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# EDITORIAL

The comfortable York film students were empty but not silent. Instead they sang a wistful tune: "Oh, to be an American filmmaker!"

The comfortable seats were empty but not silent. Instead they sang a wistful tune: "Oh, to be a German filmmaker!"

Tuesday night's meeting between Norbert Kueckelmann, ace German film director and former lawyer, and members of the York film community was further evidence of the disturbing gulf between our two film cultures. While we have to huff and puff to turn out three quality pictures a year, the German's effortlessly turn out at least 20 gems a year for a fraction of the cost of a North American film.

Situated according to their politics, professor Ian Jarvie on the German's right, professor and film theorist, Robin Wood on the left, the Canadian panelists found little to like about four German films shown in the exhibition "Authority and Fear in New German Cinema".

Jarvie, an articulate critic, managed to eke out something

about the German films being 'punkish' in style, and concerned mainly with a degradation of authority. Jarvie claimed that the German filmmakers uniform avoidance of the technical advancements made by Hollywood, limits the potential viewing audience of the socially committed German films.

Wood, the Atkinson film department head, ridiculed Kueckelmann's claim that the latter's films were progressive. Instead, Wood maintained that Kueckelmann's films presented simple realism without offering any solutions. Wood's choice of a socially constructive film?—*Reds*.

Kueckelmann answered his critics with the assertion that he makes films about issues that are close to him. "The big problem in Germany now is between the youth and the bureaucratic authorities. This is why we have the rise of terrorism and neo-fascism. The problem is bigger than East versus West, or capitalism versus communism," he said.

By evening's end it was clear that the Canadian panelists

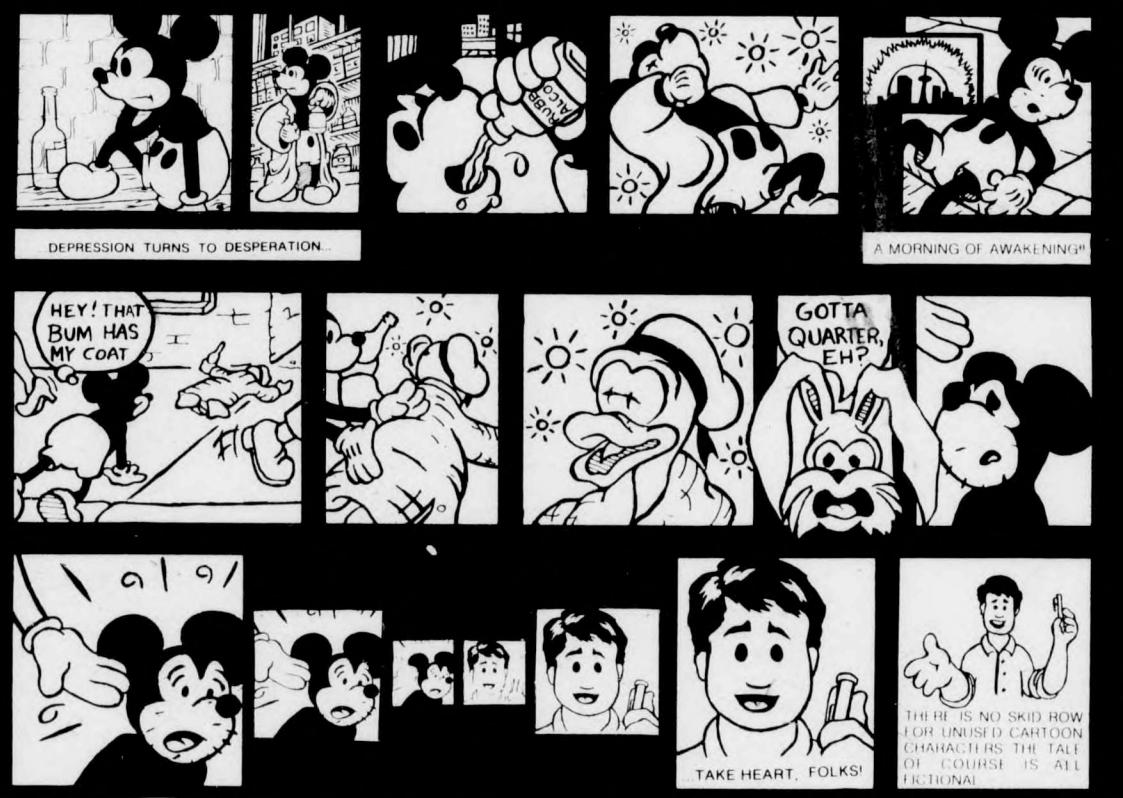
criticisms centred mainly on the German directors' insistence in dealing with their contemporary surroundings. Yet, rather than being criticized for such a philosophy the Germans should be applauded. They know that they needn't go farther than the street below for a good story. The quality of the films confirm that.

So Norbert Kueckelmann will return to Germany and make more films like *The Last Years of Childhood*. We in North America will watch more films like *Reds*. And our young filmmakers will continue to model themselves after such current Hollywood fare. The empty seats that were soaking up Monday night's panel were confirmation of the indoctrination film students at York have undergone. They neither knew, nor cared that Kueckelmann was speaking.

Wood offers Warren Beatty as a model for student filmmakers, but what would the result be if he found his way into the Nat Taylor Cinema?

It wouldn't help us find a Canadian cinematic identity, it would only fill the seats.

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