



Introduction to political economy by Dr Rees : Charlie Chaplin and Politics

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Summary

1- Introduction

2- Axis 1

3- Axis 2

4- Conclusion

5- Bibliography

Introduction

Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin was a teenage boy, known as Charlie Chaplin, born April 16, 1889 in London, England. During his travels in the United States, Keystone Studio offered him a job. He was asked to improvise in disguise, and that's how Charlie Chaplin created the character of Charlie the Tramp. From 1914, he made his own films and achieved great success. Its cost has increased tenfold, and all the studios want to release their Charlie. When all the actors and filmmakers felt exploited by the film industry, Charlie Chaplin founded the United Artist Company. In 1917, the actor played the role of a tramp, became the spokesperson for weak, immigrant, unemployed and exploited workers and created his own production house. When he made a name for himself in his own land, he was once criticized for not wanting American citizenship.

On the basis of the facts stated previously, I therefore pose the following problem: How through his art, Charlie Chaplin was able to fight against nationalism and social inequality due to the political currents of the time.

To answer this question I will develop two axes concerning two of these most popular films: The Dictator and Modern Times. A first axis will be devoted to his fight against the rise of Hitler's nationalism and a second axis will be devoted to the social class struggle which has long been favored by the Fordism of Henry Ford.

1. The dictator, cinema committed against nationalism

For a long time, Charlie Chaplin (Charlie Chaplin) didn't believe in talkies, and it wasn't until 1940 that *The Dictator* was surprised. This film is a satire of the German invasion of Europe, and it is also a satire of Feller. Chaplin was overwhelmed by the rise of nationalism and decided to talk about it in his film. Many people find that Adolf Hitler and Charlie Chaplin have a common character. Both came from poor backgrounds and both wore the same beards, so they were known around the world and were all the rage at the time. Therefore, this physical similarity is very appropriate for making fun of the dictator in the movie. For this feature film, he has renounced silence, he believes that this process is outdated and that political information will better spread the word. The film was a huge success. However, the film was banned in Europe and was only screened in France in 1945.

"I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor, that's none of my business. I don't want to conquer or rule anyone. I would like to help everyone as much as possible, Jews, Christians, Pagans, Whites and Blacks ... "

This is how the dictator's final speech begins. This is a crucial moment in the work "à la Chaplin". It is without a doubt the author's most ambitious film, and it is also a truly humanitarian work, preserved sixty years later. Full power. The "highlight" of this film is obviously its final speech. If it was a success (Chaplin's biggest public success), then all critics of the time criticized the director's famous speech and its essence (too human for some, too "communism"). In terms of form: the tone of the film underwent a fundamental change during the speech - the essence of the film is in the recording of funny and satirical comedies - really serious and politically informative. Technically, it's a tour, as Chaplin was in the scene for a very long time, during which he spoke directly to the audience.

This scene is very powerful, full of courage and sobriety: a real political act has been committed.

2. Modern times, A social goal.

At first glance, "Les Temps Modernes" appears to be an imitation of Fordism, a new method of production invented by Henry Ford on the basis of specialization and the division of labor, with the aim of increasing the productivity of workers. But this film not only has an economic impact, but also a social objective: the defense of the person as a person. Chaplin condemned estrangement, and thus adopted the theme Karl Marx loved, which was not only produced by assembly-line work, but also by the entire capitalist economic system. Since man no longer owns the goods he produces, he no longer owns himself. He himself becomes a stranger, pure labor at the mercy of the owner of the means of production. However, Chaplin does not advocate socialism, he did not offer a social solution, and his films essentially condemn.

Chaplin embodies the relations of production in a rather crude way. The worker is at the bottom of the production line and the manager is at the top of the production line. But Chaplin seems to show that everyone is a victim of the same system, because even the director has to take drugs to withstand the pressure of the environment. Modern times, beyond its intentions and ridiculous power, are a brilliant reflection of the condition of modern people. Filmed in the 1930s, today's films retain their real key strength, their timeliness and their strong relevance.

Conclusion

I chose to study these films as a subject, as these films are perhaps the most important works in Charlie Chaplin's career. You will see Chaplin dedicate himself personally to portraying an era of injustice and inequality in the United States in his films. He also wanted to make the public aware of the seriousness of the facts. He was able to invest in his own films and dedicated his life to his work. All of this had a major impact on his private life, as he was taken from the United States by the Communist Party which systematically denies accusations of communism. He evokes social injustice by integrating different literary works in his films. The two main registers are the satirical and comic registers. Satire is used to criticize ridiculed events.

Satire tries to gain the support of the audience by making them smile or even laugh. Therefore, the recorder is paired with the manga recorder, which is based on some unexpected features, situations or puns that can have destructive effects and are designed to make viewers laugh. Therefore, Charlie Chaplin can criticize each of these two registers. It is precisely thanks to the political tendency of the time that Charlie Chaplin was able to lead the fight against nationalism and social inequalities.

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