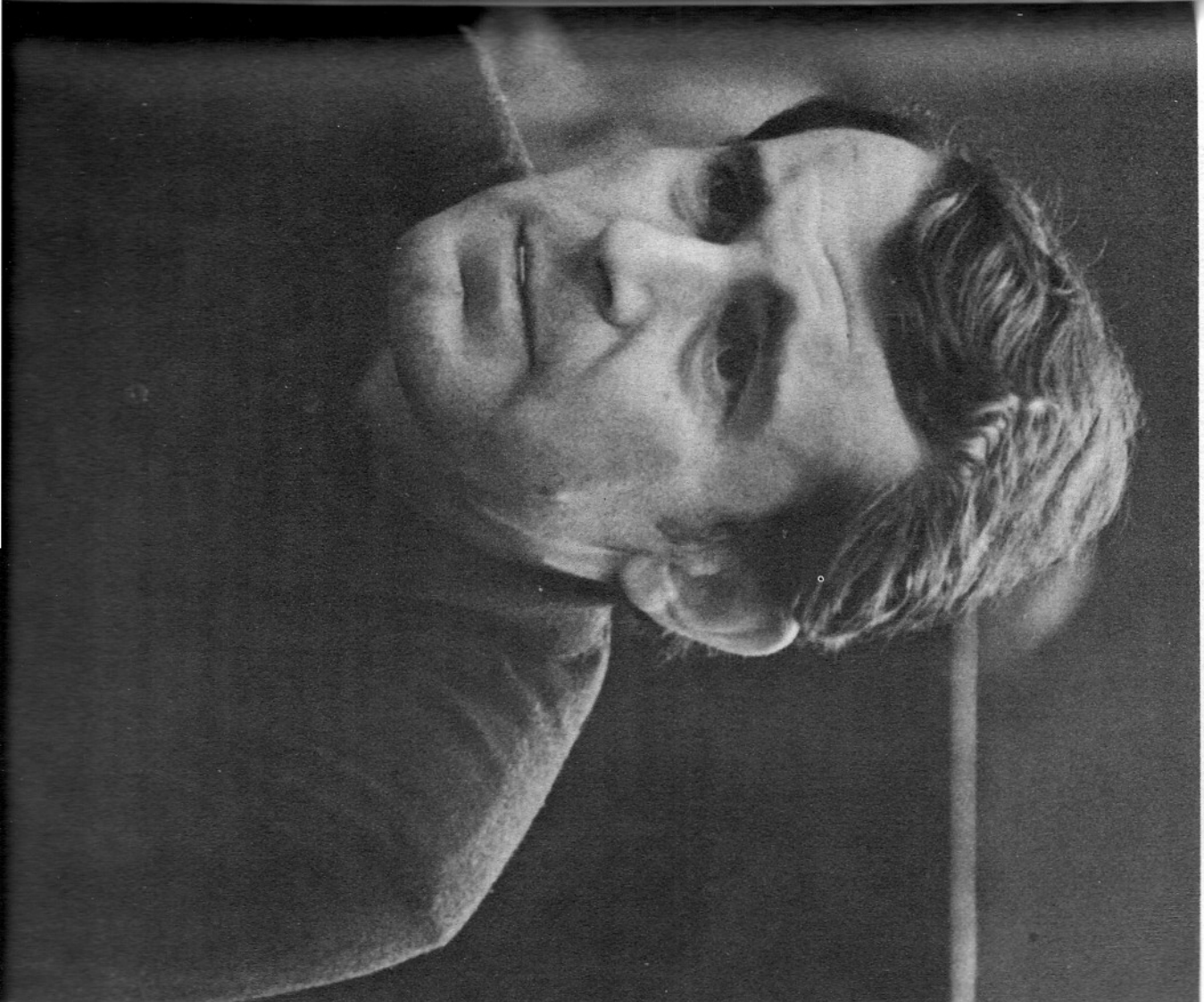


Miloš Forman



How did it happen? How did the dam of ice finally get broken through early in the 1960s? Several overall conditions played a part. A country that until recently had been represented as an exemplary model of socialist prosperity tumbled into one of the most drastic economic crises that Europe had seen since the war's end. Czechoslovakia was the only industrially advanced country in the world at that time whose national income was dropping from year to year, instead of increasing. The structure of the Czechoslovak economy, built up generation by generation since the middle of the previous century, had finally collapsed under the constant pressure of the Stalinist economic model. This considerably undermined the position of the political establishment, which, in the critical years around 1956, had still been able to use the argument of the country's relative economic well-being. The political crises grew more and more unwieldy as a result of the delay in rehabilitating the victims of Stalinism which — in the very different atmosphere of the early sixties — became the object of a political struggle inside the establishment. An additional — and related — factor was the intensification of the relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks.

With the position and credibility of the reigning apparatus in a weakened condition, the sphere of culture hurried to take advantage of the situation. Its first target was the punitive measures of the late fifties. Books that had been prohibited or scrapped were now published in mass editions; banned films were shown in movie houses; a number of small avant-garde theaters came into existence; the first exhibitions of abstract painting opened in the galleries; all restrictions in the field of musical esthetics suddenly evaporated. And the first appeals for cultural autonomy began to be heard. Prague soon became a city where it was possible to keep abreast of the contemporary world theater and literature to a degree that was superior to that of many West European capitals. Gradually this began to apply to foreign film as well (with the exception of motion pictures from America). The Union of Czechoslovak Film

and Television Artists became an important instrument for the protection of film work and its freedom from interference on the part of the political bureaucracy. Production groups that had been dissolved in the early fifties and reestablished in 1956 were granted considerable decision-making power. And, most important of all, in keeping as usual with the Soviet model, film production increased, and the slogan of the moment was "Enter Youth!"

When all this began to produce results, and the establishment once again tried to put the brakes on, it was too late. The collapse of the economy confirmed the demoralization of the ideology, and the Communists who were active within the cultural front not only quit playing the part of levers, but in many cases became the organizers of conditions for the free development of film work. Moreover, it was not just a single generation that surged forward, but essentially four generations simultaneously: The generation of Vávra, the one of Weiss and Krejčík, that of Jasný and Helge, and finally that of Forman and Schorm. And they were not beset by intergenerational conflicts, as would normally have been the case. Rather, they were firmly joined in a single rank, held together by the fact that, following numerous attempts since the end of the thirties, this was the first opportunity for all four generations to begin to assert their innermost intentions in comparative freedom. And that is how it happened that, standing up to the pressure of the political machinery, there were more than twenty directors of all ages, and with European reputations. No matter how hard it tried, the establishment could not divide or crush this front. On the contrary, its link with other spheres of culture and the arts grew stronger, and as the years passed, something was created that might be called a cultural anti-establishment, with its own socialist ideology, and its own, increasingly democratic, socialist organizations.

* * *

But when Miloš Forman and I first sat down for our in-

terview, the establishment's final attempt at a counter-offensive against the "Czechoslovak Film Miracle" was culminating. The theme of the counteroffensive — borrowed from the West — was that all the pioneering films made in the past years should be measured against the yardstick of box-office returns. (Notwithstanding the fact that those responsible for film distribution didn't make the slightest effort to promote such films and, in any case, the main motivation for the nationalization of film had been to protect it from the fatal pressures of the market.) In this situation, the temptation became even stronger to accept attractive offers from abroad, where many sensed the chance to hire the best people cheaply, and to make profitable deals.

Forman was one of the two foreign candidates for an Academy Award. He had just won a Czechoslovak State Prize. Loves of a Blonde ran for 25 weeks in a movie theater in Paris, 27 weeks in New York, and 17 weeks on Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard. Early in June he had shown the rough version of his new film The Firemen's Ball to European film magnate Carlo Ponti, who in this case played the role of co-producer. Then Forman left for London.

Now (that is, early in June 1967) on Národní třída, or National Avenue, in Prague, he has ordered a serving of roast duck with a double order of dumplings. He is wearing white levis and a turtleneck sweater, the way he used to years ago, and he sits back and says, "Well, what do you know? What's new?"

"What do you mean, what do I know. You tell me. How did you make out with Ponti? There are all kinds of stories going around Prague."

You know, it all may be one great big gamble, but at this point it looks as if Antonioni's Blow-Up cost Ponti a million dollars, and he has already made 15 million on it. So he is smiling... naturally. He seems to accept my film the way it is, but he feels that it is too short for distribution. But we're not going to change anything, not a foot of film; the picture is going to be the way I

want it. When I told that to Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz in London, they shook their heads and asked me to pinch them. But that's the way it is. Now I'm trying to think of something to supplement it to make up a program that would be acceptable in length for distribution in the regular movie houses that play Mr. Ponti's films, not the ones for sophisticated audiences.

What did you do in London?

That's one of those absurd situations. Some Americans invited me there to take a look at a Soviet play, to see if I would like to direct it. It is Arbuzov's Romance for Three — a nice play, not particularly daring or earth-shattering, but nice. A girl and two young boys in Leningrad under the siege promised each other all sorts of things, and the play shows how it all turned out years later, what happened to whom and what each of them did. I told them I'd think it over. Why should I be the one to do a Soviet story? Well, I guess they figure, since we're almost next-door neighbors....

Are there any advantages in working for a co-producer like Ponti?

You better believe there are. Like, money. And then there are technical advantages. If it weren't for the co-productions, we would never have had the film material to shoot with that we got for The Firemen's Ball. It also has the attraction — a risky attraction, perhaps — of something that a person has heard a lot about, but never tried. Suddenly he has a chance to do it. It may be sort of a flirtation with something; I don't know. It also has its disadvantages, which I am now discovering. In our cinematography, a film 6,000 feet long doesn't make any difference. To Ponti, it does.

Aren't you afraid of that kind of international connection? Are you considering continuing them?

That always depends on the sort of film you're talking about. If you have a script that would permit it, why not try it? Some

types of offers are something else, though. Scripts keep turning up from all over the place; and for the most part, they are bad. I probably wouldn't risk it in a case like that, in hopes of a miracle, even though there are quite a few offers — from America, England, France....

Less than five years have passed since you literally pushed your way through to make your first feature film at the age of thirty. Now you have all that fame, a State Prize, almost an Oscar. How does it feel?

It all went by too fast, somehow — except that, when you get right down to it, I am in just about the same situation I was in when I finished the first half of Competition. It was only three-quarters of an hour long. The producer asked, "What do we do with it? It isn't long, it isn't short." And so we made another story. You are always late in realizing things. At that time, no one could have guessed where it all would lead, or even that it might open a door to something. A person is always a little behind, but as a rule he realizes it too late.

One thing that played an important role in what happened within our film industry in the past few years is the time that we didn't work at all because we couldn't do what we wanted. Suddenly the door opened a little, and the mob standing behind the door broke it down. And then work got harder from one film to the next. Of course, the energy that had accumulated over the years, the energy with which we went flying through that door, that is something we are beginning to lose. Things get more difficult as time progresses.

When we were doing Competition, Black Peter and Loves of a Blonde, we were out of the public eye: no one knew anything about us, the films cost a few crowns to shoot, and nobody was all that impatient about them. And suddenly you are working on The Firemen's Ball; you feel all those eyes on you; you suddenly realize all the envy there is around you. Those things still leave me disoriented. All of a sudden somebody throws an obstacle in your path; it comes from a direction from which you would never have expected it. . . . As soon as a person masters one situation, he is long out of it, never to be in it again.

All over the world you see how 99 percent of the people, talents, artists, and I don't know what all, how for some reason or another they give up their uncompromising stands and demands. Now I'm trying to figure out what makes it happen, and whether we are destined to end up the same way. There are probably many reasons for it. For instance, the enthusiasm of the critics is something that constantly refills the vessel of your energy. But after a while the critics have to find other pets, and so this source of energy is lost to you.

As the years pass, your private life also becomes more complicated; it is harder to concentrate. I know that, in my own life, a maximum of enthusiasm for work is born of endless days of boredom. The more you work, the further you get from that apparently lazy life you used to lead, a life that was immensely more productive than life among producers, script editors, etc.

What is going to happen now? I mean to film, Czechoslovak film.

I don't know. All I know is that when we were in school, we stood in opposition to the previous generation. We tolerated and respected the one that came before it: it was far away, and somehow didn't really bother us. And so I think that the students at the school have to take a stand against us; they simply can't accept us. I can't imagine how they will begin, but the more unexpected it is, the better their chances.

And your generation? Will it hold its own, or will it fall by the wayside?

Neither. It will slowly lose its breath, with occasional fits and Faustian complexes that needn't always be a total loss. Internal and external circumstances play just about equal roles. It is hard to determine what just exhausted itself and what is the result of external pressures. And, of course, those pressures remain pretty much the same. There was much embarrassment surrounding the film Black Peter. It wasn't sent to the Cannes Festival. Letters to the editors about Loves of a Blonde gave the impression of a veritable campaign. The intensity is dif-

ferent every time, of course, but the basis is identical: the nervousness that characterizes the period of time between the moment a film is born and the instant it ceases to be suspect.

Here is a question for somebody: Is a person capable of seeing to it that the unrepeatable, the unique, does not repeat itself? Can a person avoid allowing the unique to be transformed into constant repetition? Because, in the end, both the artist and — with a certain delay — the audience cease to be amused. It would be ideal if a person could evolve smoothly and progressively from one stage of his work to the next stage, as "unrepeatable" as the last. But perhaps only Chaplin had conditions like that. In our situation, the way things stand, it definitely isn't possible.

Besides, work is slowing down dangerously in our cinematography. Those ten or fifteen people who made Czechoslovak film what it is today are not working at the tempo that they could. Look how many of them aren't doing anything, and for how long: Pavel Juráček, Věra Chytilová, Jaromil Jireš, Jan Němec. . . . I am convinced that if they could work regularly, at a pace that they can handle, they wouldn't have to look to Ponti or the Americans for cooperation.

You were in Hollywood for the distribution of the Academy Awards.

That is one of the times when one starts to believe in the immortality of film again. Imagine an immense building, with special bleachers for the movie fans. The guests have to pass across a sort of bridge, like fashion models; the announcer says their names into a mike, and the mob of teenagers in the bleachers screams incredibly.

I knew before I left Prague that *Loves of a Blonde* wouldn't get the Oscar — not only because it would mean that it would go to a Czechoslovak film two times running [the previous year the American Film Academy had honored *The Shop on Main Street* with an Oscar] but mainly because Hollywood, though part jungle, is at the same time very loyal. The French film *A Man and a Woman*, by Claude Lelouche, was being distributed by Allied Artists, which was on the verge of going broke. Five hundred people would have been out of work. And an Oscar means a million dol-

lars in additional box-office receipts. But maybe you'd better not put that in; someone might think I'm making excuses.

You've been all over the world in the last two years. How does it feel?

It varies. In some ways I am much more relaxed because I don't argue about certain things anymore. I know that a person who hasn't seen some things and some contexts from close up, for himself, simply cannot comprehend them.

And then, out in the world, you lose your fear of "big wheels."

It does have some unpleasant consequences because, so long as you haven't seen some things, you aren't tempted.

Of course, the main point is that being abroad just once isn't enough. The first time out, everything seems tremendously simple and easy. At home I heard people say, "Look, Boy, you've been outside; you could do all sorts of things; it would be child's play. . . ." But the closer you look at it, the more aware you are that it isn't child's play at all. You discover how things really are and, above all, you realize what language means — probably the most fundamental segment of culture that influences man.

Needless to say, it is senseless to tell this to anybody, since nobody will believe you until he finds out for himself. I always thought that with interpreting and translating, you can do anything. And then I saw what a damned hard thing it is. For example, in Hollywood, the only kind of film I could shoot with a clear conscience would be the run-of-the-mill class C Westerns, thrillers, mystery stories. But they won't let me do that; they've got lots of people for that. Nobody would give a person a contract if there were the risk of his prolonging his shooting by so much as a single day in an effort to do things a little differently. And if I wanted to work the way I do here, I would very soon be exhausted, from the language, from contact with people. But still, something inside a person is always tempted to at least give it a try.

And another thing. Whenever somebody at home says or does anything, whether it's the continuity girl or the studio director, you know what's behind it. I mean, here it is much easier to guess what this word or that action really means. Not there. In a foreign country you can master the rules of your profession,

but it is much harder to master the rules of the game. Things all over the world are illogical, but they have their order. And because the logic is missing, it is hard to understand them any place but at home.

[That conversation took place in summer 1967. The biweekly Film and TV News had just begun to appear; no one knew what would happen the next day, and this publication had to do the work of two, since Literární noviny, the Writers' Union weekly, had been closed down by the government.

Miloš Forman was just finishing work on his film about it all, about the firemen whose house burned down before their eyes while people were looting the raffle. He still believed that Mr. Ponti and Mr. Ergas would swallow his film, that Anderson and Reisz were wrong, and that what Ponti was really worried about was the footage. (Ponti eventually withdrew from the contract under different pretexts.) He had no idea of how it would all turn out with the fireman and with the raffle. He didn't even know that the firemen from the neighboring village would come to help with the fire when the fire was already out. And he didn't know a lot of other things, either.

When we sat down in Paris to talk in early 1969, Forman had worked abroad for almost a year. He was looking forward to getting home to his family and his friends, the firemen and the ones who had looted the raffle. Like the rest of us, he was a bit wiser. He had had a lot of new experiences, and he was short an illusion or two. He was still famous, not just at home but abroad too. Neither need nor a lack of interest in his work was forcing him to go back to Prague.

And so I asked him about new experiences, at least during the past three months.]

It's like this. I had a contract with Claude Berri and with Paramount. According to the contract, I was to turn in a script in the summer. I had the treatment; I thought we would wind it up in America in a week or so. But the moment we arrived, things began to happen that were far more interesting and significant than what our film was about. Martin Luther King was killed; there

was racial and student violence — in short, reality was much more noteworthy and exciting than art. It was impossible to concentrate on work. In order that we might finish our work, we left for France. No sooner had we arrived, late in April, than May broke out — the student revolution — and the situation repeated itself. Finally, we took off to finish the thing in a quieter place, in Czechoslovakia — which obviously ended up with our turning in the script now, in the winter of 1969.

Those are the facts. And what else?

It's probably a little too much for us. No one can expect us to gain wisdom. But who knows whether that isn't just rationalization. Take it from any side you want, reality is always so much more interesting than anything we can think up. It really gets a person's... how do you say it? Anyway, it makes you feel like not working.

What do you mean by gaining wisdom?

Forgetting what happened.

Why?

No, that isn't exactly it, either. So many things have happened, and so many questions have remained open, that a person keeps thinking real, true events through to an end. Not invented stories, fictions. But there is no end to it. There is a constant temptation to write an end to what is going on before your eyes.

In the summer before August 1968, Juráček, Němec and Jireš spoke about the desire to get away from immediate reality and a direct commitment.

The wish is sometimes father to the thought. But in June and July 1968, the situation was a little different. It's terrible. I wanted to film Škvorecký's Cowards. But I gradually realized that I was less and less interested in it. Under the pressure of events, the Czech nation had undergone such a tremendous purge of morality

and character that the very subject matter of Cowards. . . . And yet I was essentially doing the same thing that Němec, Jireš, and Juraček were talking about. I was enjoying getting ready for the comedy in America, which I view without the slightest emotional bias. For me personally, it was all only a game.

But an entirely different situation is arising. I have in mind, for example, what is going to happen, whether certain conceivable or inconceivable restrictions will be introduced into our film. I take after the rest of my generation in being pretty much of a pessimist. It's all a question of experience. What does it all mean to us, everything that happened? Look: a young person can be born into the depths of the Dark Ages, and perhaps it will even be good for him, so long as life's current is flowing out of the darkness.

Consider, for example, the generation of Weiss and Krejčík. They began to mature during the Nazi occupation, at a time of absolute darkness. But the current of development was headed out of it all; and in the end the results of their work were extraordinary. Then came 1948, which shifted them backward until, in 1956, new people succeeded in taking advantage of the timid rays of light. Theoretically, the directors of the previous generation had just as good a chance, but for the most part they didn't take advantage of it. I doubt that it was because they didn't want to.

Or take the next generation: Kachyňa, Brynych, Jasný, Helge. They started out in the period of the greatest intellectual darkness in modern times, after 1948; around 1956 they came up with outstanding films. They got their hands slapped in 1958, and when they were able to do things after 1962, again. . . I doubt that it was because they didn't want to, but somehow it wasn't possible to begin all over again, full force. They just did other things.

I don't know why it is, but I am afraid that if we get our hands slapped, then in a few years, when an optimum situation starts to form again — and it will happen, that can't be stopped — we won't know how to start all over again either. A subconscious defensive reflex against this outlook urges us to learn quickly to do what they call pure entertainment, clean fun, which is theoretically (but for the most part also practically) independent of the political and social situation.

If you look around in the West, it seems that everything is permitted. Why do they take so little advantage of it, say, in film?

That's why! Notice how the reaction to commercial pressure often manifests itself in the desire to do films that are noncommercial in form. If a producer feels that he isn't going to lose money, he'll let you do a pro-Communist film, a pro-Chinese film, anything. But he is scared to death if you show a desire to make a film praising — I don't know — the greatness of private enterprise, in a form that most people wouldn't understand. And then, of course, there is another thing. In a society in which ideas circulate freely — and far more quickly than in film — in the press, and on radio and TV, no film artist is going to feel the urge to say the same thing with a year's delay.

Another reason is the fact that it is generally young people who come up with films that demonstrate any spiritual commitment. It is very difficult in the West for a young person to break in, no matter what he does. That is, in itself, one way that socially conscious and interesting films are liquidated. That kind of thing can be done, on the other hand, where the entrance of young people into the field is regulated by somewhat more reasonable criteria and points of view. In that sense there is tremendous importance in the little sentence in the nationalization decree that says that artistic considerations play a prime role, over and above commercial considerations. In practice, this means that young people have a far easier time of it when they are starting out here than they do in a commercial film industry. It is a known fact that young people are generally the least conventional, while the essence of commerciality is in the things that the public are used to. The safest bets commercially are things that are ten years old. Fortunately, it does happen — though infrequently — that something entirely new achieves a maximum of commercial success. Something like that introduces mayhem into commercial production; and so from time to time it attempts something new. But when something new appears and is unexpectedly successful, they'll still be manufacturing imitations of it ten years later.

So, when you compare the two systems?

As soon as it happens that in a system of nationalized film, which has placed art over money, artistic considerations cease to be controlled in the name of a single interpretation of reality, in the name of a single ideology, you have the most ideal, the most humanistic setup that filmmakers can dream of. Whenever nationalized film has not achieved such decontrol, it is worse than the commercial system because in the latter you at least aren't under the eagle-eye of ideological censorship, although it does tend to come up with some producers there, too. Anyway, there is always the chance that you will find some fool who will let you have the money you need.

The artist's situation is very difficult, but it isn't hopeless; there is always a chance. Our system would be ideal if it could transform that hope into a certainty. Then one might hope to make a good film. A person needs both hope and certainty — simultaneously. In the system of commercial film, all there is is hope. Of course you are really bad off when you have neither certainty nor hope.

Will art ever win out over commercial entertainment in cinematography?

Art will probably never win, but then it won't get entirely beaten down by the pressure of commercialism either. A certain ratio, variable within limits, between art and entertainment will maintain itself. Perhaps as time passes the ratio will be weighted in favor of art. Something very interesting is happening in America, and it may bring some interesting results within the next few years. But then again, it may not. All sorts of people, literally, are beginning to make film: there are film departments at all the universities; just about everybody has a 16-millimeter camera; a motion picture camera is turning into what a pencil and paper used to be. That doesn't mean that by the day after tomorrow the industry will be swamped with hundreds of motion-picture Hemingways and Faulkners. As yet, this current hasn't had any influence on the work of large American film outfits. But still, underground and independent films are coming increasingly to the fore. When thirty or forty good independent films are made annually, I'd bet my right arm that three or four of them will be really

worthwhile. Of course, any time someone really achieves something that way, the doors to the big studios immediately open wide to him. But there he has a rough time asserting a modern viewpoint.

Can our cinematography stay away from commercialization?

Well, from the commercial point of view, it can't help itself. Our paradox rests in the known fact that the only truly big commercial successes of Czechoslovak cinematography, at least abroad, are so-called "artistic" films.

You've been abroad for nearly a year, with only short intervals at home. What about you, now?

It's a — a complicated situation. If all goes well, I would like to make at least one film abroad, to prove to myself whether I can or not — and also just to do it, so the unknown would stop being a temptation, and partly because I don't know what kind of a film it would be. It will probably be like — and unlike — everything I have done to date. I have spent thirty years living among the people I made films about, so the films were the result of a certain knowledge, a certain cognitive process, though not a conscious one. Just life. Whereas here... finding a story isn't hard. Stories are all over the place! But writing a script about people that you've known only a few months... If I were to be altogether honest, I would probably postpone making the film from year to year; and I haven't the slightest idea when the hour comes when a person has the right to stop consuming and start telling. But it probably won't work out like that; and I am going to have to begin, even though, I swear, I still don't know what it is going to be.

But I'd like to shoot the next film at home, I really would.

Could you elaborate on that last statement?

No, I really couldn't. I only know that I truly want to do my next film in Czechoslovakia, apparently out of some instinct for emotional self-preservation.

[That would have made a lovely conclusion to the interview. Really lovely. Dignified. Suitable. In the spirit of patriotic journalism. A real gem. But I thought of something just then, and that ending flew away. Forman had once told me about how he had taken part in a revolution at Cannes in 1968. He had said:]

"I was living at the Hotel du Cap. The other guests included about five oil magnates, some princess or other with her whole court, the Beatles, and Orson Welles. When you pressed a button, the bed rocked. In the morning the masseuse dropped in. Then breakfast. Then we went for a swim in the pool — with the Beatles, with Orson Welles, with the princess, and with the oil magnates. In the afternoon a big car drove up and took us to Cocteau Hall, to make a revolution. Everybody applauded us. Then we drove back to the hotel. Like true revolutionaries, we had the chauffeur stop the car on the way back, and we tore down the French flag. Patriotic whores, who were walking the street plying their trade nearby, shook their fists at us and yelled. When I got back to the hotel, I hung the flag out of my window as a trophy.

"In the morning the masseuse dropped in . . . and everything started all over again. The third day of the revolution, Jan Němec said that it was getting on his nerves, that he would stand up in public and refuse to withdraw his film from the competition, put on his tuxedo and lace shirt that evening. . . . He really did succeed in forcing his way up to the platform. There they grabbed hold of him, shook his hand, and solemnly proclaimed that Czechoslovak film director Jan Němec had also joined the revolution, and withdrawn his film. . . and so forth. Němec saw, sadly, that all was lost; so he went out and got drunk. I climbed into the car. On the way back to the hotel I tore down a French flag and, accompanied by the curses of the patriotic whores, rode to the hotel. The flag was gone from my window. With revolutionary indignation, I threw myself at the liveried porter. Mr. Orson Welles, whose window was directly below mine, did not wish any flag — that was what the porter told me, politely. With a sensation of revolutionary frustration, I went to my room and my rocking bed. . . ."

[While Forman was telling me this story, I had to laugh. Forman likes to tell stories, and he is a good story-teller. Except, of course, this one wasn't the least bit amusing. Still, it captures pretty well the conflict situation in which Western European intellectuals find themselves. I told Forman what I was thinking.]

That's pretty complicated too. French directors today are practically the only ones in the West who have succeeded in something. They realize that in order to retain at least some of their independence, they have to be their own producers. That isn't the case in Italy, or England either. At least they have to be co-producers. They do, in fact, achieve a certain degree of independence; but this also forces them to try not to lose all their money, and with it, the ground they've gained. That makes them compromise, which in turn makes them edgy. The results are motion pictures that can be characterized as intelligent and tasteful commercial film — which naturally arouses further nervousness because they aren't satisfied from either point of view. It isn't "James Bond," but neither is it The 400 Blows.

In Cannes, this accumulated nervousness surfaced and exploded. And it turned out that — within the overall system here — a partial reform of the film industry is impossible. In the final analysis, they themselves are half in favor of a radical reform, and believe in it, while their other half is closely linked with the status quo. During the day they attend to their business letters, and at night they are artists.

That kind of symbiosis of the producer (or the co-producer) and the director in a single body is slowly beginning to appear elsewhere as well. In England and in Italy, of course, films are being made almost exclusively with American money, whereas in France part of the investment is French; and even the state contributes something now and then. And yet it was in England that Lindsay Anderson made an exceptional film with Paramount. Of course, the situation isn't going to change overnight. A few years ago, American filmmakers turned to European directors. That was when a few European films chalked up successes on the American market. Thus, for instance, Tony Richardson or Serge Bourguignon went to Hollywood. The effort was a flop, and Holly-

wood closed its doors again. Why? Those people wanted to do in Hollywood what they had been doing at home.

Then the situation forced some American to open the door a crack; and all of a sudden Paramount has three huge box-office successes by Europeans: Zeffirelli, Polanski, and Vadim. What is the reason? Maybe I can put it this way: The ones who flopped had tried to bring their own emotion, intelligence, and heart to Hollywood. The ones who succeeded just brought sort of a European intelligence with them. They make perfectly "Hollywood" movies, which differ from the real thing only in a certain type of intelligence. And that makes for success. I once saw Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet on stage. The film version he made in Hollywood is incomparably colder. To make a long story short, they left their nostalgia behind in Europe.

J. M. Domenach would say "the European sense of the tragic."

America wants brains, not a heart, feelings, problems. To hell with that. Sentimental or not, America's tears don't come from the heart. It doesn't cry for the love of its neighbor, but for love of itself.

[And that was the end. I didn't realize what a potent end it was until later.]

Summer 1967/Spring 1969