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Oscar Nominated Movie All Quiet on the Western Front Underlines the Futility of War

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Los Angeles



All Quite on the Western Front, helmed and co-written by Edward Berger, the film, now on Netflix, is running for the Best Picture and Best Director Oscars.

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All Quite on the Western Front is a gripping film that hits you hard.

The world knows and understands the sheer futility of war, but vested interests like governments and weapons dealers provoke and keep conflicts going. Eric Maria Remarque's anti-war drama gets its first German-language adaptation after Hollywood had a go at it in 1930 and 1979. Titled All Quiet on the Western Front and helmed and co-written by Edward Berger, the film, now on Netflix, is running for the Best Picture and Best Director Oscars.

Debutant Felix Kammerer is Paul, a mere German teenager, who, encouraged by his school friends, joins the German Army at the fag end of World War I. He is absolutely naive and believes that he can march into Paris. But is shocked to find blood and gore greet him on the horrific battlefield.

Paul is innocence personified, much like many other teen soldiers, who were fed on patriotic fervour by the authorities, and led into bloody battlefields. The boy is the symbol of all that has been deceitful, and how the generals fooled young boys into thinking that they were the most important assets of the war and that they alone can help win the battles.

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Crushed and crumpled into tiny trenches, Paul and other soldiers are a bundle of dirt and mud as they are

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ordered to attack the French soldiers in this case. It was probably one of the last trench wars that were ever fought.

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The movie then moves to a railway carriage at Compiègne: the German reps are being forced to sign a one-sided peace agreement by the French. The French offer no face-saving device to their German counterparts, and once the papers have been signed, much to the humiliation of the Germans we see one German general tell his boys that they have time for one last battle to save their fatherland before the armistice kicks in.

All Quiet on the Western Front is a gripping work that hits you hard. Scenes of battle with the German army in disarray are disturbing, and we understand the shaming of the Germans laid the seeds for World War II, when Hitler egged his young men into a frenzy by reminding them how they had been treated by the French and others. WWII was catastrophic with millions dying and being maimed. Cities were reduced to rubble, Tokyo and London being two examples.

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The moot point here - has the world realised that nothing can be achieved by violence! I doubt it having seen so many wars after that- even on our own soil. I remember a character saying in a Tamil film that there is nothing that cannot be solved through dialogue. How true.

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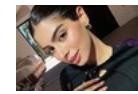


About the Author

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN *Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...*[Read More](#)



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