

Documentary

A HISTORY OF THE NON-FICTION FILM

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Erik Barnouw

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IMAGES AT WORK

allegro con brio



Nyls, the smiling one—*Nanook of the North*.

Museum of Modern Art

Explorer

Robert J. Flaherty, in his early years, had no thought but to follow in the footsteps of his father, a mining engineer. The boy grew up around mining camps of northern Michigan and Canada, with miners and Indians as companions. Later the father became a prospector searching the Canadian wilderness for mineral resources—for United States Steel and other corporations. Sometimes he took young Bob with him on these explorations, traveling many weeks by canoe in summer and on snowshoes in winter, meeting Eskimos, mapping the country, learning arts of frontier survival.

In 1910, at the age of twenty-six, young Robert Flaherty embarked on his own career as explorer and prospector. He was hired by Sir William Mackenzie, builder of Canadian railroads. Canada had decided on a railroad to carry wheat from its western lands to Hudson Bay, for shipment to Europe. Wheat-carrying trains and ships could also carry iron and other ores. What deposits were there in the Hudson Bay area? Young Flaherty was sent to prospect. Within a few short years, in four expeditions for Sir William Mackenzie, he won fame as an explorer, showed astounding resourcefulness and stamina, mapped unknown country, and brought back reports on mineral and pulpwood resources, as well as deposits of gypsum and lignite.

In 1913 as he prepared for his third expedition, Sir William Mackenzie said to him: "You're going into interesting country—strange people—animals and all that—why don't you include in your outfit a camera for making film?"

Flaherty liked the idea. He bought a Bell & Howell camera, a portable developing and printing machine, and some lighting equipment. Since he knew nothing about film, he also took a three-week cinematography course in Rochester, N.Y. During his next two Mackenzie expeditions, in 1914 and 1915, he shot many hours of film on Eskimo life. The film activity, begun casually, soon became an obsession that almost obliterated the search for minerals.

Between the third and fourth expeditions he was married. Shortly afterwards in Toronto the young bride, Frances Hubbard Flaherty, recorded in her diary—February 1, 1915:



Robert Flaherty—prospector.

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Moving pictures still the undercurrent of life. Printing almost finished and editing begun. R. refuses to let me see them until the first edition is in shape. . . . R. is full of the idea of the use of moving pictures in education, in the teaching of geography and history. Someone might well make it a life work. Why not we?

A few weeks later Flaherty began test showings. Reactions gave cause for jubilation. The director of the Ontario Museum of Archaeology, C. T. Currelly, wrote him:

I cannot too strongly congratulate you on the moving pictures you exhibited in Convocation Hall. They are much the best I have ever seen. . . . I have never known anything received with greater enthusiasm.

Another spectator wrote to a New York acquaintance:

This will introduce Mr. Robert J. Flaherty of Toronto, who has a most interesting series of ethnological moving pictures of Eskimo life, which show the primitive existence of a people in the way they lived before being brought in contact with explorers. He is looking to bring them out in the best way. I know you are thoroughly in touch with the moving picture game from the inside and can at least give him some pointers. Do what you can. . . .³

Flaherty was not ready to launch his film. Heading north for his fourth Mackenzie expedition, he obtained more footage, came back to Toronto, and continued editing. In 1916, while he was preparing to ship the film to New York, his cigarette fell from the table onto scraps of film on the floor. Within moments his entire negative—30,000 feet of film—was exploding into flames before his eyes. In trying to beat out the flames he was badly burned, and landed in a hospital. He was lucky to escape with his life.

What remained was his work print. It was not considered feasible, at that time, to make a new negative from it.

Flaherty persuaded himself the disaster had been for the best. In spite of enthusiasm he had aroused, he was not satisfied with the film. It was, he felt, too much a travelogue—"a scene of this and that, no relation, no thread." Talking it over long hours with Frances, he decided he must return to the north and make a different kind of film. It would center on one Eskimo and his family, and reveal characteristic events of their lives.

He began showing the surviving print to raise funds. It soon seemed an impossible task. The World War of 1914-18 occupied

the attention of the world and brought other priorities. Prospecting trips to Hudson Bay were, for the duration, out of the question. And film people seemed indifferent. Flaherty himself, when he showed his film, found it more and more inept. He became all the more determined to make it as he knew he must. From 1916 to 1920—while three daughters were born to the Flahertys—he kept at the fund-raising efforts. He earned modest funds with articles and talks about northern exploration. His in-laws talked about getting him a Ford agency; in his mid-thirties, he seemed to them at dead end. Then, as the war ended, the fur company Revillon Frères began to take interest in his proposals, and in 1920 Robert Flaherty finally headed north again. He was to get \$500 a month for an unstipulated period, \$13,000 for equipment and technical costs, and a \$3000 credit at Port Harrison for "remuneration of natives." It took him two months to reach this subarctic post on the northeast coast of Hudson Bay. He stayed sixteen months.

He knew now how he must proceed. The full collaboration of Eskimos had already become the key to his method. This seemed a philosophical necessity but also, in working alone, a practical necessity. Some of the Eskimos soon knew his camera better than he did: they could take it apart and put it together—and did so, when the camera fell into the sea and had to be cleaned piece by piece. They scoured the coast for driftwood to help him build a drying reel for his film.

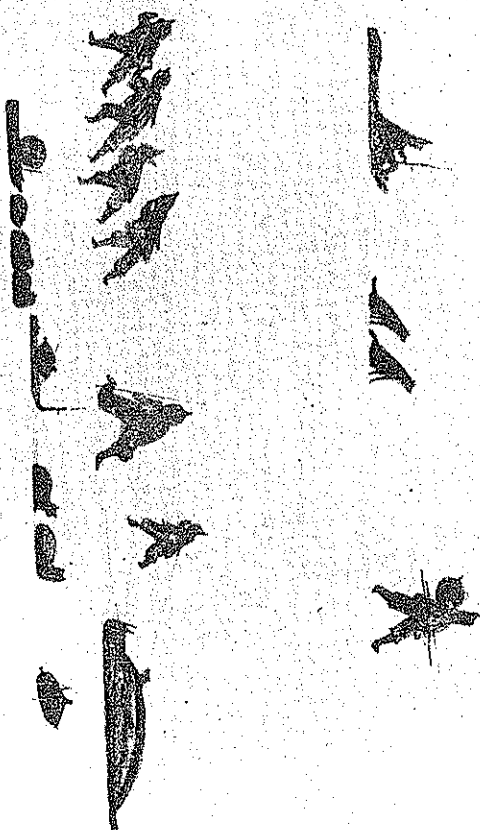
As his main character Flaherty chose a celebrated hunter of the Itivimuit tribe of Eskimos—Nanook. Nanook became chief fountain-head of film sequences. His zeal for the "aggie"—the film—came to know no bounds. One of his first suggestions was a walrus hunt, done as in former days, before the explorers came.

"Suppose we go," Flaherty said to him, "do you know that you and your men may have to give up making a kill, if it interferes with my film? Will you remember that it is the picture of you hunting the ivuk that I want, and not their meat?"

"Yes, yes," Nanook assured him. "The aggie will come first."⁴

In a diary scrawled in pencil with frequent abbreviations, Flaherty recorded his activities. On September 26, 1920, six weeks after arrival, he wrote:

It has been the day of days. Morning came clear and warm. Some twenty walrus lay sleeping on the rocks. Approached to within 100 ft & filmed



Eskimo drawing of walrus hunt—from *Flaherty Papers*.

Columbia University

with telephoto lens. Nan stalking quarry with harpoon—within 20 ft they rose in alarm and tumbled toward the sea. Nan's harpoon landed but the quarry succeeded in reaching the water. Then commenced a battle royal—& Esk straining for their lives on the harpoon line at water's edge—this quarry like a huge fish floundering—churning in the sea—The remainder of the herd hovered around—their "Ok ok!" resounding—one great bull even came in to quarry & locked horns in attempt to rescue—I filmed and filmed and filmed—The men—calling me to end the struggle by rifle—so fearful were they about being pulled into the sea.

Flaherty later wrote that he pretended not to understand their appeal and just kept cranking. The sequence became one of the most famous in *Nanook of the North*. The scene gives no hint of the presence of a rifle. Flaherty's focus was on traditional ways.

The work went on at relentless pace. Diary jottings noted ideas for sequences:

Pos scenes
unloading
the port
winter

tracking
the gramophone
Xmas
sledding
medicine—castor oil

The gramophone and castor oil were the only civilized intrusions permitted in the final film—perhaps because of the Eskimo warmth and humor they elicited.

Notes on Eskimo words and their meanings punctuate the diaries. An early entry was: "Again—*poonuk*." Flaherty must have said "*poonuk*" many times to his co-workers. He showed them every sequence immediately. If it seemed unsatisfactory, or if he wanted an additional shot from another angle or distance, the action was repeated.

Problems mounted. Sometimes it was so cold that film shivered into bits like "so much thin water glass." Some sequences involved long journeys with overnight stops in igloos built en route. A trip of many weeks to film a "polar bear aggie"—a dangerous project urged by Nanook—almost ended in disaster. They found no bear and, for weeks, no food for men or dogs. Halted many days by blizzards, they huddled in an igloo as its dome grew black with smoke and dripped black drops. They barely survived the trip. On the way back, they used film to kindle a fire.

The building of an igloo became one of the most celebrated sequences in the film. But interior photography presented a problem: the igloo was too small. So Nanook and others undertook to build an outsized "aggie igloo." During the first attempts the domes collapsed—as the builders roared with laughter. Finally they succeeded, but the interior was found too dark for photography. So half the igloo was sheared away. For the camera Nanook and his family went to sleep and awoke "with all the cold of out-of-doors pouring in."⁵ Daylight lit the scene. Flaherty was intent on authenticity of result. That this might call for ingenious means did not disturb him. Film itself, and all its technology, were products of ingenuity.

Printing his footage called for considerable ingenuity. Flaherty found that the light from his portable generator fluctuated too much. In his hut he therefore cut an aperture the size of one 35mm frame—and blocked out all windows. With the printing machine screwed to

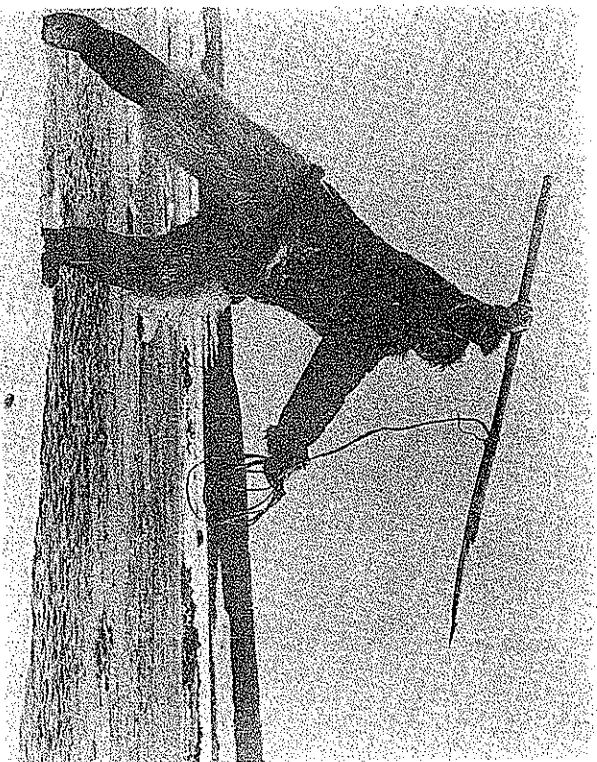
the wall, he used the sun for light, regulating the intensity with bits of muslin.

Quantities of negative shot during midwinter were developed in a rush in March and April of 1921. All available hands were recruited. The vast amounts of water needed were hauled up through a hole chiseled in six feet of ice and were then pulled by a ten-dog team and a fourteen-foot sledge to Flaherty's quarters, to be poured into wash tanks and later hauled away again. On some days tons of water were hauled. Keeping it free of fur hairs was a problem.

Late that summer Flaherty headed back to civilization. Pointing to the countless pebbles on the beach, he told Nanook that people in such numbers, far southward, would see the Inuit—"we the people," as they called themselves—in actions they had filmed together.

That winter *Nanook of the North* reached final form at the editing table. Flaherty had help from an assistant editor, Charles Gelb, but he himself dominated every moment. The editing process was undoubtedly helped by Flaherty's experience and dissatisfactions with the earlier film. This time he had been able to anticipate editing problems, providing crucial close-ups, reverse angles, and a few panoramic movements and tilts to yield moments of revelation. Flaherty had apparently mastered—unlike previous documentarists—the "grammar" of film as it had evolved in the fiction film. This evolution had not merely changed techniques; it had transformed the sensibilities of audiences. The ability to witness an episode from many angles and distances, seen in quick succession—a totally surrealistic privilege, unmatched in human experience—had become so much a part of film-viewing that it was unconsciously accepted as "natural." Flaherty had by now absorbed this machinery of the fiction film, but he was applying it to material not invented by a writer or director, nor performed by actors. Thus, drama, with its potential for emotional impact, was wedded to something more real—people being themselves.

A few moments in the film reflected earlier documentary styles. Characters occasionally glanced at the camera as though at a film maker. Nanook, grinning over the gramophone, testing a gramophone disc with his teeth, looks at the camera as though for agreement and approval; his child, tasting castor oil, shares his pleasure with a smile to the camera. These seen holdovers from travelogue—characters posing for the camera, demonstrating their quaintness. Such shots soon vanished from Flaherty's documentary language.



Nanook the hunter. *Nanook of the North*, 1922.

In his subtitles Flaherty was especially felicitous. They showed a rare gift for word-choice—"the rasp and hiss of driving snow"—and for conciseness. They never overexplained. "Now only one thing more is needed," a subtitle tells us as Nanook, having apparently completed an igloo, starts to cut a block of ice. Audiences do not know, for the moment, the purpose of the "one thing more." They soon discover: a square of snow is cut from the igloo, and the ice becomes a window. It is even equipped with a snow reflector, to catch the low sun. The sequence has often brought applause. Part of the satisfaction lies in the fact that the audience has been permitted to be, like Flaherty himself, explorer and discoverer.

Similarly, when Nanook has harpooned an unseen creature through a hole in the ice, and we see him in a grotesquely acrobatic rope-tug, sometimes winning but sometimes skidding head over heels toward the hole as the antagonist gains momentum, Flaherty does not immediately identify the unseen creature as a seal. Again he allows us the joy of discovery.

Especially valuable to the film are glimpses of children and their



Nanook and son—from *Nanook of the North*, 1922.

relations with others. During the igloo-building we see a child determinedly shooting arrows at a small snow-animal. A subtitle says: "To be a great hunter like his father." Finishing the igloo, Nanook turns to give him a brief bow-and-arrow lesson, then warns the child's hands in a moment of affection and intimacy, remote from travelogue.

Early in 1922 *Nanook of the North*, a product of two decades of exploring and almost a decade of film activity, was ready for distributors. First to see it was a group from Paramount.

Paramount was then emerging as a leading force in an American film industry that had seized world leadership. The 1914-18 World War had choked off production in France—the prewar leader—and had almost halted it in England and Italy. The American industry, expanding fantastically while establishing itself in Hollywood, had filled the vacuum. By the end of the war huge American production-distribution-exhibition combinations were supplying the screens of the world. Each felt it understood what audiences wanted: its worldwide distribution records held the answers.

At the Paramount screening of *Nanook of the North*, as Flaherty

later described it, the projection room was blue with smoke before the film was over. Then most of the men simply left the room.

The manager came up and very kindly put his arm around my shoulders and told me he was terribly sorry, but it was a film that just couldn't be shown to the public. He said that he had tried to do such things before and they had always ended in failure. He was very sorry indeed that I had gone through all that hardship in the North, only to come to such an end, but he felt he had to tell me and that was that.⁵

Four other major distribution companies reacted similarly. One executive explained that the public was not interested in Eskimos; it preferred people in dress suits. But finally the Pathe organization—like Revillon, of French origin—accepted the film for distribution and was able to open it at the important Capitol theater in New York on June 11, 1922—with immediate success. Most critics found it a revelation. "Beside this film," said the *New York Times*, "the usual photoplay, the so-called 'dramatic' work of the screen, becomes as thin and blank as the celluloid on which it is printed." The critic found it "far more interesting, far more compelling purely as entertainment, than any except the rare exceptions among photoplays."⁷ Reviewing the films of the entire year, Robert E. Sherwood said of *Nanook of the North*:

It stands alone, literally in a class by itself. Indeed, no list of all the best pictures of the year or of all the years in the brief history of the movies, could be considered complete without it.⁸

Hailed by almost all critics, the film was also a box-office success in the United States and a very substantial one abroad. Its fame spread rapidly throughout the world. European critics vied with each other in superlatives. A French critic compared the film to Greek classic drama.

Flaherty had spent on *Nanook of the North* approximately twice the amount anticipated in the original arrangements. The total production cost came to \$53,000. Such excess expenditures became a Flaherty habit. Revillon loaned the additional funds, to be repaid from distribution income; it recouped this investment and made a substantial profit, as did Flaherty. Documentary suddenly acquired a financial legitimacy it had not had for years. Paramount, first company to reject *Nanook of the North*, also became first to reconsider

its stance. Jesse Lasky of Paramount proposed sending Flaherty anywhere he wanted to go to bring back "another *Nanook*." Contract talks began, soon centering on the South Seas.

The ultimate in commercial accolade came from the Broadway music world with the appearance of the song *Nanook*:

Polar bears are prowling,
Winty winds are howling,
Where the snow is falling,
There my heart is calling:
Nanook! Nanook!

The chorus went:

Ever-loving Nanook,
Though you don't read a book,
But, oh, how you can love,
And thrill me like the twinkling northern lights
above. . . . *

Much later the Flahertys, in Berlin, found the smiling face of Nanook on the wrapper of an ice-cream sandwich—a "Nanuk." When Nanook died on a hunting trip two years after the appearance of *Nanook of the North*, the event was noted by newspapers throughout the world. When documentary film makers from many lands were asked thirty years later, on the occasion of the 1964 Mannheim film festival, to select the greatest documentaries of all time, *Nanook of the North* led the list.

While establishing a new genre, which has become firmly fixed in documentary tradition, *Nanook* and its creator have been criticized on various grounds. In this film as in later films, Flaherty exposed his characters to extreme dangers. To be sure, they welcomed and even sought these dangers, and this suggests the kind of dedication they came to share with Flaherty. Nanook, who urged the most perilous sequences, may well have sensed in the aggie a kind of immortality for the Inuit and himself. In spite of his prowess in the film, he was apparently already ill. A Flaherty diary entry notes that one night he coughed splashes of blood on the wall of their igloo.

* *Nanook*. Words by John Milton Hagen and Herb Crooker, music by Victor Nunberg, copyright 1922 Cameo Music Publishing Company. Quoted by courtesy of Harmony House (ASCAP), Mill Valley, California.

with explorers, prospectors, and entrepreneurs had been less extensive, he had glimpses of what seemed an earlier nobility. On this he riveted his attention.

He had reasons for doing so. One was a growing sense that he himself represented the cultural destruction that troubled him. He had originally plunged with all his heart into the role of explorer and prospector; before Nanook, his own father was his hero. Yet as he entered the Eskimo world, he knew he did so as the advance guard of industrial civilization, the world of United States Steel and Sir William Mackenzie and railroad and mining empires. The mixed feeling this gave him left its mark on all his films.

Flaherty did not come to grips with this inner conflict; he relentlessly avoided it, in *Nanook* as in most other films, by banishing the intruder from the world he portrayed. Flaherty wrote:

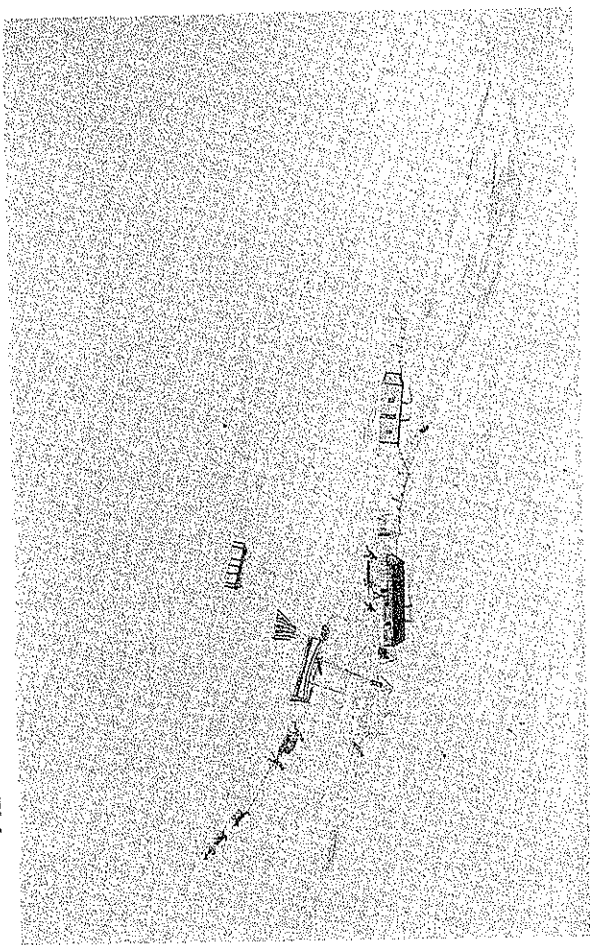
I am not going to make films about what the white man has made of primitive peoples. . . .

What I want to show is the former majesty and character of these people, while it is still possible—before the white man has destroyed not only their character, but the people as well.

The urge that I had to make *Nanook* came from the way I felt about these people, my admiration for them; I wanted to tell others about them.⁹

The urge to capture on film the nature of rapidly vanishing cultures has been pursued also by anthropologists, who have given it the name "salvage ethnography."¹⁰ Flaherty was doing such work for deeply personal rather than scholarly reasons, but the outcome was similar. It has been called "romantic" in that Flaherty was not recording a current way of life but one filtered through memories of Nanook and his people. Unquestionably the film reflected *their image* of their traditional life. Yet a people's self-image may be a crucial ingredient in its culture, and worth recording. Anthropologists, while aware of the distorting lens, study it with care. In effect, so did Flaherty.

John Grierson, a Flaherty apostle, was also a frequent critic of the "romanticism" of Flaherty. "Consider," Grierson wrote later, "the problem of the Eskimo. . . . His clothes and blankets most often come from Manchester, supplied by a department store in Winnipeg. . . . They listen to fur prices over the radio, and are subjected to fast operations of commercial opportunists flying in from New York. . . ."



" . . . small figures in a vast expanse . . ." Eskimo drawing, from *Flaherty Papers*.
Columbia University

Flaherty was a man of immense charm; his blue eyes riveted attention. Of imposing physique, he was a prodigious worker, ebullient companion, yarn-spinner, hard drinker, chain-smoker, and spared neither himself nor others. He loved music, and took his violin and phonograph records with him to the subarctic to entertain the Eskimos. He was an admirer and collector of Eskimo carvings and drawings; his photographic compositions in *Nanook* often suggest Eskimo drawings: small figures in a vast expanse of white.

But his total absorption in the Eskimo, and the nature of *Nanook of the North* and subsequent Flaherty films, seem also linked to his own conflicts. His first contacts with primitive people came early, and were dismaying. Indian hangers-on at the mining camps, who sometimes came to his mother's kitchen for food and warmth, were a pitiful lot, bearing the marks of civilized diseases, including alcoholism. Many had hacking coughs. He later described his mother as in tears over them. "It is too awful," she would say, "what the white man has done to them." When Flaherty first met Eskimos, he saw the same deterioration at work. But as he went further north, where contacts

But Flaherty knew all this; he was aware of the "fast operations." In a sense he had been part of them. His concern now was not to produce an exposé, but to celebrate what he valued. To this, generations have responded.

During the following half-century the fiction films of the early 1920's became museum curios—dress suits and all—but *Nanook of the North* retained astonishing validity, an aliveness scarcely affected by time.

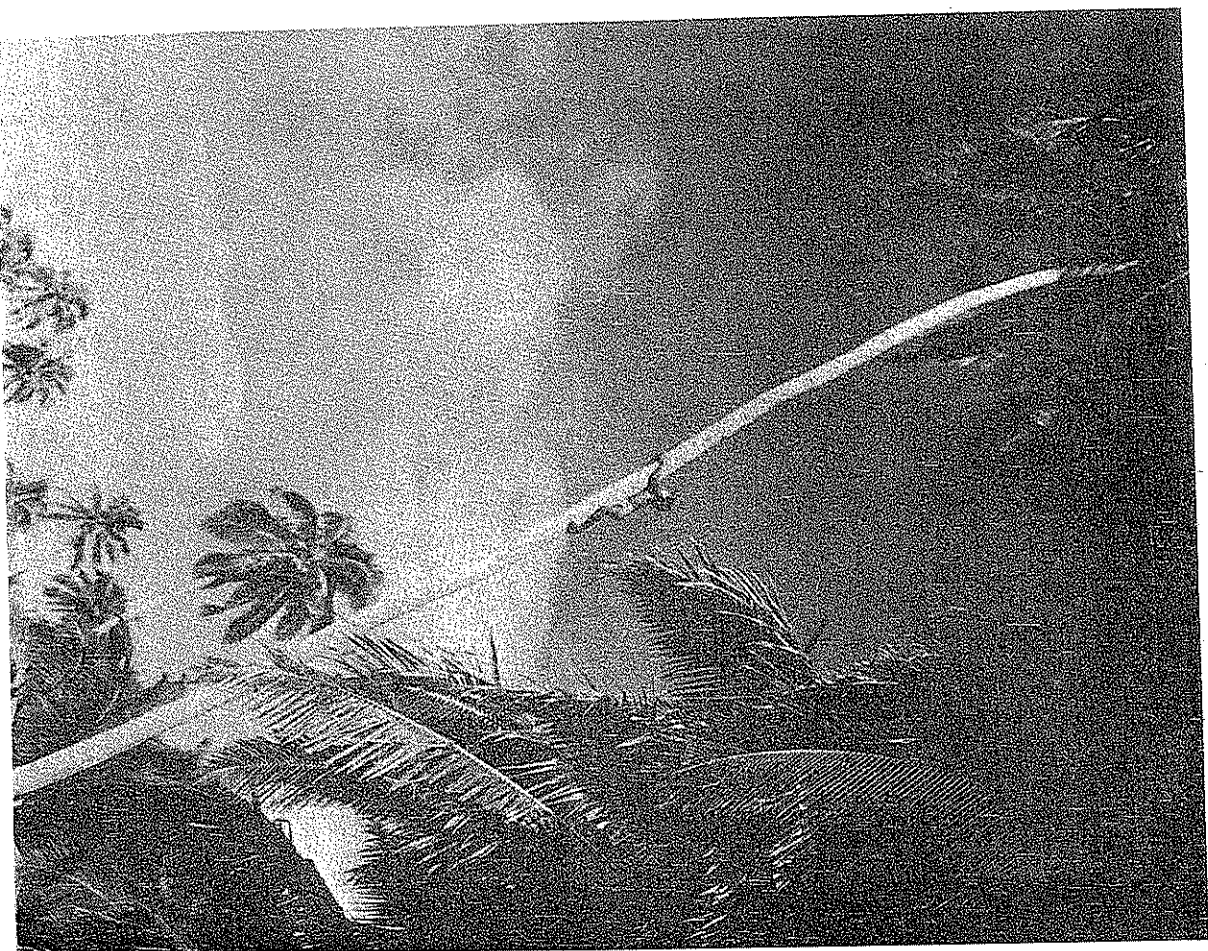
By 1923 Robert Flaherty, with a Paramount contract and a roomy budget—"Write your own ticket," Jesse Lasky had said—was organizing an expedition to Samoa in the Pacific, this time with Frances Flaherty, their three daughters, an Irish nursemaid, and his brother David Flaherty. Robert Flaherty was world-famous, creator of a new kind of film, and from the South Seas he was to bring back "another *Nanook*."

The genre, the tradition he had launched, was now in deep trouble. Behind *Nanook of the North* had been twenty years of exploring and living with Eskimos. The same process was now to be compressed into a year or two—which to Hollywood seemed a long time.

The Flaherty group headed for the village of Safune on the island of Savai'i. There they had been told they might find—before it was too late—the old Polynesian culture as it had been before the traders and missionaries came. This gave the new project a thrust similar to that of *Nanook of the North*.

The start was encouraging. When the people of Safune realized that Flaherty did not want to film them in the clothes the missionaries and traders had brought them, they were surprised and then deeply moved. "It seemed a new idea to them," wrote Flaherty later, "that neither Christ nor we, the papalagi, really wished to see them in white man's clothes. Through the influence of the missionary it had come about that the Samoan who had only a siapo was looked down upon." Urged by Flaherty, the chief asked all to wear siapos. It seemed to precipitate a reliving of old days, a remembering of things almost forgotten.

But all this could not make "another *Nanook*." The struggle for survival that had been a central element in *Nanook* hardly existed in Samoa. Flaherty had read about sea monsters but there were none. Nature was benign. Food fell from the trees. To find a climax for his film, Flaherty finally revived the painful ordeal of tattooing, a Poly-



Moana, 1926.

Museum of Modern Art

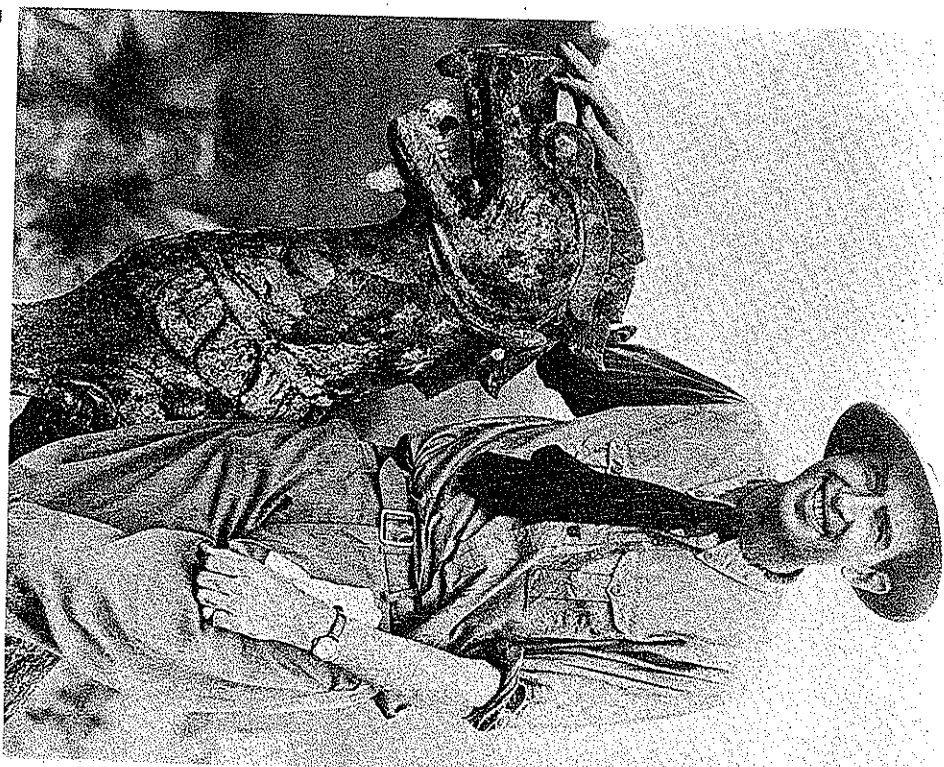
nesian manhood-initiation rite that had almost become extinct through missionary influence.

Moana, released in 1926, was hailed by some as a worthy successor to *Nanook of the North*. A film of great pictorial beauty, it was called an "idyll" by some critics—the sort of praise-word that has often kept audiences away. Paramount tried to promote the film as "the love life of a South Sea siren," but audiences lured by this were bound to be disappointed. *Moana* failed at the box office. The failure virtually ended Flaherty's association with big-studio Hollywood. An American Indian film project was started under William Fox auspices, but was soon afterward halted.

Flaherty was still a world figure. Proposals and invitations poured in. Would he like to make a film in Iceland? Australia expressed interest in a Flaherty visit. Such proposals generally came without budgets. The German director Fred Murnau, sick of Hollywood, wanted Flaherty to work with him on a film on Bali; after long negotiations, the project was abandoned.¹¹ Flaherty worked briefly with Murnau on *Tabu*—a fiction film more Murnau than Flaherty.

Flaherty wanted to make a film in the Soviet Union about one or another primitive tribe in Siberia, but he received no encouragement from Soviet officials. Stress on the virtues of primitive cultures was not likely to have high priority among the Soviets. After *Moana*, eight years passed before another Flaherty-style documentary appeared.

But primitive-people films by others meanwhile followed the *Nanook* success. The 1925 feature-length documentary *Grass*, by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack—the latter had been a combat photographer in the 1914–18 World War—was distributed by Paramount with much success. It portrayed a staggering migration of 50,000 people over the Zardah Kuh mountains in Turkey and Persia in search of grass for their herds. The crossing of the torrential Karun river with loss of life among men, women, children, goats, sheep, donkeys, horses, provided one of the most spectacular sequences ever put on film. The photography, sometimes from near positions and sometimes from mountain tops, was often breathtaking. But the migrants remain a mass of strangers to the audience; no individual portraits emerges from them. And the final emphasis was not on what they had endured but—in a brash display of egotism—on the heroic accomplishment of the film makers. The same team followed in 1927 with *Chang*, commissioned by Paramount and filmed in Siam, and



Ernest B. Schoedsack, at work on *Chang*—released 1927.

Museum of Modern Art

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ostensibly following a *Nanook* pattern: a family struggling for survival, in this case against jungle animals. But the impressive animal sequences were set in a story framework that must have been part of Hollywood pre-planning, along with pretentious subtitled dialogue. Kru, a Lao tribesman, tells his child:

"The very last grain of rice is husked, O very small daughter!"

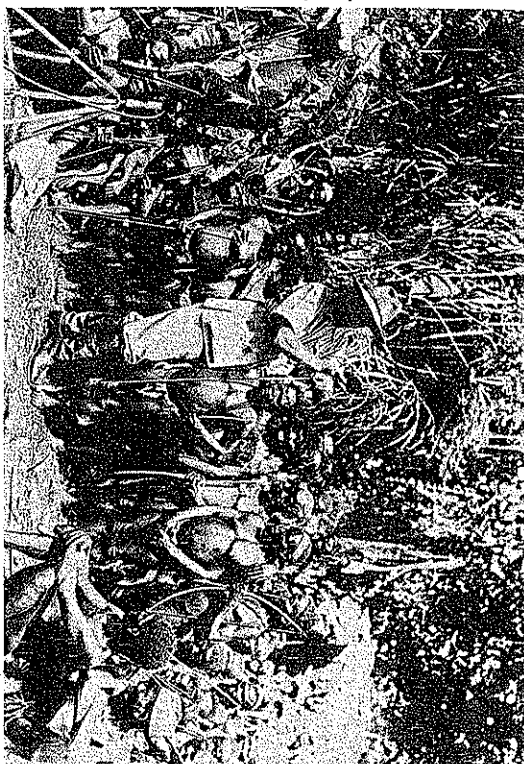
At a moment of crisis, a Lao call to battle:

"Out, swords! Out spears! Out, O Brave Men! Help us, O Lord Buddha!"

From their documentary beginnings the Cooper-Schoedsack team was clearly veering in other directions, more in line with studio ideas. They had their ultimate success a few years later with *King Kong*.

A more authentic project was the French film *The Black Cruise* (*La Croisière Noire*, 1926) by Léon Poirier—like Murnau, a temporary fugitive from fiction. Sponsored by Citroën, it recorded an unprecedented automobile journey from the northern to the southern reaches of Africa, and on to the French island colony of Madagascar. The feature-length project provided occasion for countless vignettes of tribal and village life. Again, no individual portraits emerge, and the expedition's interest remains superficial, with stress on the bizarre. Yet the record of such a journey inevitably offered documentary values, and preparations for a similar Citroën-sponsored Asian journey, from Lebanon to Indochina, were begun in 1929. Titled *The Yellow Cruise* (*La Croisière Jaune*) the film did not reach completion until many years later.

The explorer-as-documentarist tradition received some of its most tawdry contributions in the work of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, who had completed their first travelogue in 1912 and were still successfully at it two decades later. Self-glorification was the keynote. Unabashed condescension and amusement marked their attitude toward natives. They started *Congorilla*—about "big apes and little people"—in 1929 as the transition to sound was under way, so they included brief sound sequences and a narration to make it "the first sound film from darkest Africa." Both Johnsons were constantly on camera in sequences demonstrating their courage or wit, or both. In a forest clearing we see them recruiting forty "black boys" as carriers. When one gives his name, it sounds like "coffee pot" to Mrs. Osa



Martin Johnson, at work on *Congorilla*, 1929.

Morro Pictures

Johnson, so his name is written down as Coffee Pot. Johnson's narration speaks of "funny little savages," "happiest little savages on earth." His idea of humor was to give a pygmy a cigar and wait for him to get sick; to give another a balloon to blow up and watch his reaction when it bursts; to give a monkey beer and watch the result. During a shot of a crocodile opening its mouth, Johnson's narration comments: "Gee, what a place to throw old razor-blades." To catch two baby gorillas, seven huge trees are chopped down, isolating the gorillas in a tree in the middle; then it is chopped down.

A decade after *Nanook of the North* the explorer-as-documentarist was clearly in decline. The creator of the genre and of its greatest triumph seemed himself to be edging into obscurity. But meanwhile other documentary genres were moving to the fore—one of these, under the impact of huge social change.

Reporter

Denis Arkadievich Kaufman (1896–1954), known in film history as Dziga Vertov, was one of three sons of a librarian in Bialystok, in the

Polish part of the Russian empire. Early in the 1914-18 World War the family moved from war dangers to what seemed the comparative safety of Russia itself. In Petrograd—which had recently been renamed to shed the Germanic “St. Petersburg”—young Denis studied medicine and psychology and wrote poetry, falling under the spell of Russia’s “futurist” poets, among whom Vladimir Mayakovsky was the leader.¹

Futurism, a movement sweeping through Europe from its 1909 beginnings in Italy and France and invading all the arts, gloried in the clamor and rhythm of machines, and the dynamism of a world in change. Its poets tended to reject syntax in favor of word-montages; they were intoxicated with long catalogues of words in the manner of Walt Whitman, to whom they owed much. Its composers called for inclusion of sounds, as symbols of modern life, in orchestral instrumentation. The futurists were given to rhetorical manifestos, which often used unconventional typographical arrangements as means of expression and emphasis.

In 1916-17 Denis Kaufman, medical student and young futurist poet, organized an “audio-laboratory” of his own in which he built montages of sounds—sound poems on discs. They provided a foundation for things to come. He adopted the pseudonym Dziga Vertov—both names connoting *turning*, *revolving*. The names suggested a spinning top and perhaps perpetual motion—the keynote of the following years and of his role in them.

The bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 found Vertov eagerly volunteering to the Cinema Committee in Moscow; he became editor of its newsreel *Film Weekly* (*Kino-Nedel'na*), which began appearing in June 1918. This put him at the age of twenty-two at the heart of a swirling operation. To his modest editing table came footage from all fronts. In addition to German armies, invading forces of allied troops—American, British, French, Japanese, and others—landed north, east, and south, trying to suppress the revolution and, at first, keep Russia in the war against Germany. For the three years 1917-20 the combination of civil war and foreign intervention continued; blockade, hunger, chaos tore the land. Vertov's task was to assemble incoming bits of film—fragments of struggle, crisis, disaster, victory—and send them forth again, subtitled and in meaningful organization. The newsreel issues went in all directions—by “agit-train”

back to the various fronts to be seen by revolutionary fighters themselves, and by similar trains and steamboats to villages and towns. The agit-trains distributed newspapers and books; some had printing presses operating en route. When a train was not in motion, film shows were held—at night in near-by streets or fields. One “agit-steamboat” plied large rivers towing a barge-cinema that seated 800 people—while carrying its own cameraman, who sent back footage to Vertov. The mission was to get out the news—unite people by keeping them informed of the ups and downs of agonizing struggle.²

In the midst of the newsreel work Vertov compiled longer releases including *Anniversary of the Revolution* (*Godovshchina Revoliutsii*, 1919), reusing footage in broader context. But in 1919 the blockade became so tight, and the black market so rampant, that stocks of raw film gave out and the newsreel schedules faltered. Old film was sometimes scraped and recoated by homemade methods to maintain schedules—at the cost of archive material. Astonishingly, in the midst of such crises the new government went ahead with its plans for a state film school—at first operating without film. It was a measure of the importance attached to film activity.

Late in 1920 the last intervention troops were finally ousted, and a kind of peace arrived. But the land faced other and more unprecedented struggles. Not surprisingly young Vertov, now a seasoned film man who had processed hundreds of thousands of feet of film, saw newsreels playing a role in these struggles. In the building of a new kind of society there would be other crises and victories which, like earlier battle news, must surely be made known at once throughout the Soviet Union.

With the end of fighting Vertov compiled a feature-length *History of the Civil War* (*Istoriya Grazhdanskoi Voini*, 1921) from footage he knew so well, and awaited new tasks.

But the following months brought famine and epidemics. A prostrate economy forced Lenin—barely recovered from an assassination attempt—to retreat from socialist theory and proclaim a New Economic Policy—“NEP,” a temporary return to forms of private enterprise.

In the war-scarred film theaters fiction films began reappearing. There were not yet new Russian features—countless projects waited, begging for raw stock. Out of hiding, or newly imported by NEP

entrepreneurs, came mostly foreign films—American, German, French, Italian—items such as *Drama on the Equator*, *The City's Temptation*, *The Devil's Admirers*, *A Night of Horror in the Menagerie*, *Daughter of Tarzan*, *Evil Shadows*, *The Adventuress*, and *Secret of the Egyptian Night*.³

Until this time Vertov had functioned as editor—of footage supplied by others. The events of 1920–22 propelled him into a wider range of roles: writer of polemic manifestos, theorist, producer. A typical Vertov manifesto addressed film artists in the name of a mysterious Council of Three:

Five years crowded with world-shaking events have entered your lives and left—leaving no trace. "Art" works of pre-revolutionary days surround you like icons and still command your prayerful emotions. Foreign lands abet you in your confusion, sending into new Russia the living corpses of movie dramas garbed in splendid technological dressing.

Spring is coming. At the studios new activity is awaited. The Council of Three notes with frank horror how producers leaf through works of literature looking for scenario material. Names of theater dramas and epics selected for studio enactment float through the air. In the Ukraine, and here in Moscow, several photoplays have already been made displaying every symptom of impotence.

The body of cinema is numbed by the terrible poison of habit. We demand an opportunity to experiment with this dying organism, to find an antidote. . . .

Vertov was sure what the antidote must be. He saw the traditional fiction film, descendant of theater artifice, as something in the same class as religion—"opium for the people." The task of Soviet films, as Vertov saw it, was to document socialist reality.

To build cinema on theatrical tradition seemed to him outrageous foolishness. Theater offered a "scabby substitute" for life; the same was true of theatrical film with its synthetic struggles and heroics—a dangerous weapon controlled by capitalists and NEPmen. He scorned producers and distributors who "snapped up the scraps from the German table . . . the American table." "Come to life," he urged film makers. He asked them to stop running from "the prose of life." They must become "craftsmen of seeing—organizers of visible life," armed with a "maturing eye."

His attacks—on almost everything being done—inevitably won for Vertov many enemies in the film world. But his views also had support—some of it in high places. Early in 1922 Lenin held a discussion about film with the Commissar of Education, Anatoli Lunacharsky. "Of all the arts," Lenin told him, "for us film is the most important," and he spoke especially of films "reflecting Soviet actuality." Such films, thought Lenin, "must begin with newsreels." Later he called for what came to be known as the "Leninist film-proportion," a doctrine that every film program must have a balance between fiction and actuality material.

In this context Vertov and his Council of Three were able to plunge into a new kind of film journalism—while continuing to pour out manifestos. In May 1922 *Film-Truth* (*Kino-Pravda*) began to appear, usually at monthly intervals, under the banner of Kulkino. It continued until 1925 and, like the civil war newsreel, had feature-length documentaries as by-products.

The mysterious *troika* or "Council of Three" behind this venture consisted simply of Dziga Vertov himself, his wife Yelizaveta Svilova, who became film editor, and Dziga's brother Mikhail Kaufman, one year his junior, a photography enthusiast since childhood who joined Dziga after being demobilized. He became chief cameraman, soon backed by scores of other cameramen throughout the Soviet Union. Occasionally he made films independently.

The title *Kino-Pravda* was itself a kind of manifesto. The newspaper *Pravda*, founded by Lenin in 1912, had become the official government organ. The film project, in calling itself *Kino-Pravda*, seemed to assert a central role for itself. And the title epitomized Vertov doctrine—that proletarian cinema must be based on truth—"fragments of actuality"—assembled for meaningful impact.

The ambitious project began in a squalid setting. Vertov described its first quarters:

We had a basement in the center of the city. It was dark and damp, with an earthen floor and holes that you stumbled into at every turn. Large hungry rats scuttled over our feet. Somewhere above was a single window below the surface of the street; underfoot, a stream of water from dripping pipes. You had to take care that your film never touched anything but the table, or it would get wet. This dampness prevented our reels of lovingly edited film from sticking together properly, rusted our scissors and our splicers. Don't lean back on that chair, film is hanging there—as

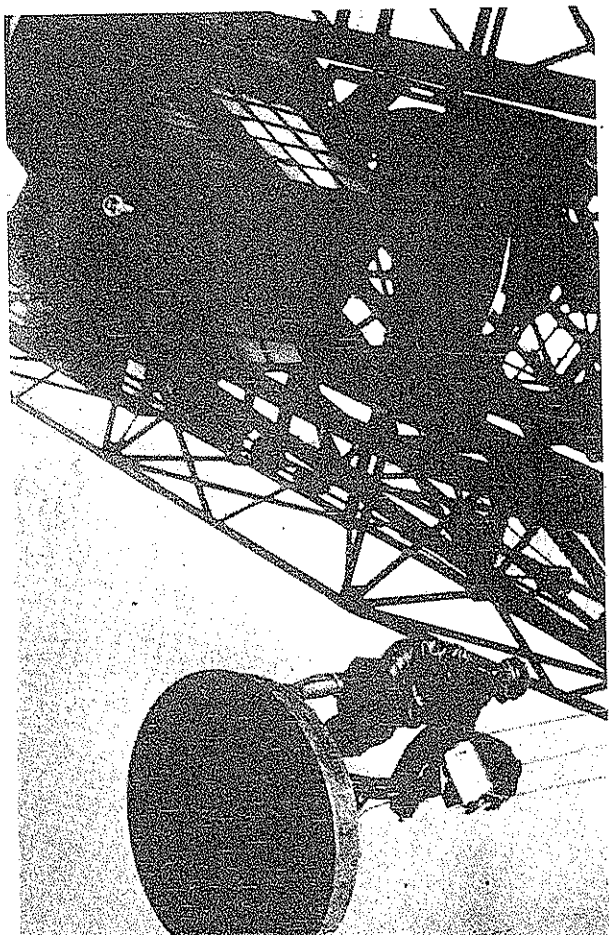
it was all over the room. Before dawn—damp—cold—teeth chattering. I wrap comrade Sylova in a *third* jacket. The last night of work so that the next two issues of *Kino-Pravda* will be ready on time.⁴

Mikhail Kaufman, later recalling these days, said they never really thought of it as hard work. It was all done as a life-necessity, "like breathing or eating." On big stories Dziga mapped strategy, assigning topics but leaving wide latitude to the cameramen. Much of the time Mikhail followed his own interests, moving about from morning till night, shooting whatever seemed important. The epoch provided the themes. His camera was constantly with him; he felt lost without it. Once he went south for a rest—without his camera. "But when I could not see it with the help of my camera, it was not beauty for me."⁵

The emphasis—harking back to Lumière—was on action caught on the run, from any revealing vantage. Permissions were never asked. Staged action was abhorred. Concealed camera positions were used to catch moments in marketplaces, factories, schools, taverns, streets.

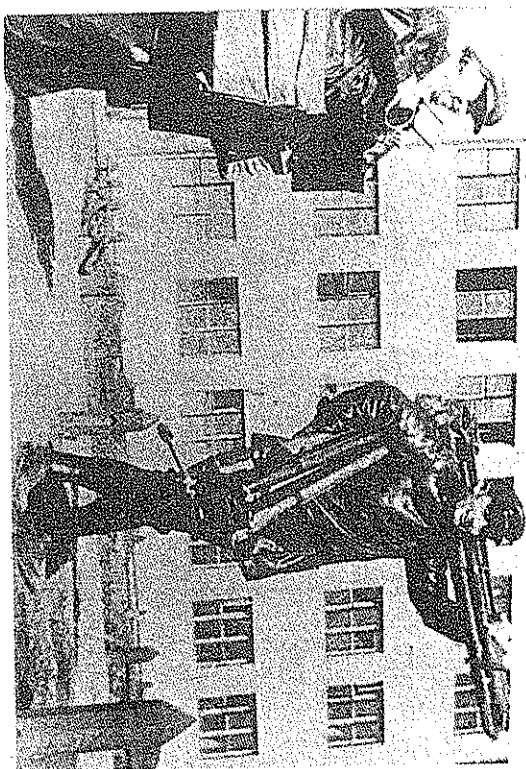
An issue of *Film-Truth* generally took up several topics. Subject matter was seldom spectacular. This was part of its essential quality: drama was revealed in "the prose of life." It caught the moment when a Moscow trolley line, long out of operation in torn-up streets, was finally put in repair and began running again. Army tanks, used as tractors, were leveling an area for an airport. A children's hospital was trying to salvage war-starved children; a flashback to scenes of the famine period emphasized the magnitude of the task. A traveling film team was shown arriving in a town, unpacking its gear, and preparing an open-air showing; a subtitle gave information on how to arrange a visit by such a film show—write to *Kino-Pravda*. Audiences clearly valued all this. It was often the one program item touching the historical moment. But the Vertov stress on unusual, revealing camera vistas and on meaningful juxtapositions must also have contributed to the impact. The subject matter might be "prose" but the treatment was lively, vigorous, sometimes witty.

In his continuing manifestos—no longer emanating from a Council of Three but from a wider group calling itself the Cinema-Eyes, or *Kinoki*—Vertov emphasized two points. One was the superhuman versatility of the film camera. He described this with the typographical zest of futurist poetry:



Mikhail Kaufman and camera.

Mikhail Kaufman collection



Dziga Vertov (at right), and assistant.

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Basic and essential:

FILM-PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD

MAKE WAY
FOR THE
MACHINE!

The most fundamental point: use of the camera as a cinema-eye more perfect than the human eye for exploring the chaos of visual phenomena filling the universe.

The cinema-eye works and moves in time and in space, seeing and recording impressions in a way quite different from the human eye. Limitations imposed by the position of the body, or by how much we can see of any phenomenon in a second of seeing—such restrictions do not exist for the cinema-eye, which has much wider capabilities.

DOWN WITH
16 FRAMES
PER SECOND

We cannot improve our eyes, but we can always improve the camera.

Elsewhere he wrote:

... I am cinema-eye—I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you a world such as only I can see.

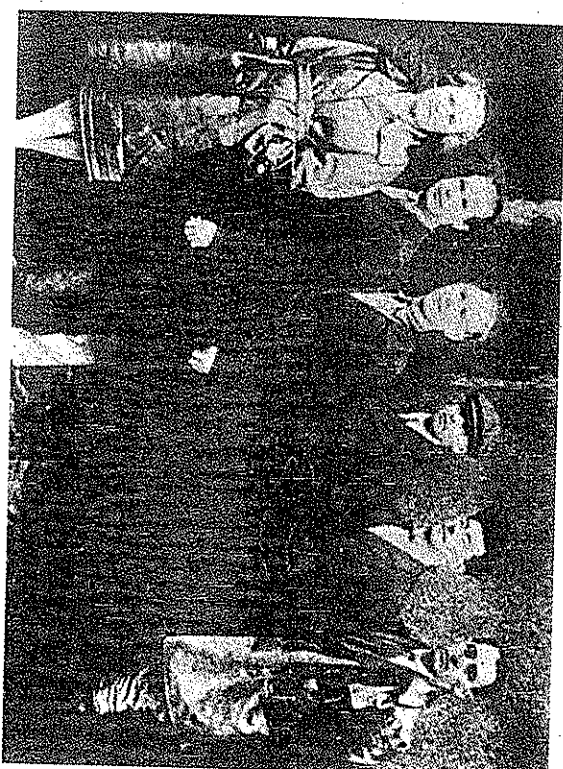
From now on and for always I cast off human immobility. I move constantly. I approach and pull away from objects. I creep under them, I leap onto them, I move alongside the mouth of a galloping horse. I cut into a crowd, I run before charging troops, I turn on my back, I take off with an airplane, I fall and rise with falling and rising bodies.

Freed from the tyranny of 16–17 images per second, freed from the framework of space and time, I coordinate any and all points of the universe, wherever I may record them.

My mission is the creation of a new perception of the world. Thus I decipher in a new way a world unknown to you.

Along with the surreal capabilities of the camera, Vertov stressed the editor's role:

But it is not enough to show bits of truth on the screen, separate frames of truth. These frames must be thematically organized so that the whole is also a truth.⁵



Kinoki team. At extreme right, Mikhail Kaufman. At left, Svilova. Beside her, Il'ya Kopalin, later prominent as a director.

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In synthesizing his bits, Vertov was ingenious, resourceful, even tricky. His love of technical tricks brought frequent criticism; he often appeared to use them for their own sake. But they also yielded telling symbolic moments. In *Film-Truth* issue No. 24 (1925), on the first anniversary of the death of Lenin, we see streams of people filing past the dead leader in his coffin. In the midst of this, the living Lenin appears in the corner of the screen as though still speaking to them. It was a highly emotional moment for its audiences.

The ideas and methods of the *Film-Truth* series were carried forward in several long documentaries, including *Cinema-Eye* (*Kino-Glas*, 1924), *Forward, Soviet!* (*Shagai, Soviet!*, 1926), *One Sixth of the World* (*Shestayta Chast Mira*, 1926), and *The Eleventh Year* (*Odinnadtsati*, 1928). Among these, *One Sixth of the World* was by far the most successful in the Soviet Union, and it also had considerable vogue abroad.⁷ It was marked by a use of subtitles that seemed to anticipate spoken commentary. In most earlier documentaries, each subtitle explained the following shot, or a limited group of shots. In *One Sixth of the World* a long series of short, intermittent subtitles form a continuing apostrophe, in a style reminiscent of Walt



One Sixth of the World, 1926.

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Whitman, a poet much admired by Vertov. The film presents an astonishing diversity of vivid footage from all parts of the Soviet Union, fused by the intermittent commentary addressed to all its people. "You in the small villages" . . . "You in the tundra" . . . "You on the ocean. . . ." Having established a vast geographical dispersion, the catalogue turns to nationalities: "You Uzbeks" . . . "You Kaliniks." . . . Then it addresses occupations—scores of them. Each catalogue item brings one or more shots, never long enough to halt the momentum of the invocation. The invocation and footage include the young, old; men, women, children; those at work, those at play. One enormously long sentence, presented in these short bursts, appears to continue for several minutes and finally concludes with ". . . you are the owners of one sixth of the globe."

The incantation-style of commentary continues, fusing other long sequences. One of these hails elements of change, each shown in a revealing vignette or two, again involving wide geographical range and diversity: a Muslim woman emerging from her hidden status; a worker at night school, learning to read; a clinic in action. The enthusiastic reception won by this film is not surprising. To

men and women with only a dim awareness of the scope and resources of their land, and with a deep desire to believe in its destiny, *One Sixth of the World* was a prideful pageant.

"The history of Cinema-Eye," said Vertov in a 1929 lecture during a visit to Paris, "has been a relentless struggle to modify the course of world cinema, to achieve in cinema a new emphasis on the unplayed film over the played film, to substitute the document for the *mis en scène*, to break out of the proscenium of the theater and to enter the arena of life itself."⁸

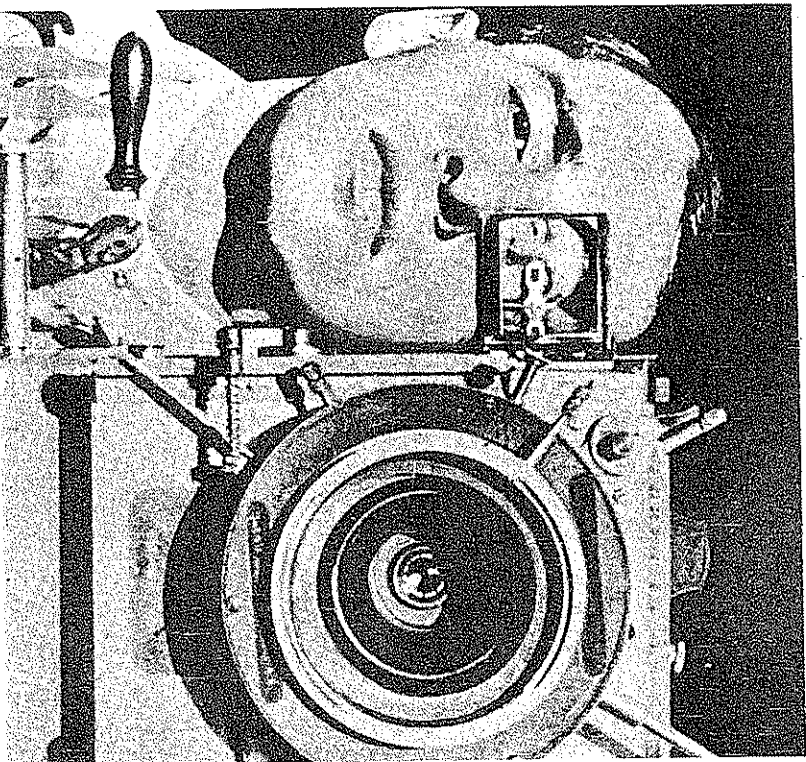
But when he spoke these words, it was already clear that he had failed in this mission. In the chaos of the first post-revolution years, the reporter-documentarist had briefly won dominance. But much of what Vertov had reported was now being transmuted into legend. The means of transmutation was not documentary, but fiction. Vertov had been part of a sequence of brilliant explosions that had made Soviet cinema, in the mid-1920's, a sudden world wonder. But the focus of interest had rapidly shifted from documentary to the works of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzhenko, and others. Some of their works had a documentary look; Eisenstein himself said of *The Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronenosets Potyomkin*, 1925) that while it functioned as drama, it "looks like a newsreel of an event."⁹ This quality led some to associate it with documentary. But what Eisenstein assembled with his montage was not "fragments of actuality" but fragments of his own intense vision.

While Vertov's *One Sixth of the World* was winning acclaim, his position in the Soviet film world was slipping. His views, so fanatically argued, made him troublesome. Besides, they represented an ultimate challenge to authority. Stalin was as interested as Lenin in cinema, but was more intent on control. During the first Five Year Plan, begun in 1928, determined efforts were made to coordinate film content with political goals. Project approvals and budgets were based on detailed scenarios. Vertov's documentary ideas collided with this procedure: how could a documentarist predict—or guarantee—what truths he would find and record in the arena of life? He at first said he could not write scenarios. That attitude marked him as a man with dangerous "anti-planning" views. To continue his work, he eventually compromised, submitting documents which he preferred to call *analyses*—analyzing his intentions without specifying shots and sequences.

Thus he eventually won the chance to make a film he had long considered—on the documentary cameraman and his role in society. In this he set out to dramatize all the theories he had poured into manifestos and polemics. It would be his testament.

It was a reckless notion. At a time when technical experimentation was increasingly damned as “formalism,” and the Stalinist view of “Soviet realism” increasingly favored explicit social doctrine, the new Vertov film with its intellectual pyrotechnics must have seemed a defiant gesture. Yet it became the film by which he was to be known throughout much of the world and even in the Soviet Union—in spite of mixed initial reactions.

The Man with the Movie Camera (*Chelovek s Kinoapparatom*,



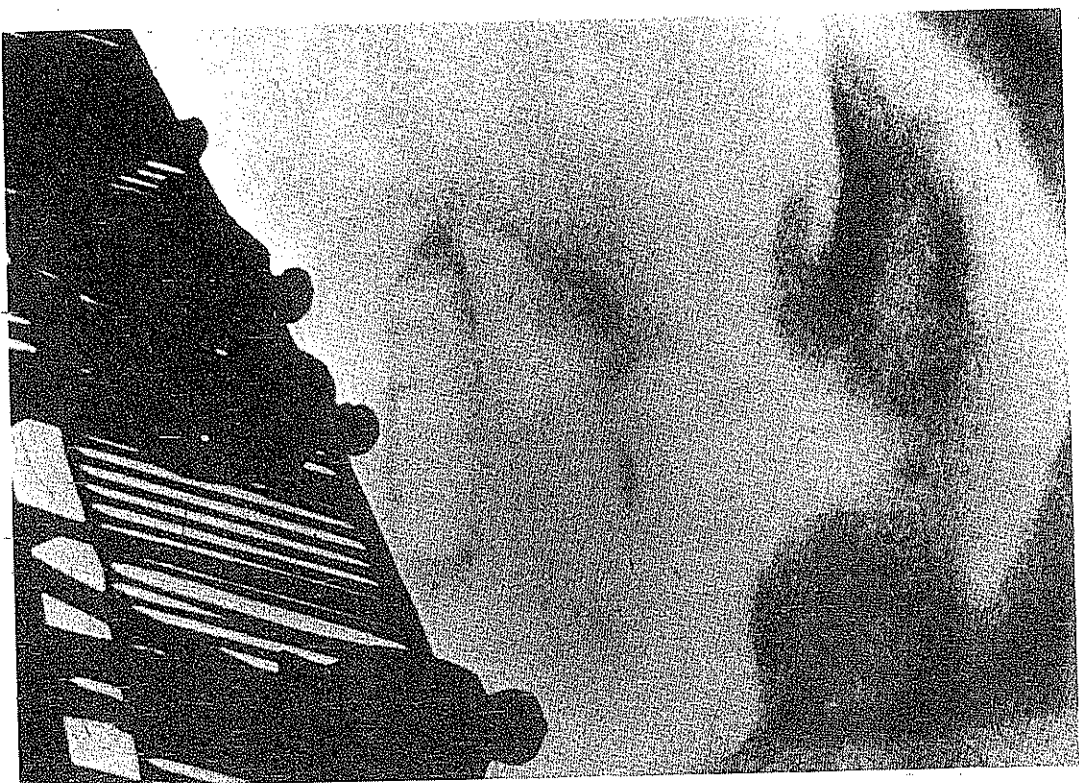
The Man with the Movie Camera, 1929.

Mikhail Kaufman collection

1929) presents, on one level, a kaleidoscope of daily life in the Soviet Union: sleeping, waking, going to work, playing. At the same time it presents constant glimpses of a film cameraman—Mikhail Kaufman—in action, recording Soviet life for all to see. We see him climbing bridge spans, smokestacks, towers, roofs; riding on cars, trains, motorcycles; lying on the ground for underneath views of trains, traffic, marching men. We see the making of a film and at the same time the film that is being made. The interweaving of the two is constant and, in its playfulness, disarming, stimulating, often baffling. We get a through-the-camera view of a passerby; see him reacting to the camera; then we see the camera as seen by him, with his own reflection in the lens. The film incessantly reminds us that it is a film. The shadow of the camera is allowed to invade the shot.

In a startling sequence, action suddenly ends in a frozen frame. The frozen frame becomes a series of stills. We then see these as frames on a strip of 35mm film being examined, image by image, by a film editor—presumably Svilova. For a while, we cut back and forth between images as seen individually at the editing table, and related motion sequences in the finished film. Occasionally we also see an audience seeing the finished film. The film digresses to note parallels. A woman washing at her washbowl is linked with a window-washing shot; paper rolling through a printing press is associated with water flowing over a dam. Shots of a wedding, a death, a childbirth, a divorce, are joltingly intercut. Superimposures and trick shots become frequent as the film progresses. At one point we see a camera putting itself together, and the tripod walking off with it. Is Vertov telling us again about the superhuman abilities of the camera—or is this just playfulness? In a superimposure we see a camera on its tripod, seemingly the size of an Eiffel Tower, standing with the cameraman in the midst of a vast crowd of tiny people: a highly expressive image. Elsewhere we see a cameraman, with camera and tripod, climbing out of a glass of beer: what is Vertov telling us here? At the end of the film, camera and tripod take a bow by themselves.

Since much of the film shows Mikhail Kaufman in action, as photographed by assistants, *The Man with the Movie Camera* involves staging and contrivance to an extent previously rejected by Vertov. But the artificiality is deliberate: an avant-garde determination to suppress illusion in favor of a heightened awareness. The film is an essay on film truth, crammed with tantalizing ironies. But what did it fi-



Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbas, 1931.

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Three Songs of Lenin, 1934.

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nally mean for audiences? Had Vertov demonstrated the importance of the reporter as documentarist? Or had his barrage of film tricks suggested—intentionally? unintentionally?—that no documentary could be trusted? Of the brilliance of *The Man With the Movie Camera* there was never a doubt. It was dazzling in its ambiguity. Eisenstein, usually a Vertov supporter, felt he was slipping into “unmotivated camera mischief” and even “formalism.”⁸

During the years following *The Man With the Movie Camera*, Vertov visited various western European countries and found audiences of *cinéastes* wildly enthusiastic. But his position continued to slip at home. The coming of sound found Vertov and Kautman working in the studios of the Ukraine—a reflection of disfavor in Moscow. But in the Ukraine Vertov created one of the most inventive of early sound films, *Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbas* (*Enthusiasm: Symphony Donbasska*, 1931). Its effective use of non-synchronous sound undoubtedly reflected his early “audio-laboratory” experiments. Subsequently he completed a film he had long planned, built to some extent on cherished Lenin footage—*Three Songs of Lenin* (*Tri Pesni o Lenine*, 1934). Each of its three segments uses music as its cohesive force: the first is a celebration of achievement; the second, a dirge,

the third, a marching song. Unassuming, deeply felt, it has gradually won the status of a Vertov classic.

Vertov continued to work and produce, but he finally settled into the anonymity of a newsreel editing desk. He ended where he had begun, but no longer writing manifestos or polemics.

He had given the reporter-as-documentarist a moment at the center of cinema, and had influenced others. The importance he had given the newsreel set the stage for several careers. Notable was that of Esfir Shub (1894-1959), who during the NEP period had worked in Moscow as subtitler and editor of foreign films—preparing such items as Pearl White serials and Fritz Lang's *Doctor Mabuse* for Russian audiences. But she had a documentary fervor and repeatedly asked for permission to study old newsreels as feature-film material. After many refusals, this permission was finally granted, and in 1926 she went into action. Among the footage she studied, analyzed, and painstakingly catalogued was material accumulated by the Museum of the Revolution—much of it unmarked, disintegrating, and stored in rusty cans in Leningrad cellars. Here her months of work were rewarded by a historic find—one she had hoped for but almost despaired to achieve. A collection of “counterrevolutionary film” turned out to be the home movies of Tsar Nicholas II. They became a key element in her immensely absorbing feature-length documentary, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (*Padeniye Dinastii Romanovikh*, 1927).¹⁰

The long-time newsreel obsession with royalty, and the Tsar's own devotion to film—as in various other royal households, a court cinematographer had immortalized birthday celebrations, tennis matches, croquet games, boating parties, and innumerable rituals—now boomeranged in overwhelming fashion. Placed meticulously in proper time context along with footage of war, strikes, munitions assembly lines, arrests of troublemakers, breadlines, the “counterrevolutionary film” proved to have powerful pro-revolutionary impact. Brief subtitles were used to document or explain individual shots: we are told that the legislative body, the Duma, included 241 landowners, seven workers. We see endless parades of religious dignitaries, in opulent garb. Officers in dress uniform dance the mazurka at a battleship deck party. A subtitle occasionally makes a sharp propaganda stab. A close shot of a munitions assembly line is explained in these words: “The hands of workers preparing the death of their brothers.”

The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty used documents of the years

1912-17. Its success led to two similar Esfir Shub projects: *The Great Road* (*Veliky Put*, 1927), covering the period 1917-27; and *The Russia of Nicholas II and Leo Tolstoy* (*Rossiya Nikolaya II i Lev Tolstoy*, 1928), dealing with 1896-1912. The three form an epic trilogy of Russian history from the birth of cinema to 1927.

Esfir Shub's scholarly achievement played an important role in encouraging the development of film archives. Her later editing work concentrated on other kinds of cinema, but she returned occasionally to the genre of newsreel compilation which she had so notably advanced.

The repertorial documentary pioneered by Vertov attracted other Russian film makers of the 1920's and resulted in some masterworks. The most celebrated was probably *Turksib* (1929), by Victor Turin, a feature-length film on the building of the Turkestan-Siberia railway. Turin's organization of his huge project, and his success in giving it cumulative dramatic impact, won wide admiration and influenced documentary film makers throughout the world. The Whitmanesque style of the subtitles, linking long sequences, was reminiscent of *One Sixth of the World* and, like Vertov's film, seemed to anticipate spoken commentary. Turin's tracing of small mountain rivulets into a raging, swollen river has been widely imitated. A memorable sequence—introduced with the simple title “Strangers . . .”—shows people in a remote Turkestan desert village watching the arrival of surveyors. This sets the stage for a later climactic sequence in which an engine for the first time arrives on the new track. Men—some on horseback—come cautiously to look it over as it stands at rest, puffing quietly. As the engine starts up, the terror of the horses and men and their temporary retreat provide fascinatingly authentic moments. Later we see them joyfully racing the engine across vast plains.

Another remarkable achievement in journalistic documentary, of special interest because it represented early Soviet observation abroad, was Yakov Blyokh's *Shanghai Document* (*Shanghaitsky Dokument*, 1928). Blyokh generally worked in fiction and had assisted Eisenstein in the production of *The Battleship Potemkin*. In *Shanghai Document* he portrayed, in revealing actuality material, a city of divided societies: the suppressed, swarming Chinese, and the heavily armed concessions of the International Settlement. The final portion of the film reflects the rise of revolutionary resistance and the strife between various Chinese factions. It touches briefly on the bloody

slaughter in Shanghai by forces of Chiang Kai-shek as he sought to consolidate his anti-communist regime. *Shanghai Document* emerged as a film of great historic interest.

Another impressive reportorial project was *Salt for Svanetia* (Sol Svaneti, 1930) by Mikhail Kalatozov. It pictures a starkly isolated mountain community between the Black and Caspian seas. Culturally bizarre in its fierce isolation, it is also seen to suffer in strange ways from a total lack of salt. As we see a farmer lie in a field to rest from his labor, a cow comes to lick the sweat from his brow. When he urinates, cattle lick his urine. As a baby is born, a dog is at hand to lick the placental fluid from its body. The climax of the film is the coming of a Soviet-built road, which will bring salt to Svanetia.

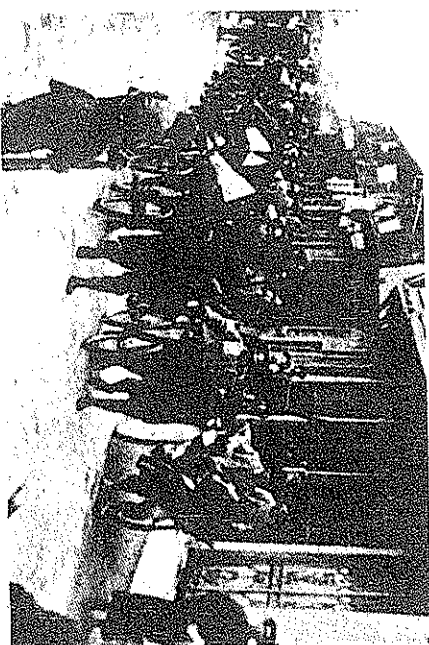
The Stalin regime apparently felt that Kalatozov had been far too fascinated by the backwardness and superstition of Svanetia, and too perfunctorily interested in the socialist solution. The film was considered unbalanced and unfair to Svanetia. Kalatozov was for a time in disfavor—an increasingly frequent occurrence during this period.*

Another memorable documentary was *Moscow* (Moskva, 1927), made by Vertov's brother Mikhail Kaufman in collaboration with Ilya Kopalin, also a Vertov co-worker. It presented an absorbing kaleidoscope of life in the Soviet capital. Still another was Mikhail Kaufman's *In Spring* (Vesnoy, 1930), much admired by contemporaries but seldom seen abroad in original form. Portraying the spring-time devastation of rain and flood—preliminaries to rebirth—Kaufman makes spring a metaphor for revolution. Portions dealing with this theme, in which religion is seen as a distortion of the symbolism of spring, were generally excised abroad.

Vertov's influence went beyond documentary. Many observers felt that he influenced fiction films of the 1920's, in that his work and polemics helped to turn them away from earlier artificialities. Thus he may have strengthened the Soviet fiction film, though he scarcely intended to do so. There may also be a Vertov influence in the use of climactic actuality sequences in a number of fiction films—as in Kuleshov's celebrated satire *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (Neobyichainye Priklucheniya Mistera Vesta v Stranye Bolshevikov, 1924) and in Ermier's *Fragment of an*



Turksib, 1929.

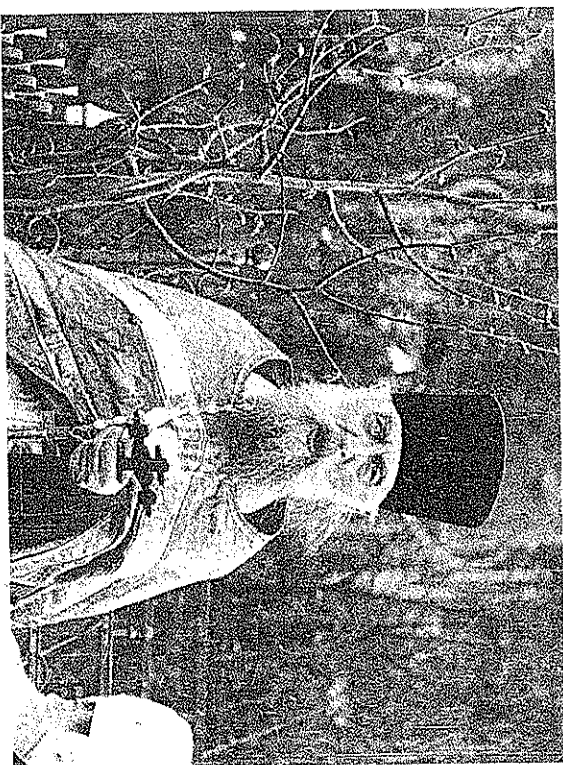


Shanghai Document, 1928.



Salt for Svanetia, 1930.

* Decades later, Kalatozov scored a world-wide success with *The Cranes Are Flying*.



In Spring, 1930.

Mikhail Kaufman collection



In Spring, 1930.

Empire (Obломok Imperii, 1929). Both end with tours of restored and rebuilt Moscow: in the first, serving to disabuse the American Mr. West of his preconceptions of Soviet life; in the second, opening the eyes of a long-time victim of amnesia who had lost his memory during a battle of the revolutionary war, and regains it a decade later. The film has a *Rip Van Winkle* pattern: the hero is suddenly confronted with the vast changes that have taken place.

The work of Dziga Vertov and of those he influenced had unquestionable propaganda values for the Soviet government in the early and middle 1920's. Yet Vertov thought of himself not as a propagandist, but as a reporter: his mission was to get out the news. Conflict—or potential conflict—between the obligations of a journalist and the demands of doctrine was not yet sensed as a problem in the early Vertov days. This happy moment passed quickly.

During the Stalin period increasing international tension, increasing fear of encirclement, increasing armament production and secrecy, along with pressures on film makers to support policy and tactics, all this laid a heavy hand on fiction and documentary alike. A golden film moment—brief, like many a renaissance in the arts—was over, and the spotlight shifted elsewhere.

Painter

All the arts were shaken by the rise of film. Practitioners of other arts re-examined their own roles, assailed cinema, staked out new positions for themselves, developed isms to fortify them, appropriated elements from cinema, wrote manifestos. Some transferred their main interest to film.

In the 1920's painters infiltrated in numbers into the film world. Along with sculptors, musicians, writers, architects, still photographers, and others they joined cine-clubs—the first was formed in Paris in 1924—to look at films, talk about films, and present their own experiments. The cine-club was in part a protest against the commercialism of cinema; even more, a recognition of its power over men.

Painters inevitably brought with them ideas and ways different from those of other film makers. Plot and climax were not among their habitual concerns. They tended to think of film as a pictorial art in which light was the medium, and which involved fascinating

composition problems in that the interrelationship of forms was always evolving, developing unexpected and mysterious dynamics. They were also interested in texture and its interplay with light.

In 1921 two painters who had been members of a Zurich avant-garde movement—the Swedish Viking Eggeling and the German Hans Richter—began joint experiments in abstract film. Richter admired the “perfect order” of Eggeling’s abstract paintings—“as clear as Bach.” Together they hoped to generate a Bach-like feeling from movements counterpointed on the screen in fugue-like patterns. At first their experiments seemed remote from documentary, but they acquired a documentary link. The artists often photographed familiar objects—“fragments of actuality” in Vertov parlance—and used them as the basis for their interplaying movements. Thus they carried the ideas of Vertov to an ultimate conclusion. The artist was beginning with actuality, then creating his own expressive synthesis.¹

Any sort of actuality could be used as a basis for such abstractions. Richter made his *Racing Symphony* (*Rennsymphonie*, 1928) from horse-race footage, which he organized into complex overlapping patterns. It was Muybridge fused with abstractionism.

A striking example of this abstract-documentary trend was *Ballet Mécanique* (1925) by the French artist Fernand Léger and the American artist Dudley Murphy. It won such vogue that Léger considered abandoning painting for film. Much of it is a composition built out of moving gears, levers, pendulums, eggbeaters, and other items. Its most celebrated sequence shows a cleaning woman climbing a flight of stairs. It was so edited that just as the woman appears to reach the top, she is seen to be at the bottom again. The effect is repeated many times, and audiences acquire an agonizing desire to see the upward journey completed. In this sequence, suggesting the degradation of repetitious labor, the film had strong philosophic overtones.

The work of Jean Painlevé gave the avant-garde film makers a link with science. Trained as a biologist, he experimented with photography of underwater life—sometimes in speeded, sometimes in slowed motion, often hugely magnified, and always artfully lighted—producing astonishing studies in the surrealism of natural phenomena, with their bizarre shapes and movements. Starting in 1928 with *Devilfish* (*Le Pieuve*), *Stickleback Eggs* (*Oufs d'Épinoche*), and *Sea Urchins* (*Les Oursons*), he later won wide celebrity with his *Sea Horse* (*L'Hip-*

pocampe, 1934) for which Darius Milhaud composed an accompaniment.

Most such experiments circulated largely in cine-clubs. But in 1927 one painter-documentarist, Walther Ruttmann, released a work of such impact that it created a genre, which established itself in theatrical cinema.

Walther Ruttmann (1887–1941) was born in Frankfurt, Germany. Along with painting, he studied architecture and music. He became a successful designer of posters. Admiring Viking Eggeling, he also became an early film experimenter, and in 1924 created a nightmarish dream sequence about black hawks for Fritz Lang’s films on the *Nibelungen* saga. He also admired Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein. All these influences seemed to come together in *Berlin: Symphony of the City* (*Berlin: die Sinfonie der Grossstadt*, 1927), directed and edited by Ruttmann and photographed by Karl Freund. It was by no means the first film about a great city; predecessors included Kaufman and Kopalin’s *Moscow* and numerous short films including *Mannahatta* (1921) by the Americans Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, and an earlier venture by a Swedish visitor to New York, Julius Jaenzon—*New York 1911*. But none of these had so strikingly suggested a painting heritage, and none spurred so many imitations. *Berlin* started a wave of “city symphonies,” to which Ruttmann himself later contributed films on Düsseldorf, Stuttgart, and Hamburg.

In *Berlin: Symphony of the City* the word “symphony” is significant. Ruttmann was interested in rhythms and patterns. People form part of the patterns, but Ruttmann is not especially interested in the people themselves. The film depicts a day in the life of the city: this dawn-to-dusk progression is the only “plot.” An early morning entrance into the city, by railroad, opens the film. It is an extraordinarily dynamic opening, and characteristically devoid of human content. It is compounded of telephone lines bobbing up and down along the track, stroboscopic patterns of railroad bridge beams, tracks dividing and coming together as seen from the front of the train, jiggling movements of couplings—all these intercut with glimpses of landscape, changing from rural to metropolitan to industrial. In the city we first see a quiet sequence of empty streets, restfully interlaced, then the city awakes via a catalogue of opening shutters, blinds, curtains, windows, doors. All manner of machinery gradually goes into

action. Machines are a major interest throughout and are often seen without human operators. An office sequence gives us frenzy compounded of typewriter and telephone activity. Eisenstein "shock" editing techniques are here injected: in the midst of phone calls we see monkeys chattering, dogs lunging at each other. Such animal-human intercutting is done at several points. A symphonic score by Edmund Meisel was composed to accompany the film, and was featured in big-city showings.²

In France the Brazilian artist Alberto Cavalcanti was at the same time making a strikingly similar film, *Only the Hours* (*Rien Que Les Heures*, 1926), about dawn-to-dusk life in Paris. Cavalcanti had been trained in Brazil for a career in architecture, but in Paris he moved into scene design, and from there into film experimentation. His Parisian film, begun after Ruttmann's *Berlin* but completed and released earlier, is less severely compartmentalized. It had moments of humor, rare in Ruttmann. Its opening suggests a Vertov trick: elegant ladies are seen descending a stairway, as though we are beginning a Hollywood high-life movie. But the action freezes: a pair of hands picks up the frozen frame, which has become a still photograph, and tears it into bits; the bits become garbage on a street. This is no Hollywood dream-movie, Cavalcanti is telling us; actually will be the theme.

Rich-poor contrasts are suggested throughout the film, but no meanings are developed from them: rich and poor are mere threads in the fabric of city life. As in Ruttmann's work, pattern and design are dominant interests. Over a girl selling newspapers Cavalcanti superimposes a swirling ballet of newspaper titles and headlines. Paris as seen by various painters forms another such montage composition; another is developed from movie posters. Cavalcanti loves tricks. We see a gentleman eating a steak for lunch; over the center of his plate—replacing the steak—Cavalcanti superimposes a slaughterhouse scene. The fancy design of the luncheon plate remains visible, framing bloody mayhem. Cavalcanti wanders from topic to topic. He uses a few staged scenes, sometimes embarrassingly amateurish. He lacks Ruttmann's sense of organization, but seems far more genial.³

Another city symphony also involved a foreigner drawn to Paris. He was Boris Kaufman, brother of Dziga Vertov and Mikhail Kaufman, and youngest of the three by a number of years. During the chaos of Russian civil war his parents had taken him back to Poland,



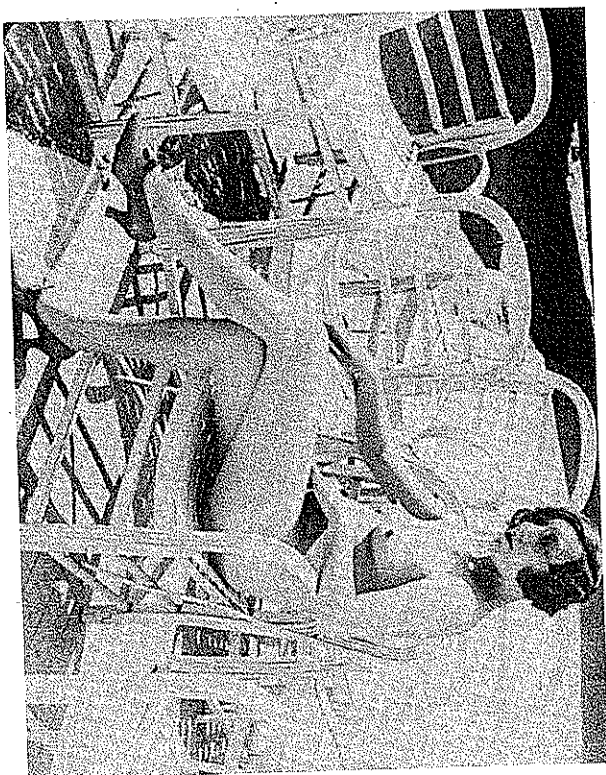
The three Kaufman brothers—before the Russian Revolution.

Mikhail Kaufman collection

and a few years later he went to Paris for study. He corresponded with Mikhail, who attempted to give him cinematography instruction by mail. In Paris Boris was able to see a number of Dziga Vertov films, and he saw Dziga when the latter visited France. Boris inevitably gravitated toward cinematography, making admired film studies of the Seine and the Champs Élysées. These led to a collaboration with a brilliant young *cinéaste*, Jean Vigo.⁴

Jean Vigo (1905–34), son of a radical journalist of Basque descent who had died mysteriously in jail, was educated in various boarding schools. A siege of tuberculosis made him settle in Nice, a resort which fascinated and revolted him. He became assistant in a photo studio, and a leading force in the Nice cine-club. Corresponding with film experimenters far and wide to secure films for his cine-club programs, he became saturated with film theory and determined to make films of his own. In 1929 he invited Boris Kaufman to Nice to work with him, and the collaboration resulted in *On the Subject of Nice* (*À Propos de Nice*), released the following year.

Kaufman photographed, Vigo directed. Vigo often wheeled Kaufman up and down the boardwalk in a wheelchair; Kaufman had a camouflaged camera in his lap. Wheelchairs were common enough in Nice to pass unnoticed, and this facilitated catching action unaware. Kaufman and Vigo were both committed to this *Kino-Pravda* approach; if someone became aware of being photographed, they



À Propos de Nice, 1930.

Cinémaèque Française

stopped instantly. At the same time, Vigo wanted a personal film—*point de vue documenté*, he called it. The maker of such documentaries, Vigo later told an audience in Paris, should be “thin enough to squeeze through a Romanian keyhole and shoot Prince Carol getting up in his nightshirt”—if the spectacle proved interesting—and “small enough . . . to squat under the chair of the croupier, the great god of the Casino at Monte Carlo.”

In Nice the collaborators did not succeed in squatting under the croupier's chair, but they made up for it with ingenuity. Early in their film is a device characteristic of city-symphony films. On a chessboard, in evening clothes, we see some small dolls—somewhat like those used on wedding cakes. Suddenly a croupier's rake sweeps them away. This movement is at once followed by a matching movement in which a streetcleaner sweeps away rubbish: in Nice, each batch of tourists becomes tomorrow's garbage.

À Propos de Nice has many similarities to other city films, but adds an edge of biting satire. Vigo felt that he was portraying “the last twitchings of a society that neglects its own responsibilities to the

point of giving you nausea and making you an accomplice in a revolutionary solution.”

Vigo, with Kaufman at the camera, later directed two brilliant fiction films—*Zéro de Conduite* and *L'Atlantide*. But his first film remained a documentary landmark. Vigo died at the age of twenty-nine.

The city symphonies, while initiated by a painter, represented a crossbreeding of all the arts. This was a natural outcome of the ferment of the cine-clubs, where the interrelationship of the arts was constantly discussed. The cine-clubs were in touch with each other, often propelling each other along parallel lines. Many film makers toured the cine-clubs with their films.

In the Belgian seaside town of Ostende, where many artists worked, a cine-club was founded by Henri Storck, son of the leading shoemaker. Sooner or later everyone came to the shoe store, so Storck as a boy already knew many Ostende artists and considered a painting career. But a store opposite the shoe shop was converted into a theater, and night after night he fell asleep to laughter and piano music from across the street; trips to the store-cinema soon saturated him in melodrama and comedy. Then a visit to Brussels and its cine-club—the first in Belgium—showed him films of other kinds. The program included Flaherty's *Moana*, and it was a revelation to him. His immediate response was the organizing of the Ostende cine-club, for which he recruited local painters, sculptors, writers, musicians, while seeking advice from other cine-clubs. He began an intense correspondence with Jean Vigo in Nice. Finally, in 1930, his own film *Images of Ostende* (*Images d'Ostende*) began the round of the cine-clubs. Storck visited some of them with his film, meeting many film makers. In Paris he got advice from Boris Kaufman. He also met young Joris Ivens, a moving spirit in the Amsterdam cine-club, the *Filmliga*, or film-league.⁵

Joris Ivens managed the Amsterdam branch of his father's photographic business while pursuing university studies. At the *Filmliga* his first enthusiasm had been for the abstract films sent to them—in some cases, *brought* to them—from Germany by Ruttmann, Eggeeling, Richter, and others. Ivens's own early work took a similar direction. In *The Bridge* (*De Brug*, 1928) he concentrated on the complex action involving a Rotterdam railroad bridge. Its middle section was raised and lowered to let ships pass underneath and trains pass overhead. As

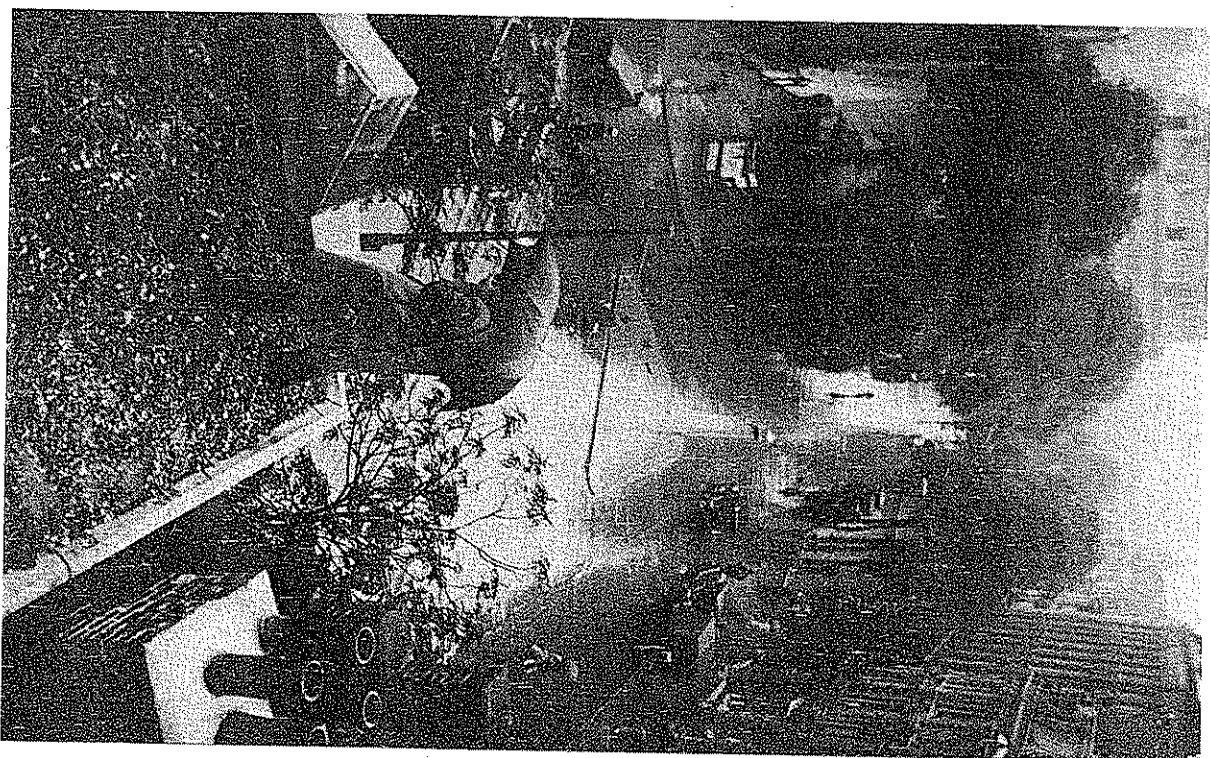


Joris Ivens editing, 1928.

Nederlands Filmmuseum

it moved, counterweights moved in the opposite direction. These movements, plus those of streaking trains, chugging boats, billowing smoke, waves, and traffic in the city beyond, made the bridge "a laboratory of movements, tones, shapes, contrasts, rhythms, and the relations between all of these." Day after day Ivens, climbing on the bridge during lunchtime intervals, searched out expressive angles. He discovered the joy and rewards of prolonged viewing. "You will always discover something new, the countermovement of a gliding shadow, a significant trembling as the cables come to a halt, or a more telling reflection. . . ."

The Bridge prepared Ivens for his later film *Rain* (*Regen*, 1929), a gem-like study made with the writer Mannus Franken and with help from John Fernhout—later known as Ferno. It appears to portray a passing shower in Amsterdam, but the footage required four months of shooting. With extraordinary beauty and precision, Ivens portrays the patterns made by rain—at first gentle, later of mounting violence—falling in puddles, gutters, canals, rivers, running down windows, umbrellas, wagons, cars, bicycles, dripping from gutters, spouts, umbrella spokes, and limbs of statues. The film starts modestly but develops richness and complexity; we are seeing a great city

Filming *Rain*, 1929.

Nederlands Filmmuseum—Van Dongen collection



Rain, 1929.

Nederlands Filmmuseum

through the lens of rain. Made under the influence of the painter-as-documentarist genre, *Rain* was perhaps its most perfect product.⁶

The late 1920's produced other films in the genre, large and small: in Paris, Man Ray's *Emak Bakia* (1927), built on light patterns from rotating objects; in Belgium, Charles Dekenleire's *Boxing Match* (*Combat de Boxe*, 1927), in which boxing footage becomes raw material for editing experiments; in the United States, Ralph Steiner's *H₂O* (1929), a montage of water patterns; in Germany, Wilfried Basse's *Market in the Wittenbergplatz* (*Markt am Wittenbergplatz*, 1929), in which the erection and later dismantling of market stalls are dramatically compressed through time-lapse photography; in France, Eugene Deslaw's *The Electric Night* (*La Nuit Electrique*, 1930), a small symphony of Parisian illuminated signs. And the genre persisted.

But the painter-as-documentarist had only a brief moment of glory. There were reasons. His spurt of activity came at the last moment of the silent film. With the arrival of the spoken word, images were suddenly downgraded. Games of movement and texture were, for the moment, almost forgotten. Furious aesthetic battles over the uses of sound took their place.

This transition coincided with another: from prosperity to economic collapse and world-wide depression. The two transitions were not unrelated: the cinema transition to sound had been started as a desperate gamble by producers facing economic ruin.

To the documentary film the two transitions brought sharp change. During the 1920's explorer, journalist, artist, and others had experimented with the moving image in a spirit that was usually zealous and optimistic. Their films had seldom been contentious. But economic collapse brought tension and strife. Ideological combat began to dominate all media. Documentary film, acquiring the spoken word at this precise moment, was inevitably called on to join the battle. In the documentary field, the word-film became an instrument of struggle.

National Education and Information Films Ltd., National Film Archive, Naya Sansar Productions; (Italy) RAI; (Japan) Iwanami Productions, Japan Association of Cultural Film Producers, Japan Film Library Council, NHK, Nippon AV Productions, Toho Company, Towa Company; (Latvia) Riga Film Museum; (Netherlands) Centrale Filmotheek, Netherlands Filmmuseum; (Poland) Association of Polish Film Makers, Krakow Festival, Film Polski, Filmoteka Polska, Wytwórnia, Filmów Dokumentalnych; (South Korea) Motion Picture Promotion Union, National Film Production Center; (Sweden) Film Centrum, Svensk Filmindustri, Svenska Filminstitutet, Sveriges Radio-TV Arkivet; (Switzerland) Locarno Festival, Praesens Film; (USA) Contemporary Films, George Eastman House, International Film Seminars, Library of Congress, Museum of Modern Art, National Archives, Time-Life Films, Tricontinental, U.S. Information Agency, Whitney Museum of Modern Art; (USSR) Association of Film Makers of the USSR, Central Documentary Studio, Gosfilmofond, Institute of Fine Arts; (West Germany) Institut für Film und Bild, Riefenstahl-Film; (Yugoslavia) Dunav Film, Film and Television Academy, Jugoslovenska Kinoteka, Neoplanta Films, Zagreb Films. To all, our warmest thanks.

The names of many of the artists interviewed will be found in the following source notes.

New York City

June 1992

E. B.

SOURCE NOTES

Prophet (pp. 3-30)

1. For the prehistory of cinema see Ceram, *Archaeology of the Cinema*; also Jacques Deslandes, *Histoire Comparée du Cinéma*, v. 1; Macgowan, *Behind the Screen*.
2. Ramsaye, in *A Million and One Nights*, is intent on ridiculing Muybridge, while concentrating all honors on Edison. Muybridge's odd adopted name (he was born Edward James Muggeridge) may have encouraged this, but his achievements were formidable. For discussion and a Muybridge bibliography, see *Film Comment*, Fall 1969; also Hendricks, *The Edison Motion Picture Myth*; MacDonnell, *Eadward Muybridge*.
3. Macgowan, *Behind the Screen*, p. 276; Sadoul, *Histoire du Cinéma*, p. 17.
4. Sadoul, *Louis Lumière*, is a good introduction to the Lumière saga; but see Jacques Deslandes, *Histoire Comparée du Cinéma*, v. 2, for additional material, and corrections of Sadoul errors. Mesguich, *Tours de Manivelle*, is an absorbing memoir by a widely traveling Lumière opérateur. English-language material on Lumière is scant, but the impact of his shows is reflected in film histories of various countries, as noted below.
5. See the chronology and filmography in Sadoul, *Louis Lumière*.
6. Robinson, *The History of World Cinema*, p. 23.
7. As told to Jay Leyda by Doublier. Leyda, *Kino*, p. 19.
8. Baxter, *The Australian Cinema*, pp. 2-3; Barnouw and Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film*, pp. 2-5. Sestier's *Melbourne Races* survives in the Australian compilation film, *The Pictures That Moved* (1968).
9. Mesguich, *Tours de Manivelle*, p. 10.
10. "Half a Century in Exhibition Line: Shri Abdullally Recalls Bioscope Days," *Indian Talkie*, pp. 121-22.
11. Smith, *Two Reels and a Crank*, p. 148.

12. *Ibid.* p. 102; Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle*, p. xiii.
13. Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights*, pp. 520-21.
14. The Ponting material reached the screen again in 1930 in the film *Ninety Degrees South*. Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914*, p. 156.

Explorer (pp. 33-51)

1. The quotation—one of several accounts of this episode—is from an autobiographical document in *The Flaherty Papers*, Box 59. *The Flaherty Papers* are the main source for this section, along with Calder-Marshall, *The Innocent Eye*, and other sources as noted.
2. All diary quotations are from *The Flaherty Papers*.
3. The letters are dated April 14 and March 6, 1915. *The Flaherty Papers*, Box 15.
4. Griffith, *The World of Robert Flaherty*, p. 38.
5. Flaherty, Robert J., "Life Among the Eskimos," *World's Work*, October 1922.
6. *Theatre Arts*, May 1951.
7. *New York Times*, June 12, 1922.
8. Sherwood (ed.), *The Best Moving Pictures of 1922-23*.
9. From the autobiographical document, *The Flaherty Papers*, Box 59.
10. See de Brigard, *Anthropological Cinema*.
11. *Film Culture*, Spring 1972.

Reporter (pp. 51-71)

1. The section is based largely on Drobascchenko, *Dziga Vertov* (German edition); Sadoul, *Dziga Vertov*. Other sources as noted. There is scant English-language material on Vertov.
2. Leyda, *Kino*, pp. 138-39. Leyda worked for a time with Vertov.
3. See *ibid.* p. 163, for a list of features playing in Moscow's "NEP-nourished" theaters late in 1922.
4. *Sovetskoye Kino*, November-December 1934; quoted by Leyda, *Kino*, pp. 161-62.
5. Interview, Mikhail Kaufman.
6. Sitney (ed.), *Film Culture Reader*, p. 362.
7. Note ebullient comment by French documentarist Chris Marker: "Let us now praise Dziga Vertov, for if I had to choose the Ten Best Documentaries of All Time, I'd call it preposterous, but if there's ONE to choose: *A SIXTH OF THE WORLD*." Quoted, Klaue *et al.* (eds.), *Sowjetischer Dokumentarfilm*, p. 70.
8. Leyda, *Kino*, p. 176. The lecture, translated by S. Brody, appeared in *Filmfront*, 1935.
9. *Film Comment*, Spring 1972, offers an illuminating discussion by David Bordwell on disputes surrounding Vertov.
10. See Leyda, *Films Beget Films*, pp. 22-28, for Shub's contribution to the evolution of the compilation film.

Painter (pp. 71-81)

1. Richter, "The Film as an Original Art Form," *Film Culture*, January 1955.
2. Manvell and Fraenkel, *The German Cinema*, pp. 45-47.
3. See Klaue (ed.), *Alberto Cavalcanti*, for several discussions of *Rien Que Les Heures*.
4. Interview, Boris Kaufman. Gomes, *Jean Vigo*, pp. 55-80.
5. Interview, Henri Storck. Maestaf, *Henri Storck*, pp. 5-23. The Vigo-Storck letters were published in *Centrofilm*, February-March, 1961.
6. Ivens, *The Camera and I*, pp. 13-46.

Advocate (pp. 85-139)

1. For the early Grierson years, see Jack C. Ellis, "The Young Grierson in America, 1924-1927," *Cinema Journal*, Fall 1968.
2. Quotations are from Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, except as otherwise noted.
3. Interview, Edgar Anstey.
4. Material on the EMB and GPO units is based on Rotha, *Documentary Film*, and reminiscences by Grierson co-workers in *Sight and Sound*, Summer 1972, and in *The Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts* (II, 4-5), 1972—reminiscences gathered as Grierson memorials. A similarly illuminating document in cinema form is the film *Grierson* (1973), produced by James Beveridge for the National Film Board of Canada; it includes historic Grierson footage and interviews with co-workers in Europe, America, Asia, and Australia.
5. *Sight and Sound*, Summer 1972.
6. *Take One*, January-February 1970.
7. Interview, Basil Wright.
8. *Film News* (XIII, 3), 1953.
9. Rotha, *Documentary Film*, pp. 106-7.
10. *Ibid.*, 1951 preface by Grierson, p. 17.
11. Material on Goebbels is based on Hull, *Film in the Third Reich*, except as otherwise noted.
12. The account of Leni Riefenstahl's career is based largely on material assembled by Gordon Hitchens in *Film Culture*, Spring 1973, and, earlier, in *Film Comment*, Winter 1965. Other sources as noted.
13. Riefenstahl, *Hinter den Kulissen des Reichsparteitagfilms*, pp. 16-24.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
15. Interview, Leni Riefenstahl.
16. For Budd Schulberg comments, see "Nazi Pin-Up Girl," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 30, 1946.
17. The Jaworsky comments are in *Film Culture*, Spring 1972.
18. Fielding, *The American Newsreel*, p. 278.
19. See "Pioneers," an interview with Thomas Brandon, *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1973.