

# REVERB

## Legg Has Good Laugh

Many thanks for the issue of *Cinema Canada* with the article on the F.B.I. files (issue No. 56).

Reaction and comments? I was, originally against the publication of the files during the lifetime of those of Grierson's colleagues who might be mentioned in them. The American Inquisition, like the Spanish, was not concerned with pursuing truth, but with rooting out what might be perceived as threats to orthodoxy. History may not repeat itself; but it may go in spirals. And it would be naive to think that something akin to McCarthyism could not arise again — and perhaps with sudden rapidity. I considered that in such an event it was far from impossible that the content of the files — however scurrilous they might be — might be used afresh against those whose names figured in them.

The 'revelations' however — which I happen to have seen already — prove in fact to be so uproariously funny that I don't think they could do much harm in

any circumstances in which a measure of sanity still prevailed. I was, for instance, delighted to discover that I was denounced as being both a fascist and a communist by the same informant; and that both these somewhat opposite accusations were taken seriously by the authorities. I was, likewise, entranced to read that the Director of the F.B.I. (the great Edgar J. Hoover himself) warned the U.S. Attorney General that if Grierson were granted entry "complete protection of the security of the United States from the threat imposed by his presence in this country is impractical." Can you not imagine a stocky figure, grey-blue eyes ablaze, moustache bristling, black hat bashed on back of head, surveying the ruins of America and, dusting off his hands, announcing "Alone I did it"?

And the upshot? Hoover died a discredited man. Grierson did not.

One can only hope that the K.G.B. today is as silly as the F.B.I. was then. Uncomfortably, one doubts it.

Stuart Legg

## Seer Grierson

I think you have done an excellent job on the Grierson story. The idiocy of the FBI et al is well presented, and indeed since October last the idiocy and malice have been further and further revealed.

I only have one specific comment, and that is about Unesco. Grierson was definitely **not** sacked from Unesco. He wrote a personal letter of resignation to Julian Huxley (then Director General) in which he forecast (correctly) that the organization was going to strangle itself in its own bureaucracy and that he wanted no part or parcel of it under such terms.

I worked with Grierson and Huxley at Unesco during the period in question, and to my mind there was no doubt that Grierson's diagnosis was correct.

I read the letter of resignation, and I have no doubt now that it can be found in the Grierson Archive at the University of Stirling, Scotland.

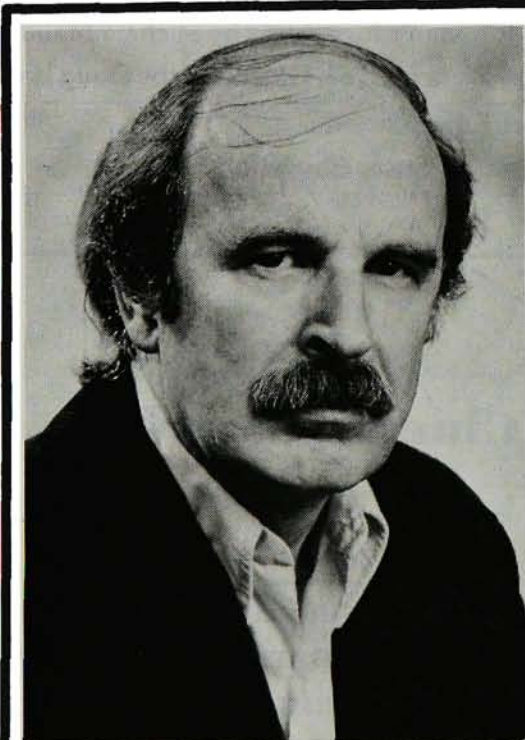
Basil Wright

## The Rubbo Rub

I should like to take issue with Ken Dancyger over some comments in his review of Michael Rubbo's *Solzhenitsyn's Children*. And those are his comments on Michael Rubbo and his Canadian audience. Since I was programmer of both this and last year's Grierson Seminar, I would first like to deal with the response to that film at last year's seminar.

Ken Dancyger complains about the lack of response from CBC and routine distribution by NFB offices. "Apparently the CBC is not alone. The film was raked over the coals at this year's Grierson Seminar." Firstly, it was last year's seminar. Secondly, it is incorrect to compare the Grierson to the CBC. The CBC won't show the film. The Grierson did! In fact, the film was shown double system prior to negative cutting, because I believed it was important to show a latest work by Rubbo, a filmmaker for whom I have a great deal of respect.

A couple of years previously the Seminar showed *Waiting for Fidel* and *I am a Tall Tree*. At that time, the CBC had



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*Richard Farrell*  
appeared in  
*The Great Detective*  
on CBC.

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declined to telecast **Waiting for Fidel**. It was suggested that Joey Smallwood had not struck them as being interesting Canadian content. Anyway, the Ontario Film Association on behalf of the Grierson Seminar sent a letter of protest to the CBC. I believe that the film was subsequently broadcast. Whether or not the OFA letter had anything to do with that, such action plus the first screening outside the NFB of **Solzhenitsyn's Children** does indicate that the OFA and the organizers of the Grierson Seminar recognize Michael Rubbo.

As for the negative response by the participants last year, I'm sorry, but one can't expect people to "embrace his work" if they don't like it, and just because it has been chosen for the seminar. The fact that it was Canadian and international in its theme had nothing to do with it. For instance, Kalle Lasn's **Ritual** — Canadian and about Japan — had a positive response. The participants, to be blunt about it, thought **Solzhenitsyn's Children** to be a very bad film; this is not the place to discuss why, since the remarks were addressed directly to Michael and within the confines of the seminar. For myself, I thought that Michael had gone wildly off track, but that doesn't affect my general opinion of him; after all, a good filmmaker should be permitted an average, even a bad film once in a while.

Now, as to the question of Rubbo's greater acceptance in the U.S. than in Canada. Because PBS has bought the film and Film Forum has shown it, it means that "They love Mike Rubbo in the U.S. and embrace his work." That's a rather embracing conclusion. To suggest that PBS necessarily bought it because it was by Rubbo is to show naiveté about television's reasons for buying shows. Who's "They" anyway? I don't know who "they" is from this review anymore than Ken admits knowing who "we" is in his remarks on resistance to Rubbo's films in Canada.

The issue of distribution of Rubbo's films is larger than Ken suggests in this review. It is part of the context of the NFB's current serious distribution problems and general malaise, and it would be more appropriate for the NFB to comment; although I would note in passing that Rubbo's films are being shown as part of a Cuban Film Festival in Toronto (with which the NFB is involved). The issue is also part of the general context of CBC's attitude towards the NFB and the independent producer; and ultimately it is part of the whole question of distribution and acceptance of Canadian documentary film.

**Donald McWilliams**

## Ghost Writer?

I draw your attention to your film review on page 32 of **Cinema Canada** No. 59, Oct.-Nov. dealing with CBC's **Crossbar**...

Who the hell is Carol Fisher and what's she doing beside me as scriptwriter? I've never heard of the woman.

Other than that, thank you for an intelligent if somewhat inconsistent review.

**Keith Leckie**

## Left Out!

*The following two letters were received concerning our "Music For Film" issue of **Cinema Canada**, No. 60/61.*

In your December publication of **Cinema Canada**, an article by Glen Morley was concluded with the so-called inclusive list of Canadian film composers. Having noticed my name did not appear on this list and since my entire income is based upon scoring music for films, I am writing to you so that a correction can be made in your next publication.

Some of my recent film scores are "Contact" for the *Nature of Things* (CBC) aired Nov. 21 nationally; "The Bankers," a half-hour film for the Canadian Bankers Association of Canada; "Three Families," a one-hour pilot for the half-hour series *Everybody's Children* on TV Ontario (to be aired in Feb./80).

I am optimistic that the omission of this composer from the list was not intentional and is due to the fact that Mr. Morley simply did not know that I exist. The intent of this letter is to remedy the situation with an addition to the list.

In the near future, I am planning on submitting articles to your publication which will likely be contrary to some of the more conventional views held by film composers!

**Lawrence Steinberg**  
**King Rockit Film Music**

I enjoyed the series and assume that it will be a particularly informative guide for Canadian film producers, and one of long-awaited necessity. However, I was somewhat surprised, as were several other film composer associates, at the deficiency of the list compiled by Glen Morley, of the Professional Directory of Canadian Film Composers. Before such a list was compiled, it would have been my hope that extensive research be completed so as not to omit the many talented and com-

petent film composer/arranger who may not have scored 250 feature-length films, but who do work professionally and are vital to the Canadian film industry. If one is trying to promote the use of Canadian talent in our films, it seems to me crucial that the list be complete, or not published at all.

It is my hope that it becomes known in the next issue of **Cinema Canada** that this, in fact, is the case, and when a new, more accurate and updated list is compiled, please include my name.

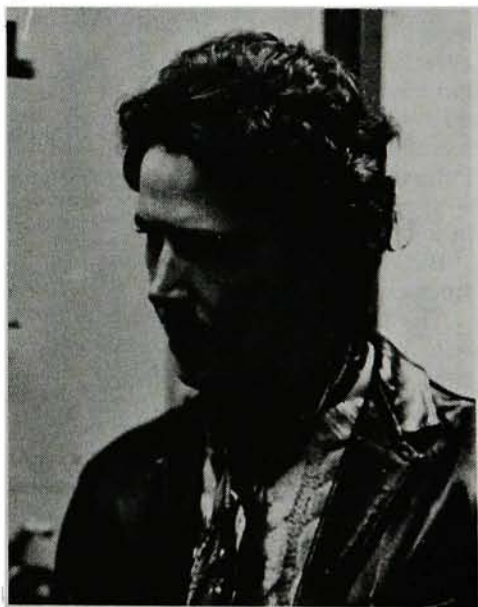
Thank you for your attention.

**Betty Lazebnik**

*The list in question was prepared by the newly formed Guild of Canadian Film Composers — a preliminary list of those who had expressed interest in the organization. The Guild is anxious to offer its services to all film composers across Canada, and can be reached at 133 Hazelton Ave., Toronto, M5R 2E4, or by phoning Ben McPeck at (416) 923-3316.*

## Errata

*Printers sometimes take matters into their own hands, and ours did in the last issue. After cropping a picture of Malcolm Muggeridge and John Mills-Cockell, he printed Muggeridge's picture instead of the composer's. Our apologies to Mills-Cockell, who appears below. Concerning the rock group, F.M., we have no one to blame but ourselves. They are currently composing the score for **The Last Chase** and not, as we reported in a cut-line, working for **Circle of Two**. Again, our apologies both to the group and to the productions. Ed.*



John Mills-Cockell recently received the CFTA award for his music in **The Newcomers**