

will. The presumption of an underlying moral commitment creates tension which would not exist in an amoral story where attraction to a woman would find easy resolution.

Without understanding the protagonist's moral commitment, and perhaps impatient with the internal, cerebral "action" that takes place as he faces a conflict between his loyalty to his wife and the continuous beckoning of Chloe's body, some viewers have interpreted his resisting temptation as a lack of decisiveness or masculinity. His reaction to Chloe is certainly atypical in contemporary society. He shows restraint even though he finds Chloe appealingly tempting. Because he delays his decision until the last possible moment, his decision is made more difficult—and the movie more entertaining.

Chloe carries a vivid message for those who presume a moral dimension in their lives.

## Opposition in all Things

GEORGE D. SMITH, JR.

*A State of Siege*, a film by Constantin Costa-Gavras and Franco Solinas.

At the time that Costa-Gavras' new film, *A State of Siege* was cancelled at the American Film Institute's inaugural festival at its new movie theater in Washington's Kennedy Center, it was described as "rationalizing political assassination," and thus conflicting with the spirit of an event honoring the late President Kennedy. However, a further reason is evident—that it insinuates American undercover agents in the uncomely role of advisor-trainers of repressive police in a South American dictatorship.

It is ironic that the appearance of this film and its rejection by the festival in Washington coincided with growing embarrassment of exposed illegal political repression within the United States. The necessity of political opposition, desirable without political violence, is the reality brought in focus by both this film and the network of political espionage and repression being unraveled by the Watergate hearings.

Costa-Gavras expresses his moral outrage at American involvement in the internal affairs of Latin America, using as a basis for the story, the 1970 kidnap-murder by the Tupamaros, Uruguayan urban guerillas, of Don Mitrone, a United States Agency for International Development official, ostensibly assigned to advise the Uruguayan police in communications and traffic control, but subsequently reported to be involved in Uruguayan internal security and closely associated with those responsible for the systematic torture and liquidation of the revolutionary opposition. Much of the film's direction was conceived after talking to people involved in the kidnapping and listening to tapes of Mitrone's interrogation by the Tupamaros.

The result is a combination of documentary and fiction, difficult for the viewer to distinguish. Costa-Gavras has said: "The movie is about political violence, rather than about political assassination. It tries to speak about violence from

each side." However, the film is not at all neutral. The Tupamaros are clean—they have the role of just inquisitors, clear-eyed, logical, knowing, of measured temperament. They try not to hurt the kidnap victims and they release an American agronomist and other non-political persons. They are grass-roots democrats, even going through a complicated voting procedure—meeting one-by-one on a moving bus—to determine whether to put the American agent to death when the Uruguayan government refused to negotiate the release of political prisoners. By contrast the police and government oligarchs are grossly overweight, pompous and insensitive, awash in self-righteous hypocrisy. A journalist asks whether the terrorists will demand release of political prisoners—the official's answer: "We have no political prisoners here, only common criminals."

The music and sequence reinforce the film's moral conclusions. The industry and purpose of the elaborate guerilla efforts in organizing and effecting plans is underscored by industrious and purposeful music, quick paced and optimistic, sometimes resembling the musical background of industrial training movies.

The film begins with the search and discovery of the assassinated American, Philip Michael Santore. The body is found in the back of a Cadillac with Montevideo license-plates, one of the many cars methodically appropriated for the kidnapping. At this point the viewer is naturally revolted by the assassination. At a pompous funeral procession it is curiously observed that the places reserved for the university president and faculty are empty. The irony is developed when the eulogy calls Santore a victim of terrorism and violence. The ensuing account of Santore's history with Brazilian and Dominican policy and his close involvement with those who inflicted electric torture, tends to leave us in sympathy with the clear-eyed revolutionaries.

The use of Yves Montand as the protagonist agent lends a subtlety to the argument, primarily because of his demeanor and objectivity. He is not by nature such a bad person. In fact, he is likeable; it is his job that condemns him. He responds to his interrogators briefly and pragmatically, trying to preserve his integrity as the evidence within each question exposes half truths and lies eroding his attempted innocence. The camera cuts from the interrogation room to scenes of the agent's life, amplifying for the viewer the irony of the questions and answers.

Although Costa-Gavras has suggested that he has attempted only to show two enemies facing each other, each trying to rationalize their actions—execution by the Tupamaros and torture by the police—and that he never made moral judgments, the judgment against repression of a political opposition is powerfully concluded, as it was in his two prior political films, *Z*, based on the assassination of Gregorio Lambrakis in Greece, and *The Confession*, a film about the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia.

The underlying subject of each of these films is *opposition* and attempts to control or eliminate it. In resolving political and social conflicts within the United States we rely upon representative government, checks and balances, an adversary judicial system and a free press. The absence of these forms of political opposition often results in climates of political repression, such as those observed by Costa-Gavras in Greece, Czechoslovakia and Uruguay. Repression to create unity is a violence and it often breeds counter-violence.

The message of *A State of Siege* in demonstrating the alternative to legitimate