

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1947)

Heft: 1076: 28ème

Rubrik: Academy Cinema

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ACADEMY CINEMA.*Presents*

A PROGRAMME OF REALISM AND POETRY

with

BATAILLE DU RAIL (A)

and

PARTIE DE CAMPAGNE (A)

The new programme at the Academy covers in the two films, *Bataille du Rail* and *Partie de Campagne*, the changes of the last hundred years. Between these two films lies the extinction of a whole way of life. But the programme is also interesting for a quite different reason: its combination of two types of film — the full length feature and the short story supporting picture — is, we believe, the perfectly balanced programme.

The Jean Renoir film, *Partie de Campagne*, is based on the de Maupassant short story "A Country Excursion" which has been perfectly translated into its new medium. Jean Renoir made *Partie de Campagne* in 1937 with the idea in mind of the "short story film." When he had finished except for two interior shots, the producers found the material so much to their liking that they asked him to develop the story for a full length feature film. For various reasons, the new scenario had not been completed to everybody's satisfaction when the war broke out and Renoir left for America. During the Occupation the film remained untouched in its tins, and in 1946 the producers wisely decided to bring it out as it was, with just the addition of two titles to replace the missing scenes.

Jean Renoir has every reason to be grateful that circumstances took a hand in keeping *Partie de Campagne* to the form he originally designed — a short story film that is a complement to the masterpiece of its creator, Guy de Maupassant. In *Partie de Campagne*, Jean Renoir has painted, using the medium of film, a series of unforgettable pictures.

Bataille du Rail belongs to a very different category. This film, dedicated by its director, Rene Clement, to the "glory of the Railwaymen of France," is a film of realism; grim indeed, but perhaps its very grimness is the poetry of this disturbed and harsh decade. The contribution of the railwaymen (both British and French) to final victory is sometimes taken too much for granted. But the task of the Frenchman was perhaps the harder, because to the simple man carrying on with his everyday job the principle of destruction is a direct negation of his work — one that it is hard to learn and to apply. *Bataille du Rail* by its matter-of-fact approach and lack of exaggeration emphasizes the strain of this daily struggle, and the simple and undefeatable heroism of the ordinary workingman which made possible and inevitable the victory of democracy.

Bataille du Rail has a great deal in common with one of the greatest British story documentaries of the war, *Target for Tonight*. It grips its audience through its reality, through the tools of the profession whose story it tells, and because the protagonists are for the most part railwaymen enacting scenes they have actually lived through.

Bataille du Rail and *Partie de Campagne* have commenced their run at the Academy Cinema on Friday, October 10th.

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