of our countries shares the same general characteristics of this superstructure, of this kind of society, and presents us with a false image of both society and our people. Indeed, it presents no real image of our people at all, but conceals them. So, the first positive step is to provide such an image. This is the first function of documentary. [...] How can documentary provide this image? By showing how reality is, and in no other way. […] As the other side of the coin of this 'negation,' realist cinema also affirms the positive values in our societies: the people's values. Their reserves of strength, their labours, their joys, their struggle, their dreams. The result—and motivation—of social documentary and realist cinema? Knowledge and consciousness; we repeat: the awakening of the consciousness of reality. The posing of problems. Change: from sub-life to life. Conclusion: to confront reality with a camera and to document it, filming realistically, filming critically, filming underdevelopment with the optic of the people. For the alternative, a cinema which makes itself the accomplice of underdevelopment, is sub-cinema.[28]

These lines are quite critical because later they will be seeing these as aspects of mostly First and Third Cinema, but also Second Cinema. Solanas and Getino first define First Cinema:

> The placing of the cinema within US models, even in the formal aspect, in language, leads to the adoption of the ideological forms that gave rise to precisely that language and no other. Even the appropriation of models which appear to be only technical, industrial, scientific, etc., leads to a conceptual dependency, due to the fact that the cinema is an industry, but differs from other industries in that it has been created and organised in order to generate certain ideologies. The 35mm camera, 24 frames per second, arc lights, and a commercial place of exhibition for audiences were conceived not to gratuitously transmit any ideology, but to satisfy, in the first place, the cultural and surplus value needs of a specific ideology, of a specific world-view: that of US finance capital.[29]

And then Second and Third Cinema:

> The first alternative to this type of cinema, which we could call the first cinema, arose with the so-called 'author's cinema,' 'expression cinema,' 'nouvelle vague,' 'cinema novo,' or, conventionally, the second cinema. This alternative signified a step forward inasmuch as it demanded that the filmmaker be free to express

27 See Rocha (2014): 219

28 See Birri (2014): 213.

29 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 237.

> himself in non-standard language and inasmuch as it was an attempt at cultural decolonisation. But such attempts have already reached, or are about to reach, the outer limits of what the system permits. […] Real alternatives differing from those offered by the System are only possible if one of two requirements is fulfilled: making films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System. Neither of these requirements fits within the alternatives that are still offered by the second cinema, but they can be found in the revolutionary opening towards a cinema outside and against the System, in a cinema of liberation: the third cinema. […] The cinema known as documentary, with all the vastness that the concept has today, from educational films to the reconstruction of a fact or a historical event, is perhaps the main basis of revolutionary filmmaking. Every image that documents, bears witness to, refutes or deepens the truth of a situation is something more than a film image or purely artistic fact; it becomes something which the System finds indigestible. […] There is no knowledge of a reality as long as that reality is not acted upon, as long as its transformation is not begun on all fronts of struggle. The well-known quote from Marx deserves constant repetition: it is not sufficient to interpret the world; it is now a question of transforming it.[30]

And lastly, in his manifesto Birri emphasizes the importance of distribution:

> The moment has come not only to oblige the 'commercial' circuits to carry national films, but also to set up 'independent' circuits in trade unions, schools, neighbourhood associations, sports centres and in the countryside through mobile projection units. A circuit based in existing grass-roots organisations, where films can be shown which, because they are openly didactic (or documentary) or ideologically progressive, come up against the greatest resistance from 'commercial' distributors and exhibitors.[31]

Solanas and Getino also write that the distribution process should take into account the difficult conditions of censorship and repression on the continent and create alternative distribution methods:

> In some places it will be possible to build infrastructures connected to political, student, worker, and other organisations, while in others it will be more suitable to sell prints to organisations which will take charge of obtaining the funds necessary to pay for each print (the cost of the print plus a small margin). This method, wherever possible, would appear to be the most viable, because it permits the decentralisation of distribution; makes possible a more profound political use of the film; and permits the recovery, through the sale of more prints, of the funds invested in the production.[32]

In addition to all these shared Marxist aesthetics values in the manifestos, "Towards a Third Cinema" has a uniqueness; the film act:

30 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 238.
31 See Birri (2014): 216.
32 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 246.

> Before and during the making of La hora de los hornos we tried out various methods for the distribution of revolutionary cinema—the little that we had made up to then. Each showing for militants, middle-level cadres, activists, workers, and university students became—without our having set ourselves this aim beforehand—a kind of enlarged cell meeting of which the films were a part but not the most important factor. We thus discovered a new facet of cinema: the participation of people who, until then, were considered spectators.
>
> At times, security reasons obliged us to try to dissolve the group of participants as soon as the showing was over, and we realised that the distribution of that kind of film had little meaning if it was not complemented by the participation of the comrades, if a debate was not opened on the themes suggested by the films.
>
> We also discovered that every comrade who attended such showings did so with full awareness that he was infringing the System's laws and exposing his personal security to eventual repression. This person was no longer a spectator; on the contrary, from the moment he decided to attend the showing, from the moment he lined himself up on this side by taking risks and contributing his living experience to the meeting, he became an actor, a more important protagonist than those who appeared in the films. […]
>
> We concluded from these data that a film could be much more effective if it were fully aware of these factors and took on the task of subordinating its own form, structure, language, and propositions to that act and to those actors—to put it another way, if it sought its own liberation in its subordination to and insertion in others, the principal protagonists of life. With the correct utilisation of the time that that group of actor-personages offered us with their diverse histories, the use of the space offered by certain comrades, and of the films themselves, it was necessary to try to transform time, energy, and work into freedom-giving energy. In this way the idea began to grow of structuring what we decided to call the film act, the film action, one of the forms which we believe assumes great importance in affirming the line of a third cinema. A cinema whose first experiment is to be found, perhaps on a rather shaky level, in the second and third parts of La hora de los hornos. […]
>
> The film act means an open-ended film; it is essentially a way of learning.[33]

This 'invention' made by Solanas and Getino is what makes Third Cinema different from the similar cinemas, and special. The key sentence in the aforementioned definition, I argue, is the following:

"we realised that the distribution of that kind of film had little meaning if it was not complemented by the participation of the comrades, if a debate was not opened on the themes suggested by the films."[34]

They say that watching a nearly four-hour film which was made in two years is not influential enough if there is not any discussion afterwards on the content. This is also what makes Third Cinema Marxist: in Marxism, the theory and the practice

33 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 247–248.
34 See Solanas & Getino (2014): 247.

need each other, the one is not very effective without the other. Action is needed to transform, to do more than interpret. As Marx states:

> Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy [...] Philosophy cannot be actualized without the abolition [Aufhebung] of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be abolished without the actualization of philosophy.[35]

6. Concluding Remarks

With his 1985 article, Birri, as both an Argentine and one of the leading directors of New Latin American Cinema, further clarifies the process this paper has traced. He states that New Latin American Cinema was born without any preliminary discussions or agreements with the aforementioned names (Espinosa, Alea, Guevara, Massip, dos Santos),

"but because it was in the air."[36]

It owes its birth to the questions that were in the minds of a generation of filmmakers growing up in different parts of Latin America at that moment. These questions are rooted in historical necessity related to the problems of the moment. Birri continues:

"What we did know was that in some ways this continent was so rich, so complex, so contradictory, so coarse, so exultant in other ways, that it was a continent that was not reflected in the images produced."[37]

Therefore, what they needed was reality; the best reality-capturing tool they had was Italian neorealism. Birri concludes:

> In this way, the theoretical postulate which accompanied our work was the call for a national, realist and critical cinema, but, additionally, it was intrinsically related to a fourth, the popular, which is to say, it tried to interpret, express and communicate with the people. […] This cinema, though it has to do above all with reality and has to intervene in the real in order to transform it, cannot do without the word poetic and the creative energy which the word contains. […] That is the new poetic-political cinema which is being produced in Latin America.[38]

Although Birri does not refer to Marxism explicitly, observing of exploitation and the use of realistic and critical cinema against it are essential features of Marxism.

Birri's statements illuminate the year(s) *Throw Me a Dime* (1958) was made, while *La hora de los hornos* was released in 1968. This is where Third Cinema differs from New Latin American Cinema, and this has to do with the sociopolitical situation of the country at the time. For Argentina the revolutionary process started in 1955, with

35 See Marx 1970: 142.
36 See Birri 1997: 95.
37 See Birri 1997: 96.
38 See Birri 1997: 97.

the military coup that overthrew President Juan Perón. The revolution succeeded in 1973 when the Peronist regime came to power; the thing *in the air*, the politicized atmosphere, was quite intense for the period of shooting *La hora de los hornos* in 1966-1968. As mentioned, Solanas and Getino changed their minds during the production process of the film and I suspect that this political intensity was the main reason besides the Cuban revolution of which they speak highly, in both the film and the manifesto. In those years, the poetic politicization was no longer enough, and there was a clear necessity to be more than critical; preparing audiences both literally and figuratively, and making them conscious and active to take the action, in short, using *all of* Marxism, both in theory and in practice, was the main goal. To this end, Solanas and Getino developed the existing cinematic practice and 'created' the cinema that would directly serve the revolution, the Third Cinema, and then advanced the existing ideas and manifestos, defining this cinema within a specific theoretical framework, along with the two others, First and Second Cinema.

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Filmography

El mégano. 1954, Julio García Espinosa, 25 min.
Ladri di Biciclette. 1948, Vittorio De Sica, 89 min.
La hora de los hornos. 1968, Fernando Solanas & Octavio Getino, 260 min.
Tire dié. 1958, Fernando Birri, 33 min.