

= La tragedia del silencio =

La tragedia del silencio (literally " The Tragedy of Silence ") is a Colombian silent melodrama film directed by Arturo Acevedo Vallarino and first screened on 18 July 1924 at the Faenza theatre in Bogotá . Filmed in black and white , it tells the story of a man suffering from leprosy . It was the first Colombian film during the silent film era with a film score , which was performed during the projection and was written by Alberto Urdaneta Forero .

At its first screening , the film was well received by critics and the public , and was later shown in Panama and Venezuela . Given the theme of leprosy , the film was criticized by some who believed it would have a negative impact on the image of Colombia . Despite parts of the film not surviving , the Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano have retained a 22 minute 45 second excerpt from the film .

= = Synopsis = =

La tragedia del silencio is a romantic melodrama . The 22 minute 45 second excerpt of La tragedia del silencio that remains shows that the film centres on a man suffering from leprosy . He is an engineer working for Ferrocarril Central , and in his spare time develops plans for an orphanage with a family friend , Father Alberto . After being informed that he has leprosy , he tells his wife and daughter of his fatal illness . A student then courts his wife . As the engineer is about to commit suicide , he learns that his diagnosis is incorrect , as a medical worker confused his test results with those of someone else . The engineer overcomes adversity and saves his marriage .

= = Cast = =

Lely Vargas
Alberto López Isaza
Gonzalo Acevedo Bernal as the student
Isabel Vargas S.
Alberto Argáez
Inés Medina Niño
Germán Santacoloma
Mercedes Niño Medina
Jorgito Acevedo González

= = Production = =

= = = Project = = =

Arturo Acevedo Vallarino was the producer and director of a theatre company in Antioquia and one of the pioneers of Colombian cinema . After the introduction of foreign films into Colombia , theatres were not as profitable , leading Acevedo to create a production house in 1920 , Acevedo e Hijos (Acevedo and Son) , originally known as Casa Cinematográfica Colombia . Acevedo wrote and directed the film .

According to Colombian film critic Luis Alberto Alvarez , to promote their film productions before releasing them , Acevedo e Hijos launched magazine Cine Colombiano , the first issue of which was published on 1 May 1924 . In this first issue , the main article reveals the prologue and first four chapters of the film , with Coutin H. González credited as the author of the article . The musical score of the film , written by Alberto Urdaneta Forero , is also in this issue .

= = = Implementation = = =

La tragedia del silencio was shot in temporary studios in the house of a priest named Moreira , which is now the location of the Jorge @-@ Eliécer @-@ Gaitán theatre . Initially , the film was shot with a Pathé camera with a 45mm lens , but later a 35mm Kodak Ektachrome was used . The chemicals used for the production of the film were purchased from Óptica Alemana , a company located in Bogotá founded in 1914 by Ernesto Schmidt Mumm . The photographic print was manufactured by the scientific section of airline SCADTA .

With La tragedia del silencio , production company Acevedo e Hijos ensured that this was the first full @-@ length entirely Colombian film , with all actors and production team members being born in Colombia . It was the only Colombian film during the silent film era (1894 to 1929) to have a score .

= = Reception = =

The promotion strategy for the film played on nationalist sentiment by announcing that La tragedia del silencio was the first authentically Colombian movie . It was first screened to the public on 18 July 1924 in Faenza theatre in Bogotá , attracting a large audience . There were several technical problems including power failure and projector errors , caused in particular by the nervousness of the director and his son , the director of the theatre Joaquín Francisco , and operator Gustavo Francisco . However , the film was well received by the public and the press , although some viewers complained about the poor image quality . The theatre was crowded during the seventeen showings of the film , but it was not very successful financially .

The first screening of La tragedia del silencio in Medellín was on 9 October 1924 , and was praised by the local press as an important development for the Colombian film industry . Following this screening , Colombian industrialist Gonzalo Mejía provided financial support to Acevedo e Hijos , resulting in the release of their next film Bajo el Cielo Antioqueño in 1925 . The film was also successful in Panama and Venezuela .

As the film addresses the topic of leprosy , some viewers voiced concerns that Colombia was frowned upon by the world because of the film , and that it resulted in the decrease of the price of Colombian coffee abroad .

= = Analysis = =

= = = Topics covered = = =

La tragedia del silencio does not address political , social , or economic topics , nor different cultural aspects such as the lifestyle of the Colombian population . Acevedo did not intend for the film to create controversy , so it does not mention the situation in Colombia , the plot of the film instead focusing narrowly on one man 's struggle between life and death . Although leprosy is the main theme of the film , there are other storylines that follow different protagonists and their motivations , such as the husband learning he must face his destiny when he learns about his disease , which requires him to separate from his family . After learning he does not have leprosy , he must confront a rival (the student) to regain the love of his wife .

The first issue of Cine Colombiano contained several images from La tragedia del silencio that could be allegories of Jesus , the Muisca people 's myth of Bochica , or the Colombian civil wars . The film has a religious aspect in the character of Father Alberto , who refers directly to Colombian Father Rafael Almansa .

= = = Film style = = =

In an attempt to imitate the conventions of silent cinema in its infancy , the staging and acting of the film are exaggerated and artificial . The equipment used by Acevedo had limitations , causing the indoor scenes to be underexposed and the outdoor scenes to be overexposed . The Pathé camera

did not allow camera movement , had imprecise definition , and dark rendering . The Kodak Ektachrome lacked a large depth of field , producing a flat image , and required good lighting to operate effectively . Overhead shots are most commonly used , with some medium shots and a small number of large shots .

= = Conservation = =

In 1987 , the documentary Más allá del silencio La tragedia gave an overview of the work done by the Acevedo family . The documentary takes its name from La tragedia del silencio , however it also aimed to commemorate the first sound film of Colombia , Los primeros ensayos de cine parlante nacional , directed by Acevedo in 1937 .

The Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano is conserving and restoring the first nitrocellulose recordings of Colombian films , as well as some earlier Columbian films . It has been able to preserve 22 minutes and 45 seconds of La tragedia del silencio , at 18 frames per second . In 2009 , the Fundación Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano announced that it was releasing ten DVDs , including work by the Acevedo family . On 24 August 2009 , the restored version of the film inaugurated the seventh festival of Colombian cinema in Medellín (Spanish : Festival de Cine Colombiano Ciudad de Medellín) .