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THE SCREEN OF CHANGE

Chapter Two – Film and Politics

Back in 1936 someone had in fact succeeded in putting *It Can't Happen Here* on the screen - or at least a snippet. In this filming the setting is a typical American middle-class home of the period. A knocking on the front door. The householder goes to answer. Enter a couple of uniformed bully boys.

'What's the trouble?', asks Mr America.

'We're having a book burning on the green tomorrow night.'

'A what?'

'We're goin' to burn up all this subversive literature. A lot of smutty stuff that's corrupting public morals - have you any objections?'

'Well, you won't find any subversive books here...'

Over by the bookcase

'Huh - now how about this one. Now this fellow Charles Dickens - wasn't he a communist...?'

This filming has been established as taking place on stage, in a theatre, while voice-over informed us that 'In twenty-one cities simultaneously, WPA actors appear in a dramatisation of *It Can't Happen Here*, novelist Sinclair Lewis's enactment of a Nazified US at the mercy of sedition-hunting fascist storm troopers.' W.P.A. stood for the Works Progress Administration by way of which, in those Depression-dogged days, Roosevelt's New Deal attempted to create jobs for the millions of American unemployed, in this case actors, playwrights and directors like Joseph Losey.

Titled 'An Uncle Sam Production', this extract from *It Can't Happen Here* was just one item in a radically new but by then already established film series which, claiming to be 'A New Form of Pictorial Journalism', had already lit up American cinema screens with such as the controversy surrounding the newly created public power system of the Tennessee Valley Authority; the dictatorial ambitions of the then Governor of Louisiana, Huey Long; and the fascist-style broadcast preachings of the Irish-American prelate Father Charles E. Coughlin. From overseas had come what we would now call in-depth (and sympathetic) looks at Soviet Russia; Ethiopia facing up unaided to Italian fascist threats; China embroiled in Japanese aggression. Nothing like this had ever been seen before on American commercial cinema screens, prompting David Selznick to declare that it 'will prove to have been the most significant motion picture development since the inception of sound' and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to award its producers that same year of 1936 a special Oscar for 'its significance to motion pictures and for having revolutionised one of the most important branches of the industry -the newsreel.' By the time of its Academy Award, this short black and white two-reeler, running barely eighteen minutes, was a regular feature, every four weeks, in 5,000 cinemas in the United States and more than 700 in Britain, with an estimated audience of 15,000,000. It was called *The March of Time*.

With its invention, the motion picture camera had entered immediately into journalism. The newsreel is as old as the cinema itself. The first films ever made were direct recordings of happenings. A catalogue of 1895-1900 lists New York in a Blizzard, Easter Parade, The Henley Regatta, and Czar Nicholas in his Summer Palace. Movie screens in 1910 reflected The Funeral of King Edward VII, as well as the fisticuffs of the Jeffries - Johnson Match. For the next quarter of a century, while such as Griffith, Eisenstein, Gance, Mizoguchi were maturing the motion picture into a great new mass art, the newsreel, although a popular and indispensable part of the programme, hardly changed at all. Even with the coming of sound, it still remained a superficial catalogue of fires, floods, and earthquakes, the ingoing and outgoing of politicians, the ups and downs of new flying machines, the parades of fleeting

fashions, the drilling of armies, launching of ships, and the comings and goings of royalty.

For one newsreel cameraman, this was not enough. To have scooped the world (and bluffed a British censor) with film of rioting following an arrest of Gandhi was not sufficient. To have then become, in time, director of short subjects for Fox Movietone News was inadequate fulfilment. Louis de Rochemont aimed to revolutionise the newsreel. What he wanted to get on to motion picture screens was a great deal more than just a mere assemblage of snapshots of sporting events and catastrophes. Just as newspapers dig into the detail and background behind their headlines, so he wanted to project, in the same way on film, the story behind the news. Like all revolutionaries, he had to find support from somewhere outside the establishment. The men who controlled the newsreels were neither journalists or film-makers. Their interest lay in the profit to be made from feature films. The newsreels were merely put together as part of a package, as a sideline to the block booking of the endlessly profitable assembly line of Hollywood product. De Rochemont's idea would cost money, and who was going to provide this, when newsreels could never be a source of profit in themselves?

Broadcasting. Yes, in that pre-television era of the early 1930s, the answer lay in the technique, and the sponsorship, of a radio show. Two bright young men of the Yale class of 1920 had already accomplished in the printed word what de Rochemont now aimed to achieve for the motion picture. With their brash new news magazine *Time* (and *Life* its pictorial counterpart to come) Briton Hadden and Henry Luce had revolutionised the reporting, and the interpretation of news. Time-Incorporated, as their corporate progeny soon came to be called, looked for new fields to conquer. For a generation raised on TV with radio miniaturised into a source of transistorised pop, the broadcasting scene of the mid-1930s is remote indeed. But it was lively, and already (before the phrase became current) mass media. It had its stars. Bing Crosby, and the husband and wife cross-talk team of Burns and Allen. Hollywood took note. *The Big Broadcast of 1936* featured all three, plus many other favourites

previously known only by the sound of their voices, or their music. In the United States radio was, from the beginning, commercial. And this meant money.

Time-Inc decided to get into radio. Not to broadcast weekly readings from its news magazines, but to dramatise actual happenings, and those that made them happen, in the news. They called their programme *The March of Time*.

Again remember that this is not only pre-television, but also quite a long time before the tape-recorder and tape-recordings of today, which make possible the interviewing of those in the news with such effortless facility (if not always matchless integrity.) What recording systems did exist back then in the early thirties were far too cumbersome and rigid to move around in a pack slung from a shoulder. What went out on the air had to originate in a studio. It had to be re-enacted. Actors read dialogue parts from tightly-written scripts based on *Time* and *Life's* own voluminous files of intensively researched investigative journalism.

The *March of Time* radio programme was also a welcome source of additional employment for New York actors. Parts were played by members of Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre. (The master himself was to base his own *War of the Worlds* invasion from Mars - which took him to Hollywood and into the movies - on its technique of convincing and literal immediacy). It was his job to impersonate the voices of Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie, German President Hindenburg, armaments king Basil Zaharoff, and Japan's Imperial Ruler Hirohito. Agnes Moorhead, the mother-to-be of the Citizen Kane yet to-be-made, was the voice of the President's Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. The vibrant and sonorous Voice of Time itself, linking the re-enacted sections with narrative, was provided by the amiable but omnipotent sounding Westbrook Van Voorhis.

The mind of Luce and, in particular, his circulation manager Roy Larsen had not overlooked the movies. After all, if they could put something upon cinema screens which regularly proclaimed that 'The Editors of *Time* and *Life* present a new form of Pictorial Journalism', this would help to sell the magazines too - and justify an

investment. And this is what they did. For Louis de Rochemont called on Larsen with his idea to transcribe and transform *The March of Time* method of radio investigation and re-enactment into film. Larsen had already been thinking along much the same lines, and Luce agreed to the making of some experimental reels. That was good enough. De Rochemont quit Movietone, retaining only a call on its film library. For he proposed that current freshly-shot footage be worked in with archive material, and that re-enacted dialogue scenes be incorporated whenever necessary in order to give each film report of hard-hitting news analysis a unique and persuasive perspective of integrated, *personalised*, and dramatic impact.

The first issue of *The March of Time* in the movies had opened at the Capitol Theatre on Broadway February 1, 1935. For the next seventeen years it was to be as much a part of the cinema scene as Mickey Mouse.

It has become fashionable to poke fun at *The March of Time*, at its portentous voice of doom – 'TIME MARCHES ON!'. But a non-stop narration rattled out by an authoritative and anonymous voice was the convention of the time; and, in any case, from its earliest issues *The March of Time* used sound-on-film newsreel cameras for direct statements, snatches of dialogue, and interviews with those involved in its reports. Commonplace now in television, such snippets of conversational realism – and quite often reconstruction – were used to break up, intercut, and highlight its otherwise *Time*-magazine style commentary (which had its origins in radio) so easily parodied. Parodied most memorably at the beginning of *Citizen Kane* when, immediately after the death in his castle-like fortress, in little more than nine minutes, the life and times of Charles Foster Kane flash on the screen in 'News On The March.'

In her New Yorker essay on *Kane*, Pauline Kael tells of how 'The March of Time was already a joke to many people' when she was a student at Berkeley in the late thirties. So let us list some of the subjects covered during the year we were making *The Citadel*, the year of 1937-38. 'Child Labour', 'Scotland's Highland Problems', 'Poland and War', 'US Dust Bowl', 'War in China', 'Ships, Strikes, and Seaman', 'Ulster

V. Eire'. Yes, at least one of these is still with us, well over sixty years later, and still not very funny.

According to Miss Kael, 'there was always laughter in the theatres when the "March of Time" came on.' One can only conclude that she and her fellow students were a great deal more sophisticated and less socially committed than that far from frivolous Scottish 'Father of the Documentary Film', John Grierson, who had his own young directors out enthusiastically shooting subjects for *The March of Time* at just that same time. Harry Watt for example. In 1936, for the series' Second Year Issue Number 4, he did a report on the Tithe War. This now forgotten confrontation was between English farmers and the Church of England. From time immemorial the farmers had had to pay a tithe, a tenth, of their crops to the land-owning church. Pure feudalism, well into the twentieth century. The farmers of that day refused. The church forced sales of their goods. For *The March of Time* the future director of *Target for Tonight* and *Where No Vultures Fly* reconstructed a raid on a farm by church militants, the sounding of the alarm, and the rush of farmers back from the fields to defend themselves. In Harry Watt's own words, 'I suppose it was the first time dramatic reconstruction of a contemporary event had been done in British documentary...'

A more substantial charge against *The March of Time* nowadays is that it was 'right-wing', if not indeed itself fascist. Readers of W.A. Swanberg's life of Time Incorporated's owner and tycoon Henry Luce are certainly given this impression; and in his 1979 investigation into the American communications industry, David Halberstam writes of Luce that 'in a sense he was by 1940 already the (Chinese) ambassador to America. It was not just his magazines, but his *March of Time* newsreels, showing the brave Chinese standing up to the barbarism of the Japanese, which became perhaps the most successful and influential propaganda of its time in making Americans care and think about China and identify with Chiang Kai-shek.'

Well, including 'Formosa - Island of Promise', a look at Chiang's final eclipse on Taiwan, (the series' last release in 1951) out of 290 *March of Time* reports during the

sixteen years of its existence, only six were devoted to Chiang Kai-shek and Nationalist China.

'The creative treatment of actuality' is Grierson's definition of documentary, and another charge levelled at *The March of Time* finds it guilty of the currently heinous crime of 'faction'; frequently setting up scenes, staging events, without informing its audience of this device. What says the record? In the original announcement of the launch of the series, 12 February 1935, the world at large was informed that 'From hundreds of stories and thousands of feet of film from all over the world, the best of these are taken and woven together in radio March of Time's curt, concise manner, re-enacting complete, dramatic episodes of the world happenings you've read and wondered about.'

Why do I go on about it like this? Does it really nowadays matter? Well, it does to me - for I worked for *The March of Time* as cameraman-reporter of its international subjects for six seminal post Second World War years. A period which bent the series into the visual rhetoric of the United States' Cold War with the Soviet Union, rendering a young left-leaning Brit like me increasingly ill at ease at its change of direction. What was it then that led me to take up its offer of employment in the first place?

Well, for a start, the innovative and far from ignoble record that I have just described; and, having spent most the war years as an army cameraman which gave me the opportunity to set up and shoot, on my own, semi-documentary film reports on such as a Yugoslav guerilla outpost in the Adriatic and the establishment of a free press in a liberated Rome - I had no desire then meekly to return to pulling focus on cameras in make-believe film studios. Moreover this wartime experience had led directly to my appointment as cameraman-reporter for the United Nations Agency brought into being to help Europe to get back on to its peacetime feet; and this, pre-Cold War, included the Soviet Union's two westerly republics of Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Whatever I shot there, at that time, was going to be unique, if not sensational, and it was. So much so, that *The March of Time* picked it up as a special

release - and me along with it. For what as a consequence my filming was able to show, on American screens, were people who had suffered appallingly in the recent war, appearing at that time in no way either able or anxious to start another one. With the title *The March of Time* gave to its edition of my work, I could find no fault: 'The Russians Nobody Knows'.

Everything up to then seemed to have led me to this point. Reflected in their films, it had been American attitudes and ways of doing things that had been so much of my own obsessive film-going childhood; and major American films, and film-makers, with whom I had felt so at home as an otherwise insignificant clapper boy at Denham. To this day I cannot believe that any British organisation would have put someone on that sort of payroll sight unseen - and unheard - judged and not found wanting solely on the strength of their work, my Russian material, viewed on a screen in New York. Back of it all was a disenchantment with Britain - a belief that its time had passed.

At the end of John Le Carre's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* the traitor, Haydon, attempts to justify himself to Smiley:

At Oxford, he said, he was genuinely of the right, and in the war, it scarcely mattered where one stood as long as one was fighting the Germans. For a while, after forty-five, he said, he had remained content with Britain's part in the world, till gradually it dawned on him just how trivial this was. How and when was a mystery. In the historical mayhem of his own lifetime he could point to no one occasion: simply he knew that if England were out of the game, the price of fish would not be altered by a Farthing. He had often wondered which side he would be on if the test ever came; after prolonged reflection he had finally to admit that if either monolith had to win the day, he would prefer it to be the East.

For me, the reasoning was the same - but to me, for all these primarily filmic reasons, it was to be the West. Had not Henry Luce himself, in a special article in his

Life magazine, not long before declared that 'We are the inheritors of the great principles of Western civilisation - above all Justice, the love of Truth, the ideal of Charity It is in this spirit that all of us are called to create the first American Century.' There seemed little reason to doubt this, in 1947.

Fifty years after its original launch, Mr Luce's very own *March of Time* burst into life all over again. Under the creative guidance of Flashback Producer Vicki Wegg-Prosser, between 1985 and 1990 Channel 4 Television mounted no less than fifty retrospective screenings of this pioneering current affairs pacesetter. Veteran participants in its original production were interviewed. Lothar Wolff, Associate Producer; Edgar Anstey, Director; Mary (sister of Joseph) Losey, Writer/Researcher; Maurice Lancaster, European Manager; Peter Hopkinson, Director-Cameraman. All of us speaking of our own contributions and confident that what a new generation would now be seeing on their TV screens would confound Jay Leyda's 1964 (*Films Beget Films*) strictures on the 'invariably conservative point of view (and) reactionary slant' of the original *March of Time*. With maybe less of an axe to grind, Flashback's presenters Fred Halliday, Jacqueline Fear and Murray Sayle got the perspective of the years between just about right.

Viewers were now to see reports by the *March of Time* in which its editors' sympathies were clearly with the unemployed seen seizing the New Jersey State Assembly House and protesting the ending of their dole payments in the United States elections of 1936; with John L. Lewis's organisation of the American coalminers and their British counterparts calling in 1937 for the nationalisation of the pits; with whites from the north beaten up by southern racists in Arkansas attempting to smash a union formed by sharecroppers demanding a dollar and a half for a ten-hour day; with Fiorello La Guardia's success in breaking up corruption as Mayor of New York city in 1938.

International subjects screened in Flashback's Channel Four retrospective evidenced *The March of Time's* support of Czechoslovakia's defiance of Hitler; its concern for the refugees already pouring out of central Europe and Spain in an issue directed by

Edgar Anstey in 1939; its hostility to Mussolini's plan for a Mediterranean empire; and, above all, with 'Inside Nazi Germany', its stand against Hitler when no other film, on any screen in either Britain or the United States, had yet to attack - let alone criticise - his genocidal ambitions.

Unlike the bland and anodyne newsreels, as a creative short film series in its own right, before release in those days every issue of *The March of Time* had to be viewed first of all by the British Board of Film Censors. Of 'Inside Nazi Germany' its Vice-President, a certain Colonel J. C. Hanna, had this to say: 'In my opinion the public exhibition of this picture in England would give grave offence to a nation with whom we are on terms of friendship and which it would be impolite to offend.'

A previous 1938 issue, 'Arms And The League', had indicated the betrayal of the League of Nations and the principle of collective security, highlighting the recent resignation of Anthony Eden in the face of the Chamberlain government's appeasement of German, Italian, and Japanese aggression. The voice over laid it on the line:

'In England', reported this *March of Time*, 'crowds are dismayed as Chamberlain, in order to be free to bargain with the Fascist nations who smashed the League's powers, drops his Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, champion of the League.'

The British Board of Film Censors banned this issue outright. Director Edgar Anstey now told Channel Four viewers how he had thereupon arranged a private screening for Winston Churchill.

'Mr Anstey', Churchill had said, 'I can tell you that this film should be seen by every man, woman, and child in this country. But I am powerless to help you. As you know, I am out of office, and I have no standing or status in this country at the moment.'

Right from the beginning, and enthusiastically supported by no less than John Grierson himself, *The March of Time* made a point of its policy to include British reports in its regular scheme of things. To the American film industry Britain was always the most lucrative and therefore the most important overseas market. British attempts to gatecrash Hollywood could not therefore be ignored. In 'Challenge to Hollywood', J. Arthur Rank was shown in conference with Hollywood tycoons, and stating that all he asked for was a fair share of the American market for English-speaking British-made films. In this same 1945 release, American audiences were also shown excerpts from British films in production at that time, including *A Matter of Life and Death*, and Gabriel Pascal incoherently directing *Caesar and Cleopatra*. By then the British documentary movement which Grierson had launched with *Drifters* in 1929 had gained international recognition - not least as a result of classic wartime productions like *Listen to Britain* and *Target for Tonight*. Directing this 'Challenge to Hollywood', the American George Black included a sequence of the then Ministry of Information's Film Chief, Jack Beddington, in conference with his documentary dominions. Glimpsed amongst them could be seen *The Citadel* scriptwriter Ian Dalrymple and my future companion at Poona Basil Wright, very uncharacteristically puffing away at a pipe. And this 1945 'Challenge to Hollywood' had not been the first time that attention had been paid to the British film industry by Time-Incorporated's 'new kind of pictorial journalism'. In only its second year of 1936 the De Rochemont-Larsen series had screened for British audiences shots of Denham Studios under construction, Alexander Korda studying scripts, and clips of the airborne technocrats about to descend on Everytown' from his production of *Things to Come*.

'Voice to the future of British cinema', the portentous tones of Westbrook Van Voorhis had informed us, 'is given by a British author of world renown, who has given up writing books entirely in favour of the cinema, Mr H.G. Wells, just back from inspecting America's Hollywood as the guest of Charlie Chaplin'. On screen we saw Korda standing sphinx-like behind his desk while, in foreground with his squeaky little high-pitched voice, the author of *Things to Come* pitched in:

At the present time there are great interests which oppress man's minds, excite and interest. There's the onset of war. There's the increase of power, the change of scale and the change of conditions in the world. And, in one or two of our films here, we've been trying, without any propaganda, or pretension, or preachment of any sort, we've been trying to work out some of those immense possibilities that appeal we think to every man. We are attempting here the thing of imaginative possibility. That at any rate is one of the challenges that we're going to make to our friends and rivals at Hollywood.

The onset of war. The war Wells and Korda had already anticipated so dramatically in *Things to Come*. In Europe, it had in fact already started. Spain. The Spanish Civil War was, in its day, just as much an ideological culture clash as Vietnam was to prove to be in the years to come. Progressive film-makers then flocked to Spain, to help the Republican cause get its story on the screen. Ernest Hemingway joined forces with Joris Ivens and John Ferno for a film they called *The Spanish Earth*, shot in Madrid under seige and a village twenty-five miles away along the road to Valencia. On this straight-forward and moving report of a people at war - human guinea pigs in this dress rehearsal for the greater war soon to come - the *Motion Picture Herald* was pleased to write that 'its partisanship and propagandist non-objectivity tend to vitiate whatever message it may carry.' Its message was clear enough to the German Ambassador in London. Von Ribbentrop was present at its 1937 screening to the British Board of Film Censors. A total ban was only relaxed after all references to German and Italian intervention had been deleted.

Who wants a screen of change? Some then did, in the United States, at 369 Lexington Avenue, New York, where *The March of Time* was put together every four weeks, under another roof and altogether different management from its *Time* and *Life* parenthood. For where, blocked by censorship, Hemingway and Ivens failed to reach an audience in Britain with *The Spanish Earth*, *The March of Time* got through. With 'Rehearsal for War' the series revealed how the Spanish Civil War was being used by both Hitler and Mussolini as a testing out of the social democratic countries will to fight.

The March of Time was as much a child of the thirties as The Left Book Club and The New Deal. Roosevelt's election and his 'New Deal' had re-energised the American ethic, given new hope to an ideal then almost smothered in the post World War One boom years of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. *The March of Time* was as much the forerunner of what it had chosen to call a 'new kind of pictorial journalism' (which we now take for granted in television) as it was the pacesetter in a fresh drive to put the real and the genuine of America on screen. It was believed to be a time to attempt amends for the ruthless human and physical exploitation which had been the background to the jazz age. Roosevelt's own administration made movies too, and chose a noted film critic to produce them. Pare Lorentz.

Pare Lorentz made his first film for the Resettlement Administration (the predecessor to the Farming Security Administration.) It covered ground to be worked over later by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* - and already screened by *March of Time* - the worked-out prairies of the mid-west, and the dustbowls which a ruthless greed for profits and no care for the future had turned them into. This Lorentz entitled *The Plow that Broke the Plains*; but his lasting achievement, and most famous film was his next, *The River*. With an eloquence altogether alien to *Time*-speak, Lorentz spelt it out:

From as far West as Idaho,
Down from the glacier peaks of the Rockies -
Down as far East as New York,
Down from the turnkey ridges of the Alleghenies-
Down from Minnesota, twenty-five hundred miles,
The Mississippi River runs to the Gulf...

But *The River* is no picturesque travelogue of the Mississippi. It is a fast-flowing chronicle of the havoc wrought over the years by private enterprise along its banks and the land through which, with its tributaries, it flows. Paced to his editing of Willard Van Dyke's and Floyd Corsby's visuals, and counterpointed with Virgil

Thomson's score, Lorentz created a commentary of protest which combined all the elements into a poetic and tragic elegy on an environment in danger of destruction by man, machine, and short term profit.

We fought a war and kept the West bank of the river free of slavery forever.

But we left the old South impoverished and stricken.

Doubly stricken, because, beside the tragedy of war, already the frenzied cotton cultivation of a quarter of a century had taken toll of the land.

We mined the soil for cotton until it would yield no more, and then moved west.

We fought a war, but there was a double tragedy -the tragedy of land twice impoverished...

Sponsors of *The River* included several agencies of the New Deal's Department of Agriculture: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Farm Security Administration, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the Soil Conservation Service.

We built a hundred cities and a thousand towns but at what a cost.

We cut the top of the Alleghenies and sent it down the river.

We cut the top off Minnesota and sent it down the river.

We cut the top off Wisconsin and sent it down the river...

The answer, the film summed up, was Federal Aid and intervention on a massive scale. Socialised power. The dams of the Tennessee Valley Authority, generating power for the land as well as controlling its flooding, provide both solution and climax to this classic motion picture study of land and human conservation.

Pare Lorentz was a close friend of King Vidor. With the completion of *The River*, Lorentz needed a break and a change of scene. Vidor suggested that he come with him to England, and that they worked together on *The Citadel*. The two film-makers sailed from New York on the Manhattan April 20, 1938. But MGM had other ideas, and the quota of American employment on the picture was already fixed. Lorentz stayed

on for a while in London, saw *The River* premiered on BBC Television - yes, BBC Television, back in 1938 - and was made much of by John Grierson, Robert Flaherty, and other documentary dominies. For Vidor, it was Denham, Lazare Meerson sets, and studio-rooted situations and dialogue.

On arriving at Denham from Hollywood two years before, Jimmy Wong Howe had wondered how it was 'That your producers shut themselves up in studios? A wall in a British studio is just the same as a wall in Hollywood.' This had occurred to me as well. But that was the time when everything originated in a studio, everything was built in a studio, everything was made to happen in a studio. The only shots of the real Oxford in *A Yank at Oxford* are behind the titles. The only shots of the real Wales in *The Citadel* are cuts from the studio train in the opening sequence.

This was not the Grierson way. This was not the Lorentz way. This is not the way of the screen of change. Back in the United States, by coincidence, Pare Lorentz also made next a feature length film of the trials and tribulations of a young doctor. *The Fight for Life*, based on the first section of a book by Paul de Kruif, was for the most part shot on location in the Chicago slums.

'Of course', said Lorentz, 'I wanted to show the housing conditions of the industrial middle west as a background to the medical story. In fact, I wouldn't have made the movie had I not been allowed to broaden it to give some indication of the unemployment and living conditions as prevailed then, not only in Chicago, but in all the industrial United States.'

Shot in and around a Maternity Centre in the heart of that city's slums, *The Fight for Life* was banned by the Chicago Police Department. It was to be twenty-one years before this film first appeared on Chicago screens - and by then they were television screens.

Those who object to 'politics' on screen are always telling us that we should be instead 'objective'. That reporting of this Orwellian era in which 'Peace is War and

War is Peace' should somehow be above the battle. And in case anyone thinks that the newsreels of the 1930s were without exception as puerile and pallid as they may seem to be when in portion revived in television programmes like *All Our Yesterdays*, let's flash back to the bombing of Shanghai in 1937. In a Paramount newsreel, for the first time on cinema screens, audiences saw the maimed and bleeding victims of aerial aggression. Uproar. It is the job of the film to entertain, not to shock or get involved in politics, was an outraged and immediate reaction. Said Jeffrey Bernerd, Editor of Gaumont-British (one of Paramount's four rival newsreels of that time): 'It is the duty of the newsreels to present news, but not to put on the screen material for a political purpose...'

Paramount's crusading Editor G. T. Cummings swiftly countered this argument: 'It is our duty', he said, 'to give the news. These things are happening, and we have decided to show them. The only way to stop war is to give people a proper idea of what it means.' Paramount's was a lone voice in those dismal days, and we had to wait forty years before we were able to see some of the anti-Nazi and anti-appeasement material and interviews they shot - but had censored at the time. *Before Hindsight* was the name of this evaluation which, written by Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, edited by Jonathan Lewis and narrated by James Cameron in 1977 incorporated this archive material in a self-evident projection of the inadequacy of the newsreels of forty years before. Their inadequacy lay in their failure to report the reality of what was then happening in Hitler's Germany, and the threat that this presented to the survival of any sort of civilised existence anywhere.

One of those interviewed in *Before Hindsight* was Edgar Anstey, correctly captioned as 'Director of Production, March of Time, London 1936-1937, 1938-1939. Foreign Editor March of Time New York 1937-1938'. He did not have much trouble in pleading the cause of *The March of Time*. *Before Hindsight* concludes with clips from the series' report of how it was to be, at that time, 'Inside Nazi Germany' - screened in its entirety as the climax to Channel Four Television's rerun of the series in December 1985.

The racism of the regime is made manifest. Jews are seen victimised and on their way to what was all too soon to become the 'Holocaust'. The screen fills with Hitler's marching legions and parades of aggressive weaponry. And then, in what is perhaps the most effective end sequence in *March of Time* history, we come upon an elderly lady, doing needlework in what must be her German home. (That this had to be set up and shot in New York is surely absolutely irrelevant). The commentary has meanwhile been telling us that now - that is, to audiences in 1938 - 'Germany is fashioning the greatest war machine history has ever seen. And throughout history machines of war have led only to one thing. War.'

By now we are on to the old lady in her modest German home. On the wall behind her we have glimpsed two photographs, hung side by side. Close-up shows them to be of two young Germans in the uniform of the First World War. Around the pictures-black crepe and medals. Clearly without the need for any words to say so - these are the sons of this widow, killed (like her absent husband) in that previous war. And as their lifeless faces fill the screen, out booms the pay-off - 'TIME MARCHES ON!'

This desperate and doomed search for impartiality that we are told we must now follow, for objectivity between victim and aggressor, progress and reaction, capital versus labour, good (if you like) and evil, was exemplified in a fascinating programme devised by the old London Film Society that same year of the Cummings-Bernerd confrontation over reporting the Japanese invasion of China. This time the subject was another war, also under way at the same time: fascist Italy's invasion of Haile Selassie's African Kingdom of Abyssinia. The programme was made up of alternate reels of two different films, shot on either side of the firing line. Firstly, the Italian Luce Films' ambitious, spectacular and pretentious *The Path of the Heroes*. This consisted of elaborate arrangements of smoothly flowing, carefully selected and staged groups of scenes, each designed to illustrate some single aspect of the conquest, proclaimed by a preceding title in French and German accompanied by its Italian dialogue equivalent. The other film was entitled just simply *Abyssinia*, shot by a couple of Russian newsreel cameramen of Sovuskinochronika. This was a

straightforward narrative, with no funny treatment. By 'intercutting', as it were, alternate reels of each, the audience was able to see the smirking smiles of fascist airmen as they admired the precise and formal patterns their bombs made, exploding on the ground far beneath them, with the effect of these bombs on the ground itself - a Red Cross hospital in ruins, and the blinded and bleeding faces of their flesh and blood targets.

But even with all due respect and homage to cameramen in Vietnam, no war in history has been such a heady mixture of passion and politics as the Spanish Civil War. The newsreels of the time reflected a great deal less than objectivity. Under the aggressive editorship of Cummings, *British Paramount News* was unashamedly on the side of the legally elected government of Spain, fighting for its life against a rebellion aided by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. *British Movietone News*, on the other hand allied to the Rothermere interests and the *Daily Mail*, reported and publicised Franco as a gallant Christian gentleman and saviour of civilisation against the onward march of bolshevism. As kids, we would fill a row of seats in newsreel theatres, cheering the one and booing the other.

Few remained uncommitted to the Spanish cause. If Franco was allowed to win, then a total European war was a foregone conclusion. Fresh from involvement in the Chinese Revolution, Andre Malraux arrived in Spain and raised an international fighter squadron in support of the Republic. And more, he made a film about it. *L'Espoir* is the story of an international group of aviators, flying the Republic's obsolete bombers against Franco's up-to-date German and Italian-flown fighters. The last reel of this film, which Malraux wrote and directed himself, is little short of epic. After a raid on a fascist fighter base, a bomber is shot down. Its crew were Belgian, French, Arab, Spanish, and anti-fascist German. The pilot is dead. His body is recovered by peasants. Strapped to the back of a mule, it is brought down from the mountains. At every village along the route, more and more join this funeral cortege. Until, at the end, all Spain seems to be in pilgrimage across the face of the land, behind this corpse of a foreigner, dead for Spain, in the fight against fascism. A sequence which is a striking parallel to *Battleship Potemkin's* concourse of people filing on to the mole

at Odessa, passing in homage before the body of the sailor Vakulinchuk, dead 'on account of a spoonful of bortsch'.

Civil War in Spain, back in those still seminal thirties. Civil war in Britain in our own time. What the BBC chose to attempt in Ulster was to report both sides of an armed conflict impartially. But with the intervention of a self-styled 'army' based on the other side of an international border, it became more and more difficult to maintain - let alone justify - this laudable intention. With a confrontation soon clearly seen to be as more than just a clash between two communities confined to six counties of Britain, the British Broadcasting Corporation's attempt to balance Ulster loyalist with gunmen of the Irish Republican Army came in for mounting criticism. As a result, both the ethic and the principle of the BBC's being above the arena were called into question.

Is it ever possible to film, report, a war impartially? How can you, unless you film both sides, giving each adversary equal time as it were, remain totally uninvolved and aloof from the political and military commitment of either? I was able to do this, just once; but wound up almost facing a firing squad as the price of my protested objectivity.

As with Ulster, the issue was religious. That same old intolerance still marching on down through the ages. But this clash was not between Catholic and Protestant Christian but between Hindu and Muslim Indian; and the setting, the roof of the world in the far off Himalayas. Both, however, had their origins in British colonial rule. Forced to give freedom to Ireland, partition was the price in 1922, with civil war its legacy in 1972. With the coming of freedom to India in 1947, agreement to the separate Muslim State of Pakistan was the price the Hindu had to pay. Each side claimed the previously independent state of Kashmir. They went to war over it.

By then myself a Cameraman-Reporter for *The March of Time*, India had been my first assignment. In front of my camera there was passing the greatest migration in human history. All the Hindus in the Pakistan side of what was now the divided

province of the Punjab in the north west were fleeing eastwards into India. All the Muslims, suddenly finding themselves in what had now become for them the wrong side of the border, trekked west. All in all, twelve million people moved in this bloody exchange of populations.

Like my latter-day successors in neighbouring Afghanistan, my problem then was to get in there, find, and film a war; at that time the first (undeclared) war between India and Pakistan over the state bordering the Punjab to the north, Kashmir. The only overland route in was by then from Pakistan. I was in India. But I had a good friend in Delhi's Ministry of Defence, and he got me on to a plane flying reinforcements up to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. By this same route India had flown a regiment of Sikhs to that airstrip just in time to throw Pakistan-supported tribesmen back the month before. Now they were perched high up in the lower Himalayan peaks fifty miles to the West. Indian artillery lobbing shells up at them, and ammunition convoys winding their way through this awesome scenery, were the most dramatic scenes I was able to shoot before the first fall of winter snow closed the airport and I took off and away on the last flight out that season.

My task and objective was then to get to the other side, the receiving end of those shells. It took me three weeks to reach the Headquarters of the Pakistan Army in Rawalpindi, where everyone denied and disclaimed all knowledge and any involvement in this war going on up the road.

I ate a lonely and depressed dinner in a faded Kiplingesque hotel called Flashmans (yes, that's true!) Across the room, similarly solitary with the baked jam roll which generations of cooking for the British had persuaded Flashmans to be the height of haute cuisine, was a Pakistan Army Colonel I had met on the plane the previous day. We drank coffee together. 'I'll get you into Kashmir', he said. 'Be ready at the hotel after lunch tomorrow.'

Standing with camera and equipment at the portals of Flashmans the following day, as if awaiting a taxi, I was prepared for anything. A truck drove up. Its driver

motioned me aboard. We drove off. Nobody spoke. I was volunteered no information. My questions remained unanswered. By evening we were on the border of Kashmir, a great gorge through which thundered one of the great Himalayan rivers on its way down to irrigate the fields of the divided Punjab, now behind us in Pakistan. We passed the night in a deserted frontier post. Then across the river gorge on a crazy suspension bridge on foot. Mules awaited on the other side. By some mysterious means, word of my mission was preceding us. Equipment strapped to the sides of these docile beasts, we walked on. Walked and walked, climbed and climbed. For two days. Up and down mountain tracks, just below the snowline, all the time passing and re-passing 'volunteers' coming in from Pakistan, laden with weapons and ammunition, the insignia of the Pakistan Army only just removed from their battle dress. We reached the headquarters of Pakistan's first campaign to wrest Kashmir from India: a village, where I was at once taken before the 'Leader'. I was made welcome and invited to film a meeting he planned to address that same evening. I pleaded lack of light by then, and my own near exhaustion, as an excuse to decline. I lay down on a makeshift bed in a mud hut. Bang! Crash! Whoosh! Whoomph! All hell suddenly broke loose outside. I dashed out. Indian Spitfires were rocketing and machine-gunning the village. They accounted for twenty-seven Kashmiri peasants, dead and wounded.

Regretting that in those days there was no practical and portable sound recording equipment available to cameramen alone and on the hoof like me, that night I talked long with this 'Leader' of 'Azad' (Free) Kashmir, Sardar Ibrahim. From him I heard at first hand the origins of a still festering conflict which by 1990 had threatened to become nuclear.

Adjacent to the north west area of the Indian sub-continent which had become Pakistan, Kashmir also has a primarily Muslim population. But its Ruler was a Hindu Maharajah. Over which of the two new nations between which his fiefdom was sandwiched he should join, he dithered. Whereupon a revolt took place in his territory, demanding accession to Muslim Pakistan. Panic-stricken, the Ruler immediately signed up with India; Pakistan meantime unofficially making the way

clear for the fellow Muslim tribesmen of its own North West Frontier Province to sweep down to the support of their co-religionists in Kashmir. Thereupon India claimed this to be aggression against what had then become, in strictly legal terms, a newly joined State of the new Indian Union; and to this day has ever since refused a referendum as to what the wretched Kashmiris themselves would really like to do.

Up there in the foothills of the Himalayas, I at least felt fine, and very pleased with myself. Even without an on-the-spot original sound recording of the Pakistan-Kashmir case, I had a scoop, and spent the following day filming Ibrahim, his rugged headquarters and ragged followers, in action. No other cameraman had then penetrated this side of the Kashmir story, at all.

With the same guide who had led me up from Pakistan in the first place, I then set off on the return journey. At the river frontier border crossing we halted. No further, I was told. Why, I asked? No answer. At least not vocally, but abruptly physically. I found myself seized, separated from camera and film, and flung into a cowshed with its door bolted behind me. A surprising and unexpected twist in my fortunes indeed - and for why? I gave up wondering, and went to sleep. Outside picturesque, but, so far as I was concerned in this predicament, plainly hostile guards patrolled all night. Was it because I had failed to film that evening meeting called by the 'Leader', possibly because I knew in advance of the planned Indian air attack, and in some way had been able to communicate with a camera which might, in another of the cases of its equipment, have been really a radio? No doubt it was known that I had already filmed the other side, and was a cameraman accredited to the enemy in Delhi as well. A plague on both your houses was certainly now my attitude, and the force of G.K. Chesterton's dictum that 'the man who sees both sides of a question should be hit on both sides of the head' seemed about to become a reality as far as I was concerned.

However, the next morning I was let out, camera and film were returned undamaged. Without a word of explanation, I was led, all in one piece, back to Flashmans. I lost no time in getting the exposed film away; and, despite this somewhat brusque treatment and experience at the hands of Kashmir's freedom fighters, continued to

plead the Pakistan case with my editors in New York. They, like most of the world then and for many years to come, tended to see only the Indian side of things.

In Kashmir, although I could not but see the justice of Pakistan's case, I operated a strictly and deliberately neutral camera. In combat, I defy anyone to shoot with a genuinely uncommitted camera. In fact I deliberately threw mine aside on one occasion, to assist actively, as a combatant, my own side in mutual survival.

This was in Greece, in 1944, towards the end of the Second World War. The Germans were pulling out. I was then a uniformed British Army Film Unit cameraman. I had talked my way into being allowed to join a small force of commandos, landed as a reconnaissance force at an abandoned airfield two hundred and fifty miles to the east of Athens. In just four jeeps, and less than a week, with one captured enemy gun, we had chased the retreating enemy to within less than thirty miles of the Greek capital.

But before they finally evacuated Athens, the Germans decided to turn around and test our strength. We were encamped on an abandoned airfield at Megara. Advancing down on our little handful was the rearguard of nothing less than the entire German Army Group in the Balkans.

Now the uniform I wore, and not the viewfinder of my camera, dictated my actions. I was ordered down to the beach at our back, to see if there were any signs of an enemy landing to our rear as well. All clear. And then, the most miraculous sight of a lifetime. Overhead, the sky suddenly filled with huge four-engined troop transports. Ours. They carried the leading elements of the airborne brigade of the main British force scheduled to liberate Athens.

A ground wind was blowing at more than thirty miles an hour. More than enough to call off any drop. But seldom, if ever, could reinforcements have been more urgently needed. Our own commander fired off a green smoke signal - announcing to those in the sky above that the ground was still in our hands. This was in fact the signal for chaos. The Germans started to shell us while, at only five hundred feet over our

heads, the paratroops poured out of their aircraft. I was almost too excited to hold my camera steady - and soon I didn't even hold it at all. For as soon as those paratroops hit the deck they were dragged by the wind in their still opened chutes over the ground at more than thirty miles an hour. Within minutes many were out in the sea, bleeding and broken, their ammunition and weapon containers likewise strewn all over the place. If any of us hoped to survive the now developing German counter attack, the task was to get as many and as much of these men and their equipment into action as soon as possible. Two of our four jeeps had gone back for supplies. That meant that my own vehicle was half the entire mobile and available transport. Frantically we dashed about in it, picking up survivors and weaponry. The paratroops' radio set was fished out of the sea; enemy shells bursting all the time in our midst.

Should I have just stood my ground, and shot all this with my camera? By not doing so, I missed what could have been possibly the most dramatic and exciting coverage of World War Two. Never before, or since, has a cameraman been already on the ground before an airborne invasion of his own side dropped on his head, in broad daylight. But what one was able to do with the invaluable jeep and one's own bare hands (of which there was only another one of the first and barely another thirty of the second) saved that airborne descent - and that particular liberation of Greece from disaster.

It was such excitements, and what seemed at the time such fulfilments with a hand-held camera in World War Two that decided me against any return to a film studio. Cameras, I now believed, should be out and on the streets. An obvious move on my part would have been into the then booming and confident world of the British documentary film. But for what I now wanted to do, what I now wanted to say, I needed a motion picture format more abrasive, less English middle-class if you like. Journalistic rather than aesthetic. Less Film Society - more Fleet Street.

Based very much on the lay-out of *Life*, in Britain the weekly newsmagazine *Picture Post* had also pioneered the pictorial report of news in depth. I had subscribed from

its first issue October 1, 1938. Many of its reporters and cameramen were to become the nucleus of television's new breed of communicators when, in the fifties, it succumbed (as too for a while would *Life* itself) to the new electronic medium. In its issue of January 21, 1939, *Picture Post* ran a story on the plight of Britain's 2,000,000 unemployed. It was reported of Bob Davies, a thirty-nine-year old Welsh coalminer that he had been out of work for seven years on end. Once a strong young boxer, he was finished as a man, coughing his lungs out with silicosis for which he received no compensation. Had any British feature film dared to put this human and national disaster on the screen. At that time, no. But we at pre-war MGM British had done so, and it was called *The Citadel*.

The classic British documentary of this subject, at that time, is *Coal Face*. But Cavalcanti's film is more poetical than political. Music was by Benjamin Britten, and words by W.H. Auden - including direct quotations of the statistics of death in mining disasters. But the manner of this presentation, combined with the inadequacy of the sound recording system then available to the Grierson group, lessened the impact of its appeal for mass action.

In the tenth issue of its second year of 1937, *The March of Time* came up with 'Black Areas', directed by Edgar Anstey. Here was the direct reality. Unemployed Welsh miners begging in the streets of London; two thirds of Britain's miners unemployed for thirteen years; boycott of a company union; a lock-out; demands for the complete nationalisation of Britain's coal mines and industry.

Only three months before I had at last succeeded in gate-crashing a studio and entering the make-believe world of the pre-war British feature film, *The March of Time* had come up with its first report of the 'British Hollywood' and 'the giant strides in the growth of the British film industry'. Always it had seemed to be where the real action was, reporting in a direct and muscular manner the true facts of a flesh and blood world. It was to be *The March of Time* for me.

Towards the end of the war against Germany I had shot film for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. UNRRA coped with the colossal economic problems of a wrecked continent, while simultaneously attempting the return home of the millions who had been uprooted by Hitler's war. *The March of Time* acquired some of this film and, on the strength of it, offered me that job, based in their London office. In 1947 I had not hesitated.

But by then time had indeed marched on from those halcyon and hopeful days of the New Deal and *The March of Time's* own aggressive youth. Soon there was another war on, the 'Cold War' between the United States and the Soviet Union. As this intensified, more and more *The March of Time* did indeed come to reflect the narrow and blinkered anti-communism of its parent publishing house Time-Incorporated. The era of Roosevelt was no more. The junior senator from Wisconsin, Joseph R. McCarthy, was beginning to make his bigoted way in the land. I had to admit to myself that I might have made a mistake. The arteries of *The March of Time* were hardening. Louis de Rochemont had moved on by way of Hollywood into factual feature production. His original *March of Time* series was now becoming increasingly non-objective in the doctrinaire nature of its reporting that 'We' of the 'West' were the 'goodies', 'They' of the Communist East the 'baddies'. Previously filming for UNRRA in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union immediately after the Second World War, I knew that there was more to it than this sterile over-simplification. But objectivity in this developing situation was beyond the scope or powers of my new masters. However, before its final end, *The March of Time* was to attempt one bold issue of genuine impartiality.

By 1950 the world was truly once again at war, in Korea. China, now under Mao, appeared to many to be bent on aggression. In Europe, an American general once again headed up a coalition of ten other nations, poised to counter the presumed Russian threat from the East. It was a time to take stock. The calendar reminded the editors of *The March of Time* that the human race had reached the mid-point of the twentieth century. Where were we heading? And so, in 'Mid Century - Half Way To Where?', *The March of Time* reviewed man's progress to date, and assembled an

intercut series of interviews with the presumably far-seeing, and certainly prestigious in their various fields of human endeavour.

'Though outwardly at peace, the world at mid-century is split into two conflicting concentrations of power', an introductory title proclaimed. The capitals of these conflicting concentrations of power were of course Washington and Moscow. Easy enough for *The March of Time* to film and record statements from the mighty in the first, but how to balance with the point of view of their Marxist adversaries in the Kremlin? No American communists were available or, at that time, able to speak. The twelve members of the Board of the American Communist Party had been indicted by a Grand Jury on charges of teaching and advocating the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force and violence. The call came to us in London. Same language, but safer if the message came from our side of the Atlantic. Off to King Street we went, to the headquarters of the British Communist Party, and to its General Secretary Harry Pollitt.

It seemed he had received approval from his masters - or was his welcome an indication of left-wing deviationism on his own personal part? Whatever the case, Pollitt quite clearly relished this opportunity to bear witness by way of the apparatus and lackeys of the imperialist enemy.

I filmed him in his office: a spartan interior - desk, plus a few chairs; on the mantelpiece, a bust of Karl Marx; on the wall, portraits - Lenin, of course, and Stalin - and one other. I peered hard. Pollitt noticed, and reminded me. It was Ralph Fox, the British writer, killed with the International Brigade in Spain.

Camera set up, sound channel checked. Pollitt needed no prompting: 'The working people of all capitalist countries will become the masters of the wealth they produce, as in the Soviet Union, China, and the People's Democracies.' In close-up: 'Poverty, unemployment, war, will be abolished. Mankind will rise to heights of social, economic and cultural progress undreamed of in the past. All roads will lead to communism,

and British and American imperialism can do nothing to stop this inevitable development.'

One dedicated and committed Marxist's view in 1950 of where we would be in the year 2001. What did others forecast for *The March of Time* and mankind in 'Mid-Century - Half Way To Where?' A leader of labour on the other side of the fence, by then so-called 'Iron Curtain', the CIO's President, Walter Reuther: 'Democracy's most challenging problem is to find a way to translate technical progress into human progress, and prove that men can enjoy economic security without sacrificing their political freedom. The communist masters in the Kremlin offer the promise of economic security at the price of political and spiritual enslavement. While rejecting communism, American labour is equally determined to resist the abuse of economic power in the hands of the great monopolies. While labour maintains that the rights and dignity of the individual are supreme to the state, we also insist that people are more important than profits, and that human rights come before property rights.'

A voice from the past, and a ration of rhetoric - from Winston Churchill, addressing a mid-century convocation at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 'Do not suppose that half a century from now you will not see seventy or eighty millions of Britons, spread about the world, and united in defence of our traditions, our way of life, and the world causes which you and we espouse. Let us move forward together in discharge of our mission, and our duty, fearing God and nothing else.'

The Chairman of the Board of RCA, David Sarnoff, speaking up for technology. 'In the next half century, people will see as well as hear around the world. Pocket-sized radio instruments will enable individuals to communicate with anyone, anywhere. Newspapers, magazines, mail and messages will be sent through the air at lightning speed, and reproduced in the home.'

For the arts, Herbert Read, also filmed by us in London: 'During the past fifty years all the arts have had to accept the triumph of the machine. Traditional forms of painting and sculpture have no function in our streamlined existence. If they are to find a

place in the civilisation of the next half century, the visual arts must effect a compromise with the machine. This must be done only within the terms of what we call abstract art.'

Spokesman for the military machine, so much the catalyst and customer of the mid-century industrial complex and infrastructure, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley: 'How a future war will be fought depends on when it is started. Begun tomorrow, it would be much like World War Two. Ten years from now, war can only be more destructive than the last. Science and technology, with the development of the guided missiles, target-seeking projectiles and other weapons has multiplied tremendously the destruction possible on the battlefield, at sea, and in the air. But this very scientific progress of weapons may be the ultimate deterrent to any future war. The more I work on the plans for defence, the more I am convinced that war is not inevitable.'

And finally, from Princeton, the voice and image of a servant of science; and the father, so-called, of the Atomic Bomb, to be hounded from public office in the years of inquisition which lay just ahead. J.

Robert Oppenheimer: 'Science has profoundly altered the conditions of man's life both materially and in ways of the spirit as well. It has extended the range of questions in which man has a choice. It has extended man's freedom to make significant decisions. No one can predict what vast new continents of knowledge the future of science will discover. But we know that as long as men are free to say what they think, free to think what they must, science will never regress, and freedom itself will never be wholly lost.'

And now that we have indeed reached that then distant Millennium would anyone care to give screen-time to where we might all be in 2050 ?