

Our Amateur Cinema in *Nuestro cinema*

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Nuestro Cinema, which has occasionally published articles and news about amateur cinema and the rules for national and international amateur film competitions, will today inaugurate this section as a permanent supplement. As in other sections [of the journal], in this one dedicated to amateur cinema we will analyze all its problems and facts from an independent point of view and from an understanding of proletarian culture. In other words, we will give to the cinema – and to art in general – an eminently practical sense of direct assessment with the ideological content that each of its manifestations requires. We believe that we have made it sufficiently clear what we want and what we are fighting for so as to not need to repeat ourselves here.

Like mainstream cinema everywhere (with the fortunate exception of the Soviet Union), amateur film is the fief of the dominant classes. In Spain, a country with an underdeveloped economy, amateur film is presently inaccessible not only to the proletariat but even to the petit bourgeoisie. The fact that amateur film has made it into Iberia by way of Cataluña and that at present it is Cataluña (a much more economically developed area than the rest of Spain) that holds sway over almost all activity related to amateur cinema is very significant. This means that only Cataluña, where all classes have achieved a higher standard of living, has amateur cinema. This is, naturally, a decisive factor in the cultural and social evolution of humanity, and only Cataluña has been able to engage in concerted action and give a certain amplitude and a definite internationalism to its amateur filmmaking movement.

The classes that today have all the means of production in their hands call amateur cinema a “sport” because they cannot give it any other name. The same people who describe mainstream cinema as an element of culture that is spectacular or recreational (and rarely political and never an instrument or weapon of class, as the advanced proletariat would describe it) cannot give any other name to a cinematographic manifestation that, even if to a lesser degree, possesses all the characteristics of mainstream cinema including its striking lack of accessibility for the working classes. But the proletariat must not consider amateur cinema as anything but a weapon with which to fight the social and cultural battle that is being waged. For this very reason, the proletariat must do everything necessary to seize it and train itself in its use.

In isolation, a proletarian cannot acquire the requisite production and projection apparatuses for cinematographic activity. But since the amateur cinema is a necessary instrument for proletarian culture and its ongoing struggle, the proletariat that unites its efforts and savings to edit a newspaper, publish a book or create a common library, must exert itself one more time in order to acquire everything necessary for direct, decisive action in favor of amateur cinematography. In this sense, amateur cinema offers countless advantages over mainstream cinema. In the first place, the apparatuses are easy to use. Whether for production or projection, anyone can use them. But the most worthwhile thing is the savings represented by raw film stock, its developing, and projection. A regular projection room is often beyond the economic reach of an organization that wishes to use it. Between the film rental, the room and the costs of advertising, the budget for the meeting is almost always used up. An amateur film

apparatus can be installed anywhere – any room or meeting hall will do. The program, even if [the films] are rented, is infinitely cheaper and the results of the session in terms of artistry and spectacle are the same, even as the cost is much lower. This assumes that the program will use both amateur cinema's capacity for immediate representation and part of the offerings that film and equipment companies make available for the entertainment of wealthy families. And of course it should also take advantage of all those films that the censors have prohibited in the mainstream cinema but have reproduced as 8, 9.5, 16 and 17.5 millimeter films since at present amateur cinema is not censored. But the day when autonomous production ensures a national and international exchange of films and constitutes a repertoire that depicts the life and essential struggles of the proletariat in the world, that shows its ideas and initiatives, its labors and problems, the amateur cinema as a means of expression will have opened up a new path. The proletariat who uses it will then have a valuable ally in the struggle to create a better world through a classless society.

We intend this new supplement to coordinate, orient and help, in every way possible, the establishment of a proletarian amateur cinema movement. We introduce it with the same enthusiasm and intentions as when we created Nuestro Cinema.

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