

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1947)

Heft: 1068

Rubrik: Academy Cinema

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ACADEMY CINEMA

Presents

LA LOI DU NORD (A)

"La Loi du Nord" is an unusual film to have come out of France. Set partly in America and partly in the north of Canada (where the exteriors were shot) it deals with one of the most significant questions of our time: the problem of the man of power, the individual who attempts to be a law unto himself. The hero, Robert Shaw, is an industrialist who has reached the highest pinnacles of wealth and power and does not recognise any outside limitations on his will. He commits a murder and thereby comes into conflict with a society which attempts to restrain him — a conflict which he tries to solve by a flight to the Far North. But even there he cannot content himself with a secondary role and imposes his leadership on the two people who accompany and assist him.

Yet, the tremendous will-power and strength which Robert Shaw exerts remain sterile and cannot even save him from the pursuit of the law. In the end it is Jacqueline, the girl who accompanies him, who, dying, atones for him and whose gentleness and humanity may save him from the worst consequences of his own actions. It is made clear that Robert Shaw's will, which has moved in the region of violence and murder, leads not to greater happiness for himself and those around him, but to the death of the only person he loves in the cold, frozen wilderness of the

Far North. And it seems as if, by a subtle and perhaps unconscious symbolism, the endless plains of ice over which Shaw is driven by his demonic will, represent the inner sterility and emptiness of one who is moved by his will to the exclusion of all other considerations and who, finally, can only escape like a hunted animal — from the police, from society, from himself . . . deeper and deeper into a country from which there is no return.

"La Loi du Nord" is a magnificent demonstration of Jacques Feyder's talent to create an atmosphere of unusual intensity, an atmosphere in which the exterior environment is not only brought before the spectator's eyes with superb realism but also serves to objectify the inner condition, the thoughts and emotions of his characters, creating that fusion of inner and outer reality which is the prerequisite of all great art. The acting is on a high level: Michele Morgan has never been lovelier, nor given a finer performance than in the role of Jacqueline; Pierre Richard-Willm brings to life a most difficult part with complete conviction, and Jacques Terrane, a newcomer, reveals himself as a sensitive actor with an almost irresistible boyish charm. Charles Vanel, well-known as one of the finest character actors in the French cinema, once again gives an outstanding performance as the simple, honest Sergeant Dal, who is faced by the classical choice between love and duty and acquits himself with both honour and humanity.

In the same programme will also be the premier run of "The Promise," a story of Palestine.

