

Labor Goes to the Movies

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY Film Series 2005-2006



SEPT. 9 – 9 TO 5
(USA, Martin Ritt, 1979)

Speaker: Hester Eisenstein, Queens College and Graduate Center

In this fantastical story, Dolly Parton, Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda play three administrative professionals sick of their unproductive, sexist, stupid boss. They exact feminist revenge by imprisoning him at home and taking over the office. Productivity and morale skyrocket as the mostly women workers are suddenly acknowledged for their contributions and allowed flexible schedules, day care, and other human rights. This film is a fun, feel-good triumph of solidarity, common sense and humanity over petty power plays. Plus, it includes Dolly Parton's very catchy hit by the same name.



OCT. 21 – THE TAKE
(USA, Avi Lewis, 2004)

Written and produced by Naomi Klein
Speakers: Peter Ranis, York College and Jack Hammond, Hunter College

This award-winning documentary examines the experiences of several "bottom-up" social movements in contemporary Argentina during the 2001 economic collapse. Faced with the closures and bankruptcies of firms that once employed them, workers rally around the motto of "Occupy, Resist, Produce" to claim ownership of such firms, given that the original owners had been recipients of generous public subsidies. The workers view occupying and running the factories as one of the few options left to them. The film asserts that it is a viable alternative to the globalization patterns associated with free-market neoliberalism.



JAN. 12 – LA COMMUNE (PARIS 1871)

(France, Peter Watkins, 2000) with English subtitles

La Commune is a masterful and revolutionary work of film art. The often ignored true story of the socialist uprising of the Parisian population, after the Franco-Prussian war, against a centralized and militaristic government is re-created in Watkins' blending of documentary, political, historical, and postmodern film genre in this critical and effective narrative. This film presents "breaking news" from the 1871 battle lines, as well as distinctive "you are there" media coverage from both Socialist and Royalist TV stations. *La Commune* represents a workers' government facing injustice, violence, and collective amnesia.

Afternoon Show – Time TBA



FEB. 10 – NOTHING BUT A MAN
(USA, Michael Roemer, 1964)

This highly acclaimed film, produced at the height of the civil rights era, forcefully portrays the humiliating treatment of African Americans, particularly men, in the South. Set in 1963 Alabama, the main character (Ivan Dixon) courts the daughter (Abbey Lincoln) of a minister who considers the suitor, a worker, to be beneath him. When the protagonist tries to organize his coworkers, he is fired and blacklisted. The film was added to the National Film Registry in 1993.



APRIL 7 – BURN!
(USA, Gillo Pontecorvo, 1969)

Action drama, swashbuckling historical epic, and political allegory rolled into one, this was director Pontecorvo's "prequel" to the famous *Battle of Algiers*. Marlon Brando, in what he considered his best performance, plays a British agent provocateur who foments a slave rebellion but is unable to foresee its ultimate unwanted consequences. Set on the fictional 19th-century Caribbean sugar island Quemada, *Burn!* explores the logic of colonialism, racism and inter-imperial rivalry. When the film was released in the midst of the Vietnam War, its allusions to the Cuban revolution and to "Indochina" made it politically too hot for distributors, and despite the star power of Brando and Pontecorvo, *Burn!* was gone in the blink of an eye.

The PSC is proud to present the fourth year of its labor film series. The series is designed to create opportunities to discuss issues facing the contemporary labor movement and to strengthen ties among union members throughout the city. Screenings feature PSC members and special guests — professors from other colleges, union activists and other workers.



NOV. 11 – MATEWAN
(USA, John Sayles, 1987)

In the 1920s, mine owners ruled the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Mine guards threw pro-union miners out of their company-owned houses, beating and murdering union organizers. Federal and state governments ignored the violence while the United Mine Workers of America fought to organize the coalfields.

Matewan features a pacifist union organizer who works to pull African American miners, immigrant miners and Appalachian miners into one union despite their differences and the bosses' attempts to divide them. You can't miss a movie whose main character says, "You know there ain't but two sides in this world – them that work and them that don't."

DEC. 9 – A DAY'S WORK, A DAY'S PAY

(USA, Jonathan Skurnik & Kathy Leichter, 2002)

Speakers: Deborah E. Bell, PSC Executive Director, Jonathan Skurnick, and Maribel Peña, The Welfare Media Initiative

A Day's Work, A Day's Pay follows three welfare recipients in New York City from 1997 to 2000 as they participate in the largest welfare-to-work program in the nation. When forced to work at city jobs for well below the prevailing wage and deprived of the chance to go to school, these individuals decide to fight back, demanding programs that will actually help them move off of welfare and into jobs. It was broadcast nationwide on PBS and cable throughout 2002 and 2003.



MARCH 10 – TEN
(Iran, Abbas Kiarostami, 2002)

Voted one of the "ten best films" of 2002 by *Cahiers du Cinema*, *Ten* records ten conversations in a car between a divorced Iranian woman and a series of passengers. Her son, honing his male privilege skills, attacks her for divorcing his father and remarrying; her sister tearfully describes her break-up with her long-time boyfriend; a prostitute taunts her for her condescension; an old woman encourages her to go to her mosque; and a jilted bride tries to grapple with the remains of her life. One of the undisputed masters of contemporary Iranian cinema, Abbas Kiarostami once again presents a gripping portrait of modern Iran with yet another startling economy of means.

MAY 12 – CUNY FILMS
Films by CUNY students and faculty

All screenings take place at

CCNY Center for Worker Education
99 Hudson Street
Manhattan

6 PM (unless indicated)

\$2 suggested donation

Space is limited!

Light refreshments will be served before each screening.