

Documentary

A HISTORY OF THE NON-FICTION FILM

2nd Revised Edition

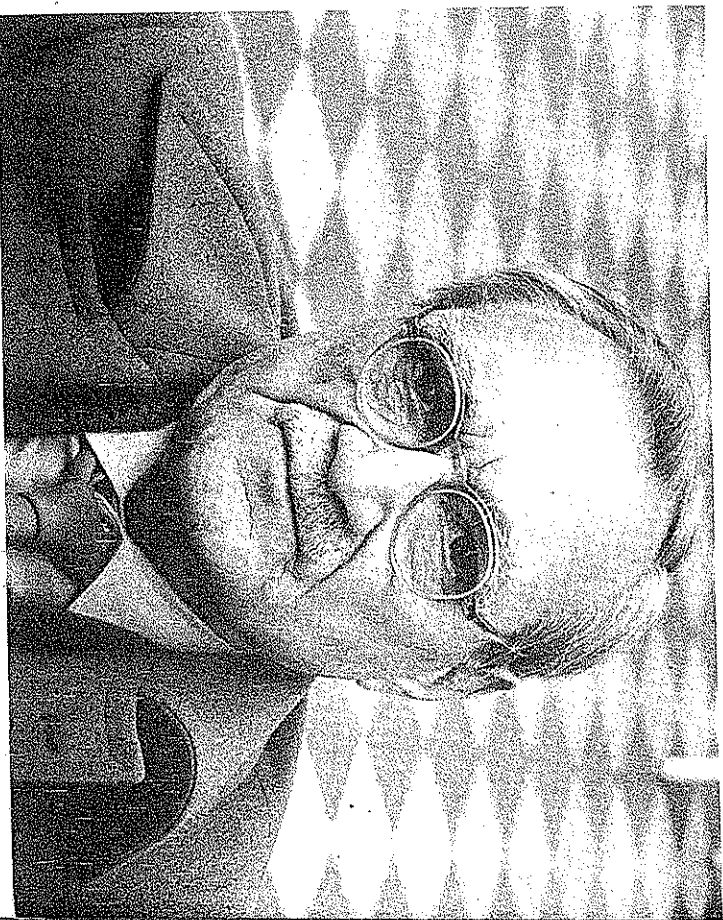
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SOUND AND FURY

sempre staccato



John Grierson.

Photograph by Virginia Leirns

Advocate

When John Grierson (1898-1972), son of a Scots schoolmaster and grandson of a lighthouse keeper, was studying at Glasgow University and earning distinction in moral philosophy, he was already thinking about film. He sensed that film and other popular media had acquired leverage over ideas and actions once exercised by church and school. These thoughts became the mainspring of his life.

A Rockefeller Foundation grant took him to the United States in 1924 for research in social sciences. While studying at the University of Chicago he crisscrossed the land interviewing film makers, scholars, politicians, journalists. Above all, he observed the American melting pot in action. And he began to feel—with Walter Lippmann—that expectations once held for democracy were proving illusory. Problems facing society had grown beyond the comprehension of most citizens; their participation had become perfunctory, apathetic, meaningless, often nonexistent.¹

While Lippmann was pessimistic about all this, Grierson was not: he saw a solution. The documentary film maker, dramatizing issues and their implications in a meaningful way, could lead the citizen through the wilderness. This became the Grierson mission.

That this implied an assumption of leadership, of an elitist role, did not trouble Grierson. He believed in "the elect having their duty." They must not only explain, they must inspire. He was not frightened by the word "propaganda." He could even say: "I look on cinema as a pulpit. . . ."²

In the United States Grierson met Robert Flaherty, with whom he began a lifelong, stormy hate-love relationship, hailing Flaherty as the father of documentary while deploring his obsession with the remote and primitive. Grierson's determination was to "bring the citizen's eye in from the ends of the earth to the story, his own story, of what was happening under his nose . . . the drama of the doorstep." In this respect Grierson felt more drawn to the social relevance of Russian cinema. In New York, Grierson helped prepare *The Battleship Potemkin* for American audiences. This involved some tampering with the film, and months of struggle with New York State censors. The task gave him a detailed familiarity with Eisenstein's



Grierson: "I look on cinema as a pulpit . . ."

National Film Archive

editing techniques, which became a further major influence on his own film ideas.

Early in 1927 Grierson was back in England, visiting the Empire Marketing Board to call on its chief, Sir Stephen Tallents, who found him "brimming with ideas." The Empire Marketing Board was intended to cement the British Empire by promoting trade and a sense of unity among its various parts, and it was attempting this through posters, pamphlets, exhibitions. The next step, argued Grierson, must be film; Tallents already held the same view. But this required a meeting of minds with the Financial Secretary of the Treasury, Arthur Michael Samuel, who was considered the leading authority on the herring industry and who was flatly opposed to film. Grierson met this problem with a characteristic head-on approach. He came to the meeting recommending immediate production of a film on the herring industry. The result was an appropriation of £2500, with which Grierson produced and directed his first film, the fifty-minute silent film *Drifters*, photographed by Basil Emmott. It was premiered at the London Film Society late in 1929.

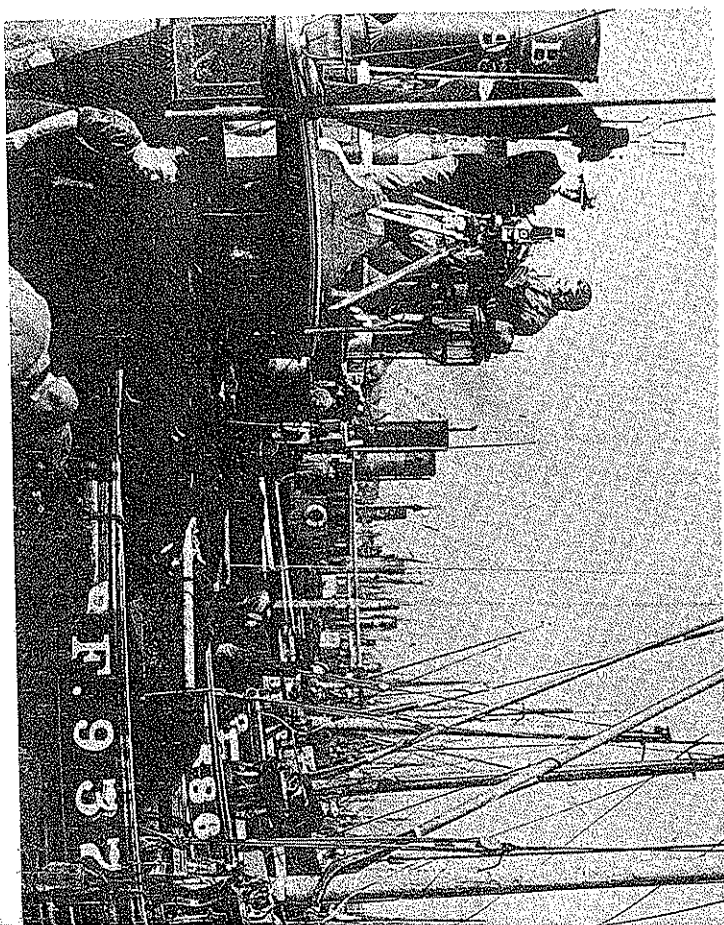
The society, a pioneer in the cine-club movement, had been formed in 1925. Programs of previous years had suggested an art-for-art's sake orientation, with films like *Mannahatta*, *Berlin: Symphony of the City*, and *Rien Que les Heures*. The program of November 10, 1929, was representative of a shift. The main attraction was the Grierson version of *The Battleship Potemkin*, with *Drifters* as an added item. *The Battleship Potemkin* was, by British censorship decision, forbidden to theaters—but not to the London Film Society, a private group. As films grew more issue-oriented, this private status tended to make the society a place where forbidden films could be seen—usually leftist, sometimes Russian. The London Film Society, already tending leftward in its membership, became more so during the Depression years; the same was true of cine-clubs in many countries.

The *Potemkin* unveiling was a total triumph, and some London Film Society members were even more impressed with *Drifters*. Vigorously paced and imaginatively edited—some felt they saw an Eisenstein influence, but the style was less obtrusive—it brought the daily work of the herring fisheries to life in a way that astonished the audience. There was nothing doctrinally radical about it, but the fact that British workingmen—virtually ignored by British cinema except as

The success of *Drifters* meant a new career for Grierson. Instead of directing further films, he became creative organizer; at the Empire Marketing Board he assembled untrained recruits and proceeded to turn them into a bustling EMB Film Unit, finding funds for them to function, goading them, teaching them—and meanwhile shielding them fanatically from bureaucratic interference. That all this called for a special kind of genius may be seen in the paradox of his position. His mandate and funds were from sources intent on consolidating the status quo and the British Empire. This was true of the Empire Marketing Board as well as of other entities, such as the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board, that underwrote specific projects. Grierson's recruits, almost without exception, were socialistically inclined activists inspired by *Drifters* and *Potemkin*. After *Drifters* they flocked to the Grierson banner.

In a sense, all were learning together. The EMB Film Unit grew from a staff of two at the start of 1930 to over thirty in 1933. Most of the young recruits had little or no professional experience. For Edgar Ansey, Arthur Elton, Stuart Legg, the chief preparation had been London Film Society screenings. Paul Rotha, a Film Society member from the start, was already a film scholar and had written *The Film Till Now* (1930), but he had not produced or directed films. Basil Wright had done one avant-garde experiment, *Verov-inspired*. All these men were in their early twenties. Grierson himself, with only *Drifters* behind him, scarcely had a start on the staff and was only a few years their senior. Yet he assumed at once an almost god-like position among them, dominating them with a "fierce benevolence." He was "the chief."

While handling sponsor negotiations, he managed to supervise all on-going projects. The viewing of rushes, or of an edited workprint, could be an intimidating occasion. The fledgling director would notify Grierson's aide, the soft-spoken J. P. R. Golightly, when the material was ready; then he would wait in the projection room. After a time Grierson would crash in and sit down. "Right. Shoot." His concentration on the film was total; then came a rapid stream of comments, which might range from lens choice to philosophical context. They were often a mixture of encouragement and stern reprimand. "Ansey, you've failed badly here." (He always used last names.) Identifying points of failure, he left solutions to the director; when the latter found a solution, Grierson gave full credit. "There,



Shooting *Drifters*, 1929. Above, Grierson directing.

National Film Archive

comedy material—were the heroes gave the film an almost revolutionary impact. In a British cinema grown stale with artificiality, it was a breath of salty sea air. The film went on to a successful run in theaters.

Drifters made clear the Grierson deviation from Flaherty. The herring fisheries, a subtitle tells us, used to be a thing of quaint old villages; the men still lived in the old villages, but the fishing had meanwhile become "an epic of steam and steel." Grierson gives only the briefest glimpse of the quaint old villages; his eye is on the steam and steel. Flaherty would have chosen otherwise. Amid churning sea and rolling ship, Grierson shows us in vivid detail "the teamwork of man and machine." Final scenes depict quayside auctioning of the catch and project the herring business into international trade—"a market for the world." Grierson must have had the Empire Marketing Board in mind in his final subtitle: "So to the ends of the earth goes the harvest of the sea."

you've done it—pure genius." The staff, all tyros, seemed to welcome the tyrannical supervision, even when it was brutal.³

The atmosphere was strangely monastic. Working hours were limitless. Staff members got the impression that marriage was taboo, and the existence of girl-friends was kept from Grierson. Grierson himself fell for Margaret Taylor, sister of staff member John Taylor, and they got married, but Grierson did not mention it for eighteen months. She went to work at the unit, but they never arrived or left together. Harry Watt, who joined the unit in 1932, thought of Grierson as a "Presbyterian priest." Another recruit, William Coldstream, wondered whether the preference for film themes of work and corporate effort—never involving the intimacy of a Flaherty film—had something to do with Grierson's fastidiousness about personal matters. Yet Grierson and his staff spent hours at the pub together, drinking and talking. In a way these were seminars, heady and memorable, crammed with pungent observation.⁴

Beginning with mere scraps of equipment, the EMB Film Unit was confronted at once with problems of sound. To inspire and educate his staff, and to give the unit prestige, Grierson brought two celebrated names into the work. From France came the Brazilian Alberto Cavalcanti, who proved invaluable in sound experiments. From America came Robert Flaherty, to do photography for *Industrial Britain* (1933). Of his participation Grierson said later: "The amount of money put aside for Flaherty was £2,500, so I probably fired him by the time he spent £2,400. . . . We'd finish it within the £2,500 all right."⁵ In fact, the group made several films from the Flaherty footage. All bore the Grierson rather than the Flaherty stamp.

Grierson importuned his staff to avoid the "aestheticity." He told them they were propagandists first, film makers second. Art is a hammer, not a mirror, he said. It was part of Grierson's genius that he could build an atmosphere of enthusiasm for necessary, vital propaganda without ever being quite clear about its aim, other than the general idea that it was citizenship education, looking toward a better and richer life. For many staff members it was enough that, like *Drifters*, their work was giving new dignity to the working man. "Every film we made," said Harry Watt, "had this in it, that we were trying to give an image of the workingman, away from the Edwardian, Victorian, capitalist attitudes." Looking at issues from a workingman's point of view, some films—such as *Housing Problems* (1935)

and *Coal Face* (1936)—sounded a note of protest and of urgent need for reform. In this, Watt felt, they were suspect to many in government, and living on a razor's edge. "Not many of us were communists, but we were all socialists and I'm sure we had dossiers. . . ." For a time they were apparently observed by a secret-service operative in the guise of a trainee film-editor. All this kept them sharply aware of the political limits inherent in government sponsorship—a favorite subject of Grierson admonitions. Yet the emotional center of the output was pro-labor. They were giving the workingman his rightful place.

The sponsors had a different rationale. In later years Grierson explained it in these terms:

When it came to making industry not ugly for people, but a matter of beauty, so that people would accept their industrial selves, so that they would not revolt against their industrial selves, as they did in the late 19th century, who initiated the finding of beauty in industry? The British government—as a matter of policy.⁶

That their task was to nurture a more amenable labor force would have surprised the film staff. Grierson avoided such problems by putting himself firmly between sponsor and artist.

But the ambiguous relationship is implicit in many of the films. *Song of Ceylon* (1935)—directed, photographed, and edited by Basil Wright with the assistance of teenaged trainee John Taylor—is perhaps the most brilliant example.

The film is in four parts: (1) The Buddha, (2) The Virgin Land, (3) The Voices of Commerce, (4) The Apparel of a God. Wright was clearly enthralled by the Ceylonese people, and conveys his admiration throughout the film. The film was sponsored by the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board, but the tea trade does not enter the film until the third part, when its activities are introduced on the sound track.

The first two parts, portraying the Ceylonese and their heritage, are of special interest. Accompanying scenes of extraordinary beauty, Wright uses passages from a travel book of 1680 written by Robert Knox. Thus the antiquity of Ceylonese culture is dramatically emphasized: we hear age-old words that were still applicable in British-ruled Ceylon. The words are linked with photographed action:

COMMENTARY: . . . But husbandry is the great employment of the people. In this the best men labour; nor is it held any disgrace to work for



oneself be it at home or in the fields; but to work for hire with them is reckoned for a great shame, and very few are here to be found who will work so. They are very active and nimble in their limbs and very ingenious, and all things they have need of, except ironwork, they make and do themselves, inasmuch as they all build their own houses.

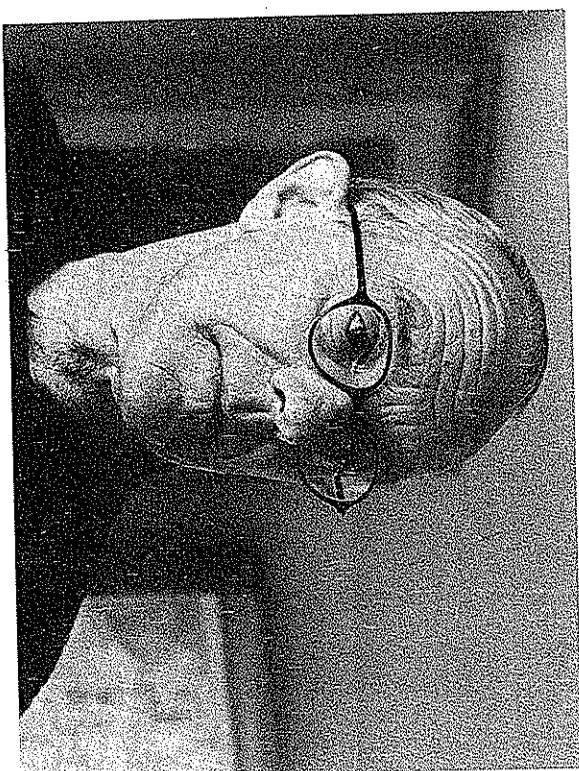
In the third part we continue to see handsome people, but commerce enters the sound track with a montage of voices: market quotations of tea prices, telephone orders, invoices, mail inquiries. The sequence ends with "faithfully yours . . . faithfully yours . . . faithfully yours." The overriding impression is of commerce intruding on a lovely, age-old environment.

In the fourth part commerce finally appears visually, in scenes of ships, docks, and loading operations. We see files of Ceylonese carrying cargo. Perhaps—perhaps not—we will recall the Robert Knox words: ". . . but to work for hire with them is reckoned for a great shame. . . ." Near the end of the film we return to a theme from the first part, extolling the beauty of the Buddha. But it is the beauty of the Ceylonese that the images compel us to contemplate.

Song of Ceylon exemplified the working atmosphere of the film unit, in which anyone could be enlisted for any sort of task. The "voices of commerce" heard in the sound track montage included voices of Cavalcanti, Grierson, Legg, and Wright.⁷

Like *Drifters*, *Song of Ceylon* won enthusiastic plaudits at the London Film Society and went on to successful theatrical showings. Perhaps the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board was delighted with it: the film put the Board on record as fervently admiring the Ceylonese and their culture. It made clear the role of tea as an imperial link. To others it may have suggested exploitation. Without question, the film made the rising British documentary movement known throughout the world.

In 1934 the Empire Marketing Board was dissolved, and the film unit was moved bodily into the General Post Office to become the GPO Film Unit. *Song of Ceylon*, begun under EMB, was completed as a GPO project. The unit's task was now to "bring the post office alive." But the General Post Office was in reality a sort of communication ministry, which also had charge of the development of wireless in all its forms, including radio and television broadcasting. Grierson saw the situation as a mandate to explore the entire role of communication in modern society—a favorite Grierson topic.



Basil Wright.

Photograph by Virginia Leirens

From this emerged another of the most renowned works of the unit—*Night Mail* (1936), directed by Harry Watt and Basil Wright. Again the skill of workers and the importance of their role were dominant themes. As in *Song of Ceylon*, the sound track was an experiment; Cavalcanti as sound supervisor seems to have contributed much to this. A verse sound track had been tried in *Coal Face* with only minor success; the trippingly rhythmic *Night Mail* narration, written by W. H. Auden and scored by Benjamin Britten, was immensely successful, and became a model for numerous imitations. The film was edited to the rhythm of its sound track. A lyric poem celebrating the rushing of the mail to homes and businesses of northern England and Scotland, *Night Mail* is infectious in spirit and style—a cinema classic of lasting interest.

Another sound-track experiment, of a prophetic sort, was carried out in *Housing Problems* (1935), directed by Edgar Anstey and Arthur Elton. The Gas Light and Coke Company sponsored it, persuaded by Grierson that the demolition of derelict slums and their replacement by government-financed housing—a key demand of the socialistic Labour party—would inevitably bring modernization and

increased use of gas. Thus the company financed a film of blunt and moving protest.

The method was novel. Instead of the commentator or narrator characteristic of Grierson documentaries, slum-dwellers appeared as spokesmen. In their rat-infested kitchens, unheated living rooms, crumbling hallways, they talk directly to the camera and provide a guided tour. Horror and humor merge for powerful impact. At least one of the spokesmen—a lady who tells of epic battles with a rat—had never seen a film—but sensed that she was having a chance to communicate her problems to a large constituency. Arthur Elton had used such direct testimony in an earlier GPO film for the Ministry of Labour, *Workers and Jobs* (1935). But *Housing Problems* more clearly demonstrated the potential values of the device—later used extensively in television.

As the film unit grew, it also proliferated, giving birth to a Strand Film Unit with Paul Rotha as production director; a Realist Film Unit under Basil Wright; a Shell Film Unit begun by Edgar Anstey; a Film Centre under Grierson himself, which provided an advisory service. Government support had been the starting point, but corporate sponsors were soon underwriting many of the films. The "movement" retained cohesiveness throughout the 1930's, continuing to look on Grierson as its godfather and to congregate and confer in pubs. Meanwhile films gushed forth in a steady stream: Elton's *The Voice of the World* (1932), Rotha's *Contact* (1933), Anstey's *Gran-tion Trawler* (1934), Legg's *BBC: the Voice of Britain* (1935), Rotha's *Shipyards* (1935), Anstey's *Enough to Eat* (1936), John Taylor's *The Smoke Menace* (1937), Mary Field's *They Made the Land* (1938), Watt's *North Sea* (1938), Elton's *Transfer of Power* (1939).

The influence of the movement, at home and abroad, was fed by speeches and writings, especially by Grierson and Rotha. Rotha's book *Documentary Film* (1935) appeared in many translations. Such magazines as *Signs and Sound*, *Cinema Quarterly*, and Grierson's *World Film News* furthered the process.

At first, members of the film unit disagreed as to whether they should fight for a place in the theatrical film world or build an alternative system based on club, school, church, library, business firm. In the end they did both. Outstanding films such as *Song of Ceylon* and *Night Mail* got wide theatrical exposure; meanwhile nontheatrical

distribution, encouraged by the rise of 16mm film, began to assume some importance.*

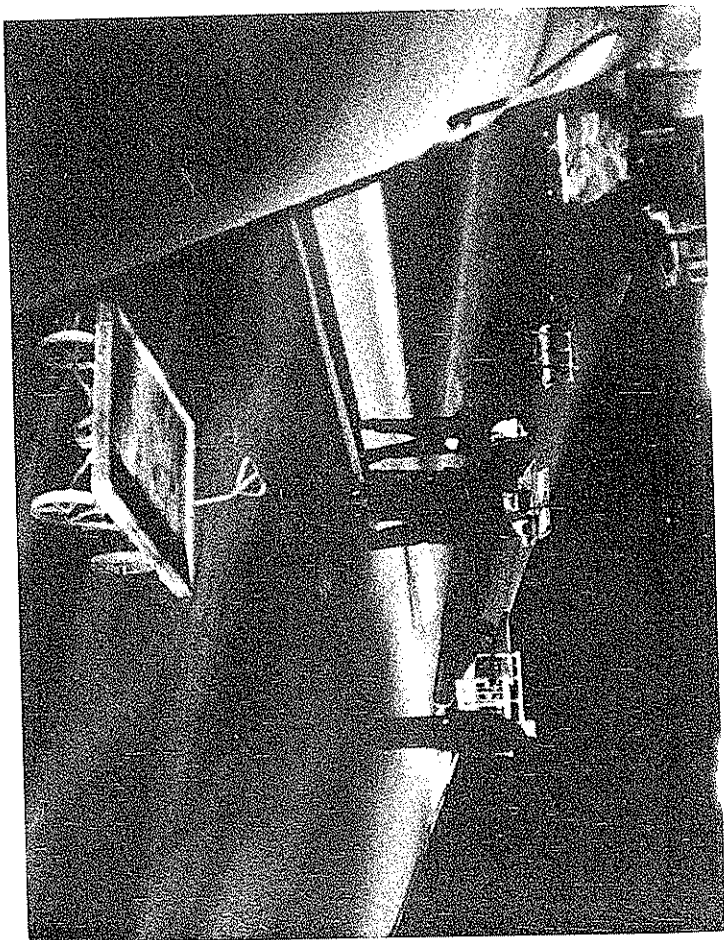
The divergence of the apostle Grierson from the master Flaherty was increasingly apparent, and often mentioned by Grierson. He liked to pay tribute to Flaherty, then follow with a comment cutting the master down. In a typical statement, Grierson wrote:

Flaherty has been one of the great film teachers of our day, and not one of us but has been enriched by his example and, I shall add, but has been even more greatly enriched by failing in the final issue to follow it . . .

Such comments became increasingly frequent—from Grierson and his followers—after the appearance of a new Flaherty film, *Man of Aran* (1934). Flaherty's visit to England had enabled him to make a new start via a contract with Gaumont British, giving him the freedom he needed and a topic to his liking. The setting was the bleak Aran Islands off Ireland, swept by storms and battered by incredible seas; the theme, the struggle for survival. As in Samoa, Flaherty had the help of his wife Frances and brother David, and assorted technicians. John Taylor, Grierson trainee, joined the unit. Laboratory work was done on the spot in an old stone wharf-house. The film was edited by John Goldman and scored by John Greenwood.

Flaherty and his group spent almost two years on the Aran Islands. What emerged was a film of far greater professional polish than *Nanook of the North* or *Moana*, and with epic grandeur. The "caressing" movements of Flaherty's camera over landscape and people won admiration from Paul Rotha, among others. With long-focus lenses Flaherty followed in detail the perilous maneuvers of small boats heaving in mountainous waves—often at distances of several hundred yards from his camera positions on the cliffs. Sound effects were later added to the film with telling effect. Fragments of dialogue were also post-synchronized. Almost lost in the roar of wind and wave, they were used with exceptional skill—almost as an additional sound effect. Along with these production values were familiar Flaherty elements. As in *Nanook* and *Moana*, he concentrated on a small group; again,

* The need for a less bulky alternative to 35mm was recognized early in film history. Manufacturers introduced 9½mm, 11mm, 15mm, 16mm, 17½mm, 21mm, 22mm, and 28mm equipment; in the competitive chaos, none could win a foothold. In 1923 Eastman, Bell & Howell, and Victor Animatograph agreed to standardize on 16mm and a nonflammable type of film; other companies followed suit. This enabled 16mm to begin a slow advance.

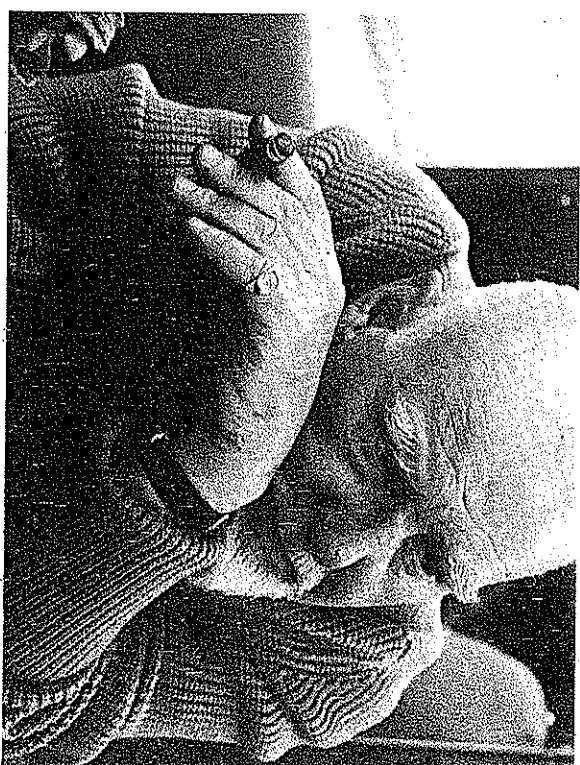


Night Mail, 1936.

National Film Archive



Housing Problems, 1935.



Paul Rotha.

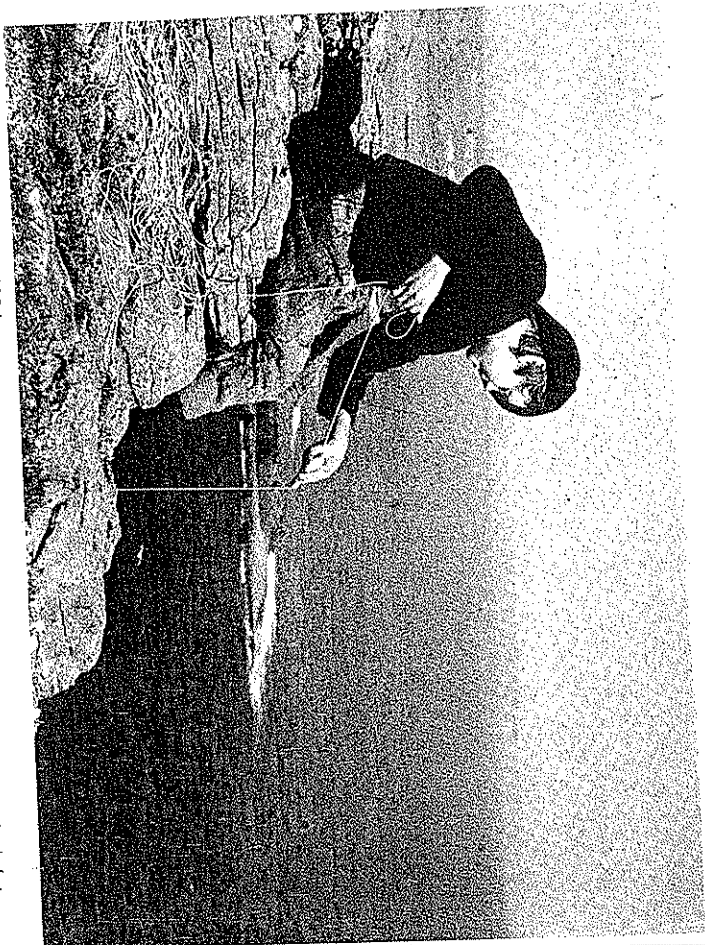
Photograph by Virginia Leirens

as "waxwork figures acting the lives of their grandfathers." He added: "Surely we have the right to believe that the documentary method, the most virile of all kinds of film, should not ignore the vital social issues of this year of grace." To many, *Man of Aran* seemed a hold-over from an earlier period.⁹

Grierson and his movement had in a few years changed the expectations aroused by the word "documentary." A Flaherty documentary had been a feature-length, close-up portrait of a group of people, remotely located but familiar in their humanity. The characteristic Grierson documentary dealt with impersonal social processes; it was usually a short film fused by a "commentary" that articulated a point of view—an intrusion that was anathema to Flaherty. The Grierson pattern was spreading.

In 1939, with war apparently in the offing, the Imperial Relations Trust dispatched Grierson to Canada to apply his organizing skills in another part of the empire; the National Film Board of Canada was the result. Later he went on similar missions to Australia and New Zealand.

He had already played a pivotal role in the British cinema, and one



Man of Aran, 1934.

Museum of Modern Art

to a child played an important part. There was once more a return to the past. The Aran islanders had not for many decades hunted the basking shark in small boats with harpoons; Flaherty brought in an expert to teach them how, and in the process exposed them to much danger, but they welcomed it. "God bless the work," they would say. Frances Flaherty later recalled: "They served us and the film hand and foot; they lived and died with us with the ups and downs of the film. It was a way Bob had." Pat Mullen, Aran islander who interpreted for them, put it this way: "He won me and won my soul out of me as well."⁸

Man of Aran won first prize at the Venice film festival and was hailed by many as a great film, and Flaherty's finest. Dissenters—especially Grierson and his group—asked how Flaherty could possibly have ignored, amid a world economic crisis, the social context in which Aran islanders carried on their bitter struggles. Was he unaware of the evils of absentee landlordism? With all its cinematic craftsmanship, the film seemed to Paul Rotha a "reactionary return to the worship of the heroic." He began to write of Flaherty's characters

which, in a curious way, was richly representative of his time. He had presided over pro-Labour film production under Conservative sponsorship. "In that sense," thought Grierson years later in retrospect, "*Night Mail* and *Housing Problems* were the films of a Tory regime gradually going socialist. . . ." He would hardly have said so at the time.¹⁰

The politicizing of documentary was not a Grierson innovation but a world phenomenon, a product of the times. In Germany it took a different form, with very different results.

As soon as Hitler came to power in 1933, his thirty-six-year-old Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, began steps to bring all media under his control. On political or racial grounds, countless workers were driven from their jobs; many went abroad. These were replaced by Nazi adherents. By October 1933 anyone with editorial duties had to be licensed by Goebbels. Proclaiming that censorship would be positive, not merely negative, he gradually took charge of all aspects of production, distribution, and exhibition.¹¹

In Germany, as in a number of countries, cine-clubs had operated outside regular rules of censorship. Goebbels abolished the distinction, decimating the cine-clubs. There would be no independent cine-club movement in the new Germany.

As a result of these sweeping moves, films in Nazi Germany began a rapid, catastrophic decline. But there was an exception: the work of one genius who—due to unusual circumstances—flourished outside the Goebbels dominion.

Leni Riefenstahl was a dancer before turning to acting, and a screen star and pin-up beauty before becoming a director. As fiction-film star and director she was especially associated with "mountain films"—a German genre often compared to American westerns. The setting evoked heroism and virtue, and had mythic overtones. For a highly industrialized nation, the misty peaks and streams and crashing storms provided a sense of contact with primordial beginnings; the films sometimes reached back into Teutonic mythology. Among successes in which she appeared were *The Sacred Mountain* (*Die Heilige Berg*, 1926), *The White Hell of Piz Palu* (*Die Weiss Hölle von Piz Palu*, 1929), and *The Blue Light* (*Das Blaue Licht*, 1932), which she also directed.¹²

A prominent Riefenstahl admirer was Adolf Hitler. In 1933 she received a call from him. It was a few months after he had achieved dictatorial power, and just two days before the annual rally of the National Socialist German Workers party—the Nazi party. According to her account, he asked how she was getting on with the work. She asked, "What work?" He said that months earlier, he had ordered his propaganda ministry to have her make a film about the rally. She had heard nothing of this, but he insisted she proceed, doing whatever she could. Without time to prepare, she gathered equipment and a few assistants and rushed to the rally. There a succession of bureaucratic harassments—emanating, she thought, from a Goebbels resentful at being bypassed—made the experience a nightmare, but she completed the short film *Victory of Faith* (*Sieg des Glaubens*, 1933), financed by the Nazi party.

Exhausted, she left for Spain for work on a new feature, but there she collapsed, spending two months in a Madrid hospital—an aftermath, she was sure, of the sufferings Goebbels had caused her. Their mutual resentment grew into a feud.

On her return to Germany, Hitler got in touch with her again. He wanted her to make a film of the 1934 party rally, which was to be the largest ever staged—announcement and demonstration, to all the world, of German rebirth. For this film she must have all necessary time to prepare, and all resources would be at her disposal.

She demurred. She suggested Walther Ruttmann, creator of the famous *Berlin: Symphony of the City*, and even discussed it with Ruttmann. Though he had been considered on the left politically, he was eager to do the project and drafted plans. But Hitler insisted it must be Leni Riefenstahl. According to her account, she then agreed on condition that neither Hitler nor Goebbels nor anyone else would interfere, nor even see the film until it was finished. The film appears to have been made under these terms. An ample budget was set up by the UFA studio—Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft—which also distributed the film.

She got to work. Never had there been such mobilization and deployment of resources—men and gear. Before long she had assembled a staff of 120 people, including sixteen leading cameramen, their assistants, and supporting technicians. Thirty cameras and four sound trucks would be in operation. Twenty-two automobiles and their

drivers were assigned to her, along with uniformed field police. She felt they must all live together in Nuremberg, location of the rally, for constant coordination through the week of scheduled events—September 4-10, 1934. But all hotels were booked. More than a million people were expected in Nuremberg, tripling its population. Leading Nazi official Julius Streicher owned a large Nuremberg building and offered it. Making an advance inspection, she was dismayed to find scores of empty rooms without furniture, water, light, or telephone. But within forty-eight hours miracles had been performed for her—bedrooms for all her 120 people had been fully furnished; offices, conference rooms, dark rooms stood ready; a telephone switchboard had been installed; kitchen and dining hall were being equipped and staffed.¹³

Meanwhile with relentless drive and sense of detail Leni Riefenstahl—then thirty-two years old—was plotting camera locations and movements with her staff, and the town of Nuremberg was constructing, to her specifications and on a scale without precedent, special bridges, towers, ramps. A 120-foot flagpole at the Luitpoldshain was being equipped with an electric elevator, which was to be able to take a cameraman to the top in seconds. Along Adolf Hitler Square a ramp was being built at second-floor level to allow a camera dolly to move with marching troops while photographing them from bird's eye vantage. She commanded a fire department truck; atop its ninety-foot extension ladder, a cameraman would be able to soar over the gables and monuments of Nuremberg, high above marching troops and their banners. Other vehicles with extension ladders were put at her disposal by utility and streetcar companies.

Planning of rally events and of their film coverage went on together. On a field, huge parades of spade-carrying men—the Labor Service—were to march past Adolf Hitler, then line up in perfect order to hear his speech extolling labor. Wooden rails were laid out so that cameras would be able to photograph the men from within their ranks. A camera platform was built at the precise spot where they would give the Führer an “eyes right” salute. Camera positions were staked out on city rooftops, on church towers, and in road-side ditches. In meeting halls cameras would peer down through skylights and up from orchestra pits. All cameramen were given elite-troop uniforms; the Chief of Staff had expressed the opinion that the pres-

ence of cameramen in civilian dress would “mar the solemnity of the occasion.”

As crowds began to descend on Nuremberg, Riefenstahl's cameramen were rehearsing on their fantastic ladders, ramps, and towers.

A report on all these arrangements was later published, with a text credited to Leni Riefenstahl. It paid tribute to Hitler:

The Führer has recognized the importance of cinema. Where else in the world have the film's inherent potentialities to act as the chronicler and interpreter of contemporary events been recognized in so far-sighted a manner? . . .

That the Führer has raised film-making to a position of such pre-eminence testifies to his prophetic awareness of the unrealized suggestive power of this art form. One is familiar with documentaries. Governments have ordered them and political parties have used them for their ends. But the belief that a true and genuinely powerful national experience can be kindled through the medium of film, this belief originated in Germany.¹⁴

According to her own accounts, of then and later, Riefenstahl was at this time dazzled by Hitler, though disliking many around him. And he had put her as film maker in a position unique in film history.

She did not invent the actions captured by her cameras. She saw it as her task to bring them to the screen with maximum impact.

During the week of photography she coordinated her forces with an almost maniacal drive and discipline, mirroring the atmosphere of the events themselves. Then she gave months to editing. A score in Wagnerian style was provided by Herbert Windt. The final result, *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*), was premiered in March 1935 and was at once hailed as a masterpiece—inspiring to some, sinister and terrifying to others. The Venice film festival gave it a top award; so did a Paris festival.

The opening credits stated:

Produced by Order of the Führer
Directed by Leni Riefenstahl*

Triumph of the Will has no spoken commentary; she considered any commentator an “enemy of film.” Verbalization of the message is left to speeches by Hitler and other Nazi leaders. But the almost phys-

* Various translations are possible. The original titles: “Hergestellt im Auftrage des Führers/Gestaltet von Leni Riefenstahl.”

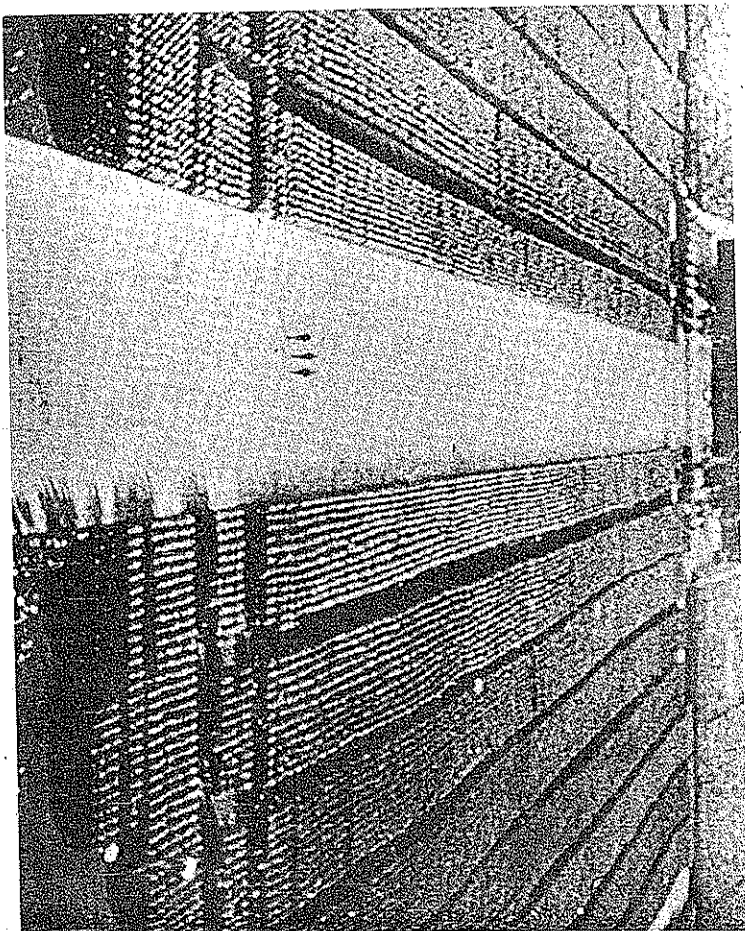
The subtitles have set the stage:

On September 5
1934
20 years
after the outbreak
of the World War
16 years
after the start
of German suffering
19 months
after the beginning
of Germany's rebirth
Adolf Hitler flew
again to Nuremberg
to review the columns of his faithful followers

Triumph of the Will was considered an overwhelming propaganda success, rallying many to the Hitler cause. Some critics have felt that the role of Leni Riefenstahl in this success was unforgivable. But it is also pointed out that no film has been more widely used by opposition forces. Every nation ultimately arrayed against Hitler used huge segments of *Triumph of the Will* in its own propaganda films; nothing else depicted so vividly the demonic nature of the Hitler leadership, and the scarcely human discipline supporting it. Riefenstahl's cameras did not lie; they told a story that has never lost its power to chill the marrow.

Amid ovations for *Triumph of the Will*, Riefenstahl proposed a new project to UFA: a long film on the Olympic games to be held in Berlin in 1936. UFA was dubious: the Olympic games had never been given feature-length treatment. The 1932 Olympics, held in Los Angeles, had been virtually ignored by Hollywood except as news-reel material. Besides, Riefenstahl wanted more than a year for editing; UFA felt the film would be obsolete when issued. However, Tobis—a smaller company than UFA—agreed to finance the film. She meanwhile negotiated with the International Olympic Committee, not mentioning her plan to Hitler; she wished to avoid official sponsorship.

The Olympic officials were cautious. Riefenstahl wished to prepare pits beside jumping areas, camera rails along running tracks, towers at the diving sites. Fearing that the outcome of contests might eventually be challenged on the ground of distraction, officials required

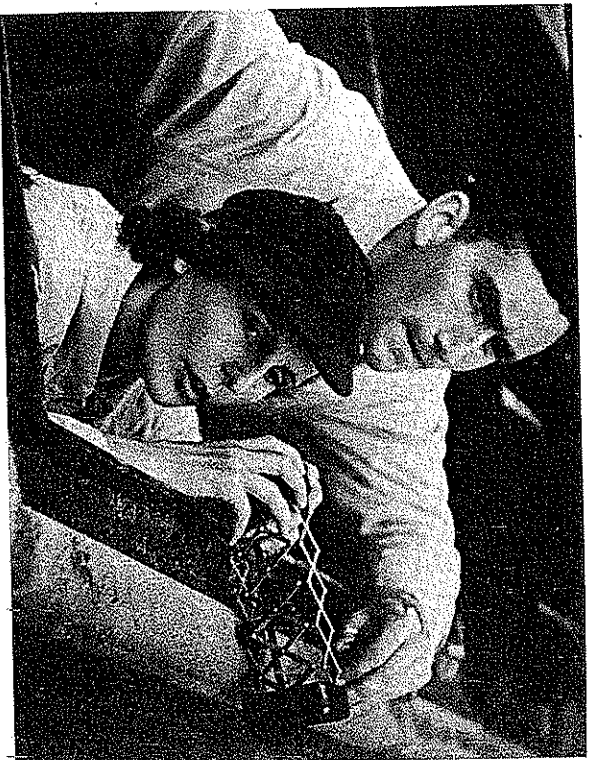


Triumph of the Will, 1935.

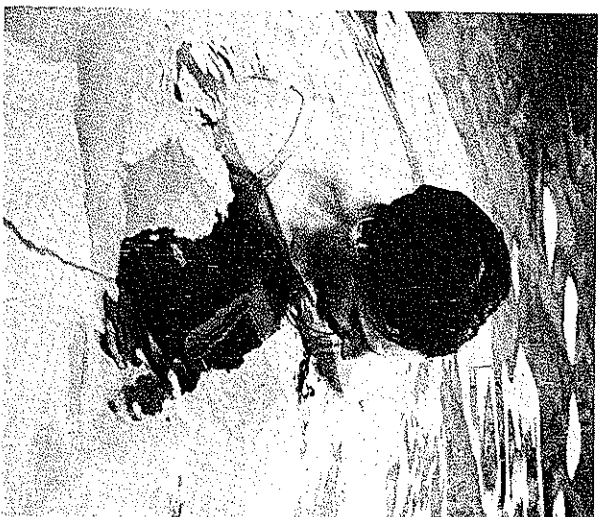
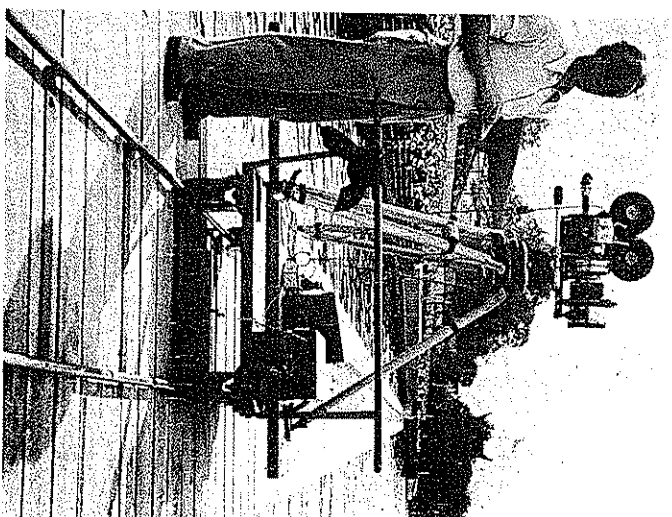
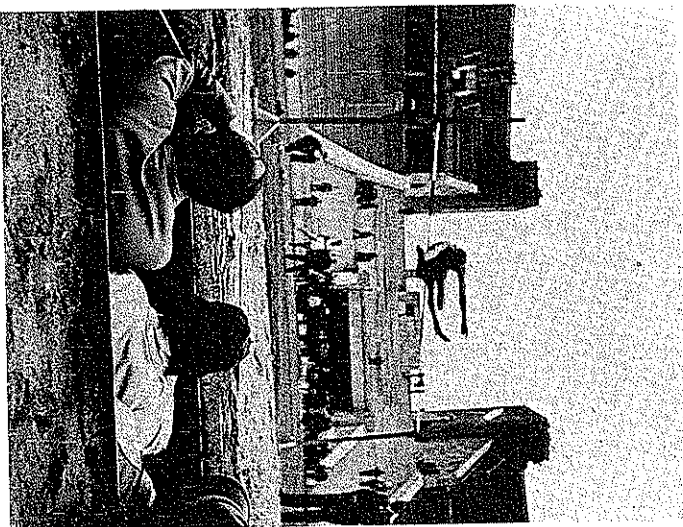
Museum of Modern Art

ical impact of the film derives much from her choreography of images and sounds: marching men, cheers, banners, swastikas, eagles, crowds, ancient German streets and towers, folksongs, clouds, oratory, uniforms, women, children—and above all, in a series of apparitions, the Führer.

The film opens with an amazing sequence—one that makes Hitler a sort of deity descending to earth to save the German people. This sequence uses subtitles, which Riefenstahl credited to Walther Ruttmann. They were, according to her account, the only part of Ruttmann's proposals used in the final film.¹⁵ The sequence shows us a lone plane skimming over cloud tops; occasionally mists obscure it, but it re-emerges. Eventually the earth is seen: spires of Nuremberg, wrapped in mists. The shadow of the plane touches the city. Crowds are waiting, looking up. Finally the plane lands. A door opens. After a moment, Hitler appears. Deafening roars of vast crowds split the air.



Making *Olympia*, 1936. Directing in pit, Leni Riefenstahl. The film was released in 1938.



Riefenstahl-Film

made by an automatic camera placed in the boat during practice runs. Along race courses, photography by amateurs supplemented that of the professionals.

Most of the film was shot silent; sound elements were added later. Even footsteps of runners and jumpers were created and post-synchronized during the editing process. The state of technology, in Germany and elsewhere, discouraged sound recording on location, except for static sequences such as speeches.

While the Riefenstahl forces were at work, the Propaganda Ministry was producing its own Olympia film. Far from cooperating with her, Goebbels—still resentful—forbade leading cameramen to work with her; at one point, ministry employees tried to bar her from the stadium. Hitler is said to have ordered a ceremony of reconciliation to quiet scandal over this waspish feud.

The Riefenstahl *Olympia* has an extraordinary Wagnerian opening, reminiscent in its mythic overtones of *Triumph of the Will* and of Leni Riefenstahl's early "mountain film" career. We begin with shots suggesting a misty, primitive world. Soon we see a runner carrying a torch across rugged landscape; architecture and coastline tell us this is ancient Greece. We briefly see nude athletes and dancers training—one of them is Leni Riefenstahl. Then we see the torch handed from one runner to another, as they carry it from ancient Greece to modern Germany, and into a vast stadium presided over by Adolf Hitler. The sequence seems to tell us that the torch of civilization has been carried from its ancient center, Greece, to modern Germany, watched over by a pantheon at whose apex is Hitler.

While any such opening, placing Hitler at the center of international pageantry, was bound to suggest a dominant propaganda intention, the remainder gives a different impression. The first of the two films concentrates on track and field events, in which the high points are victories by nineteen-year-old Jesse Owens and other black athletes. It is said that Goebbels representatives pressed Riefenstahl to exclude these from her films, but that she declined. She accords these victories a dramatic buildup, and an admiration of muscular beauty, comparable to her treatment of other victors and victories. Many critics have stressed this fairness—often with expressions of surprise.

But she could not eliminate the historic context from the minds of audiences. Outside Germany it was widely reported that Hitler had

Early morning training run—from *Olympia*, 1938.

Museum of Modern Art



her to obtain approvals from all national committees and from all contestants individually. At enormous effort, over many months, she secured these approvals.

Olympia eventually became two feature-length films, and another organizational achievement of amazing virtuosity. She was restricted to six camera positions on the stadium field, but supplemented these with cameras in grandstands and many elsewhere. She had the opening of the games photographed from the Zeppelin Hindenburg. Automatic cameras were sent aloft via free balloons, with attached instructions for returning the film to Leni Riefenstahl. The most startling photographic innovation involved diving; dives were followed through the air and then under water without a break. The start of the dive was photographed from the surface of the water; at the moment of impact the cameraman went under water with his special camera while changing focus and aperture. It took months to perfect the procedure. For boat-racing sequences, shots of a coxswain were

left the stadium just before an Owens triumph, and had thus avoided witnessing a setback for the master race. This "snub" is not shown or mentioned in the film. To American screen writer Budd Schulberg the omission exposed Riefenstahl as a dedicated Nazi propagandist. But its inclusion would surely have damned her on similar grounds.¹⁶

The second of the two *Olympia* films suggests that her main obsession was not politics, but the magnificence of the body in action. Dropping earlier attention to victories and statistics, she composes sequences of unforgettable splendor—moving, as she explained to interviewer Gordon Hitchens, from "reality" to "poetry." The high point of this comes at the climax of the diving events, in a sequence based on a simple but brilliant editing idea. In a series of dives, she gives us only the flight through the air, eliminating the climactic splashes. We see a long succession of such dives, sometimes overlapping via dissolves. The impression is one of total victory over gravity, as body after body tumbles through the air, in choreographed patterns of stunning beauty, without ever being brought to earth. Few lowlier sequences have ever been put on film.

The *Olympia* films, released in 1938—two years after the event—won their quota of prizes, critical hosannas, and box-office success. But amid world tension, they also met storms. Britain banned the films, using the footage for physical-education films for war training. During 1938–39 Leni Riefenstahl visited Hollywood to help launch American distribution. She was the guest of Walt Disney, but was ignored by most of the film colony. On the eve of war she returned to Germany, and to fiction films. She tried to organize a film to be titled *Penhesilea*, in which she was to appear as queen of the Amazons. But war brought a long hiatus in her work.

Among the cameramen she employed for the *Olympia* films was Heinz von Jaworsky—later, in America, Henry Jaworsky. He had worked on some of her fiction films, and she had tried to enlist him for *Triumph of the Will*. Being in part "non-Aryan"—Jewish—he told her it would be best for him to stay out of it. But she asked him again for *Olympia*, with possible risks to both, and he gladly worked on it. She continued to befriend him. When war broke out she told him Hitler but many would lose the war. She apparently still believed in Hitler but felt he was surrounded by criminals—*verbrecher*. Her career as propagandist seems to have been a product of unique gifts for spectacle,

and political ingenuousness. Her two major films stand as valuable documents of an age.¹⁷

Walther Ruttmann, abandoning his early leftist bent, apparently became an ardent Nazi advocate. His films for the cause included the UFA short *German Tanks* (*Deutsche Panzer*, 1940). He is reported to have died of wounds received while making a film on the eastern front.

While Goebbels was snuffing out the German cine-clubs, another cine-club movement was on the rise. This was in the United States. Cine-clubs arrived late in America, probably because it was home base of the leading film empire. Elsewhere Hollywood films were foreign culture, and challenged pride and the sense of identity. In the United States this nationalistic challenge was not a factor.

When cine-clubs did burgeon, it was as by-product of Depression unrest, which in the final days of the Hoover regime became almost revolutionary. Now the deprived experienced an identity problem: nowhere in the mass media did they find their plight represented.

President Hoover considered the Depression to be mainly a crisis of confidence; undermining confidence was therefore a public disservice, and optimism was statesmanship. The press, almost wholly Republican, tended to reflect this view; it constantly noted signs of upturn, even as the headlines lengthened. Meanwhile radio concentrated on smooth music, fortune-telling, and advertising; it scarcely had the beginnings of a news service. Fiction films from Hollywood were in an opulent phase of Busby Berkeley choruses, and were beginning to seem as remote to many Americans as to Asians and Africans. And its "non-fiction" product, the newsreel, was perhaps even more irrelevant and bizarre—and was so by design.

To theaters throughout the world, major American studios were selling a contract service of 52 features, 52 shorts, and 52 newsreels per year. In this block-booking system—later altered by antitrust action—newsreels were only an item in an entertainment package. Studio executives generally felt that controversy could only bring troubles; its avoidance became hallowed principle. The attitude actually hardened in the early Depression. In 1931 the Fox Corporation issued a statement that none of its theaters would be allowed to show newsreels of a controversial nature.¹⁸

All this set the stage for the Workers Film and Photo League,

which began in New York City in 1930 and spread rapidly. Within two years local Film and Photo Leagues (the "Workers" was dropped from the name) were in operation in major cities, loosely united in a National Film and Photo League.

The years 1930-32 were a time of hunger marches and "Hoover-villes"—clusters of shacks thrown up in parks and along railroad tracks. Evictions, foreclosures, strikes, protests were epidemic. Members of the Film and Photo Leagues concentrated on documenting these phenomena. Exchanging material, they organized a *Workers Newsreel* which was circulated among members and successfully pressed on some theaters. Many of the groups participated in documenting the National Hunger March of December 1932; their combined footage grew into a feature documentary, *Hunger*.

The newsreel activity used silent film, mainly 35mm. The market value of silent projectors had collapsed with the coming of sound; thus the equipment was readily available to the League groups.

The New York Film and Photo League met in a loft at 22 West 17th Street. Its secretary was Thomas Brandon, later a pioneer distributor of foreign films. Sessions included screenings of such films, as well as current work brought by participants. Meetings welcomed members and nonmembers, still photographers and film makers, veterans and novices—all united by crisis.

Margaret Bourke-White and Berenice Abbott (both associated with *Fortune* magazine) were among the still photographers who came to the loft. So were Ralph Steiner and Paul Strand—photographers already deeply involved in film. Other participants were Leo Hurwitz and Herbert Kline, who were associated with the magazine *New Theatre*, which often reflected the Film and Photo League ferment. Willard Van Dyke, arriving from California with a reputation in still photography, was a later participant.¹⁹

The New York Film and Photo League issued its own mimeographed bulletin, *Filmfront*. It sometimes included translations of articles by European film theorists—the Russian Dziga Vertov, the Hungarian Béla Balász, the Frenchman Léon Moussinac.

In 1934 the Film and Photo Leagues joined in organizing a National Film Conference in Chicago, screening and discussing forty reels of film made the previous year. A report on the conference stated:

... in the same way as the Soviet cinema began with the kino-eye and grew organically from there on ... the Leagues started also with the simple newsreel documents, photographing events as they appeared to the lens ... exploited in a revolutionary cinematic way.²⁰

The Film and Photo Leagues formed a loose movement, but their agitation generated organized production ventures. Notable among these was Frontier Films, which in 1935 began an impressive career of militant film making, involving a galaxy of talent—Paul Strand, Leo Hurwitz, Irving Lerner, Sidney Meyers, Jay Leyda, Willard Van Dyke, Harry Dunham, and many others.

But meanwhile the surge of protest activity was having high-level effect. After President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, visual documentation of the sort fostered by the Film and Photo Leagues began to find broader support. An early example was the short film *Hands* (1934), by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke. Dramatizing the relief work of the WPA—Works Progress Administration—it concentrated on hands: idle hands, hands at work, and finally hands putting earnings (from government relief projects) back into circulation. Artful in its understatement, the film was underwritten and distributed by Pathé. But it was soon eclipsed by far more ambitious projects sponsored by RA—the Resettlement Administration, which concerned itself with dust storms and their human toll. In its information division was Roy Stryker, heading a photographic unit. Under him a group of extraordinary photographers—Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Carl Mydans, Ben Shahn, and others—began touring the land, photographing dust-storm victims, migrant workers, sharecroppers, and other rural derelicts. Through publications and exhibits they began to open the eyes of the nation to the unchronicled devastation of rural poverty. The head of the agency, ex-professor Rexford Guy Tugwell, wanted to extend this work to motion pictures. This ushered in the meteoric career—brief and brilliant—of Pare Lorentz.²¹

Born in 1905 and reared in the southern college town of Clarkburg, W. Va., Pare Lorentz had a home life saturated in the arts. After college he headed for New York and was soon writing film criticism for the humor magazine *Judge*, the sophisticated *Vanity Fair*, the *New York Evening Journal*, and other publications. Along with film screenings—commercial and experimental—he soaked up

concerts, opera, theater, and married the actress Sally Bates. Fascinated by the social role of cinema, young Lorentz collaborated with civil-libertarian lawyer Morris Ernst in the book *Censored: the Private Life of the Movies*, published in 1930. His interests were gradually shifting to politics. In 1933 he published *The Roosevelt Year*. 1933, he had hoped to use the material for a film but, unable to raise film funds, he turned it into a book full of photos of protests, breadlines, farm riots, dust storms, accompanied by a lucidly written text. The book won him an offer from King Features, syndication arm of the Hearst publishing empire, to write a political column. Thus *Washington Sideshow* began appearing in 1934, but when Lorentz in an early column praised the New Deal farm program, he was promptly fired via telegram by Hearst from his headquarters in San Simeon, California. Lorentz was out of a job, but was already trying to promote a film about the dust bowl. It was just what Rexford Guy Tugwell wanted.

Lorentz had never made a film, but he gave an impression of extreme competence. He was handsome, articulate, and seemed to know everything about film. He was resolved to make a film that could win theater distribution and reach a wide public. Few government films had achieved this, but he felt it could be done. Asked if he could do it for \$6000, he said he could.

Lorentz realized that government film production was, to many in Hollywood, an outrage—in fact, “socialism.” He hoped to overcome this attitude. But with his absurdly minuscule budget he knew he must, for the moment, stay away from Hollywood. He turned first to the experimental talent of New York, on the margins of the film world. As cameramen he engaged Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand, Leo Hurwitz. All had been associated with the New York Film and Photo League; all had films to their credit. Paul Strand had recently completed *The Wave*, a widely praised semidocumentary film about a Mexican fishing village, sponsored by the Mexican government.

The group began photography in Montana and moved southward to Texas—following dust storms that were rapidly turning millions of acres of farmland into desert. Amid the choking blizzards Lorentz searched for images of the sort he wanted, but he had no precise script. This sometimes annoyed his cameramen and finally brought an “ultimatum.” Strand and Hurwitz presented Lorentz with a pro-

posed shooting script; if Lorentz would adopt it as basis for further shooting, they would continue. Lorentz refused. The crisis represented a division such as Grierson had also had to contend with. The dissidents saw the dust storms not just as a catastrophe of nature, but as a consequence of the misuse of land by a rapacious social system. Perhaps—to an extent—Lorentz did too. But in the context of government sponsorship his task was conservation, not iconoclasm. The impasse involved questions of tactics, as well as philosophical orientation. Lorentz managed to hold his crew together, but tension continued.

The crew was not the only source of trouble. With completion of the dust-storm sequences Lorentz disbanded his group and headed for Hollywood. He hoped to depict the historical background of the dust-bowl crisis by means of stock footage, such as the major studios make available at a standard price per foot. But the companies had apparently adopted a policy of noncooperation with government—at least with the Roosevelt administration. The stock film libraries refused to serve Lorentz.

Lorentz had expected Hollywood opposition, but scarcely at this stage. Fortunately some leading Hollywood artists—notably King Vidor—were angered at the studio policy and, *sub rosa*, acted as intermediaries to get Lorentz the footage he needed. Later Lorentz obtained 1917–18 war footage from the Signal Corps in New York.

His troubles were only beginning. His \$6000 budget had been spent. He hired a girl to teach him the mechanics of film editing and made himself an editor. Then he achieved a crucial coup. The composer Virgil Thomson, moved by the material Lorentz was assembling, agreed to work with him for whatever funds Lorentz might scrounge. They began their collaboration as Lorentz pressed Washington for additional appropriations.

The Lorentz-Thomson teamwork became a key element in *The Plow That Broke the Plains*. They shared enthusiasm for folk-music themes, rich in association, and abhorrence for “micky-mousing” scores—those which regularly underline points made by word or image. Thomson’s music constantly supplied added dimensions. An example was his music for a 1917–18 wartime sequence. To meet world demand for wheat, farmers were being pressed to turn grazing lands into wheatlands. As we see tractors coming over a hill, we hear

a strain from *Mademoiselle from Armentières*—marching song of American troops. It provides momentary emphasis that farmers are becoming part of a war machine.

For Lorentz and Thomson, editing and composing became a unified process. Neither wanted a score imposed on a finished film, or vice versa. The commentary written by Lorentz evolved as part of the same process. Eventually read by Thomas Chalmers, a former Metropolitan Opera baritone, it became a kind of *recitativ*. It sometimes addressed people seen on the screen: "Settler, plow at your peril. . . ." The score was finally recorded by performers from the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Alexander Smallens—recruited by Virgil Thomson.

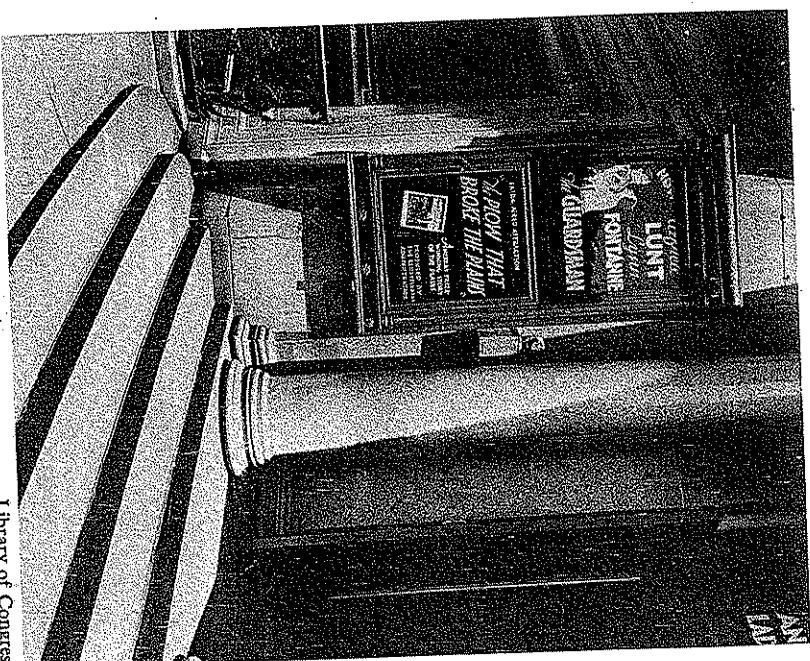
A series of previews early in 1936 soon made it known, in and out of government and film circles, that *The Plow That Broke the Plains* illuminated a national problem with strong documentation, and with emotional power and beauty. This was its glory, and the nub of its further problems. Government film activity had been going on unimpressively for almost three decades: the Department of Agriculture had been making demonstration films of sorts since 1908; the Department of the Interior had used films to announce availability of western lands; Signal Corps cameramen had documented practice maneuvers and battle action. As long as these and other projects had special functions, or were ineffectual, they raised few problems. But films addressing a general audience with overwhelming impact were another matter. This was government competition with Hollywood; besides, it was controversy threatening to disturb temples sacred to Entertainment. In Congress the power of the film agitated opponents of Roosevelt farm policies; they saw it as New Deal propaganda—an election-year stab in the back. Some politicians felt their states had been irreparably damaged by being depicted as wastelands.

At the same time Lorentz was in trouble with his own agency. His \$6000 project had become a \$19,260 film. He had paid many bills en route from his own resources, and arrived in Washington with receipts—some written on scraps of wrapping paper and backs of envelopes. This did not suit government protocol: in the end, much of the surplus cost had to be defrayed by Lorentz—who had earned \$18 per day for his work on *The Plow That Broke the Plains*—and by his actress wife. Amid these crises the Resettlement Agency itself was in trouble; it was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Court of Ap-



The Plow That Broke the Plains, 1936.

Museum of Modern Art

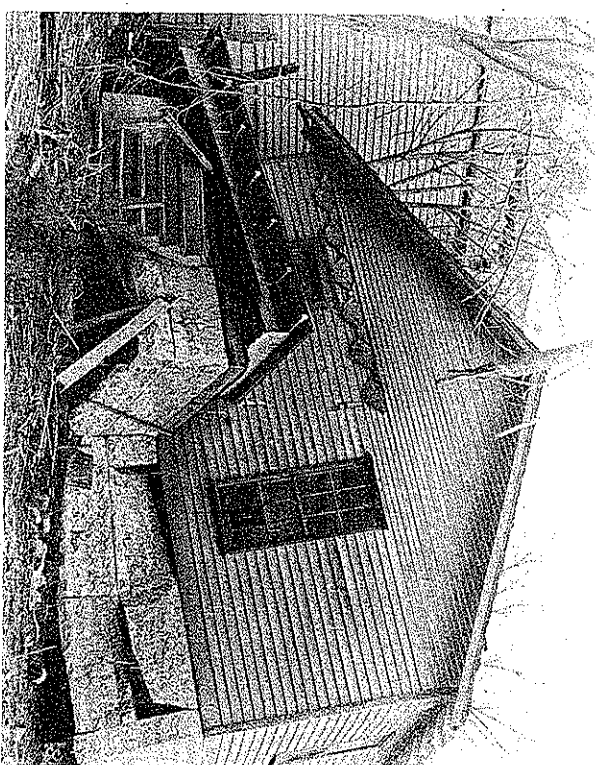


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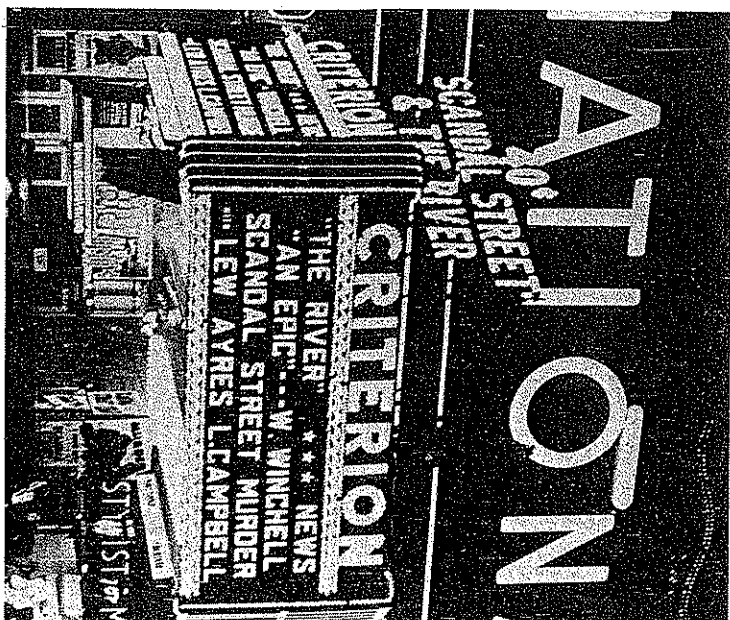
peals. Litigation continued, but plans were afoot for transferring the work, or part of it, to the Department of Agriculture.

The united-front opposition of the film industry was, once again, broken by a man with an independent spirit. Although the major distributors had rejected *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, the urbane Arthur Mayer, former Paramount executive who had become manager of New York's important Rialto Theater, decided to show the film. What is more, he resolved to capitalize on the industry's opposition. Opening it on May 28, 1936, he called the film "The Picture They Dared Us to Show!" His advertisements quoted critical eulogies obtained via previews, then added: "Yet Hollywood has turned its manicured thumb down!" From the Rialto came word that audiences were cheering at every performance. Theaters in other major cities—Philadelphia, Boston, Washington—followed the Rialto example; then came an explosion of bookings. Some 3000 theaters eventually showed the film—without benefit of major studio distribution.

Lorentz had lived through months of unrelieved, almost inhuman pressures, and felt he had had enough. In mid-1936 he visited the office of Tugwell—by then in the Department of Agriculture—to announce his resignation, but stayed to urge a new film idea—*The River*. "You people," he told Tugwell, "are missing the biggest story in the world—the Mississippi River." Within days this discussion seemed to produce miracles. The suggested topic reached into numerous issues of concern to the New Deal: flood control, hydroelectric power, soil conservation, rural electrification. At home Lorentz received a phone call from Tugwell, saying he had talked with the President; Roosevelt was providing a budget of \$50,000 for *The River*. This time Lorentz would get \$30 per day. A fiscal expert would accompany the unit to handle finances. They were to begin at once. By the fall of 1936 Lorentz had completed research and hired several cameramen: Willard Van Dyke, who with Ralph Steiner had made *Hands*; and Stacy and Horace Woodard, nature-film specialists. The Woodards left the project early but were replaced by Floyd Crosby, cameraman for the Murnau-Flaherty film *Tabu*, who had been recommended by King Vidor. By January, 1937 the planned shooting was done and the crew was disbanded, when it became clear that a flood along tributaries of the Mississippi was about to produce a thousand-mile catastrophe. Lorentz hastily recalled Crosby and Van Dyke. The Department of Agriculture provided additional



The River, 1937.



funds. The cameramen, improvising as they went, were in action for one of the greatest of film climaxes—and momentous ammunition for the New Deal.

Again the music of Virgil Thomson and the sonorous voice of Thomas Chalmers became part of the project. This time narration took an incantatory style, reminiscent of Walt Whitman—and also of the film *Turksib*, known to all the participants. There was constant use of cadenced catalogues—of the names of places, rivers, trees. In a review of the insensate destruction of primeval forests—

NARRATOR: . . . Black spruce and Norway pine; Douglas fir and red cedar; scarlet oak and shagbark hickory—we built a hundred cities and a thousand towns, but at what cost!

Repetition was part of the style. The words “we built a hundred cities and a thousand towns” were used as a refrain. Lorentz sometimes called the film an “opera.”

On completion of the film late in 1937, Lorentz once more built up interest through previews in major cities, as well as special screenings along the Mississippi. This time a historic breakthrough was achieved: Paramount offered to distribute *The River*.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt saw the film at a screening at his home in Hyde Park, N.Y., he turned at once to Lorentz and said: “That’s a grand movie. What can I do to help?” This led to talk of a U.S. Film Service, to make such films for various agencies.

During the months that followed, *The River* won several prizes, including best-documentary award of the Venice festival. In August 1938, as *The River* was showing unexpected box-office pull for Paramount, the U.S. Film Service was established by presidential order, under the National Emergency Council. The herculean labors of Pare Lorentz now seemed to win success after success. A film on unemployment—tentatively titled *Ecce Homo*—was begun with funds from federal relief agencies. Shortly afterward a film on infant mortality was begun—a fiction film with professional actors, under Public Health Service auspices, also using relief funds. At the same time the Rural Electrification Agency contracted for a film, eventually titled *Power and the Land*. Concurrently the Department of Agriculture decided to back a film on soil conservation, *The Land*, which Robert Flaherty agreed to direct. There were discussions with the State Department about a film on Latin America. Lorentz seemed to have

achieved a status comparable to that of Grierson, watching over a spreading documentary empire. But Grierson was a skilled politician who knew how to keep his fences mended; Lorentz was not. Lorentz was in the field, trying to maintain artistic control over diverse enterprises. In the midst of his whirlwind efforts, he received a shock: the appropriations committee of the House of Representatives had scuttled the U.S. Film Service budget.

Desperate efforts were made to save the situation. But opponents had united in a deadly strategy. In using relief appropriations for “movies,” they said, the U.S. Film Service was violating the law. The appropriation bill had not mentioned “movies.”

President Roosevelt did not press the battle. His attention was shifting to international crises and defense needs. In mid-1940 the U.S. Film Service died. Some of its projects had already been abandoned; others had been transferred to the sponsoring agencies. The leadership the government had briefly assumed in documentary production was being relinquished. The spotlight shifted back to private entrepreneurs.

The atmosphere of cinema had meanwhile changed. With such films as *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Hollywood was following where Lorentz and others had led. Even newsreels seemed to be yielding to the times—mainly under the impact of *The March of Time*.

Launched in 1935, *The March of Time* was not a newsreel in any accepted sense. It used actually sequences but combined these with freewheeling dramatizations. Events were re-enacted not only by participants—this had often been done—but by professional actors in scenes scripted, directed, edited, and scored by professionals, in a manner established in a radio series also titled *The March of Time*. Thus the ambiance of events as depicted on *The March of Time* was often entirely a *Time* creation, and hardly of a “documentary” or “newsreel” character. *March of Time* executives had no difficulty rationalizing this: their probing of events simply went beyond elementary newsreels. Henry Luce, head of the *Time* organization, proclaimed the style “fakery in allegiance to the truth.”²²

In content as well as style, *The March of Time* broke with newsreel tradition: it set out to be provocative. Sometimes it provoked liberals, sometimes conservatives. Through its narration, delivered in an apocalyptic tone by Westbrook Van Voorhis, the Voice of Time,

it took editorial positions. The style of the series has been aptly described by Raymond Fielding in his book *The American Newsreel 1911-1967*:

The static camera and nervous editing, the *vox e sepulchro* strained with alarm, the posture of omniscience, and the calculated air of fearlessness—all combined to delight a contemporary audience otherwise bored with the inanities of intermission travelogues and farces. *Time* editorialized openly, infuriating its enemies and oftentimes alienating its friends. And it did all this with vigor, artistry, and showmanship which shamed its less-daring competitors.²³

In 1937 *The March of Time* received an Academy Award for having "revolutionized" newsreels. Some industry elements deplored the award and the trend. It meant the destruction, warned the *Motion Picture Herald*, of the theater as "the public's escape from the bitter realities, the anguishes, and the turmoil of life." But newsreels seemed, at least for a time, to enter a more adventurous phase. RKO later (1942) started a monthly release, *This Is America*, competitive with *The March of Time* but working on a less panoramic scale. It tried to "relate the small cog to the big wheel instead of showing the big wheel"—as *The March of Time* did.²⁴

Meanwhile the New York film makers whose activism had started the documentary upturn of the 1930's were not resting. In 1939 they produced one of the most impressive films of the period—*The City*, directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke. Sponsored by the American Institute of City Planners, it was based on a brief outline by Pare Lorentz, elaborated by Henwar Rodakiewicz. Lewis Mumford wrote the commentary, which was read by Morris Carnovsky. Like other ambitious documentaries of the time, the project enlisted a major composer—Aaron Copland. The film was produced for use at the 1939 New York World's Fair, which became a significant documentary showcase. *The City* was full of experiments, some highly successful. A stylized lunch-counter montage was a triumph of satire; traffic jams provided memorable sequences. Choral voice montages—as in concurrent radio experiments by Norman Corwin and in several British documentaries—were occasionally used. Concealed cameras in a suitcase on a counter, or on a street behind a military recruitment poster, yielded rich moments. On a crowded street we see a man discarding a newspaper into a trash barrel; a second later another covers and examines it. Children playing irrepressibly amid filth and

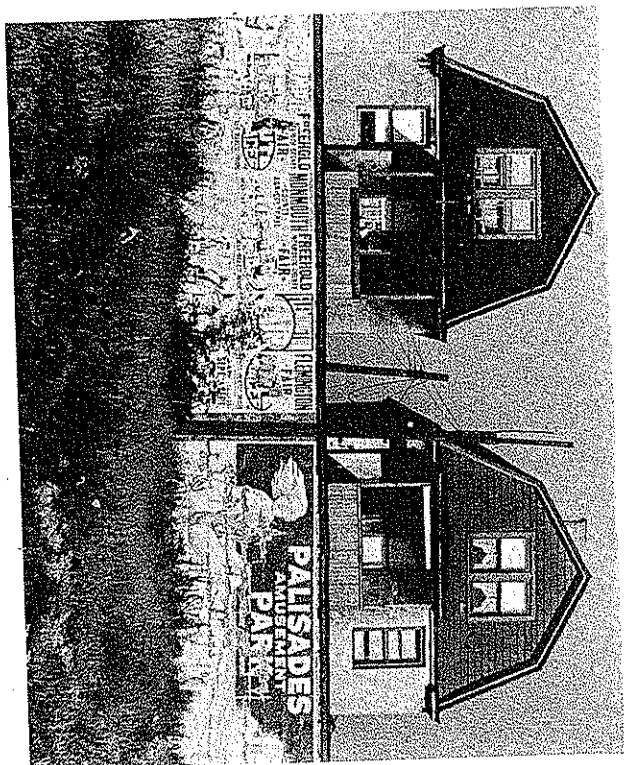


Willard Van Dyke.

Museum of Modern Art

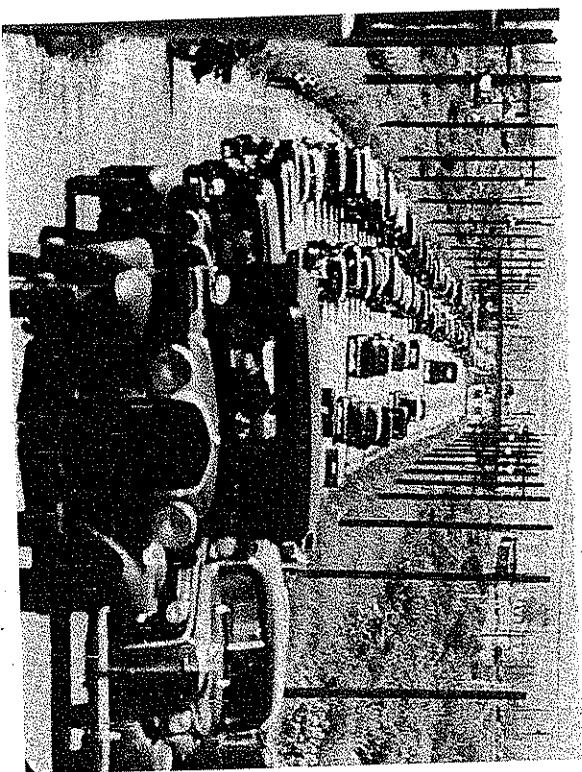
traffic congestion provide fascinating vignettes. *The City*, as impressive as the Lorentz films in developing its thesis, has the advantage of streaks of humor that are lacking in Lorentz. As an exposition of the urban crisis, *The City* was notable. The film *Valley Town* (1940), directed by Willard Van Dyke and edited by Irving Lerner, with a score by Marc Blitzstein, applied similar techniques to the problems of an industrial town.

The most prolific documentary production group of these years was the hard-hitting Frontier Films, formed by veterans of the Film and Photo Leagues. Its *People of the Cumberland*—about the Highlander Folk School promoting unionization among Cumberland Mountain people—represented a rich array of talent. Photographed by Ralph Steiner, it was written by Erskine Caldwell, with music by Alex North and Earl Robinson, conducted by Elie Siegmeister. In a manner reminiscent of *Housing Problems*, it featured a sequence foreshadowing television. A farmer working in a field is suddenly asked a question by a disembodied voice. Stopping his work, he considers the question for a moment, then answers. A final sequence offers a number of such "at-work" statements—clearly not life caught on the run, but a highly stylized device, deliberately discarding illusion.



The City, 1939.

Museum of Modern Art



Another Frontier Films production, *Native Land*, by Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz—narrated by Paul Robeson with a score by Marc Blitzstein—dealt with civil rights violations cited in government hearings. The film used dramatized reconstructions. Since few civil rights violations were occurring on camera, the film makers felt no more difficulty than did *The March of Time* in justifying dramatizations: they were going beyond surface truth. Years in the making, the film was not released until 1942. Meanwhile public concern, and that of Frontier Films, had shifted to the international arena, and here Frontier Films did its most notable work.

The "civil war" that erupted in Spain in 1936 was, more precisely, a rehearsal for world war. An insurrection under General Francisco Franco against the elected Spanish government was aided with arms and troops by Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. This went on in blatant violation of a "nonintervention" pact they had proclaimed, along with France and Britain—which nations nonetheless observed the agreement, refusing to sell or give arms to the combatants. The United States meanwhile had its hands tied by an arms embargo law, passed by Congress after revelations of vast profits made by American "merchants of death" during the 1914-18 World War. With arms withheld by France, Britain, and the United States, the elected Spanish government—the "loyalist" forces—depended mainly on limited supplies arriving from the Soviet Union, and seemed ultimately doomed. The "nonintervention" thus seemed to guarantee a Hitler-Mussolini-Franco victory, and this aroused indignation through much of the world. Volunteers by the thousands began to arrive in Spain to fight for the loyalists in an International Brigade, or to assist it through medical or relief work. Fund-raising to support these efforts, and propaganda to end the "nonintervention" and arms embargo, occupied artists and writers in many countries. For the moment, it was a cause that united liberals, socialists, communists, anarchists. Among numerous film makers who arrived on the scene was a young Russian, Roman Karmen, whose vivid film reports from Spain laid the basis for a long and notable documentary career. His reports provided the nucleus for a feature-length compilation titled *Spain (Ispaniya, 1939)*, edited by Esfir Shub. Another early arrival in Spain was the American Herbert Kline, who collaborated with the Hungarian photographer Geza Karpathi to document a shining fragment of history: the work of Dr. Norman Bethune, dapper Canadian

society physician who had suddenly given up his Montreal practice in order to join the loyalist forces, and who in their service invented the blood bank. The footage by Kline and Karpathi was turned over to Frontier Films, edited and amplified by Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz, it became *Heart of Spain* (1937).

Another Frontier Films production proved even more newsworthy—and prophetic. The Japanese war on China had flared intermittently since 1931, when Japan had seized Manchuria. While China was being nibbled away, it was also ravaged by civil struggle, which was the subject of many rumors, seldom reliable. Most news dispatches centered on—and emanated from—Chiang Kai-shek and his Wellesley-graduate wife, Madame Chiang, who were depicted as unified forces of China. But there were also reports of another force, which had somehow made its way in an epic march—in the face of incredible hardships, and attacked and pursued by Chiang Kai-shek forces—from eastern China to a remote, mountain-locked stronghold in the northwest—under one Mao Tse-tung and the military leader Chu Teh. The first American observer to reach this stronghold was the journalist Edgar Snow, who wrote of his findings in the book *Red Star Over China*, published in 1937. But before its appearance another American, Harry Dunham—a ballet dancer turned cameraman, who had published pictures in *Life* magazine—made his way through the chaos of China to Mao's domain and—even more miraculously—was able to bring hundreds of feet of film back through China and to the United States, reportedly in Chinese ginger jars. The film became *China Strikes Back* (1937), completed for Frontier Films by the scholarly Jay Leyda with Irving Lerner and Sidney Meyers, who were among the busiest of film editors, and the poet and screen writer Ben Maddow. For the mysterious Harry Dunham, who apparently explored numerous arts, it was the one major contribution to cinema, he died during World War II.

China Strikes Back shows us the youthful Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, and other early associates. It reveals to us the rugged Yenan area adopted as their base. It makes clear that Mao has set aside an orthodox Marxist principle, at least for China: he sees in the Chinese peasantry—not in a city-based proletariat—the power base from which a new China is to emerge. The film makes clear Mao's emphasis on the guerrilla struggle against the Japanese, on close relations with the



Roman Karmen filming Mao Tse-tung—Yenan, 1939. The expedition resulted in the feature *In China*, released 1941.

Karmen collection

peasant population, and on punctilious cleanliness and respectful dealing. The revelations in *China Strikes Back*, meshing with Snow's report in *Red Star Over China*, won attention as far away as Moscow, which until then had apparently had little communication with Yenan. According to Jay Leyda, Stalin had referred to Mao's forces contemptuously as "margarine communists." But a Moscow screening of *China Strikes Back* persuaded young Roman Karmen—back from Spain in 1938—to propose a film expedition to Yenan. The result was another notable series of film reports, culminating in the Russian feature documentary *In China* (1941).²⁵

It is significant that those who completed *China Strikes Back* for Frontier Films—Lerner, Leyda, Maddow, Meyers—used pseudonyms. The film brought news that ran against prevailing tides of doctrine, which made Chiang Kai-shek savior of China. As war clouds gathered, unorthodox ideas increasingly stirred suspicion. In segments of Congress and the press, a witch-hunting atmosphere was developing. The men of Frontier Films, veterans of the Film and Photo Leagues, had had an impact on the history of American documentary. But as

war approached, some of its leaders found themselves working in increasing isolation.

Something of the same sort was happening in Japan, but with more drastic results. As in other countries there had been a cine-club movement, which leaned leftward under the impact of economic crisis.

One of its leaders was Akira Iwasaki. While studying German literature and philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University in the late 1920's, he found his interest shifting to cinema, and he took up film criticism. He saw foreign films whenever he could—American, German, French. Few Russian films were admitted to Japan, but he did see *Turksib* and *Storm Over Asia*. He became part of a group calling itself the Proletarian Film League, or Prokino—formed in 1929. Like the Film and Photo Leagues in the United States, Prokino members met to screen films and went on to make them—newsreels and longer documentaries. Working with meager funds, they generally used 16mm reversal film. This meant that original films could be used for projection, and they usually were; when these wore out, nothing remained. Like the Film and Photo Leagues, Prokino organized its own distribution system, holding screenings for labor unions and farm groups over a widening area.

Among youthful Prokino recruits was Fumio Kamei. Originally a painter, he had visited the Soviet Union to study industrial arts. There the work of Pudovkin and Blyokh especially excited him, and weaned him from painting to film. On his return to Japan he fell under the influence of Akira Iwasaki and the Prokino group. Work on public-relations films won him his first film earnings and led to a job in the documentary unit of Toho, one of the major Japanese studios.²⁶

The documentary had been slow to develop in Japan, but military expansion on the Asian mainland became a subject of frequent newsreel items and of occasional documentaries. These adhered to a special foreign-policy vocabulary. The 1931 seizure of Manchuria and a concurrent ferocious attack on Shanghai were introduced with such subtitles as "Manchurian Incidents" and "Movements in East Asia." When conquered Manchuria became Manchukuo, it was the occasion for rituals prominently featured in newsreels: the founding of Manchukuo, the crowning of its Emperor, and his state visit to Japan. In western news media Manchukuo was a "puppet state"; in Japanese

newsreels it was part of the "new order in Asia" and of an Asian "co-prosperity sphere."²⁷

In 1937 Japan renewed its war on China in full force with drives on Shanghai, Soochow, Nanking, Peking. The rising pitch of events gave the documentary new standing. With the fall of Shanghai, Toho sent young Fumio Kamei to film the occupation of the city. The result was the feature-length *Shanghai*, a Toho release made with army cooperation—a film of fascinating ambiguity.

The film shows no battle action; the battle itself had received exceptionally strong newsreel coverage, mainly from the vantage of the international settlement. But Kamei invited Japanese officers of varied rank to explain, on camera, how they had achieved their victory. This they do, fulsomely and proudly, with occasional reference to maps. Meanwhile Kamei occasionally cuts away from them to shots in which the camera travels over battlefield devastation and over city ruins teeming with uprooted humanity. On the battlefields we see innumerable Japanese graves, suggesting that the Japanese paid a higher price for the victory than news reports have suggested. Within the city, the shots of conquered people are unforgettable. We see endless lines at a water pump. In scenes of Japanese soldiers trying to make friends with Chinese children—through pats on the head, gifts of candy, and donkey rides—the confused faces of the children are haunting.

The film, released by Toho, appears to have infuriated army officials, and to have made Kamei a marked man. His film *Fighting Soldiers* (*Tatakau Heitai*), about the life of soldiers, completed for Toho in 1939 and released, was banned the following year, and its negative destroyed. His script for a Toho short on the geology of Mt. Fuji was vetoed on grounds that Fuji symbolized the empire and must not be examined scientifically. The fate of the completed *Kobayashi-Issa*, a lyric tourist film released in 1940, was especially curious. It dealt with the haiku poet Kobayashi, but more particularly with the rugged part of the country where he grew up. His poems were used by Kamei as the commentary—occasionally sardonic. The region consists largely of unarable land, so that farmers toil endlessly on small hillside strips. Hence the climactic haiku:

Spring has come
but my happiness
is moderate.



Fighting Soldiers—released 1939, banned 1940.

Toho

The opening of the film tells us:

Three things are important
here: the moon, Buddha,
and noodles.

The film was denounced for excessive concern with poverty.

In 1939 Japan, following the German example, decreed that films could be directed only by those with government licenses; Kamei was denied a license. A preventive detention law was adopted, permitting arrest of those suspected of dangerous tendencies. Kamei was arrested in October 1941 and remained in prison for almost two years.

Prokino had been outlawed. However, interest in documentary was on the rise. It was stimulated by a Japanese edition of Paul Rotha's *Documentary Film*, which was translated by a young woman, Taka Aisugi, and appeared in 1938. In 1940, as a war measure, the showing of *burka eiga*—cultural films, including documentaries—was made compulsory for all theaters in major cities; the following year the rule was extended to other areas. The newsreels were consolidated into one official newsreel, *Nippon Eiga*—often shortened to *Nichiei*. Newsreel and documentary began to root themselves firmly in Japanese cinema. But it became a highly controlled movement, having no room—at least for the moment—for a Kamei or Iwasaki.

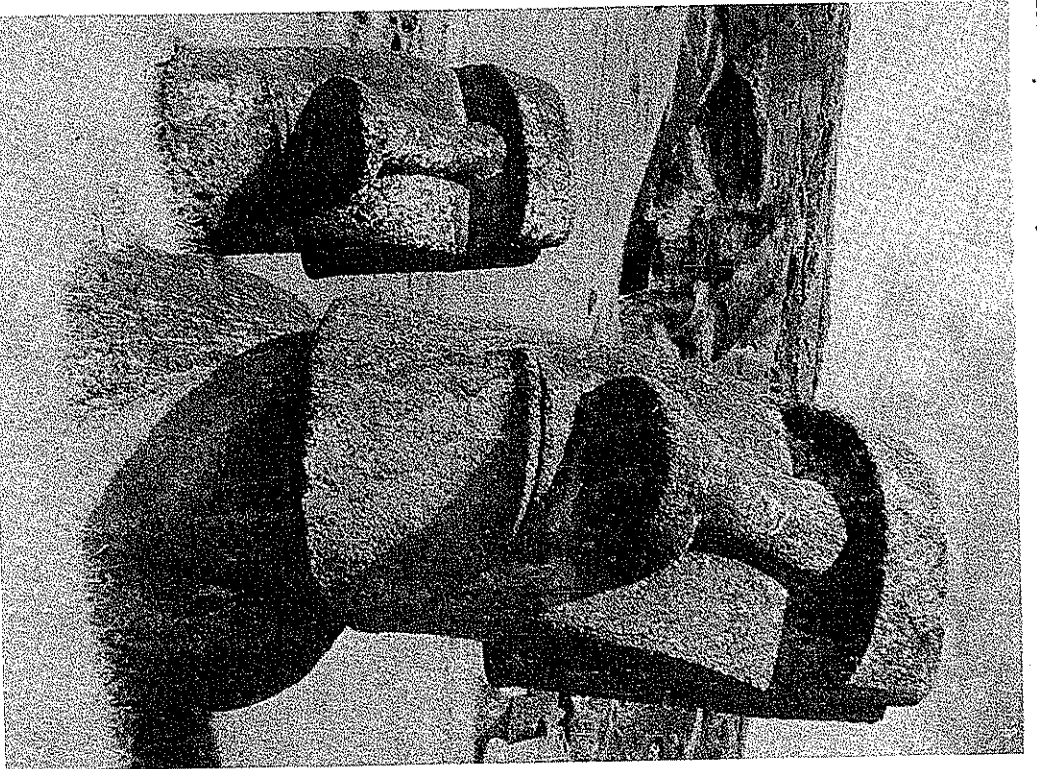
Asia, Europe, America—in diverse places, documentary film continued to show parallel developments. During the 1930's these involved not only the rise of advocacy—subtle or overt—and such phenomena as the guerrilla pressure of cine-clubs, suppressed in some places; it involved also matters of form. The typical film of advocacy was shot like a silent film, with "voice-over" narration added. This had almost become the standard documentary form. Even the Spanish Luis Buñuel, associated with surrealism, made a voice-over documentary, the sardonic *Land Without Bread* (*Tierra Sin Pan* or *Las Huides*, 1932), banned in Spain for its horrifying portrayal of a Spanish village. Voice-over was also the technique used in the Belgian film *Easter Island* (*L'île de Pâques*, 1935), a Henri Storck production shot in the South Pacific by John Ferno, a former co-worker of Joris Ivens. Its portrait of an island dominated by monuments of a civilization whose inhabitants had virtually exterminated each other in warfare—the camera showed scraggy remnants living in squalor—seemed to carry a warning to a world increasingly dominated by strife. There were voice-over passages, accompanying newsreel material, in Jean Renoir's *Life Belongs to Us* (*La Vie est à Nous*, 1936), a semi-documentary tract for the French *Front Populaire*.

In the voice-over format, some narrators were characterized but most were abstract voices. Some were calm but most were resonant with authority, and backed by impressive music. These were becoming documentary clichés.

Reenactments played a part in some documentaries—and these, as in *The March of Time*, occasionally involved actors. There was little public discussion about the validity of such techniques.

The parallel developments were furthered by traveling documentarists. From the start, the documentary had been represented by artists moving from continent to continent: the Lumière cinematographers; then Flaherty, Grierson, Cavalcanti, Karmen, and others. The film of advocacy produced an especially striking example, in a single career linking nations, genres, and eras. This was the leading film maker of Holland, Joris Ivens.²⁸

Although his early films *The Bridge* and *Rain* had been experiments in design, social issues were already important to him. He had been a student activist. Later, in the mid-1920's, he had worked in a German camera factory and had marched in protest against working conditions. When the marchers were fired on by police, he felt he had



Easter Island, 1935.

Museum of Modern Art

been involved in an early battle against spreading fascism. Then, in Amsterdam, the Filmliga provided continuing political stimulus. Its showings of foreign films included films forbidden to Dutch theaters. The right of artists to view such films in privacy had been upheld after a stormy 1927 incident in which police had tried to stop a

screening of Pudovkin's *Mother* (Mat, 1926)—apparently the first Soviet film to reach Amsterdam. The libertarian victory had given the Filmliga its initial organizing impulse and helped it to grow dramatically.

Unlike similar groups elsewhere, Ivens and his friends did not produce newsreels, but they contrived a provocative equivalent. In the Netherlands, cinemas were closed on Sundays; during this weekend interval newsreels were borrowed from cooperative projectionists, then retitled and rearranged for totally revised, left-wing impact. Having relished the results and used them for discussion meetings, the *cinéastes* restored the films to their original form for the Monday theater showings.

The rapid growth of the Filmliga enabled it to institute meetings at which prominent film makers were invited to discuss their work. From France came several, including Alberto Cavalcanti and René Clair. From the Soviet Union came Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov. While Russian studios were being converted to sound, their directors were encouraged to make such travels.

The Pudovkin appearance brought a turn in the life of Ivens. Netherlands authorities, nervous about Pudovkin's visit, allowed him to be on Dutch soil not more than twenty-four hours before, and twenty-four hours after, his Filmliga appearance. But during those hours Pudovkin saw several films, including *The Bridge and Rain*, and he said to Ivens: "It might be a good thing for us if you would come and visit us in the Soviet Union." Three months later a letter from Pudovkin brought a specific follow-up: "Why don't you come now? Your expenses from the frontier will be paid. Be sure to bring your films." In December of 1929 Ivens headed for the Soviet Union.

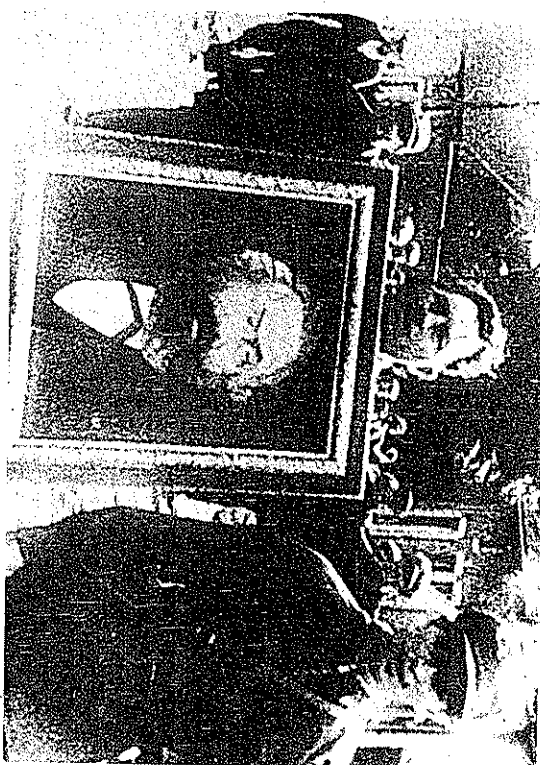
During the following months he gave scores of lectures, with screenings of his films. Shuttled from place to place with an interpreter, he answered questions about film, social conditions, and his own life and background. And he saw films: at the Ukraine studio Dovzhenko showed him his new film *Earth* (*Zemlya*, 1930); at the Georgia studio Mikhail Kalatozov showed him the recently completed *Salt for Svanetia*. Then, to his astonishment, Ivens was invited to direct a film, on a topic of his choosing. He chose a new steel center at Magnitogorsk, which was being built and organized largely by youth brigades. The film eventually became *Song of Heroes* (*Pesn o Geroyskh*, 1932).

Before he could start production, he made a return trip to the Netherlands, where in a short time he improved his financial situation by making two industrial films, including one for Philips Radio. Working in its almost luxurious plant he made *Industrial Symphony* (also known as *Philips-Radio*, 1931), a film of great technical beauty, with emphasis on textures and patterns of movement—as in *The Bridge*. (He had suggested photography in workers' homes, but the idea was vetoed by the company.) Returning to the Soviet Union, he launched into his other factory film: here, on the frontier between Europe and Asia, he lived in log-house barracks, working sometimes in a sea of mud, sometimes in incredible cold. Equipment was scant, and all film production material—like every other kind of material—was in short supply. Yet Ivens later wrote in his memoirs: "It was the first time in my life that I felt integrated with my work, a part of my environment."

On completing *Song of Heroes*, he returned to the Netherlands in time for the climax of something he had begun years earlier: a continuing film record of the draining of the Zuider Zee. But the completion of this engineering feat, designed to create new wheatlands, brought an unexpected, bitter irony—which became the final point of his film. In 1933 wheat was being dumped into the seas to maintain its price on international markets. Ivens expressed his anger in the jolting finish of *New Earth* (*Nieuwe Gronden*, 1934). In a sudden change of mood, accented by Hanns Eisler's music, the film indicates a system placing wheat prices above the hunger of millions.

Meanwhile the Belgian Henri Storck was in touch with him. Storck was outraged over the problems of coal miners in the Borinage section of Belgium, and the violent police action used to quell their strike, which had been precipitated by wage cuts. Ivens joined Storck to make *Borinage* (1933), financed by the Brussels cine-club, Club de L'Écran. To elude the police they worked in extreme secrecy, living in miners' homes, moving frequently from home to home. Recent evictions, demonstrations, and clashes with police were reenacted with the help of miners. It was virtually "underground" film making, shadowed by secret police.²⁸ Censors banned the completed film in both Belgium and Netherlands, but it had substantial cine-club circulation.

Ivens was becoming a celebrated man of causes. He was invited to the United States. A group of prominent writers and artists—Herman



Borinage, 1933.

Storck collection

Shumlin, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, and others—proposed to raise funds and form a corporation, Contemporary Historians, Inc. They wanted Ivens to go to Spain to make a film about the anti-fascist struggle. Ivens cabled young John Ferno to join him on the Spanish project. Both would contribute their services to the cause. Ernest Hemingway joined the project, writing and speaking the narration. In Spain they found Roman Karmen of the Soviet Union at work on his film mission. For both Ivens and Ferno, it was the first filming of war. In a village they saw Caproni planes coming and bombs descending—smooth, shining brilliantly in the sun. Then came the crash of bombs and silence all over the village, followed by the cries of the wounded. Then, amid the dust of the explosions, women began to emerge, bewildered, not yet knowing what had happened. Ivens and Ferno followed them, with cameras in action. Two women picking up a baby. Ivens found himself thinking, how can I possibly be so brutal? But he was determined to keep shooting, and did. They kept on for weeks. Hemingway said they took "too many chances" and would be killed. The editing was done in New York by Ivens's editor, Helen van Dongen, who came from Holland for the project. Irving Reis, director of the experimental CBS radio series *Columbia*



Spain, 1936: Roman Karmen, Ernest Hemingway, Joris Ivens. Karmen collection

Workshop, worked with her, adding sound effects to the silent footage. For their bombardment effect they found the sort of solution not unusual for this period: they appropriated a sequence of earthquake noises from the film *San Francisco* and ran it backwards. The effect was found triumphantly authentic. Virgil Thomson and Marc Blitzstein culled music from recordings of Spanish folk tunes. President Roosevelt saw a preview of *The Spanish Earth* at the White House and asked questions about the Russian tanks. Mrs. Roosevelt asked about the chances of a loyalist victory. The film was premiered in 1937. Some critics said Ivens had turned from art to propaganda. The *Motion Picture Herald* said it was "too stark, bitter and brutal to please the general audience." But many felt they had seen a classic. *Time* said:

Not since the silent French film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, had such dramatic use been made of the human face. As face after face looks out from the screen the picture becomes a sort of portfolio of portraits of the human soul in the presence of disaster and distress. These are the earnest faces of speakers at meetings and in the villages talking war, exhorting the defense. These are faces of old women moved from their homes in Madrid for safety's sake, staring at a bleak, uncertain future, faces in terror after a bombing, faces of men going into battle and the faces of men who will never return from battle, faces full of grief and determination and fear.

For those most concerned with the loyalist cause, Ivens was a hero of the hour. He had become one of the great names of documentary film. Pare Lorentz, making plans for a U.S. Film Service, wanted him for a project—the film he was planning on rural electrification. But there were more urgent topics, such as the war in China. The artists and writers who had sent Ivens to Spain wanted him now to film the Chinese-Japanese war. They formed a new corporation—History Today, Inc. Luise Rainer, who had starred in *The Good Earth*, headed the fundraising. The Chinese ambassador was helpful. Early in 1938 Joris Ivens and John Ferno—they were co-directors on this project—were on their way; Robert Capa of *Life* went with them, to make stills. Footage would go—via Hollywood laboratories—to Helen van Dongen in New York for editing. They devised with her a cable code. The message JOHNNY VERY ILL would tell her: "Get us out of this country as soon as possible—tangling with the Japanese army or occupation authorities."²⁰

But there were problems besides the Japanese. A Colonel Huang, assigned by the Chiang Kai-shek government to advise them, seemed to be in charge of making obstacles. Every move of the film group was apparently reported to Madame Chiang. In Hankow, temporary capital, the group encountered a new censorship system.

Every time I took a shot, one of the Chinese censor people took exactly the same shot with a 16mm camera. The 16mm print was sent to Hong Kong, developed there by Kodak, flown back to Hankow and seen by the censor before we were allowed to send the identical 35mm film to Hollywood.

Ivens asked for permission to visit the Mao Tse-tung Eighth Route Army—but without results. Guerrilla units, they were told, could be found anywhere. All requests and inquiries concerning the Yenan forces precipitated a runaround. Ivens and Ferno tried, nevertheless, to make their way to the northwest; their efforts were watched, and a telegram from Hankow brought warning:

MADAME WANTS ME TO INFORM YOU CHINA HAS ONLY ONE ARMY UNDER GENERALISSIMOS COMMAND IN YOUR PRODUCTION YOU ARE CAUTIONED NOT TO PUBLICIZE ANY PARTICULAR UNIT BUT GIVE PROMINENCE TO THE CHINESE ARMY STOP JULY AND AUGUST VERY HOT FOR HANKOW FILMING HOPE YOU TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF JUNE WEATHER HERE.

The film, *The Four Hundred Million*, scored by Hanns Eisler with a narration written by Dudley Nichols and read by Fredric March, was premiered in 1939, and was both acclaimed and attacked. As an explanation of the upheavals in China, the film had limited value. As testimony on the horrors of modern war, it provided unforgettable moments.

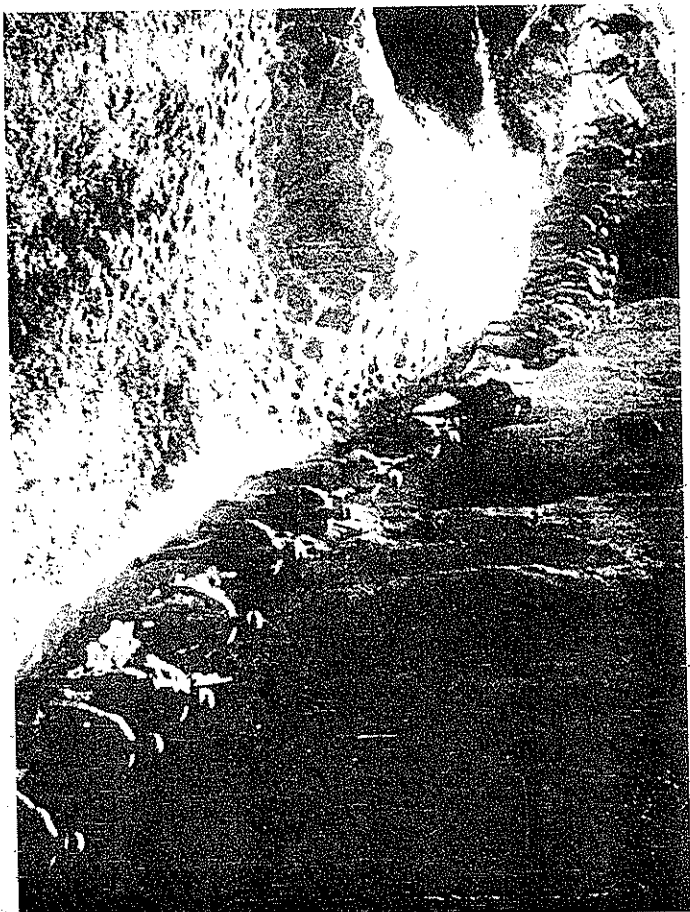
From *The Bridge through New Earth* to *The Four Hundred Million*, Joris Ivens had moved long distances. At first it had been a matter of patterns in motion; then of social problems; now it seemed mainly a matter of loyalties. Ideological debate was being drowned by bombs. Ivens had moved on into a time when film makers, surrounded by the rumble of explosions, would not be asked to probe issues, but to sound the call to action.

Bugler

When German armies drove into Poland in September 1939, they plunged also into the film genre that was to dominate documentary production throughout World War II: the bugle-call film, adjunct to military action, weapon of war. The film maker's task: as to the faithful, to stir the blood, building determination to the highest pitch; as to the enemy, to chill the marrow, paralyzing the will to resist. In all these tasks, German war films made a glittering start.¹

The importance attached to the work was evident. In the advance on the Polish city of Gdynia, the attack is said to have been delayed so that cameramen could take positions ahead of the assault troops, so as to document the full impact. In the later conquest of Norway, which made unprecedented use of parachute troops in coordination with naval landings, 300 German cameramen were said to be in action. Many German cameramen were killed during the war.

The accumulating battle footage was processed into expanded newsreels in the *German Weekly Review* (*Deutsche Wochenschau*) series—it often ran to forty minutes during the early part of the war—and into long documentaries. Captured footage, stirring music, animated maps, and highly emotional narration were important additional elements. While the overwhelmingly dynamic action riveted attention, speech and music were used to impose specific meanings and values on the events. The viewer was word-regimented.



The Four Hundred Million, 1939.

Nederlands Filmmuseum



China, 1938: John Ferno, Joris Ivens and Chinese associate—at work on *The Four Hundred Million*.

Among films emerging from the footage on Poland, *Baptism of Fire* (*Feuertaufe*, 1940), made for the German Air Ministry and featuring an exultant epilogue by its chief, Hermann Göring, seems to have had the widest impact. Directed by Hans Bertram, himself an air ace, the film had music by Norbert Schultze, composer of the song "Lili Marlene." *Baptism of Fire* glorified the role of air power in the smashing of Poland, and was aimed partly at England—as a softening-up tactic. Its narration had an impetuous lyric quality, taking sensuous delight in aerial action and embroidering it with fanciful figures of speech. As planes complete a triumphant mission and veer homeward, the narrator tells us: "Like noble greyhounds, our pursuit planes gambol over the conquered area." Narration alternates with passages of song:

High up, we feel in the east wind the day's brave venture.

We reach for the sun, leaving the earth far below.

Comrade, comrade, all the girls must wait.

Comrade, comrade, the order is clear, we're ready to go!

Comrade, comrade, you know the slogan: on, to the enemy! On, to the enemy! Bombs on the land of the Poles!

But in the end, Britain is the film's target. Her pledge to support Poland, made by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, is pictured in *Baptism of Fire* as the most heinous of war crimes, in that it encouraged the Poles to try to defend unfortified Warsaw. The film displays vividly the resulting rain of annihilation—and accompanies it with lyric and self-righteous exultation.

NARRATOR: Warsaw . . . the drama of a town nearing its end. . . . The wind carries the curtain of smoke eastward. The glare of the sun is reflected on the sheer-white cumulus which, lifted by the heat of the flames into bizarre tower-like shapes, soars up like a gigantic mountain range. Down below, hell. . . . Thirty-six hours later, Warsaw surrenders. . . . We fly over the town once again, this time without bombs. Mr. Chamberlain should be of the party. . . . What have you to say now, Mr. Chamberlain? Here you find conclusive evidence of the catastrophe you brought about in the Polish capital. Do you fear the curse of a betrayed people? . . . All this is your work, yours is the guilt, and you will have to answer for it at the last judgment. And remember one thing: this is what happens when the German Luftwaffe strikes. It will also know how to strike at the guiltiest of the guilty.

The final moment of the film brings a reprise—with a variation—of the film's exuberant refrain:

Do you hear the password? On, to the enemy! . . . Bombs, bombs, bombs on England!

The Polish footage gave birth also to *Campaign in Poland* (*Feldzug in Polen*, 1940), which demonstrated Nazi ground warfare in equally shattering fashion. Dynamically animated maps, depicting pockets of resistance encircled and choked by German tank divisions, convey an almost physical sense of strangulation. Like *Baptism of Fire*, the film pictures German destruction as a sword of retribution. The hour of reckoning is at hand for sinful nations.

Campaign in Poland was the first major work of Fritz Hippler, who also directed *Victory in the West* (*Sieg im Westen*, 1941), celebrating with similar impact the defeat of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France. Hippler was a rising force in the Goebbels regime. Having studied sociology and law at Heidelberg University, he had joined the newsreel division of the Propaganda Ministry in 1935. But it was the war years that propelled him into prominence. He came to be considered, according to David Stewart Hull in his *Film in the Third Reich*, the "evil genius" behind a number of Nazi film projects. The most notorious of these was *The Eternal Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*), released late in 1940.

In that year several anti-Semitic films appeared, apparently to set the stage for Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish problem." Except for *The Eternal Jew*, they were fiction films. Goebbels assigned to Hippler the task of producing an anti-Semitic "documentary," and he complied in spectacularly odious fashion.

Like other Hippler films it relied heavily on narration—in this case a compendium of anti-Semitic invective, linked with images of many kinds including "degenerate" art, pornography, and slaughterhouse scenes allegedly illustrating Jewish ritual.

In one respect, the film was another by-product of the crushing of Poland. Hippler supervised photography in the Warsaw ghetto, where hundreds of thousands of Jews were herded by the conquerors into pockets of indescribable misery. His footage showed half-starved, unshaven creatures caught in pathetic acts of barter—a pair of socks for a scrap of food. Such footage is used in *The Eternal Jew* as showing Jews "in their natural state." The audience is warned that Jews have

elsewhere learned to hide their nature behind a veneer of civilization; but now German audiences can see them as they are, an unclean, cheating, parasitic species.

The Eternal Jew then embarks on a "history" of the Jew, purporting to show how his true nature shows through the acquired veneer. The story is here "documented" through footage from fiction films. A selection from *The House of Rothschild* (1934) shows a rich Rothschild—played by George Arliss—putting on old clothes to fool and cheat a tax collector. Another excerpt purports to document the role of Jews in international finance and the starting of wars. Then we are told: "The Jew is interested instinctively in everything abnormal and depraved." This aspect is illustrated via an excerpt from *M* (1932), the Fritz Lang film starring Peter Lorre—"the Jew Lorre," as the narration puts it, "in the role of a child murderer." We get a snatch of its original dialogue.

LORRE: . . . it burns within me. I must go the way that I am driven. . . . Who knows what is going on inside me? How I must do it—not want, must!

The end of the film tells us that under the Führer Germany dedicates itself to the cause of racial purity.

The idea of "documenting" a thesis with fiction excerpts was not entirely new. A Grierson film of the Empire Marketing Board period, *Conquest* (1930), used footage from the 1923 feature *The Covered Wagon* as though it were history; its "documentary" look made this a tempting though dubious action. And according to Jay Leyda, the scholarly Esfir Shub in her compilation film *Spain* used a brief battle shot from the 1930 feature *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Inclusions of this sort may be made unwittingly; filing anomalies in stock-shot libraries have made this an increasing possibility. But this was hardly the case with Hippler, who used a questionable device in a particularly unscrupulous manner.

Hippler's film career ended when he was captured by the British. After the war he was employed as translator by the United States army. Film historian David Stewart Hull later found him working as a travel agent in Berchtesgaden.

Although high-pitched lyricism and invective were especially characteristic of Nazi war films, there was also occasional use of irony, as in the short film *Gentlemen* (1940). This shows us Churchill, Cham-

berlain, Halifax, and Eden as British leaders brought up in the code of "gentlemen." It then demonstrates via foreign newsreel footage how "gentlemen" behave. Eden travels far and wide to try to get Indians, Egyptians and others to fight Britain's war so as to save the gentleman's way of life. Meanwhile Britain has deserted France, her chief ally, pulling troops out of the continent in helter-skelter evacuation. In doing so, the British blow up French bridges and buildings and drop bombs on towns and roads, not caring that they meanwhile kill countless French people, create masses of refugees, and destroy hospitals, schools, and cultural treasures. In contrast, the German advance is pictured as liberation. German troops rebuild bridges, care for the wounded, and give people food and gasoline to help them return home. The French, says the film, are beginning to see that their hope is with Germany and not with "gentlemen."

In similar vein, *Round the Statue of Liberty* (*Rund um die Freiheitsstatue*, 1941) takes an ironic look at the United States, contrasting pretensions with actualities via footage of gang wars, race riots, strikes, slums. No wonder, says the commentary, that the Statue of Liberty turns her back on America.

Nazi film strategies appeared to yield success as long as the armies advanced. When reverses began, the lyric campaign films dwindled, then ceased. Newsreel issues shortened, and tended to fill up with examples of home front devotion and sacrifice, Hitler's visits to military units, and orations by Nazi leaders. One of the most extraordinary newsreel issues, released in 1943, consisted of a "total war" speech by Goebbels—apparently staged for camera purposes, since it addresses the world at large. To dispel any speculation that Germany might weaken, Goebbels says he has invited representative Germans to join him in the Berlin Sportpalast, to answer his questions about their state of mind. Those arrayed before him include members of the Nazi hierarchy, scientists, artists, wounded war veterans, munitions workers, housewives. They respond to him in chorus.

GOEBBELS: The English maintain that the German people are resisting the government's measures for total war.

CROWD: Lies! Shame!

GOEBBELS: They do not want total war, say the British, but capitulation.

CROWD: Sieg heil!

GOEBBELS: Do you want total war?

CROWD: Yes!

GOEBBELS: Do you want a war more total and more ruthless than we could ever have first imagined?

CROWD: Yes!

GOEBBELS: Are you ready to stand with the Führer as a phalanx of the homeland behind the fighting Wehrmacht, to continue the struggle unshaken and with savage determination, through all vicissitudes of fate until victory is in our hands?

CROWD: Yes! . . .

GOEBBELS: You have proclaimed to our enemies what they need to know to prevent them from indulging in false dreams and illusions. . . .

German newsreel issues regularly reached opposing governments through non-belligerent nations, especially Spain, Portugal, and Turkey. *Deutsche Wochenschau* issue No. 651, the Goebbels Sportpalast speech, must have convinced them with its vehemence that thoughts of defeat were troubling Germany.

In Britain as in Germany, the start of war brought a concentration on bugle-call films. The GPO Film Unit became the Crown Film Unit; war films were its task. Their purpose was similar to that of the German films, but the styles were different.

The Grierson years had prepared Britain well for a documentary war. Many of "Grierson's boys" were by now seasoned film veterans; eager to serve war needs, many made valuable contributions—Cavalcanti, Watt, Rotha, and others. But as in Germany, the war brought forth new names, most notably that of Humphrey Jennings (1907–50).³

A Cambridge graduate interested in painting, poetry, and drama, Jennings had worked in and around the GPO Film Unit since 1934 as scene designer, actor, editor—generally on other people's films. Grierson considered him a dilettante. But with the outbreak of war he directed—with the collaboration of Harry Watt and Pat Jackson—a modest short film titled *First Days* (1939) that somehow caught the spirit of the moment. Its style was precise, calm, rich in resonance. He developed the style further in *London Can Take It* (1940) —again with Harry Watt—and in *Listen to Britain* (1942), which earned Jennings a world-wide reputation. With *Fires Were Started* (1943), generally considered his masterpiece, he became virtually a wartime poet-laureate of the British screen. His later films included *The Silent Village* (1943), *The 80 Days* (1944), *A Diary for Timothy* (1945).



Humphrey Jennings, at left.

National Film Archive

In many ways, the Jennings style was at odds with connotations of "war film," and this was a reason for his impact. The war provided him with a melodramatic backdrop. *The First Days* shows us at once a world full of threat. As people gather round radios to listen to the announcement of Britain's declaration of war, the city around them is undergoing grotesque changes. Monstrous barrage balloons hang overhead. Millions of sandbags are being piled against buildings. Tanks sit in the shadows of trees. Gunners are on the alert. There are searchlights and sirens. In the National Gallery we see room after room hung with empty frames—the art treasures have been removed to safety. The historic Thames, winding its way through the city, is now seen as a threat. "The gleaming river may betray London yet," says the commentary.

It is against this background that Jennings performs his specialty: the vignette of human behavior under extraordinary stress. The films are crowded with small, unspectacular moments: humorous, touching, curious. In the midst of the surrealist madness of war, they form a

tapestry of men and women behaving in a human way, and somehow confirming our faith in humanity. They are carrying on. Jennings was credited with catching the mood of the British in crisis, but he may have done more: perhaps he helped set a pattern for crisis behavior.

The Jennings war films never explain, exhort, harangue. They *observe*. Some critics, admitting them, wondered if this was enough. Among these was John Grierson, a man with faith in explanations—who, in Canada, continued to foster work in a different vein, usually vigorously articulate. But the response of the British people to the work of Jennings left no doubt. Seeing themselves in his film tapestry, they discovered they were quite wonderful people after all.

The moments are diverse, and almost always brief. There are incongruities—never pushed to extremes. Emerging from shelters after a night of sirens and crashing bombs, Londoners briefly survey the wreckage, as though checking the weather outlook, then set off to work with their umbrellas. A woman enters a shop via its smashed front window. A mother remarks how quiet it is since the children were evacuated. Though all is askew, familiar things are seen and heard: snatches of popular song, radio broadcasts, street signs, well-known buildings. They represent a stream that cannot be stopped or diverted.

A remarkable aspect of the Jennings films is the absence of hate-the-enemy incitements—which did crop up in British newsreels. In *Fires Were Started* we see members of the Auxiliary Fire Service—a group not of heroic demagogue—at work during the air blitz, coping with an incredible holocaust and surrounded by death and disaster. Yet—as the critic Jim Hillier points out—the blitz is treated almost as a natural disaster. The firemen show no interest in “the enemy” as such, nor does Jennings. He was, in this sense, uncompromising. He seemed to be saying that time was short for humanity; that being human could not be postponed until some postwar era.

This spirit is carried out in the musical selections that permeate the films. The sound track of *Listen to Britain* gives us an anthology of the sounds of Britain at war—juxtaposed with characteristic Jennings vignettes. The sounds include the music of Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart. We see the pianist Myra Hess playing Mozart in lunchtime concerts for war workers in the midst of the ruined city. Britain is preserving culture—including German culture—from disaster.

The films seem simple, but the editing weaves complex patterns.

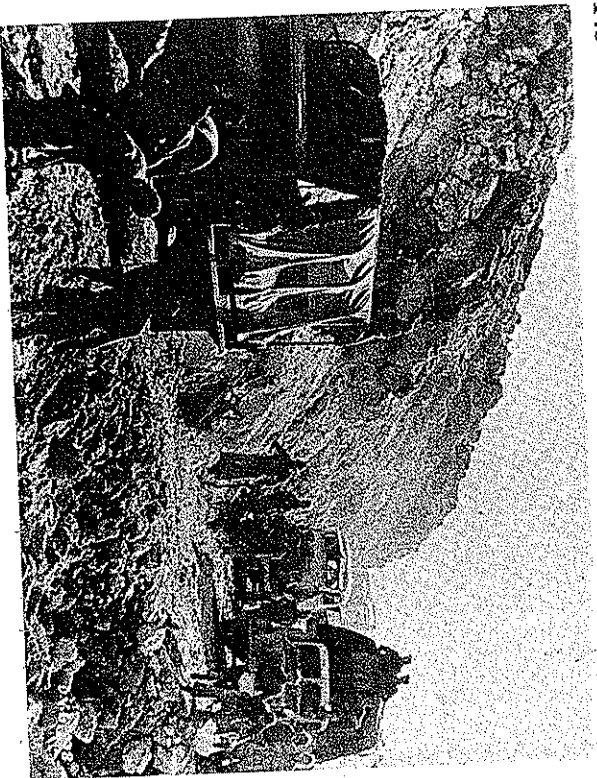
The music played by Myra Hess is carried on over scenes of ordinary people in various parts of the city, and touches them and their activities lightly with an aura of nobility. Sound effects established in one setting are constantly carried over into others, creating thought-provoking resonances and associations. Jennings was an avid sound-track experimenter. He used narration sparsely. He used dialogue—usually in brief snatches, improvised on the spot—more often than most contemporary documentarists.

Listen to Britain and *Fires Were Started* are among the few war films that can be seen decades later without embarrassment. In these, nothing of humanity has been sacrificed for assumed strategic needs. They are films of affirmation. In his final war film, *A Diary for Timothy* (1945), a disturbing note enters. It relies on narration—written by E. M. Forster—more heavily than do most Jennings films. The narration takes the form of a “diary” written for a baby born late in the war, when victory seems assured. It is to let him know of the fearful Armageddon that has set the stage for the world he will inherit, and to pose questions he must ultimately answer, as to what to do with that world. A dissolve symbolically shows the baby emerging from the flames of war. In spite of lifting rhetoric, the film has a sense of foreboding. It is as though Jennings has been certain all along that Britain would see its way through the war, but has deep fears about the peace.

Jennings continued film-making in the postwar years, but never with his wartime success. It is as though his gentle vignettes needed the violent backdrop. None of his postwar films added to his reputation. In 1950, while setting up a shot on a cliff in Greece, he lost his footing and fell to his death.

He has been called by director Lindsay Anderson “the one real poet” of British cinema. It is curious that Jennings, so unwarlike, should have found his voice in the most ferocious of wars.

His works were defensive. In one way or another, all of them said that England could “take it”—the keynote of the early years of war, but less appropriate later. It was a relief to many Britons when Harry Watt emerged with *Target for Tonight* (1941), filmed on a bombing mission over Germany. Marking a shift to the offensive, it initiated the films of victorious action that took the spotlight in the later years of war. Of special brilliance among these was *Desert Victory* (1943), directed by Roy Boulting—a lucid and breath-taking exposition of the

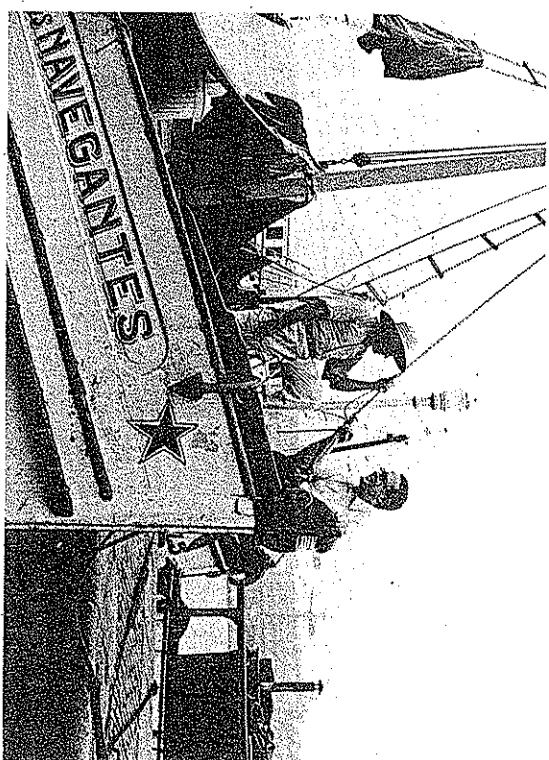


Desert Victory, 1943.

National Film Archive

North African campaign that chased Rommel's Afrika Korps 1300 miles from El Alamein to Tripoli. The film crew suffered losses—killed, wounded, and captured. But it is said that a film unit actually took Tobruk, arriving before the troops. The *Desert Victory* success paved the way for Boulting's similarly impressive *Tunisian Victory* (1944)—made with United States collaboration—and *Burma Victory* (1945). Each of these had elements of the Jennings spirit: emphasis on small human moments within the vortex of war. Finally came *The True Glory* (1945), a climactic British-American war report directed by Carol Reed and Garson Kanin, with voice-over narration by General Eisenhower and numerous anonymous soldiers.

Like the Germans, the British occasionally attacked with irony. One of the most satisfying moments of the war was provided by Alberto Cavalcanti in the opening of *Yellow Caesar* (1940), a compilation of Mussolini footage. We first see a street organ-grinder; then, as his music continues, there is a dissolve from his rotating hand to the rotating hand of Mussolini, emphasizing his oratory with circular flourishes. It took genius to note, in the Mussolini footage, the possibility of such a dissolve, and the mordant effect of hurdy-gurdy music



Alberto Cavalcanti, at right.

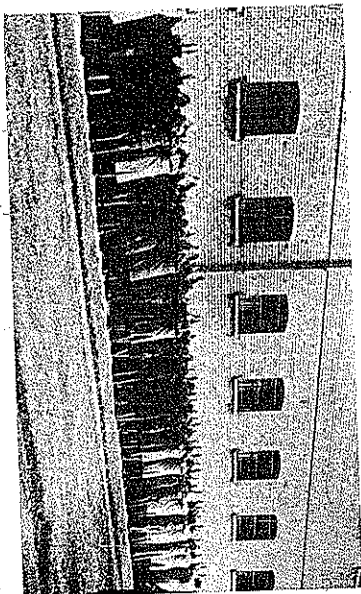
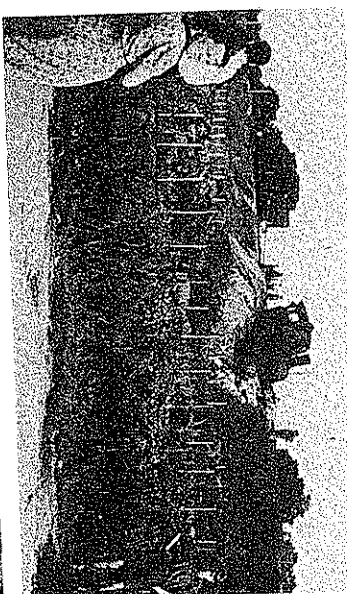
National Film Archive

as Mussolini leitmotif. Another moment beloved by audiences was provided by an unidentified film editor in *Swinging the Lambeth Walk* (1940). Again, a simple trick is the basis: German military marchers are recut, with backward and forward motion, to a popular English tune; Hitler himself is made to jig back and forth. The reduction of the grandiose to the absurd by this simple device held fascination for years.

In late stages of the war, film played a part in British communication with underground groups on the continent. Cavalcanti made the film *Three Songs of Resistance* (*Trois Chansons de Resistance*, 1943) specifically to be parachuted to partisans. Some footage reached England from underground groups. The Danish underground operated a camera truck in Copenhagen throughout the war, with a Nazi-uniformed driver at the wheel, documenting Nazi activities and its own occasional acts of sabotage. Some footage of this sort came to England via Sweden, and was used in English newsreels and documentaries.

The Danish underground made daring use of films—those from England and its own. It made an occasional commando-type raid on

The Danish underground at work—in footage shot by the underground. The footage reached England during the war, and was used in the postwar Danish feature *Your Freedom Is at Stake* (*Det Gaelder Din Frihed*, 1946), compiled by Theodor Christensen.



a theater, forcing the projectionist to show underground films. Guarding the entrances, the commandos told the audience to sit and enjoy. Afterwards they took the films and vanished. It was under such circumstances that Danes saw *Swinging the Lambeth Walk*. The extraordinary risks were apparently felt justified by a moment of savage anti-Hitler ridicule.⁴

When Hitler, chafing over the stalemate with Britain, wheeled his main attack eastward—Russian oil and wheat were among the incentives—it became the turn of the Soviet Union to jolt audiences with its war films. It was soon able to offer the world a closer look at war than other nations could give, for its war experience was to be unique.

Beginning with retreat, the Russians yielded vast areas to the Nazi advance, falling back to the very rim of Moscow—and Leningrad, and Stalingrad—but leaving pockets of partisans, including cameramen. In the rubble of frozen cities the defenders made agonizing stands, then counterattacked. As units advanced, retaking villages, Soviet cameramen began to show something the world had not seen: captured Nazi soldiers, weary and disheveled, trudging through Russian mud and snow. The cameras also began to show, in recaptured areas, atrocities at first scarcely credible. In Russia the war was shot in painful close-up.⁵

Fiction-film studios were evacuated eastward—to Alma-Ata and elsewhere—but newsreel and documentary activities retained a Moscow base. In darkness and cold, within the sound of artillery and bomb explosions, laboratories processed incoming film. It came from everywhere, by all conceivable routes. Sometimes it arrived—astonishingly—from cameramen who had seemingly vanished into oblivion. Moscow often wondered how they had obtained film.

In charge of assembling the combat newsreels—the sort of job Ver-tov had held during revolutionary struggles, but on a hugely expanded scale—was Roman Gregoriev. He had begun film work in the Ukraine studios, to which Dziga Vertov and Mikhail Kaufman had been sent in the 1930's. Gregoriev, writer and editor, became a Vertov admirer and documentary devotee. Called to Moscow as newsreel editor, he was on the job in 1936-37 as Roman Karren's Spanish war footage came in—and later, his Yenan footage. By the time the Nazi-Soviet clash moved into high gear, footage of some 400 cameramen was converging on Moscow editing tables. As elsewhere, the footage was turned into newsreels and more structured documentaries.

Soviet cinema, in decline during the 1930's, began a renaissance during the war, with documentary leading the way. Its hold over audiences, in a land where virtually all families lost members in combat, was incalculable; documentaries and newsreels often seemed the only link with distant loved ones. For many years after the war, on May 3 of each year, a woman in Tashkent laid flowers at the screen of her local cinema. It was where she had had her last glimpse of a son.

In stations of the Moscow Metro—used, like the London underground, as air raid shelters—film projectors were set up. In cinemas, documentaries began to outnumber fiction films.

Individual battles and campaigns became the subject of feature documentaries—many of them war-film classics. The first of these were directed by documentary veterans. Leonid Varlamov (1907–62), who had begun documentary work as an assistant cutter in 1929, teamed with the *Kino-Pravda* veteran Ilya Kopalin on the triumphant *Defeat of the German Armies near Moscow* (*Razgrom Nemetskikh voisk pod Moskvoy*, 1942). It became Moscow Strikes Back in an American version, winner of a 1943 Academy Award. Varlamov then directed a film that caused global astonishment—*Stalingrad* (1943), documenting one of the great turning points of World War II and including the surrender of Field Marshall Friedrich von Paulus and vast, bedraggled columns of Nazi troops.

Roman Karmen was among numerous cameramen whose footage appears in the Moscow and Stalingrad films, and he also directed a film that matched them in power and drama—*Leningrad at War* (*Leningrad v Borbe*, 1942). Its survival story involved new, strange sights: a midwinter lifeline of supply vehicles threading across frozen Lake Ladoga in the dead of night, continuing through spring thaws as trucks slogged over perilously thinning layers of ice; meanwhile the melting of the ice in the fuelless city, and a chance to bury thawing corpses in the finally thawing ground. The imagination of fiction could not match the scenario.

Leading fiction directors began to turn to documentary—Alexander Dovzhenko with *The Fight for Our Soviet Ukraine* (*Bitva za Nashu Sovetskuyu Ukrainu*, 1943) and *Victory in the Ukraine* (*Pobeda na Provoberezhnoi Ukrainie*, 1945); Sergei Yutkevich with *Liberated France* (*Osvobozhdeniiaia Frantsia*, 1944), composed of foreign footage including captured German material; and Yuli Raizman with the climactic *Berlin* (1945), showing capture of the city in street-to-



Surrender of Fieldmarshall Von Paulus—from *Stalingrad*, 1943.

Karmen collection

Victory in the Ukraine, 1945—directed by Dovzhenko.

Staatsliches Filmarchiv der DDR



street, house-to-house combat. Again, unthinkable vistas: amid the rubble, as tanks and troops push on, we see a German gentleman cutting meat from a horse killed in battle.

The director Mikhail Slutsky supervised an unusual project: *Day of War* (*Den Voiny*, 1942)—for which all footage was shot on one day—June 13, 1942—by over 200 cameramen at “filming points” throughout the Soviet Union. The project was modeled on a prewar film, *Day in a New World* (*Den Novogo Mira*, 1940), which is said to have originated as a suggestion by Gorky. *Day of War*, in shortened form, became a *March of Time* issue titled *One Day in the War*.

The film coverage of the war was the stuff of legends. More than 100 Soviet cameramen died in action; their ranks were readily and eagerly filled. The state film academy—founded in 1919 in the midst of revolution—added combat photography to its curriculum; diplomats were earned in part through front-line action. Combat cameramen won many awards. During an air battle a cameraman left his camera, took a gun position and shot down a German pursuit plane. He won an award for valor, and a reprimand from his studio.

The accumulated war footage of one cameraman, Vladimir Shinsky, is shown in the film *Cameraman at the Front* (*Frontovoi Kinooperator*, 1946), compiled by Maria Slavinskaya and depicting the cameraman's own death. Film was moving through his camera as he was shot, and we see the footage blur into a spiral as he falls. Another cameraman saw him fall, filmed his final moments—and also died in action.

Wartime film activity sowed seeds of postwar relationships. Polish and other national detachments fighting with the Russian advance had their own documentary units, Soviet-equipped. Film equipment and supplies were dropped to Yugoslav partisans. Roman Gregoriev, asking for a field assignment away from executive duties, covered the link-up with Bulgarian partisans and the expulsion of the Nazis from Bulgaria—in *Entrance of the Red Army into Bulgaria* (*Vstupleniye Krasnoi Armii v Bulgariyu*, 1944).

Soviet war films were credited with strong impact in the United States. American opinion of the Soviet Union had been at low ebb after the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression pact of 1939; many felt that the pact had irrevocably discredited the Stalin regime and the entire communist cause. When Hitler later attacked Russia, early collapse of the

Soviet Union was widely predicted—often with satisfaction. The heroic stands at Moscow, Stalingrad, Leningrad—all vividly documented in film—brought a change. Division of sentiment remained, but anti-Soviet expressions tended to become muted. Admiration for the Soviet war effort was widely voiced. And its films elicited ecstatic admiration from critics and Hollywood executives. After Pearl Harbor, Soviet war films became a major source of material for war films of the American government.

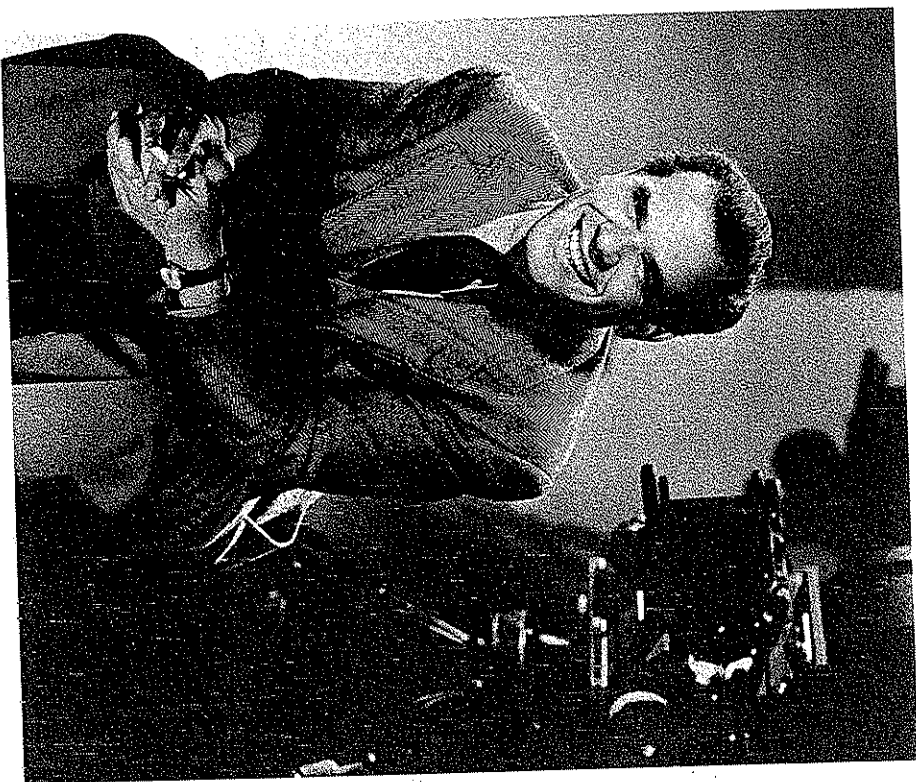
The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, followed by the German declaration of war on the United States, made it America's turn to plunge into bugle-call films. Its need was crucial and had special aspects, producing a film strategy different from those of other belligerents. As exemplified by the celebrated *Why We Fight* films, America's early war films were the most eclectic, relying heavily on combat footage of other nations—friend and foe—as well as on diverse other sources. They were also marked by an unusual emphasis on history.⁶

There were reasons for all this. Isolationism had deep roots and remained strong. Reluctance to spill blood “to save the British Empire” or “to save communism” was great. Disillusionment over the results of World War I and American participation in it remained a factor. And there was little feeling of threat to the homeland—in spite of heavily promoted air raid drills. The devastation inflicted by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor did stir war fever, but it lacked historic context, and was inclined to be racist. It did not relate itself readily to the European war. On the whole, the U.S. War Department found draftees confused and divided about the war, and massively ignorant about its background.

A few weeks after Pearl Harbor, Hollywood director Frank Capra—he had suddenly become *Major* Capra and was in spotless new uniform—found himself seated opposite General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff—gray, sober, admitted. The place was a new building, the Pentagon. The dialogue was later recounted by Capra in his memoir, *The Name Above the Title*.

“Mr. Capra—allow me to call you that for a moment—you have an opportunity to contribute enormously to your country and the cause of freedom. Are you aware of that, sir?”

Capra, usually brash, found himself acting more like the shy, fumbling heroes of his *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (with Gary Cooper) and



Frank Capra.

Museum of Modern Art

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (with James Stewart). He said: "Well, General Marshall, I—I mean if you're asking me does it scare the heck out of me, I'll have to say, yessir. It does!"

The General explained that in the American army, civilians would soon outnumber professional soldiers by fifty to one. Germans and Japanese were sure, the general said, that these American boys would be too soft for modern war; but Marshall felt they would fight like tigers—if told clearly why they were in uniform. "Now Capra, I want to nail down with you a plan to make a series of documented, factual-information films—the first in our history—that will explain to our boys in the Army *why* we are fighting, and the *principles* for which we are fighting."

"General Marshall, it's only fair to tell you that I have never before made a single documentary film. In fact, I've never even been near anyone that's made one."

"Capra, I have never been Chief of Staff before. Thousands of young Americans have never had their legs shot off before. Boys are commanding ships today who a year ago had never seen the ocean before."

"I'm sorry, sir. I'll make the best darn documentary films ever made."

Capra felt he should at once learn something about documentaries, and he asked the War Department to show him Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*—which he discovered to be "blood-chilling." He had to have special "security clearance" before being allowed to see it, and this seemed preposterous to him. The more he contemplated his own reaction to the film, the more he felt it was a key to his problem. If American soldiers could see *that*, they would surely know why they were fighting. When he discovered that the Alien Property Custodian had hundreds of wartime newsreels and documentaries from Germany, Italy, Japan, he arranged—it took adroit jurisdictional maneuvering—to have them transferred to his control. Then he felt he must also get material from America's war allies, so he got in touch with the Soviet embassy. Here his campaign took a sudden detour.

At the War Department's Office of Internal Security—to which he was abruptly summoned—he found himself confronted by a bespectacled colonel. A "faceless" male stenotypist took notes. The colonel informed Capra that he was under arrest for violation of the Articles of War and would be held incommunicado, pending an inquiry. The

colonel then produced a photo, which Capra recognized as a picture of himself, with his hands in his pockets, standing in front of the Soviet embassy.

Capra said, "Hey, that's me, Colonel, standing in front of the Soviet embassy. By golly . . . !"

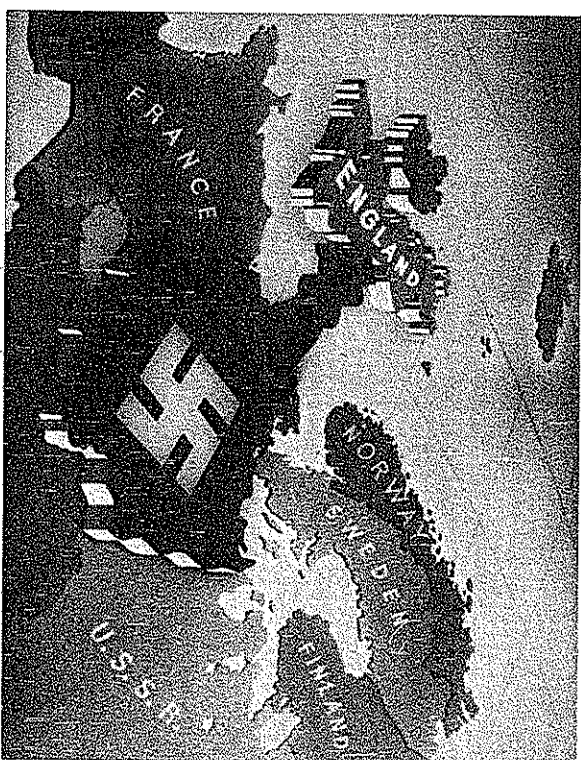
The "admission" was noted. "By whose authorization did you consort with representatives of a foreign power?"

It was a perfect Capra scene. Mentioning that he was making films under direct orders from General Marshall, he said: "And damn it all, Colonel, if you insist on keeping me from carrying out the orders of the Chief of Staff, I demand a certified transcript of this nonsensical interrogation." He said he knew a columnist—Drew Pearson—who would probably print it verbatim.

Capra was permitted to walk away—and he got his Soviet and other newsreels. Out of his labors emerged the seven films of the *Why We Fight* series: *Prelude to War* (1942), *The Nazis Strike* (1942), *Divide and Conquer* (1943), *The Battle of Britain* (1943), *The Battle of Russia* (1943), *The Battle of China* (1944), and *War Comes to America* (1945). The unit he organized also launched a newsreel for troops, *Army-Navy Screen Magazine*, and made several additional films, including *The Negro Soldier* (1944) and films on the themes "Know your enemy" and "Know your ally." It was also the Capra unit that cooperated on the British-American production *Tu-ristan Victory*.

The *Why We Fight* films became a required part of military training. Some were shown to civilians. Translated into other languages, most were shown abroad. In terms of their basic purpose, the films achieved dramatic successes. Opinion studies among American draftees showed a sharp reduction of anti-British sentiment after their viewing of *The Battle of Britain*; weeks later, the changed opinion seemed to hold. Since most draftees at the time were headed for Britain, the change was considered a valuable accomplishment.

In form, the films were emotionalized history lessons—word-dominated, like many war films. The illustrative footage was largely culled from existing material, from a great variety of sources. A few sequences were staged for the films. Animated maps, made at the Disney studios under the supervision of novelist Eric Knight—who also participated in the writing of the scripts—contributed powerful moments. For the spread of aggression, black ink oozed menacingly



" . . . smack up against a rock called Britain." Animated map by Disney studios for *Divide and Conquer*, 1943.

National Archives

across maps. Maps were used to dramatize such lines as: "World conquest was impossible, without running smack up against the rock called Britain." While hearing these words of commentary—from *Divide and Conquer*—we see a black, solid-looking arrow punching out from the black area under Nazi control, and then crumpling like an accordion. An animated sequence showing one hemisphere in darkness, the other in bright sunlight, was used to depict the war as a struggle between a "slave world" and a "free world."

The style of commentary was muscular and down-to-earth. While the screen showed Hitler, Mussolini, Hirohito as "slave world" leaders, the narrator said: "Take a good look at this trio. Remember their faces. . . . If you ever meet them, don't hesitate. . . ." (*Prelude to War*). The style favored aphorisms: "For free men are like rubber balls. The harder they fall, the higher they bounce. . . ." (*Divide and Conquer*).

Most of the work of assembling the films was done at abandoned Twentieth Century-Fox buildings on Western Avenue in Hollywood, which became Capra headquarters—and a bustling, hard-driving film-

production factory—after his initial Pentagon struggles. Leading Hollywood artists—Carl Foreman, Walter Huston, Anatole Litvak, Alfred Newman, Lloyd Nolan, Leonard Spigelgass, Dimitri Tiomkin, Tony Veller, and many others—came here for anonymous work as editors, writers, composers, conductors, narrators, directors. No personal credits appeared on the *Why We Fight* films.

Documentarists Robert Flaherty and Joris Ivens were for a time brought into the work of the Capra unit, but without notable result. Neither could fit himself into the mass-production atmosphere.

The unit examined and catalogued huge quantities of footage. Selected fragments came from newsreels of practically all nations, from documentaries of Hippler, Ivens, Jennings, Riefenstahl, Varlamov, Watt, and others—and from fiction films. The *Why We Fight* films were attempting a vast panorama: a short history of modern times, with passages on traditions of various countries. Where the commentary could not be supported by actuality footage, the editors looked to fiction. Since most were fiction-film practitioners, this probably seemed a matter of course.

The result was a strange amalgam. *Divide and Conquer* showed a very real combat-footage war plus bits of European history from Twentieth Century-Fox's *Viking Trails*, Warner's *Escape from Crime*, Paramount's *The Avengers*, Arkino's *The Girl from Ленинград*, and Columbia Pictures' *The Commandos Strike*. In *The Battle of China* the actuality war had a history rooted in moments from Goldwyn's *Marco Polo*, David Selznick's *Ku Kan*, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *The Good Earth*. In *War Comes to America*, the very real war had a historic background depicted via moments from Griffith's *America*, Twentieth Century-Fox's *Drums Along the Mohawk* and *The Roaring Twenties*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *The Big Parade*, and Warner's *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.⁷

The films were, like most war films, simplistic in interpretation. This was felt necessary. In depicting all allies in "free world" terms, many unpleasant problems were simply ignored. This helps account for the immense popularity of the films among our allies: *The Battle of Britain* was shown widely in Britain, on Churchill's orders; *The Battle of Russia* was shown widely in Russia, on Stalin's orders. America's own problems were similarly swept under the rug. In writing glowingly of "the idea of freedom . . . the idea that made us the people we are" (*War Comes to America*), the scriptwriters

were aware they were addressing a racially segregated army, and the fact disturbed them. But they hoped the stress on proclaimed ideals would influence the actuality. This was the essence of wartime strategy, and the use of fiction excerpts probably dovetailed with it. Myth became, for the moment, history. Something of the sunny spirit of Mr. Deeds and Mr. Smith shone through the *Why We Fight* films.

Not all films of the Capra unit were well received. *The Battle of China*, depicting China as resolutely unified under Chiang Kai-shek, seemed so dubious that it was soon withdrawn. *Know Your Enemy: Japan*—on which Joris Ivens worked with his editor, Helen van Dongen—was completed in 1944, but was not distributed. It was full of the generalizations promulgated early in the war, but not easily believed even then. Concerning the Japanese soldier, the commentary—written largely by Carl Foreman—warns American draftees:

NARRATOR: He and his brother soldiers are as much alike as photographic prints off the same negative. . . .

To the Japanese their Emperor is the most holy of holies, their visible god. . . .

If you are Japanese, you believe you have been commanded by heaven to conquer all other races and peoples. . . .

That's why mothers and wives accept the ashes of their dead soldiers without grief or sorrow . . . for the dead are warrior gods who live on beside them to be cherished and cared for, to be given food and drink, and a lighted cigarette to smoke. . . .

If you are Japanese, you believe these things implicitly.⁸

According to Ivens, the demise of *Know Your Enemy: Japan* was caused by its depiction of Emperor Hirohito as a war criminal. The *Why We Fight* films had also done so, but there had been a policy shift. It was now felt that the Emperor should be kept after the war, as an aid to maintenance of order.

The Negro Soldier was made to allay agitation over segregation in the armed forces. Neither segregation nor agitation against it are mentioned in the film, although segregation is shown, as an apparently benign and accepted institution. In form the film is a sermon by a black minister speaking from his pulpit in a crowded church—plus flashbacks. The flashbacks—using, like the *Why We Fight* films, a mixture of actuality footage, fiction footage, and staged scenes—deal with the war, the Negro's participation in it, his heroism in previous

Wars, and his contributions to American life. We also follow a black soldier through his military experience. The film was widely praised for dignity and sincerity, but seemed unable to extricate itself from stereotypes. Ultimately condescending, unrelenting in religiosity, it ends with black soldiers marching off to war to the tune of "Joshua fought the battle of Jericho."

One significant aspect of the Capra unit—and of the *Why We Fight* films—received little comment at the time. For the first time in history, the army was undertaking the political education of millions of Americans—who were, for the time being, a captive audience. It was called a "morale" service, but the crystallization of attitudes on a wide range of issues—national and international—was very much a political matter. If this new role of the military stirred little opposition, it was partly because it was wartime, and because the highly respected General Marshall led the way. Civil libertarians who might have objected did not do so, perhaps because they were surprised and pleased by the films. The first film released, *Prelude to War*, took a liberal-socialist view of the Spanish war—pro-loyalist, anti-Franco. It denounced isolationism in a way that delighted liberals. *The Battle of Russia* was so friendly to the Soviet Union that it seemed to augur a new era of international amity. All this was surprising, and welcome to many. But the persuasive power so suddenly—for military reasons—mobilized behind a particular set of ideas could as suddenly be switched. Attitudes of the moment masked more shifty realities—as Capra's encounter with the Office of Internal Security, and Ivens's troubles over the Japanese Emperor, must have suggested.

In later months of the war the spotlight shifted, as elsewhere, to filmed reports of victorious campaigns. As in the Soviet Union, leading figures of the fiction-film world were drawn into this work: John Ford with *The Battle of Midway* (1944); William Wyler with *Memphis Belle* (1944). But the most impressive recruit was John Huston, who directed three war documentaries. The first, *Report from the Aleutians* (1942), was routine; the others were unique.

The Battle of San Pietro was made in 1944 to explain "why we hadn't swept over Italy" as rapidly as had been expected. In carrying out the assignment, Huston conveyed unforgettably the foot soldier's experience of battle and awareness of his expendability, in a slaughter of uncertain value. After the fighting we see the dead put into sacks; in his original version, Huston used the voices of the dead men,

as recorded before battle, over shots of their dead bodies—an extraordinarily poignant use of the sound track. The military hierarchy was horrified. Cuts were ordered, and even then release of the film was delayed until the war was almost over. Huston later recounted dialogue at a Pentagon screening. One general said: "This picture is pacifistic. It's against war. Against the war. Against war." Huston replied, "Well, sir, whenever I make a picture that's for war—why, I hope you take me out and shoot me." Yet Huston insisted his main purpose was not to condemn war but to express his deep feeling for the men.⁹

This motivation carried over into *Let There Be Light*, shot in 1945. The army wanted a film to demonstrate to industry that "nervous and emotional casualties were not lunatics." The aim was to facilitate their employment. For this purpose, Huston filmed the process of rehabilitation at an army hospital, using concealed cameras to cover individual and group therapy. The viewer becomes witness of moving triumphs, as when a man who has lost the power of speech finds he can talk again. In astonishment he says, "Why, I can talk, I can talk! Listen! I can talk! Oh God, listen, I can talk. Oh, there's nothing wrong. Oh God, listen!" Few more moving climaxes have been filmed.

John Huston.

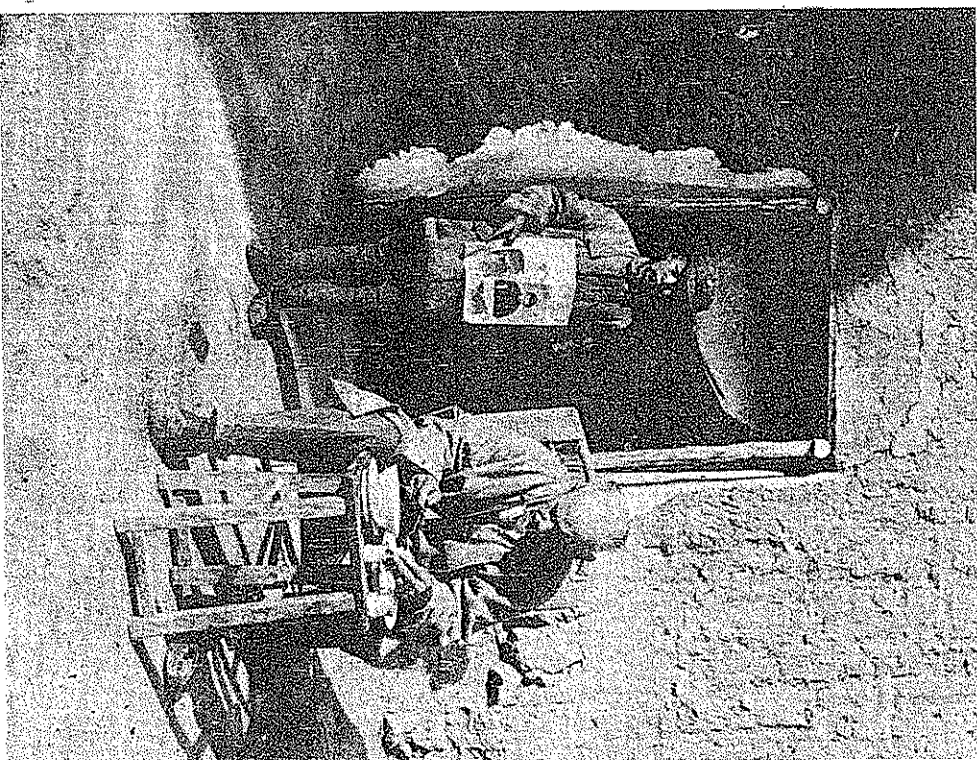
United Artists



Huston looked back on this project as "the most hopeful and optimistic and even joyous thing I ever had a hand in. I felt as though I were going to church every day out in that hospital." All patients portrayed in the film approved its release. But the army—with various explanations—banned it except for showings to psychiatrists. One explanation was that the film was not the sort of film that had been intended; that Huston had "pulled a fast one." Another was that the War Department wished to avoid raising false hopes for incurable cases. But perhaps Huston had again brought the viewer too close to war and its human toll.¹⁰

Although the most celebrated American war films were made for the armed forces, impressive work was also done in the film division of the OWI (Office of War Information) Overseas Branch. Many of its films—directed to audiences abroad—were likewise war-related, but usually with home-front emphasis. *The Cunningham Story* (1945), directed by Helen Grayson, recorded touchingly the sometimes painful integration of a group of war refugees into a Connecticut town. *Toscanini: Hymn of the Nations* (1945) portrayed the great conductor on and off the podium, with stress on his anti-fascist activities. It was made in celebration of the liberation of Italy, and was directed by Alexander Hammid, a refugee from Czechoslovakia—where as Alexander Hackenschmidt he had been a pioneer documentarist. It was produced, like many OWI films, by Irving Lerner. Unlike the army films, the OWI films were dominated by veteran documentarists, largely from the New York film world.

The war years, even more than other periods of documentary history, produced global migrations of film makers. The mobile armies took and drove them everywhere, with lasting effects on the film map. Film production had clustered in major centers; the war irrevocably dispersed it. This was significant for Asia, where crisscrossing armies planted film production in countless new areas. The Japanese assaults scattered China's Shanghai film enterprises in various directions: some moved south to Hong Kong and beyond, to Singapore; some followed the Chiang Kai-shek government when it moved inland to Chungking; some film makers and equipment also found their way to the northwest, to Yenan, enabling the Chinese Red Army to begin its own documentary record of the war. Jay Leyda mentions *Yenan and the Eighth Route Army* (Yenan ho Ba Lu Chun, 1939) as its first formal film.¹¹



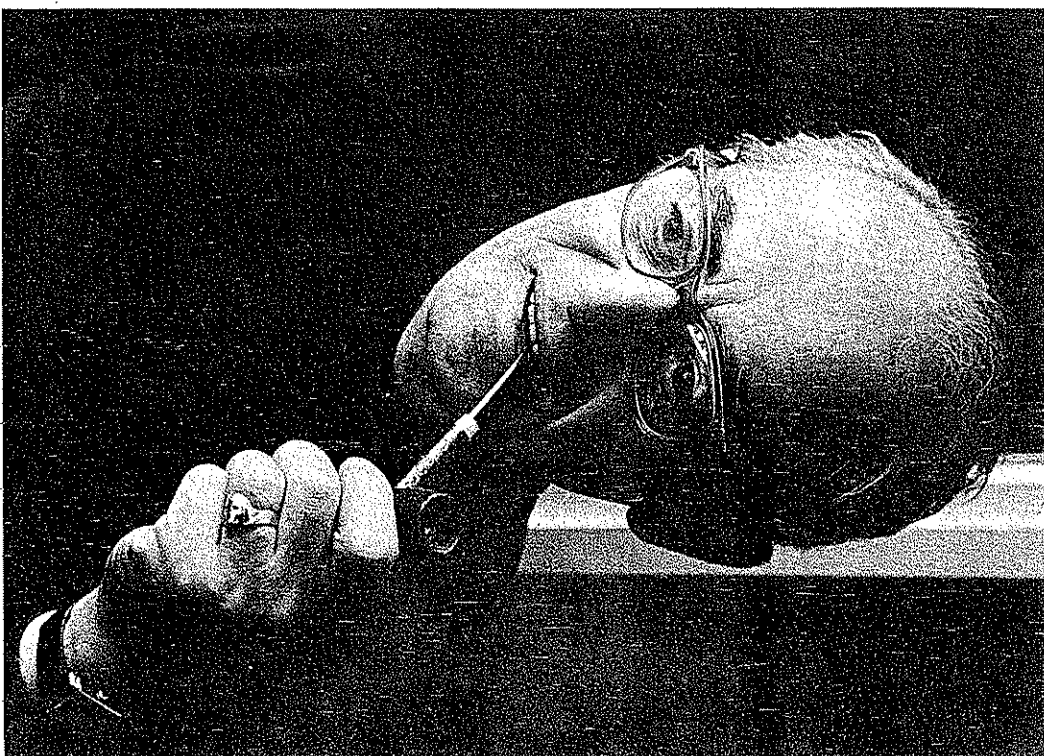
Dr. Norman Bethune, with the Eighth Route Army, China. After his work with the loyalists in Spain, Dr. Bethune joined the Mao Tse-tung forces in 1938, and died in their service. Footage of his final days, shot by Eighth Route Army cameramen, was later made available to the National Film Board of Canada for its biographical film *Bethune*, 1964.

National Film Board of Canada

Japanese forces were not only goads; they served also as documentary missionaries. In Japan as elsewhere, documentary and newsreel had won new status as cohesive forces in a widely dispersed war. Recognition of a soldier-son in Nippon Eiga Sha newsreels was a momentous experience. The theater customarily presented the family with a still from the newsreel. Japanese film makers were producing their own stirring reports of victories in the field, such as *Malayan War Record* (*Marei Senki*, 1942); *Divine Soldiers of the Sky* (*Sora no Shinpei*, 1942), about parachute troops; and *Sunk Instantly* (*Gochin*, 1943), shot largely from a prowling submarine. Meanwhile the Japanese in almost all areas coming under their control—Korea, Manchuria, the Philippines, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma—introduced their film equipment and knowhow, and involved the conquered in "co-productions." This was in furtherance of their proclaimed Asian "co-prosperity sphere." It was done—according to Anderson and Richie, in *The Japanese Film*—in the spirit of "an older brother to one slightly younger." The aim was Japanese hegemony, but the activity unquestionably stirred nationalistic feelings among the conquered, and a determination to express them through film.¹²

The war produced numerous migrations of individual film makers. Boris Kaufman, brother of Verlov, left France as a refugee and spent the war years partly in the United States, partly in Canada—where, at the National Film Board, he helped John Grierson build a strong documentary movement. In the war series *The World in Action* (1941–45), supervised by Stuart Legg, the NFB soon showed remarkable vigor and artistry.

Perhaps the most bizarre of individual migrations was that of Paul Zils, who began as an UFA employee and Goebbels favorite. As a teenager he had won a film prize, which resulted in an UFA apprenticeship at Neubabelsberg, starting in 1933. He rose rapidly; blond, handsome, with full Aryan credentials, he found favor with Goebbels. UFA frequently made him an intermediary to secure script approvals from Goebbels. (Goebbels once asked him: "Would it help your career if I approve this script?") The position of trust enabled Zils to attend a 1937 festival in Paris, where he defected. A donation from an English lady enabled him to board a freighter eastward for South Asian ports, hoping to reach the United States. Obsessed with Asia since reading Herman Hesse's *Siddharta*, he stopped off in In-



Boris Kaufman.

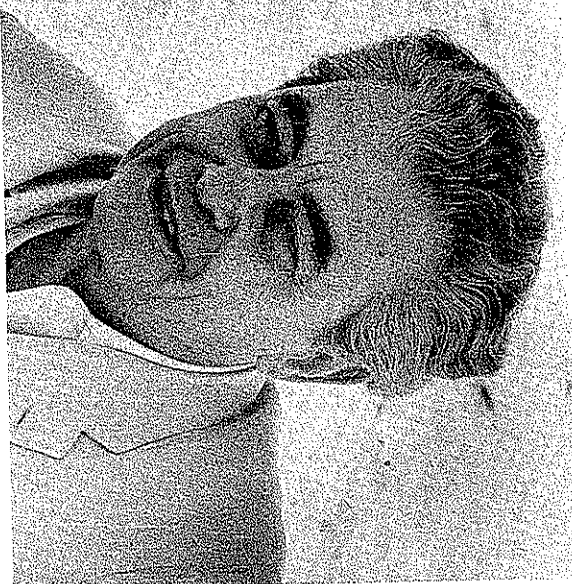
Photograph by Virginia Leirens



John Grierson, in early days of National Film Board of Canada.
National Film Board of Canada

dia, Singapore, and Indonesia—at that time known as the Netherlands East Indies—earning money by taking odd jobs en route. He was especially enamoured of Bali, and drafted plans for a feature-length documentary about it. In Tokyo he got a tourist visa for the United States and so reached Hollywood. With other German refugees he taught at Max Reinhardt's School of the Theater on Sunset Boulevard, while finding film employment difficult. But his Bali proposal caught fire at Paramount, which decided to finance it. With a budget he headed back to Bali and was hard at work on the film when, on May 10, 1940, he was arrested. Germany had invaded Holland, so 3500 German nationals in Indonesia were imprisoned in a Sumatra jungle stockade. The following year brought a sudden change. The Japanese, having devastated Pearl Harbor, were moving rapidly on Indonesia. Many of the German prisoners were experts on Indonesia; to keep them out of Japanese hands, it was decided to move them to India on three transports, one of which was torpedoed and went down. The survivors, along with German prisoners and internees from Ceylon and elsewhere, were herded to a large prison camp in Bihar. Some were anti-Nazi, some pro-Nazi, some just "good Germans." Zils found there were forty musicians in the camp; also a conductor, composers, writers. He began to organize shows—a major production each month. All instruments were made by prisoners. A ballet was organized, scenery built. Sometimes as many as 150 people were working on a production. They were rigid about schedules, premiere dates, and curtain time. Month after month the guards watched in astonishment as the productions grew more ambitious. The British were so impressed that they approached Zils with an offer. They would release him if he would go to work for Information Films of India—a newsreel and documentary unit organized by the British to win Indian cooperation in the war effort, against the opposition of the Indian National Congress. In 1945 Zils went to work as a British propagandist. When war ended the unit closed, but he decided to stay in India. Ardently pro-independence, he came to play a role in documentary films of independent India—and later, even more prominently, of Ceylon.¹³

A still more dramatic odyssey was made by the inveterate traveler, Joris Ivens. Shortly after his service with Capra, he was invited by the Netherlands government to become Film Commissioner for Indonesia. A contract defining his duties, and government press re-



Joris Ivens.

Photograph by Virginia Leirens

leaves announcing the appointment, featured dedicated rhetoric. A government release said the Dutch were ready to "shed their blood" for the liberation of the East Indies, not for a return to prewar status. The contract spoke of "the great western ideal of freedom and democracy (*het grote westelijke ideaal van vrijheid en democratie*)."

As Film Commissioner, Ivens would begin by documenting the liberation. He received a substantial budget to buy equipment in the United States. Well provided, he headed for Australia, where a liberation armada of Dutch and English ships was gathering. Awaiting the day, Ivens recruited Australian film personnel. Camerawoman Marion Michelle joined him from the United States, where she had done her first film work during Depression days in the Chicago Film and Photo League.¹⁴

In August 1945, as the ships stood ready, word came that an independent Indonesia had been proclaimed in Indonesia itself, under Achmed Sukarno. The news seemed to bring consternation to the "liberation" fleet. A first group of ships sailed, apparently not to assist the new Indonesia but to nip the development. The Dutch spoke of Sukarno as a Japanese agent and of his government as a Japanese

puppet regime. The fleet would bring "order." Plans were made to blockade the islands.

It had been assumed in all plans that Film Commissioner Ivens and his crew would go with the first ships to photograph the liberation. But they were not allowed aboard.

At this juncture Ivens held an indignant press conference. He said he had been engaged to film the liberation of the islands, but since the Netherlands government itself had made this impossible, he considered his contract void.

Events moved rapidly on the Australian waterfront. Javanese crew members walked off ships destined for the islands, and numerous Australian labor unions acted in support. A ship with largely Indian crew left port, but a speedboat went in pursuit for the unions; from its deck, by bullhorn, appeals were shouted to the Indian crew—and won the day. The Indians forced the return of the ship. "The ship that didn't sail" became the theme of *Indonesia Calling* (1946)—a film made by Ivens and his group in support of the new Indonesia. Its opening proclaims:

The Waterfront Unions of Australia
present
INDONESIA CALLING

The Ivens action was front-page news around the world. Netherlands newspapers called him a traitor. He was accused of making *Indonesia Calling* with Dutch government equipment, but denied it. Having handed in the equipment when resigning, he had made *Indonesia Calling* mainly with an old Kinemo—the camera he had used for *The Bridge* in 1928.

The film was partly a documentation of events shot on the run, partly a reconstruction of very recent events. The climactic pursuit of "the ship that didn't sail" could be reproduced photographically by having the speedboat pursue a transport—any appropriate transport. In the speedboat, a man stood up with a bullhorn and was seen to shout. The shouted bullhorn words were added during the editing process.

In spite of its air of feverish improvisation, *Indonesia Calling* had strong impact. Australia banned the film, then reversed itself, evidently in deference to the popularity of the Indonesian cause. In the Netherlands the film was taboo, and Ivens no longer welcome. Sailing

ships carried two prints of *Indonesia Calling* through the blockade to the Indonesian islands; there they had many night showings for independence forces, who had to fight until late in 1946 against Dutch and British "liberation" troops.

The sequence of events, and the attention it received in the world press, suggests the status the documentary film had acquired during war years. Film makers had become accustomed to dwelling near the center of power. They looked forward to having similar importance in the postwar world. But first another war-related task awaited documentarists.

Prosecutor

Among film men of advancing armies, closing in on Germany and Japan, an activity receiving urgent attention was the documenting of war crimes. Almost all belligerent armies were involved.

As Yugoslav partisans overthrew the Nazi puppet regime in Croatia, their film makers documented its concentration-camp atrocities in the film *Jasenovac* (1945), the work of Gustav Gavrin and Kosta Hlavay. Their own footage was supplemented by captured material, including documents and still photographs. *Jasenovac* became the first film approved for showing in postwar Yugoslavia, and the contents served as evidence in war-crimes trials.

The events were paralleled in Poland. The film unit of the Polish contingent moving with Soviet troops was headed by young Aleksander Ford and Jerzy Bossak. Both had been members of a left-wing cine-club called Start, which they had helped to form in the early 1930's. In Poland's pre-war film world they had been outsiders, angry young critics publishing manifestos and occasionally making films, but not welcomed by the commercial industry they assailed. As they returned, producing a newsreel for Polish troops—titled *Fighting Poland* (*Polska Walczaca*)—they became the nucleus of a postwar film industry. Their first major task faced them when they came on the Nazi extermination camp Majdanek. They had heard rumors of atrocities, but could scarcely believe what they found there. Ford and Bossak made the Polish film *Majdanek* (1944)—scenes of unspeakable grief as people found corpses of friends and relatives stacked like wood, and such relics of other lives as half a million pairs of

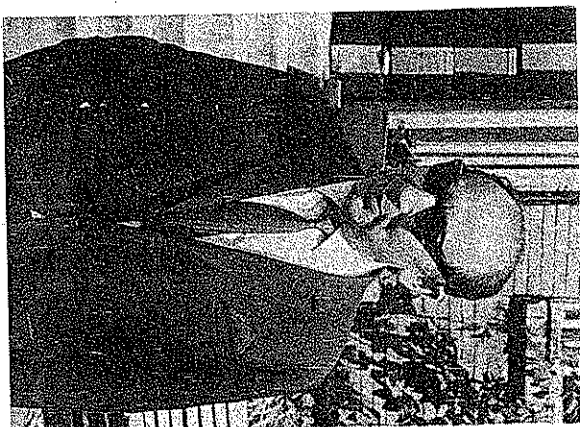
shoes and mountains of human hair and teeth and eyeglasses. This footage, too, became evidence at war-crimes trials.¹

The advancing American, Russian, British, and French troops had special evidence-gathering units. In the American forces these were OSS (Office of Strategic Services) teams, usually consisting of a cameraman, a German interpreter, and an information specialist. Film evidence came to them from many sources, often in fragments. A house that had been occupied by a Nazi officer yielded some 8mm reels—"home movies" that, it turned out, included footage of a 1941 episode in Stuttgart in which a dozen or more Jews were pulled from their homes, beaten, stripped, and dragged by their hair through the street—a pogrom witnessed without interference by bystanders. The sequence lasted a minute and a half. By reproducing each frame, the action was slowed to make a three-minute sequence. In this form it was used at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders.²

Allied research teams were astonished at the care with which Germans had documented their crimes and preserved the record. Outside Munich a tank unit found a villa that had been used by Heinrich Himmler; a 35mm projector was threaded and ready to show a reel of medical experiments carried on in prison camps. In the home of an eastern front veteran, searchers found a sequence apparently filmed as a demonstration of resourcefulness. Troopers were shown leading a man and a boy, half starved, into a small blockhouse. The camera then showed the troopers arranging a hose from an automobile exhaust to a small aperture in the wall, and starting the motor.

In the film archives at Neubabelsberg, a half-flooded bunker yielded the Nazis' own documentation of their extermination of the Warsaw ghetto. Much of this material eventually appeared in the Polish film *Requiem for 500,000* (*Requiem dla 500,000*, 1963), by Jerzy Bossak and Wacław Kazimierzak. Among the curious findings on various fronts were souvenir albums left by dead Nazis in which, along with the usual family snapshots and scenic wonders, were mementos of the Nazi reign of terror. Were they kept with nostalgia, or pride? In later years such material yielded such films as the Polish *Fleischer's Album* (*Album Fleischera*, 1962), by Janusz Majewski, and *The Everyday Life of Gestapo Officer Schmidt* (*Powzedni Dzien Gestapowca Schmidta*, 1963), by Jerzy Ziarnik.

Extensive war-crimes footage and many still photographs were presented in evidence at the Nuremberg trials. Such wide use of pho-



Jerzy Bossak.

Wyw6rnia Film6w Dokumentalnych

*The Every-day Life of Gestapo Officer Schmidt*, 1963.

tographic evidence was apparently without precedent. The trials themselves were filmed in full, and the combined material became the basis for two historic—yet little-known—feature-length documentaries, one Russian, the other American. The Russian film, *Judgment of the Nations* (*Sud Narodov* in Russian, *Gericht der V6lker* in German, 1946), was directed by Roman Karmen and edited by Yelizaveta Svilova, wife and long-time editor of Dziga Vertov. The American film, *Nuremberg* (*Nürnberg*, 1948) was initiated by Pare Lorentz, who supervised footage searches in American archives—mainly at Astoria, Long Island, where an old Paramount studio had become the Signal Corps Pictorial Center—but was completed in Germany by Stuart Schulberg, a member of one of the OSS evidence-gathering teams. The film was a production of the American military government. The Soviet Union's *Judgment of the Nations* was shown in theaters throughout Russian-occupied areas of Germany and in the Soviet Union, where it was reissued in 1962. America's *Nuremberg* had a two-year run in theaters in American-occupied areas of Germany, and was also shown in British areas, but was never released to American theaters—apparently in deference to pleas by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of West Germany. The U. S. Department of Defense withdrew the film from all circulation in 1950.³

These two films, based on trials, were in themselves a kind of show-trial through which the German people were invited to contemplate a scarcely believable record of horror. Even without compulsion, theaters were filled for months.

Obsession with evidence to be unearthed from film archives lasted longer in eastern Europe than elsewhere—a not surprising consequence of the calamitous events it had witnessed. The interest persisted especially in East Germany, location of copious Nazi film archives. Seized by the Soviets, these archives were turned over to East German control in 1955, and became the basis for an unusual career—that of the film-making team Andrew and Annelie Thorndike. For years they combed through the massive accumulations of film—much of it still uncatalogued decades after the war. They came to epitomize the documentarist-as-prosecutor.⁴

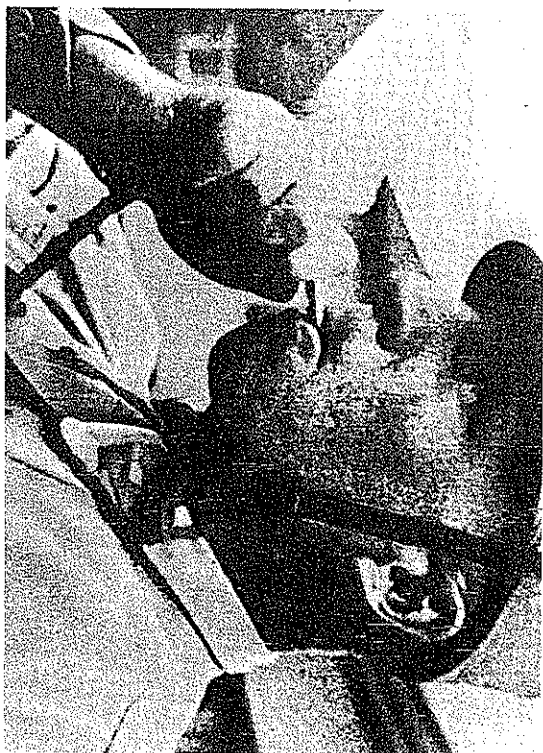
Andrew Thorndike, of German-American descent, was born in Berlin in 1909. His father was a member of the Krupp board of directors, and Andrew began his film career making promotional films for industry at the UFA studios. But he reacted against his establish-

ment background. Early in the war, charged with anti-Nazi activity, he was dispatched to the eastern front as a punitive assignment. He was captured and spent four years as a Soviet prisoner. Returning in 1948, he resumed documentary work at UFA, which had meanwhile become DEFA, the East German state film organization. While making a film about a new school, he became interested in the young teacher who had founded the school, and married her. They became a film team specializing in historic compilations—in the manner of Esfir Shub, but with a difference. Esfir Shub had exposed a defunct monarchy; the Thorndikes were concerned with the persistence in power of living Nazis—not in East Germany, but in West Germany.

In their first major compilation, *You and Many a Comrade* (*Du und Mancher Kamerad*, 1955), they recounted modern German history, warning that alliances of military and industrial leaders (including Krupp) had twice brought Germany to war and disaster. Such alliances, said the film, were no longer possible in East Germany; but the film warned that military-industrial groups representing the same interests were again moving into control in West Germany. It detailed the Nazi careers of various West German leaders.

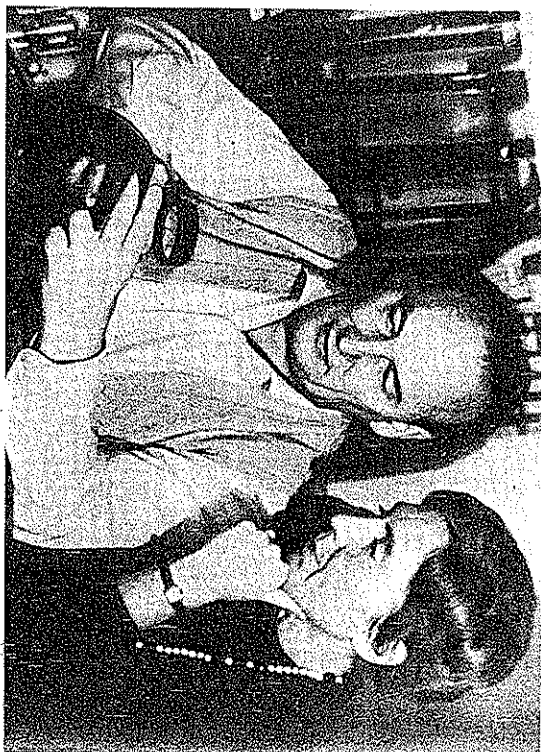
The film, assembled with impressive skill, had enormous impact in East Germany, and probably helped consolidate the East German regime. It also had important film consequences. It persuaded the East German government of the importance of its film possessions and of their proper storage, preservation, and cataloging. The facilities that were subsequently developed for this purpose—at Wilhelmshagen, near Berlin—soon became the envy of film archivists throughout the world. A steady procession of archivists and documentarists came to inspect the subterranean labyrinths, with their arrangements for rigid temperature and humidity control, and the intensive cataloging efforts.

All this encouraged further archive films. The Thorndikes pursued their successful theme in two films—more were originally intended—titled *The Archives Testify*. . . . The films open with a traveling shot along cans of film in the DEFA vaults. The first target of their accusation, in the film *Holiday on Sylt* (*Urlaub auf Sylt*, 1957), was Heinz Reinefarth, who after the war had settled in the West German town of Westerland, on Sylt Island in the North Sea, and become its mayor. The film shows him relaxing there in benign splendor. Then, through a mass of archive footage, stills, and clippings, the



Du und Mancher Kamerad, 1955.

Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR



Andrew and Annelie Thorndike.

Thorndikes identify him as a brutal officer in charge of wartime executions in Warsaw. They use the technique of freezing a frame at this or that crucial point and superimposing an arrow, to pinpoint significant detail.

Their next film dossier, *Operation Teutonic Sword* (*Unternehmen Teufelsschwert*, 1958)—the second in the series *The Archives Testify* . . . —was aimed at Hans Speidel, a leading military official of NATO—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The film accuses him of a long, lurid career of Nazi secret-service activity involving assigned murders of “communists and Jews” in France and “devastation duties” in the Soviet Union. Again masses of archive footage, with frozen frames, relentless arrows, clippings, stills, and maps, are offered in evidence.

While the Thorndikes had made some use of reconstructed events in *You and Many a Comrade*, they foreswore such methods in their later work. Archive material had become their passion. Their concern was to document—not illustrate—their accusations.

In a similar spirit of indictment, the East German director Joachim Hellwig followed the Thorndike lead in *A Diary for Anne Frank* (*Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank*, 1958). The film begins deceptively in fiction-movie fashion: a girl runs home excitedly to tell her mother she got the part, she will play Anne Frank! But the film switches abruptly to more grisly matter. Tracing the route of Anne Frank from Amsterdam to her extermination-camp death, the film poses the question: what happened to those who supervised, her arrest, deportation, and death? It finds them—again via massive archive material—alive and in influential positions in West Germany.

These films were made at a time of considerable traffic between East and West Germany. A number of West German critics came to see the films, and their comments precipitated wide discussion in West Germany. The films reflected the bitter antagonism between the East and West German regimes, and made their contribution to the bitterness. They also put continued pressure on West Germany for action against war criminals.

In Japan agitation over war guilt was less persistent, for good reason. In Europe the horror of the extermination camps had provided the emotional center for prosecutions. In Japan all horrors were overshadowed by the war-ending horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where two small atomic bombs had incinerated a vast population

and cast a shadow of genetic damage over generations. Even as war-crimes trials brought execution to leading Japanese militarists, the atomic holocaust haunted men's minds.

In Japan, war-guilt issues produced curious and dramatic reversals. While events had discredited and crushed the military, they had brought new dignity to men who had been early and avowed anti-militarists. In the film field this included men like Akira Iwasaki, a leader in the prewar Prokino group, and Fumio Kamei, who had angered the military with his film *Shanghai* and later gone to jail. Even before the American occupation force arrived on the scene, Iwasaki won new standing: he was commissioned by Nippon Eiga Sha, the government newsreel monopoly, to produce a documentary on the effects of the two atomic bombs. In spite of chaos and the breakdown of transportation, Iwasaki managed to have cameramen at work at Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the occupation arrived; this brought him into immediate contact with its headquarters staff.

Americans took control of the project; then, for fear of its impact, declared the footage *secret* and impounded it in Washington, where it remained for almost a quarter of a century. But occupation headquarters was clearly impressed with Iwasaki's anti-militarist credentials, and appointed him to a committee of twenty charged with the task of identifying rabid militarists in the Japanese film industry. Such a list was drawn up and the individuals suspended—most of them for short periods. Meanwhile Iwasaki also received a go-ahead from headquarters for a major project—a compilation film to be titled *The Tragedy of Japan* (*Nihon no Higeki*). Iwasaki chose Fumio Kamei to direct the work.

It was to be a history of modern Japan and—like the East German *You and Many a Comrade*—an indictment of the forces that had led the nation to war and ruin. Responding to the “democratization” order of the American occupation, it was meant to help eradicate feudalism and militarism from Japanese society.

Unfortunately, segments of American headquarters worked at cross-purposes. Plans for *The Tragedy of Japan* were approved by CIE—the Civil Information and Education Section, which was largely staffed with academicians and writers, very serious about “democratization.” They also liked the resulting film, which was completed in 1946 and won strong applause at preview showings. But all films, before their general release, needed a go-ahead from CCD—the Civil

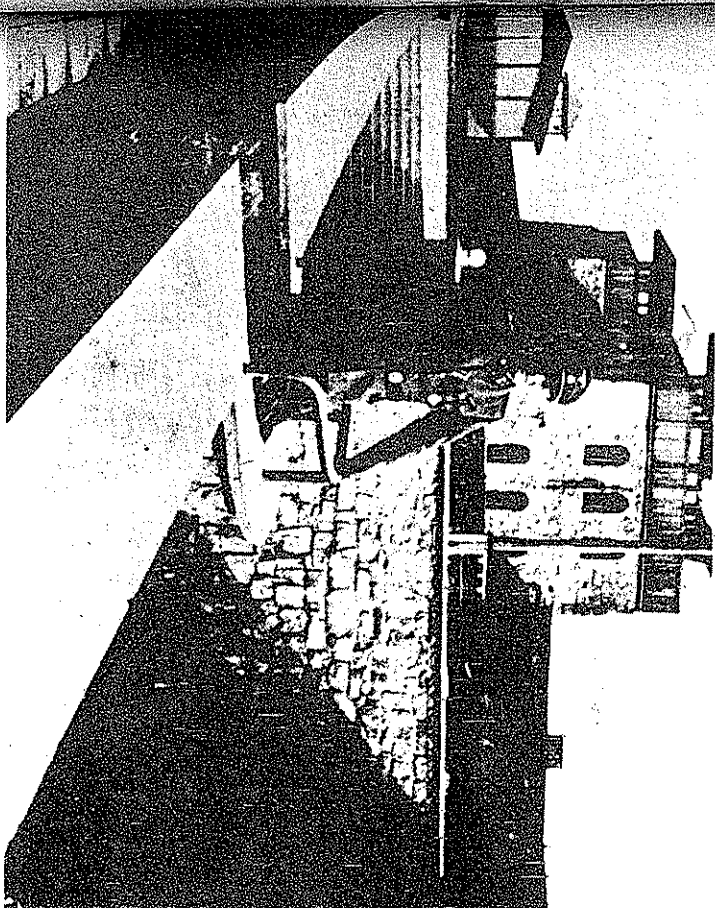
Censorship Division, dominated by army career men, strongly conservative. They promptly banned *The Tragedy of Japan*. The film makers looked on the Emperor as a war criminal, whereas the CCD was intent on maintaining his sacrosanct status: this had become occupation policy. *The Tragedy of Japan* was declared by CCD to be "communist." Amid vast changes—in Asia as in Europe—old patterns reasserted themselves.⁵

Documentarists specializing in war-crimes indictment films were not many, and the movement could not last. Too many new problems confronted film makers.

Yet the ghosts of World War II were not easily exorcised. Documentarists would return for decades to records of this war—more often, as time went on, in the spirit of historian, or elegist, than as prosecutor.

Of all documentaries born of war horror, the most admired was unquestionably *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et Brûlure*, 1955), directed by Alain Resnais. It was a searing indictment—but with a shift in aim. Resnais made brilliant use of a simple device: frequent shifts between black-and-white archive footage of the extermination camps, and sequences in warm color filmed in the verdant surroundings of a former camp. These alternations, bringing us again and again from postcard colors of a postwar tourist world to the black-and-white, staring eyes, the barely stirring skeletons, the line-ups of the naked, and the ovens, give the film a greater impact than any other such film had achieved. The impact is intensified by a quietly reflective, powerful commentary written by Jean Cayrol. At the end of the film, in a color sequence, the camera moves along crematorium ruins, twisted wires, broken watchtowers, and blocks of cracked concrete.

NARRATOR: The crematorium is no longer in use. The devices of the Nazis are out of date. Nine million dead haunt this landscape. Who is on the lookout from this strange tower to warn us of the coming of new executioners? Are their faces really different from our own? Somewhere among us, there are lucky Kapos, reinstated officers, and unknown informers. There are those who refused to believe this, or believed it only from time to time. And there are those of us who sincerely look upon the ruins today, as if the old concentration camp monster were dead and buried beneath them. Those who pretend to take hope again as the image fades, as though there were a cure for the plague of these camps. Those of us who pretend to believe that all this happened only once, at a certain time and in a certain place, and those who refuse to see, who do not heed the cry to the end of time.⁶



Night and Fog, 1955.

Contemporary Films

There was peace—with many uncertainties. In a world heaped with ruins the documentarist saw challenges. But what role he would play in meeting them, he could not tell.

For a decade and a half he had been concerned with war: the threat of war, the war, the aftermath of war. Almost nothing else had seemed to matter.

During those years the documentary had seldom been subtle or profound, but it had had power, and had assumed central importance. It had often outdrawn the fiction film. The documentarist had moved among world leaders. He saw no reason why he should not continue to do so.

His audience had grown vastly—not only in theaters but in other outlets: army camps, clubs, schools, churches, libraries, offices, factories. For war purposes, hundreds of 16mm projectors had been spread around the globe. The 16mm film had grown up in war.

The documentarist felt he had achieved importance. But he also

had a feeling that peace had left him dangling in mid-air. Armies had been his sponsors; who would take their place? For what objectives? On what terms? He peered ahead--in search of a role in a world he could not possibly know.

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 Drobashchenko, *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. Siney (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 Began 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. Maelstaf, *Henri Storck*, pp. 5-23. The Vigo-Storck letters were published in *Centofilm*, 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.

20. Quoted, Petric, *Soviet Revolutionary Films in America*, p. 443.
21. The Lorentz material is based on interview, Pare Lorentz; and Snyder, *Pare Lorentz and the Documentary Film*.
22. Elson, *Time, Inc.*, p. 237.
23. Fielding, *The American Newsreel*, p. 231.
24. Barsam, "This is America," *Cinema Journal*, Spring 1973.
25. Leyda, *Dianying*, pp. 150-51.
26. Interviews, Akira Iwasaki, Fumio Kanei, Taka Atsugi.
27. See the revealing 1940 Japanese newsreel compilation *History of the Newsreel* (*News Eiga Hattasushi*), produced by *Asahi Shinbun*, with items from 1904 to 1940, reflecting the imperial-military dominance.
28. The following pages are based on Ivens, *The Camera and I*, pp. 49-183; additional sources as noted.
29. Interview, Henri Storck.
30. Interview, John Ferro.

Bugler (pp. 139-72)

1. The following is largely based on Hull, *Film in the Third Reich*, and Manvell and Fraenkel, *The German Cinema*.
2. For the script translations in this section the author is indebted to the Imperial War Museum, London.
3. Monograph on Humphrey Jennings, in Lovell and Hillier, *Studies in Documentary*, pp. 62-132.
4. Interview, Ib Monty; and Neergaard, *Documentary in Denmark*.
5. The following is based on Leyda, *Kino*, pp. 364-97; and interviews, Roman Gregoriev, Roman Karmen.
6. Capra, *The Name Above the Title*, is the main source of the following. Other sources: Leyda, *Films Beget Films*, pp. 49-72; Murphy, William Thomas, "The Method of *Why We Fight*," *Journal of Popular Film*, Summer 1972.
7. Lists of the sources are on file in the motion picture section of the National Archives. Signal Corps motion picture case files OF 1-7, NA.
8. National Archives.
9. Hughes (ed.), *Film Book 1*, pp. 28-29.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-33.
11. Leyda, *Films Beget Films*, p. 71.
12. Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, p. 158.
13. Interview, Paul Zills.
14. This section is based on *The Ivens Papers*, on file at the Netherlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam; interview, Marion Michelle; and Ivens, *The Camera and I*, pp. 242-45.

Prosecutor (pp. 172-82)

1. Interview, Jerzy Bossak.
2. Interview, Stuart Schulberg.
3. Interviews, Pare Lorentz, Joseph Zignman.

4. *Filmdokumentaristen der DDR*, pp. 11-74.
5. Interviews, Akira Iwasaki, Fumio Kanei, Ryuchi Kano; Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, p. 182.
6. The full script, with description of images by Merle Worth, is in Hughes (ed.), *Film Book 2*, pp. 234-55.

Poet (pp. 185-98)

1. For the genesis of "neorealism" see Leprohon, *Le Cinéma Italien*, pp. 85-124, and Zavattini, *Sequences from a Cinematic Life*.
2. Interview, Arne Sucksdorff. Cowie, *Swedish Cinema*, pp. 82-89.
3. Interview, Henri Storck.
4. Interview, Bert Haanstra.

Chronicle (pp. 198-212)

1. Leyda, *Films Beget Films*, the classic work on compilation films, discusses the comedy usage, pp. 36-37.
2. See Barnouw and Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film*, pp. 117-18, for a list of British-banned newsreel sequences of the 1930's dealing with Gandhi.
3. Barnouw, "How a University's Film Branch Released Long-Secret A-Bomb Pic," *Variety*, January 5, 1972.
4. Interview, Colin Low.
5. See Myerson (ed.), *Memoires of Underdevelopment*.
6. Interview, Jean Rouch; de Brigard, *Anthropological Cinema*; Haudequet, *Paul Fejos*.

Promoter (pp. 213-28)

1. *The Shell Film Unit 1933-1954*. Also, Shell film catalogues.
2. Based on *The Flaherty Papers*, Columbia University, and comments by Frances Flaherty and Richard Leacock on the sound track of the *Louisiana Story Study Film*, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
3. *The Opportunity for Sponsored Films*, pp. 1-22.
4. See Galbraith, *Economics and the Public Purpose*, for a detailed analysis of this development. See Schiller, *The Mind Managers*, for its impact on communication media.
5. Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting, I, movies*.
6. Rovege, *Senator Joe McCarthy*. For the impact at the State Department, see Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pp. 8-13.
7. Barnouw, *The Golden Web*, pp. 253-83, and *The Image Empire*, pp. 38-40.
8. See Friendly, *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control . . .*, pp. 3-98, for the rise and fall of *See It Now*.
9. Barnouw, *The Image Empire*, pp. 85-117.
10. Miller, *The Judges and the Judged*, pp. 78-81. *The Reporter*, April 29, 1952.
11. Interview, Robert Young. For details on *Harvest of Shame*, see