

They don't need the serious articles of Engels, Lenin? . . . The LENIN of Russian cinema may appear in your midst today, but you will not allow him to work because the results of his production will seem new and incomprehensible . . .

Our work is not in that situation, however. We have not in fact created a single work more incomprehensible to the masses than any given film-drama. On the contrary, by establishing a clear visual link between subjects, we have significantly weakened the importance of intertitles; in so doing we have brought the movie screen closer to the uneducated viewers, which is particularly important at present.

And as if in mockery of their literary nursemaids, the workers and peasants turn out to be brighter than their self-appointed nursemaids. . . .

Thus, two extremities of viewpoint are present. One—that of the kinoks—has as its goal the organization of *real life*; the other, an orientation toward the propagandistic-artistic drama of emotional experiences and adventures.

All state and private funds, all technical and material resources are mistakenly being poured into the latter end of the scales, into the propagandistic-artistic.

As for us, we're grabbing hold of work as hitherto, with our bare hands, and we confidently await our turn to control production and win our victory.

1923

KINO-EYE: THE WRITINGS OF DZIGA VERTOV, ED.
ANNETTE MICHELSON (LOS ANGELES: UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1984)

Kinoglaz

(A NEWSREEL IN SIX PARTS)

The solid front of the film-drama has been broken by
Kinopravda.

This breach must not be:
plugged up with the NEP stopper,
filled in with the litter of compromise.

The recent appearance of numerous surrogates—motion pictures done in the style of the kinoks (the workers of *Kinopravda*)—compels them to begin, somewhat prematurely, a

decisive attack on the reign of bourgeois cinema. The preliminary reconnaissance has been entrusted to the Goskino cell of the kinoks, since they are more experienced. Plans for the cameras' attack have been worked out. The whole film campaign (between ten thousand and thirty thousand feet) will go under the slogan and title *Kino-Eye*. The reconnaissance by the Goskino cell is being carried out with a single camera (we have no more at our disposal) and will probably form the first part or starting point of the battle. A six-part series is projected.

The first of these has taken into account our complete lack of weapons; equipment intended for studio use is unsuited to our work. In this part the camera, having chosen some easily vulnerable point, cautiously enters into life and takes its bearings in its visual surroundings. In subsequent parts, along with an increase in the number of cameras, the area under observation will be extended. Gradually, through comparison of various parts of the globe, various bits of life, the visible world is being explored. Each succeeding part will further clarify the understanding of reality. The eyes of children and adults, the educated as well as the uneducated, are opening, as it were, for the first time. Millions of workers, having recovered their sight, are beginning to doubt the necessity of supporting the bourgeois structure of the world.

We are not employing a single director, actor, or set designer in this mighty film-battle. We renounce the convenience of the studio; we sweep aside sets, makeup, costumes. Just as you cannot describe in advance the battles of a war that's just been declared, you cannot write an advance scenario for our film-campaign. Proceeding from material to film-object, and not from film-object to material, the kinoks are seizing the last (most tenacious) stronghold of artistic cinema in the literary scenario. The scenario, whether in the form of a fascinating short story or a so-called preliminary editing sheet, must disappear forever as an element foreign to cinema.

We cannot foresee the results of the campaign; we do not know if these ten thousand feet will be our cinematic October. The most powerful weapon and the most powerful technology are in the hands of the European and American film-bourgeoisie. Three-fourths of the human race is stupefied by the opium of bourgeois film-dramas.

The battle against the blinding of the masses, the battle for vision can and must begin only in the USSR, where the film-weapon is in the hands of the state.

To see and show the world in the name of the worldwide proletarian revolution—that is the most basic formula of the kinoks.

1924

The Birth of Kino-Eye

It began early in life. With the writing of fantastic novels (*The Iron Hand, Uprising in Mexico*). With short essays ("Whaling," "Fishing"). With long poems (*Masha*). With epigrams and satirical verse ("Purishkevich," "The Girl with Freckles"). It then turned into an enthusiasm for editing shorthand records, gramophone recordings. Into a special interest in the possibility of documentary sound recording. Into experiments in recording, with words and letters, the noise of a waterfall, the sounds of a lumbermill, etc. And one day in the spring of 1918 . . . returning from a train station. There lingered in my ears the sighs and rumble of the departing train . . . someone's swearing . . . a kiss . . . someone's exclamation . . . laughter, a whistle, voices, the ringing of the station bell, the puffing of the locomotive . . . whispers, cries, farewells. . . . And thoughts while walking: I must get a piece of equipment that won't describe, but will record, photograph these sounds. Otherwise it's impossible to organize, edit them. They rush past, like time. But the movie camera perhaps? Record the visible. . . . Organize not the audible, but the visible world. Perhaps that's the way out?

Just then—a meeting with Mikhail Koltsov, who offered me work in cinema. At no. 7 Malyi Gnezdnikovsky Lane, begin work on *Kinonedelia*. But this is initial training. It's far from what I'm after. After

Mikhail Koltsov. A Soviet writer and journalist, Mikhail Koltsov (1898–1942) joined the staff of *Pravda* in 1922, publishing a satirical column for many years in that newspaper. He also served as editor of the journal *Ogonek* and worked in cinema during the first postrevolutionary years. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and published a *Spanish Diary* based on his experiences. Arrested during the purges of the late 1930s, he was executed in prison.

no. 7 Malyi Gnezdnikovsky Lane. The address of the newsreel section of the Cinema Committee of the People's Commissariat of Education. Vertov began work here in the spring of 1918. It was during the move to this location that he made a leap from another building, across roof tops, filmed in slow motion and later projected. In his account of that incident and of its central importance, he says, "Didn't recognize my face on the screen. My

all, the eye of the microscope penetrates where the eye of my movie camera cannot. The eye of the telescope reaches distant worlds, inaccessible to my naked eye. What about the camera then? What's its role in my assault on the visible world?

Thoughts about kino-eye. It arises as high-speed eye. Later on, the concept of kino-eye is expanded:

kino-eye as cinema-analysis,

kino-eye as the "theory of intervals,"

kino-eye as the theory of relativity on the screen, etc.

I abolish the usual sixteen frames per second. Together with rapid filming, animation filming and filming with a moving camera, etc. are considered ordinary filming techniques.

Kino-eye is understood as "that which the eye doesn't see,"

as the microscope and telescope of time,

as the negative of time,

as the possibility of seeing without limits and distances,

as the remote control of movie cameras,

as tele-eye,

as X-ray eye,

as "life caught unawares," etc., etc.

All these different formulations were mutually complementary since implied in kino-eye were:

all cinematic means,

all cinematic inventions,

all methods and means that might serve to reveal and show the truth.

Not kino-eye for its own sake, but truth through the means and possibilities of film-eye, i.e., *kinopravda* ["film-truth"].

Not "filming life unawares" for the sake of the "unaware," but in order to show people without masks, without makeup, to catch them through the eye of the camera in a moment when they are not acting, to read their thoughts, laid bare by the camera.

Kino-eye as the possibility of making the invisible visible, the unclear clear, the hidden manifest, the disguised overt, the acted nonacted; making falsehood into truth.

Kino-eye as the union of science with newsreel to further the

thoughts were revealed on my face—hesitation, vacillation, firmness (a struggle within myself), and again, the joy of victory. First thought of the kino-eye as a world perceived without a mask, as a world of naked truth (truth cannot be hidden)"—trans. and ed.

Kinopravda & Radiopravda

(BY WAY OF PROPOSAL)

The textile worker ought to see the worker in a factory making a machine essential to the textile worker. The worker at the machine tool plant ought to see the miner who gives his factory its essential fuel, coal. The coal miner ought to see the peasant who produces the bread essential to him.

Workers ought to see one another so that a close, indissoluble bond can be established among them. The workers of the USSR ought to see that in other lands—England, France, Spain—everywhere, there are workers just like themselves, and everywhere the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is being waged. But these workers live far from one another and are therefore unable to see each other.

Workers and peasants have to take the word of some individual (a teacher or propagandist) who describes the situation of workers and peasants living elsewhere. But every teacher, propagandist, priest, writer, etc., describes what's occurring elsewhere in his own words, determined by a whole series of factors: his convictions, education, ability to write or speak, his honesty, integrity, his "mood," and the state of his health at a given moment. How, therefore, can the workers see one another?

Kino-eye pursues precisely this goal of establishing a visual bond between the workers of the whole world. The kino-eye workers, the kinoks, are working in the area of newsreel (*Kinopravda*, *Kinokalendar*, *Kinoglaz*) and in that of scientific film (*Silk Growing*, *Rejuvenation*), or on the scientific part of a given film (*Abortion*, *Radiopravda*, etc).

The kino-eye movement is gradually gaining attention and support. Sympathetic letters from provincial areas, supporting the resolutions of peasant viewers, emerging groups of kinok-observers, the reinforcing of the kinoks by a new shift of Komsomol film production workers, and finally, portions of the state clientele that have turned to kino-eye—all these things are of considerable encouragement to us in our struggle.

Komsomol. The All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League, a mass organization of Soviet youth, founded in 1918 as the Russian Communist Youth League to aid the Communist Party in the education of Soviet youth—ed.



Three Songs of Lenin

In the present instance it's the movie theaters connected with feature-length pictures that are turning out to be the most conservative. It's essential to promote the slogan of "mixed programs":

- a. the three-reel newsreel, on the model of *Kinoglaz*, say, *Leninist Kinopravda*;
- b. a one-reel cartoon;
- c. a one- or two-reel science (or travel) film;
- d. a two-reel drama or comedy.

Mixed programs of this sort, to which we must gradually accustom both theaters and the public, are an entry into the commercial movie theaters; through them newsreel and scientific films can begin to pay their way and make a profit, even if they have cost considerable sums.



Enthusiasm

Of course the proportion can be changed in one direction or another. Back in 1922, Comrade Lenin already called for the establishment of a fixed ratio between "entertainment" pictures (made specifically for advertisement and profit) and propagandistic newsreel "from the life of the peoples in every land."

Somewhat later, in a private conversation with Comrade Lunacharsky, Comrade Lenin again mentioned the necessity of establishing a "fixed ratio between entertainment pictures and scientific ones" in movie theater programs, and pointed out that "the production of new films, imbued with communist ideas and reflecting Soviet reality, must begin with the newsreel." Lenin further added: "If you have good newsreels, serious educational films, then it doesn't matter if some useless film, of the more or less usual sort, is shown to attract an audience."

the production of new films. . . . Cf. the collection *Samoe vazhnoe iz vsekh iskusstv* ("The Most Important of the Arts") (Moscow, 1963), p. 123.

Enthusiasm

It's no secret to anyone that to this day Comrade Lenin's persistent instruction has not begun to be carried out.

The kinok's work in newsreel and scientific film is placed in an extremely disadvantageous and dependent position in relation to artistic cinema, since the latter fills the movie theater program with big capital and all the best tools of production at its disposal.

Against this chart:

Artistic cinema	95%
Scientific, educational films; travelogues	5%

we've got to promote this chart:

Kino-eye (everyday life)	45%
Scientific, educational	30%
Artistic drama	25%

In this way, the question of kino-eye, that is, of organizing the workers' vision, will be solved. The second position of the kinoks

has to do with organizing what the workers hear.

We are promoting propaganda using facts, not on the level of vision alone, but on that of hearing too.

How can we establish an audio link right along the front line of the world proletariat?

If, with respect to vision, our kinok-observers have recorded visible life phenomena with cameras, we must now talk about recording audible facts.

We're aware of one recording device; the gramophone. But there are others more perfect; they record every rustle, every whisper, the sound of a waterfall, a public speaker's address, etc.

The broadcast of this record can, after its organization and editing, easily be transmitted by radio, as "Radiopravda."

Here, too, in the broadcasting program of every radio station, a fixed ratio can be established between radio dramas, radio concerts, and radio news "from the life of the peoples in every land."

A "radio-newspaper" minus paper and limits of distance (Lenin), that is radio's basic significance, not the broadcasts of *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, songs, and such, with which our radio-broadcasting has begun to develop its work.

Before it's too late, we must save our radio from getting carried away with "artistic broadcasts" (i.e., the domination of artistic cinema).

To artistic cinema we oppose kinopravda and kino-eye; to artistic radio broadcasts we oppose radiopravda and radio-ear.

Technology is moving swiftly ahead. A method for broadcasting images by radio has already been invented. In addition, a method for recording auditory phenomena on film tape has been discovered.

In the near future man will be able to broadcast to the entire world the visual and auditory phenomena recorded by the radio-movie camera.

We must prepare to turn these inventions of the capitalist world to its own destruction.

We will not prepare for the broadcast of operas and dramas. We will prepare wholeheartedly to give the workers of every land the opportunity to see and hear the whole world in an organized form; to see, hear, and understand one another.

1925

The Same Thing from Different Angles

The allegation is false that a fact taken from life, when recorded by the camera loses the right to be called a fact if its name, date, place, and number are not inscribed on the film.

Every instant of life shot unstaged, every individual frame shot *just as it is* in life with a hidden camera, "caught unawares," or by some other analogous technique—represents a fact recorded on film, a *film-fact* as we call it.

A dog running by on the street is a visible fact even if we don't catch up with it to read what's written on its collar.

An Eskimo on the screen remains an Eskimo even if he's not labeled "Nanook."

It would be completely absurd to try to have each individual shot (as a general rule) answer an entire questionnaire: where, when, why, date of birth, family situation, etc.

In a film archive, a storehouse, or museum where footage from current newsreels is kept in numbered chronological order, all the necessary data can be appended to each box of negatives, such as a detailed description of each film-fact, relevant newspaper clippings, biographical and other data.

This is necessary so that a film editor in constructing a film-object on a given theme will not make errors and mix up the facts in time or space.

In those films in which space is overcome by montage (for example, "workers of one country see those of another"), it's all the more essential that the editor take into account all data on the film footage to be organized.

But this does not in any way mean that the editor has to set forth all this data in the picture in the form of an information supplement to each shot or group of shots. This data only represents cover documents, as it were, for the editor, a kind of guide to the correct "editing route."

1926

Consciousness or the Subconscious

(From a kinok proclamation)

We oppose the collusion of the "director-as-magician" and a bewitched public.

Only consciousness can fight the sway of magic in all its forms.

Only consciousness can form a man of firm opinion, firm conviction.

We need conscious men, not an unconscious mass submissive to any passing suggestion.

Long live the class consciousness of the healthy with eyes and ears to see and hear with!

Away with the fragrant veil of kisses, murders, doves, and sleight-of-hand!

Long live the class vision!

Long live kino-eye!

III

The Basis of Kino-Eye

The establishment of a visual (kino-eye) and auditory (radio-ear) class bond between the proletariats of all nations and lands on a platform of the communist decoding of world relations.

The decoding of life as it is.

Influence of facts upon workers' consciousness.

Influence of facts, not acting, dance, or verse.

Relegation of so-called art—to the periphery of consciousness.

Placing of society's economic structure at the center of attention.

Instead of surrogates for life (theatrical presentations, film-drama, etc.) carefully selected, recorded, and organized facts (major or minor) from the lives of the workers themselves as well as from those of their class enemies.

From a Talk by a Group Leader

Through this visit we learned how films are made. From production to screening, the fellows followed the making of an artistic drama. They saw for themselves a studio, actors, and directors. They saw the construction of films by kinoks; and as a result, for the seventh anniversary of the October Revolution, the group put up a huge poster on their car: "Down with actors and artistic dramas—

give us a new cinema!" And in brackets, "Friends of the kinoks, eleventh and ninety-third detachments of the Krasnaia Presnia Young Pioneers.

The group has about fifteen active members. Among a number of gifts received on the detachment's anniversary was one from the kinoks: a real still camera with all the accessories. There was no end to our joy.

Right now the fellows are putting out a weekly newspaper of their own, *Photo-eye*, consisting of their own photographs (every photograph, even those that have not turned out, is included). Through this newspaper they can gauge their progress in photography, and, in addition, illuminate all the main events in their lives each week.

The detachment corresponds with the countryside and with pioneers in other cities of the Soviet Union—Rybinsk, Voronezh, Barnaul, etc.—and they feel it's their duty to tell everyone about their group and about *Photo-eye*.

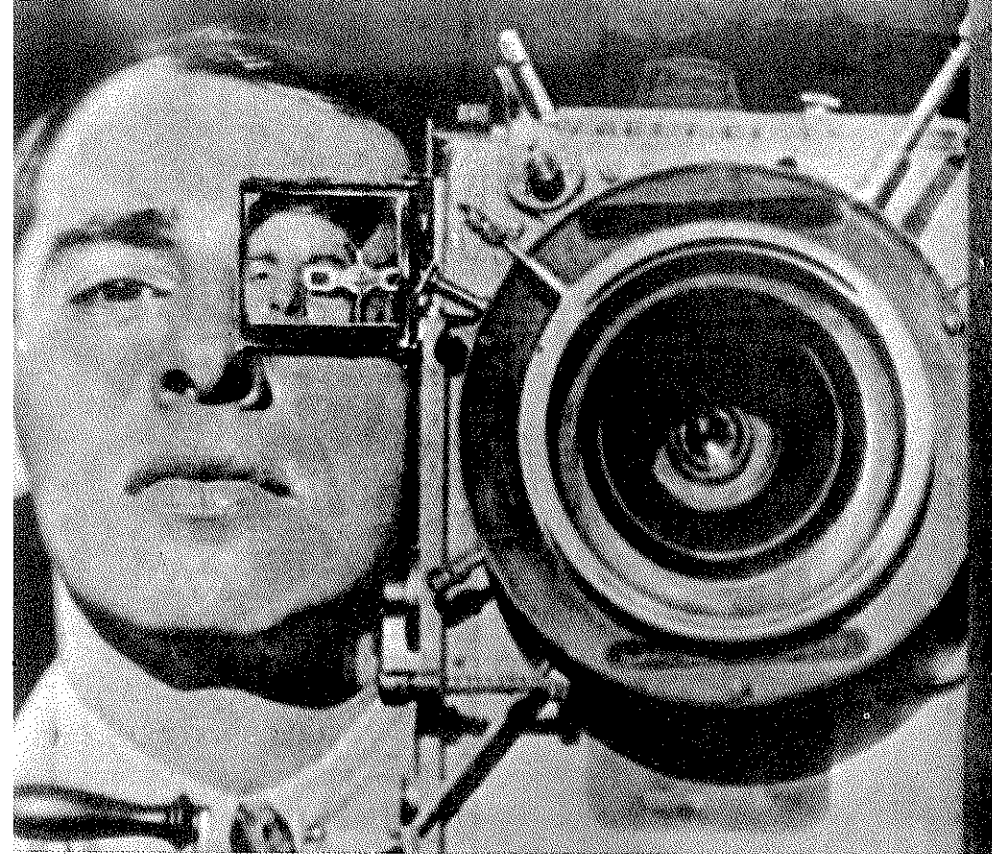
In order to review our work a diary is kept by each in turn. Certain interesting moments in the life of the group are described in it.

Provisional Instructions to Kino-Eye Groups*1. Introduction*

Our eye sees very poorly and very little—and so men conceived of the microscope in order to see invisible phenomena; and they discovered the telescope in order to see and explore distant, unknown worlds. The movie camera was invented in order to penetrate deeper into the visible world, to explore and record visual phenomena, so that we do not forget what happens and what the future must take into account.

But the camera experienced a misfortune. It was invented at a time when there was no single country in which capital was not in power. The bourgeoisie's hellish idea consisted of using the new toy to entertain the masses, or rather to divert the workers' attention from their basic aim: the struggle against their masters. Under the

Young Pioneers. The Young Pioneers were established by the fifth Komsomol Congress in 1922 for children between the ages of ten and fourteen. The organization stressed collective action rather than individual incentive and competition. In Vertov's *Kinoglaz* of 1924, members are active in campaigns for price control, the elimination of alcoholism, and in other aspects of public education—ed.



Mikhail Kaufman

electric narcotic of the movie theaters, the more or less starving proletariat, the jobless, unclenched its iron fist and unwittingly submitted to the corrupting influence of the masters' cinema. The theater is expensive and seats are few. And so the masters force the camera to disseminate theatrical productions that show us how the bourgeoisie love, how they suffer, how they "care for" their workers, and how these higher beings, the aristocracy, differ from lower ones (workers, peasants, etc.).

In prerevolutionary Russia the masters' cinema played a precisely similar role. After the October Revolution the cinema was faced with the difficult task of adapting itself to the new life. Actors who had played tsarist civil servants began to play workers; those who had played ladies of the court are now grimacing in Soviet style. Few of us yet realize, however, that all this grimacing remains, in many respects, within the framework of bourgeois technique and theatrical

form. We know many enemies of the contemporary theater who are at the same time passionate admirers of cinema in its present form.

Few people see clearly as yet that nontheatrical cinema (with the exception of newsreel and some scientific films) does not exist.

Every theatrical presentation, every motion picture is constructed in exactly the same way: a playwright or scriptwriter, then a director or film director, then actors, rehearsals, sets, and the presentation to the public. The essential thing in theater is acting, and so *every motion picture constructed upon a scenario and acting is a theatrical presentation*, and that is why there are no differences between the productions by directors of different nuances.

All of this, both in whole and in part, applies to theater regardless of its trend and direction, regardless of its relationship to theater as such. *All of this lies outside the genuine purpose of the movie camera—the exploration of the phenomena of life.*

Kinopravda has clearly shown that it is possible to work outside theater and in step with the revolution. Kino-eye is continuing the work, begun by kinopravda, of creating Red Soviet cinema.

2. The Work of Kino-Eye

On the basis of reports by film-observers a plan for the orientation and offensive of the movie camera in life's ever-changing environment is being worked out by the Council of Kino-Eye. The work of the movie camera is reminiscent of the work of the agents of the GPU who do not know what lies ahead, but have a definite assignment: to separate out and bring to light a particular issue, a particular affair.

1. The kinok-observer closely watches the environment and the people around him and tries to connect separate, isolated phenomena according to generalized or distinctive characteristics. The kinok-observer is assigned a theme by the leader.

2. The group leader or film [reconnaissance] scout distributes themes to the observers and, in the beginning, helps each observer to summarize his observations. When the leader has collected all the summaries, he in turn classifies them and rearranges the individual data until a sufficiently clear construction of the theme is achieved.

Themes for initial observation can be split into roughly three categories:

- a. *Observation of a place* (for example, a village reading room, a cooperative)
- b. *Observation of a person or object in motion* (examples: your father, a Young Pioneer, a postman, a streetcar, etc.)
- c. *Observation of a theme irrespective of particular persons or places* (examples: water, bread, footwear, fathers and children, city and country, tears, laughter, etc.)

The group leader must teach them to use a camera (later, a movie camera) in order to photograph the more striking moments of observation for a bulletin-board newspaper.

A bulletin-board newspaper is issued monthly or every two weeks and uses photographs to illustrate the life of a factory, plant, or village; it participates in campaigns, reveals surrounding life as fully as possible, agitates, propagandizes, and organizes. The group leader submits his work for approval by the Goskino cell of the Red *kinoks* and is under the immediate supervision of the Council of Kino-Eye.

3. The *Council of Kino-Eye* heads the entire organization. It is made up of one representative from each group of kinok-observers, one representative of the unorganized kinoks, and, provisionally, three representatives of the kinok production workers. In its practical, everyday work the Council of Kino-Eye relies upon a technical staff—the Goskino cell of Red kinoks.

The Goskino kinoks' cell should be regarded as one of the factories in which the raw material supplied by kinok-observers is made into film-objects.

The Goskino kinoks' cell should also be regarded as an educational, model workshop through which Young Pioneer and Komsomol film groups will be drawn into production work.

Specifically, all groups of kinok-observers will be drawn

into the production of future kino-eye series. They will be the author-creators of all subsequent film-objects.

This departure from authorship by one person or a group of persons to mass authorship will, in our view, accelerate the destruction of bourgeois, artistic cinema and its attributes: the poser-actor, fairy-tale script, those costly toys—sets, and the director—high priest.

3. *Very Simple Slogans*

1. Film-drama is the opium of the people.
2. Down with the immortal kings and queens of the screen! Long live the ordinary mortal, filmed in life at his daily tasks!
3. Down with the bourgeois fairy-tale script! Long live life as it is!
4. Film-drama and religion are deadly weapons in the hands of the capitalists. By showing our revolutionary way of life, we will wrest that weapon from the enemy's hands.
5. The contemporary artistic drama is a vestige of the old world. It is an attempt to pour our revolutionary reality into bourgeois molds.
6. Down with the staging of everyday life! Film us as we are.
7. The scenario is a fairy tale invented for us by a writer. We live our own lives, and we do not submit to anyone's fictions.
8. Each of us does his task in life and does not prevent anyone else from working. The film workers' task is to film us so as not to interfere with our work.
9. Long live the kino-eye of the proletarian revolution!

4. *The Kinoks and Editing*

By editing, artistic cinema usually means the *splicing together of individual filmed scenes* according to a scenario, worked out to a greater or lesser extent by the director.

The kinoks attribute a completely different significance to editing and regard it as the *organization of the visible world*.

The kinoks distinguish among:

1. *Editing during observation*—orienting the unaided eye at any place, any time.
2. *Editing after observation*—mentally organizing what has been seen, according to characteristic features.
3. *Editing during filming*—orienting the aided eye of the movie camera in the place inspected in step 1. Adjusting for the somewhat changed conditions of filming.
4. *Editing after filming*—roughly organizing the footage according to characteristic features. Looking for the montage fragments that are lacking.
5. *Gauging by sight (hunting for montage fragments)*—instantaneous orienting in any visual environment so as to capture the essential link shots. Exceptional attentiveness. A military rule: gauging by sight, speed, attack.
6. *The final editing*—revealing minor, concealed themes together with the major ones. Reorganizing all the footage into the best sequence. Bringing out the core of the film-object. Coordinating similar elements, and finally, numerically calculating the montage groupings.

When filming under conditions which do not permit preliminary observation—as in shadowing with a movie camera or filming unobserved—the first two steps drop away and the third or fifth step comes to the fore.

When filming short moments, or in rush filming, the combining of several steps is possible.

In all other instances, when filming one or several themes, all the steps are carried out and the editing is uninterrupted, *beginning with the initial observation and ending with the finished film-object*.

5. *The Kinoks and the Scenario*

It is entirely appropriate to mention the script here. Once added to the above-mentioned editing system, a literary scenario immediately cancels its meaning and significance. Because our objects are

constructed by editing, by organizing the footage of everyday life, unlike artistic dramas that are constructed by the writer's pen.

Does this mean that we work haphazardly, without thought or plan? Nothing of the kind.

If, however, we compare our *preliminary plan* to the plan of a commission that sets out, let us say, to investigate the living quarters of the unemployed, then we must compare the scenario to a short story of that investigation *written before* the investigation has taken place.

How do artistic cinema and the kinoks each proceed in the present case?

The kinoks organize a film-object on the basis of the factual film-data of the investigation.

After polishing up a scenario, *film directors* will shoot some entertaining film-illustrations to go with it: a couple of kisses, a few tears, a murder, moonlit clouds rushing above, and a dove. At the end they write "Long live. . . !" and it all ends with "The Internationale."

Such, with minor changes, are all film-art-agitdramas.

When a picture ends with "The Internationale," the censors usually pass it, but the viewers always feel a bit uneasy hearing the proletarian hymn in such a bourgeois context.

A scenario is the invention of an individual or a group of people; it is a short story that these people desire to transfer to the screen.

We do not consider this desire criminal, but presenting this sort of work as cinema's main objective, ousting real film-objects with these little film short stories, and suppressing all the movie camera's remarkable possibilities in worship of the god of art-drama—this we cannot understand and do not, of course, accept.

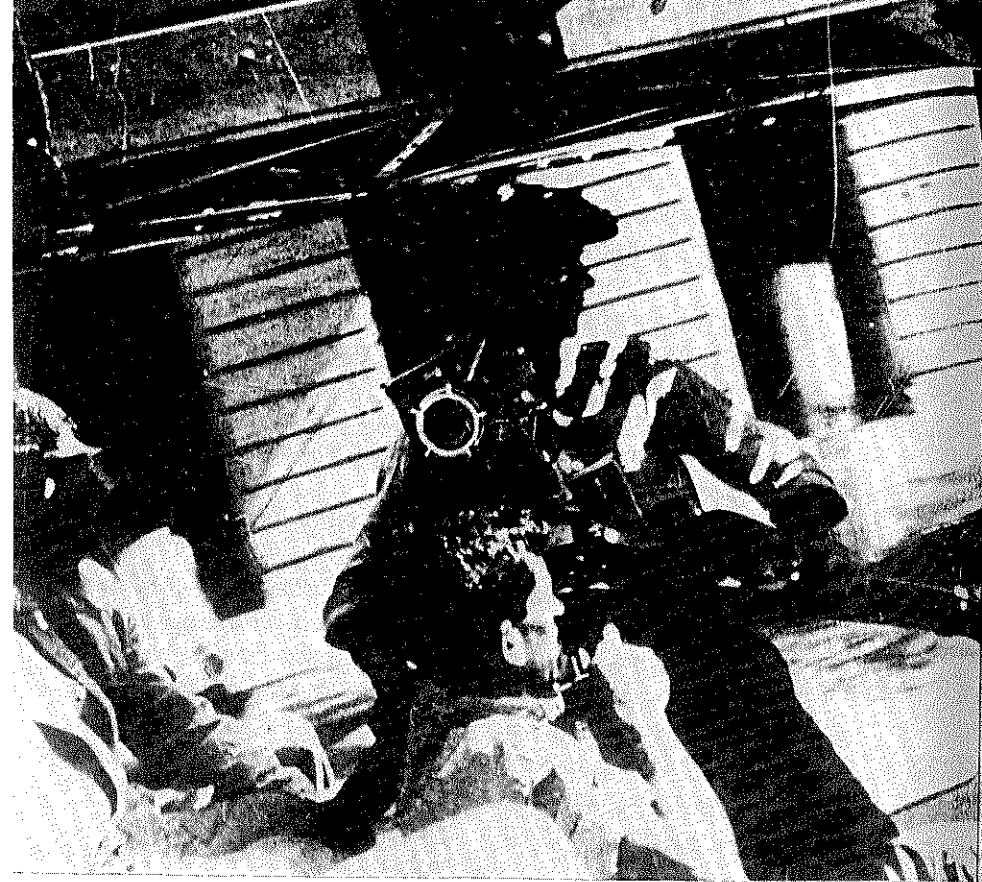
We have not come to cinema in order to feed fairy tales to the Nepmen and Nepwomen lounging in the loges of our first-class movie theaters.

We are not tearing down artistic cinema in order to soothe and amuse the consciousness of the working masses with new rattles.

We have come to serve a particular class, the workers and peasants not yet caught in the sweet web of art-dramas.

We have come to show the world as it is, and to explain to the worker the bourgeois structure of the world.

We want to bring clarity into the worker's awareness of the phenomena concerning him and surrounding him. To give everyone working behind a plow or a machine the opportunity to see his



The Man with a Movie Camera

brothers at work with him simultaneously in different parts of the world and to see all his enemies, the exploiters.

We are taking our first steps in cinema, and that is why we are called kinoks. Existing cinema, as a commercial affair, like cinema as a sphere of art, has nothing in common with our work.

Even in technique we only partially overlap with so-called artistic cinema, since the goals we have set for ourselves require a different technical approach.

We have absolutely no need of huge studios or massive sets, just as we have no need for "mighty" film directors, "great" actors, and "amazing," photogenic women.

On the other hand, we must have:

1. quick means of transport,
2. more sensitive film,

3. small, lightweight, hand-held cameras,
4. lighting equipment that is equally lightweight,
5. a staff of lightning-fast film reporters,
6. an army of kinok-observers.

In our organization we distinguish amongst:

1. kinok-observers,
2. kinok-cameramen,
3. kinok-constructors [designers],
4. kinok-editors (women and men),
5. kinok laboratory assistants.

We teach our methods of cinema work only to Komsomols and Young Pioneers; we pass on our skill and our technical experience to the rising generation of young workers in whom we place our trust.

We venture to assure both respectable and not-so-respectable film directors that the cinema revolution is only beginning.

We will hold out without yielding a single position until the iron shift of young people eventually arrives, and then, all together, we will advance, over the head of bourgeois art-cinema, toward the cinematic October of the whole Soviet Union, of the whole world.

6. Kino-Eye on Its First Reconnaissance

Part One of the Film-object *Life Caught Unawares* The editing of *Kinoglaz*, Part One, was done according to the editing scheme set forth in an earlier section of the present article.

In Part One we note the following themes:

1. The "new" and the "old."
2. Children and grown-ups.
3. The cooperative system and the marketplace.
4. City and country.
5. The theme of bread.
6. The theme of meat.
7. A large theme: home-brew—cards—beer—shady business; "Ermakovka"—cocaine—tuberculosis—madness—death. A theme to which I find it difficult to

"Ermakovka." A hostel on Kalanchevsky Street in Moscow—ed.

give a single name, but one which I contrast here with the themes of health and vigor.

It is, if you like, a part of our terrible heritage from the bourgeois system and one that our revolution has not yet had the time or the opportunity to sweep away.

Along with the montage of themes (their coordination) and of each theme individually, we edited individual moments (the attack on the camp, the call for help, etc.).

I can point to the dancing of the drunken peasant women in the first section of *Kinoglaz* as an example of a montage moment not limited by time or space.

They were filmed at different times, in different villages, and edited together into a single whole.

The beer house and the market, actually all the rest . . . were also done through montage.

The raising of the flag on the day the camp opened can serve as a model of a montage instant *limited in time and space*.

Here, for a length of fifty feet, fifty-three moments that have been spliced together go by. Despite the very rapid change of subjects on the screen (one-fourth of a second is the maximum length of time an individual subject is present on the screen), this fragment can be viewed easily and does not tire one's vision (as verified by the worker-viewer).

On Shortcomings of *Kinoglaz*, Part One The film's excessive length should be mentioned as its chief shortcoming.

We must not forget that artistic films were also one- or two-reel in the beginning and that their footage was only gradually increased.

The field of kino-eye is a new one, and the portion being served to the viewer should be increased cautiously to avoid tiring him and shoving him into the arms of the art-drama.

Hoping to break into the big movie theaters, we yielded to the demand to provide a six-act film and . . . made a mistake; this has to be admitted. We must correct this mistake in the future and make small objects of various types that can be shown individually or in a group program as desired.

The overly broad sweep of Part One, the excessive number of themes interconnected at the expense of the deepening of each single one, can also be considered shortcomings.

This kind of approach to the first part is not coincidental; it was dictated partly by our intention to provide a broad exploration and, on the basis of that exploration, to penetrate deeper into life in the subsequent parts. Such an approach was also partly necessary since more time, artificial lighting, and a lot of animation filming were needed in order to develop completely some of the themes of *Kinoglaz*.

The expenditure of time meant a greater expenditure of money. The artificial lighting "limped on both legs," while the animation stand was so busy that we had to content ourselves with a ten-meter cartoon and ten illuminated titles.

I mention only these shortcomings—not that there are no others, but because we need to give first consideration to precisely the above-mentioned defects and mistakes and to draw appropriate conclusions for future work.

What We Lost and What We Gained in Releasing Part

One We temporarily lost several organizational and technical positions. We had fewer joint meetings, and several members of the group almost left work and disappeared; the central leadership was weakened and the organizational core of it all somehow lost its focus.

At present all these organizational losses are almost fully recouped.

Of the technical positions that we temporarily ceded, the chief one is animation filming (filming each frame individually). We have done animation filming for a long time, since the first issues of *Kinopravda*, and consider it an important weapon in the struggle against artistic cinema.

For practice we shot various things (some were necessary, some were not) by this method: illuminated titles, maps, bulletins, cartoons, advertisements, and so forth.

We always announced at meetings and in the press that what we were doing in this area was only training, mere preparation for a serious departure into another essential area.

When, under the most trying conditions, the kinoks spent sleepless nights filming various cartoons, humoresques, etc., they had to be reassured that it would not be long now, that we were just about to begin the real animation work that was in the kinoks' plan.

Persistently we prepared the union of newsreel and scientific film

in which the animation method was to play a decisive role. "Drawings in motion, blueprints in motion, the theory of relativity on the screen"—such was already the direction of the kinoks' first manifesto, written at the end of 1919, and before the film, *The Einstein Theory of Relativity*, was released abroad.

Because we were distracted by work on the first part of *Kinoglaz*, it turned out that our first scientific picture, *Abortion*, in which the kinok Belyakov had a significant part, was joined not with the factual footage in our plan, but with a bad romantic drama of a low order.

As was to be expected, *the union of science and drama did not occur*.

Dramatic footage looks very cheap and colorless beside scientific film. The scientific verity of such a picture is called into question by this sort of "artistic" proximity.

Clearly, if not for work on *Kinoglaz* we would not have lost this position and would have used this splendid opportunity to create something competent, healthy, and interesting.

We are not, of course, going to give up this position we've won. *We will continue this work*, whether through an agreement with the department of scientific film, formed by our technical foundation, or by beginning to build afresh.

Kinopravda and the film-calendars have suffered somewhat, but we have already made good 80 percent of the loss.

The commercial cinema world greeted the first part of *Kinoglaz* with hostility, to the great joy of directors, actors, and the entire cinematic priestly caste. The big movie theaters would not even open their doors to such an "abomination."

The popularity of the slogan "kino-eye" nevertheless grew and continues to grow. A series of articles devoted to Part One cut its way through the entire party, Soviet, theatrical, and cinema press.

Kino-eye, photo-eye groups sprang up, etc.

Every day someone would leave a movie theater after seeing an art-drama, feeling disgust for the first time, and remember kino-eye.

As the slogan "kino-eye" spread, the popularity of the name itself grew.

Worker correspondents for various press organs began to sign themselves "kino-eye" when they described everyday phenomena; a kino-eye movie theater opened in Yaroslavl; the "kino-eye" of a

The Einstein Theory of Relativity. A film made in the United States in 1923 with animation by Max Fleischer—ed.

peacock's tail flashed by on Moscow posters; notes on kino-eye and caricatures of it became daily occurrences. . . .

But if it is possible to forgive a worker correspondent for *Komar* for signing "kino-eye" to the little scenes he's spied upon, one can't forgive a kino-eye theater for opening not with Part One of *Kinoglaz*, but with *The Indian Tomb* or something of that sort.

The filming of Part One of *Kinoglaz*, which interrupted our organizational work and deprived us of several technical positions, enriched our knowledge and experience.

In this work of ours we were testing ourselves, above all. Our most pressing tasks presented themselves more clearly and practically.

We really came to know those difficulties awaiting us, and although we haven't overcome them completely, we are already familiar with them now and understand how to overcome them. We learned a great deal in this struggle, and this lesson will not go to waste.

We have ceased to be merely experimenters; we are already assuming responsibility for the proletarian viewer; and, facing the businessmen and specialists boycotting us, we now close our ranks for a fierce battle.

1926

On *The Eleventh Year*

Comrades, *The Eleventh Year*, just like Part One of *Kinoglaz*, *Forward, Soviet!* and *One Sixth of the World*, is one model, one type of nonacted film.

As the author of the film object shown today, I would like to draw your attention to the following aspects of the film:

First of all, *The Eleventh Year* is written in the purest film-language, the "language of the eye." *The Eleventh Year* presumes visual perception, "visual thinking."

Secondly, *The Eleventh Year* is written by the camera in documentary language, in the language of facts recorded on film.

Thirdly, *The Eleventh Year* is written in socialist language, the language of the communist decoding of the visible world.

movie camera (kino-eye), to "life as it is," seen by the imperfect human eye.

1928

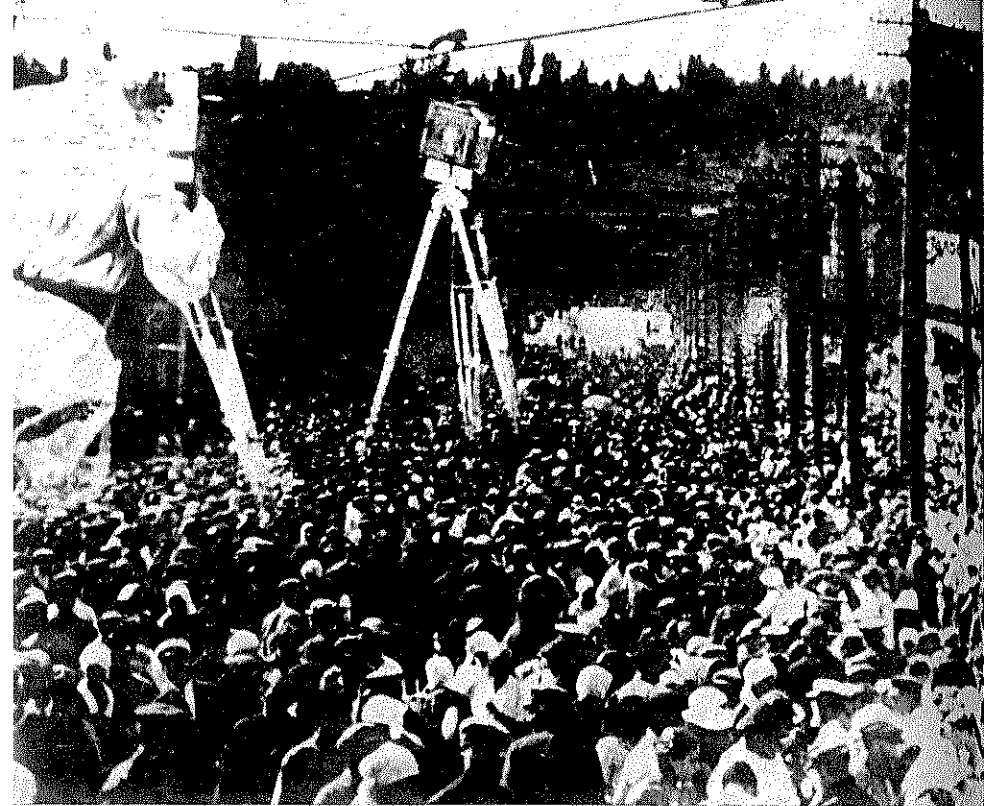
From Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye

(FROM THE KINOKS' PRIMER)

The village of Pavlovskoe near Moscow. A screening. The small place is filled with peasant men and women and workers from a nearby factory. *Kinopravda* is being shown, without musical accompaniment. The noise of the projector can be heard. On the screen a train speeds past. A young girl appears, walking straight toward the camera. Suddenly a scream is heard in the hall. A woman runs toward the girl on the screen. She's weeping, with her arms stretched out before her. She calls the girl by name. But the girl disappears. On the screen the train rushes by once more. The lights are turned on in the hall. The woman is carried out, unconscious. "What's going on?" a worker-correspondent asks. One of the viewers answers: "It's kino-eye. They filmed the girl while she was still alive. Not long ago she fell ill and died. The woman running toward the screen was her mother."

A park bench. The assistant director of a trust and a woman typist. He asks permission to embrace her. She looks around and says, "All right." A kiss. They get up from the bench, look into one another's eyes and walk along the path. Disappear. The bench is empty. Behind it there's a lilac bush. The lilac bush parts. A man comes out from the bush, lugging some sort of equipment on a tripod. A gardener, who's witnessed the whole scene, asks his assistant: "What's that all about?" The assistant answers: "That's kino-eye."

A fire. Tenants are hurling their possessions from the burning building. Any second now they expect the fire department to arrive. Police. An anxious crowd. At the end of the street fire engines appear and rapidly approach. At the same time a car rushes from a side street into the square. A man is cranking the handle of a camera. Another man stands next to him and says: "We made it in



The Man with a Movie Camera

terms of a higher mathematics of montage. Still others declared that it was not "life as it is," but life the way *they* do not see it, etc.

In fact, the film is only the sum of the facts recorded on film, or, if you like, not merely the sum, but the product, a "higher mathematics" of facts. Each item or each factor is a separate little document. The documents have been joined with one another so that, on the one hand, the film would consist only of those linkages between signifying pieces that coincide with the visual linkages and so that, on the other hand, these linkages would not require intertitles; the final sum of all these linkages represents, therefore, an organic whole.

This complex experiment, whose success is admitted by the majority of those comrades who have expressed any opinion, frees us, in the first place, from the tutelage of literature and the theater and brings us face to face with 100 percent cinematography. Secondly, it sharply opposes "life as it is," seen by the aided eye of the

time. Film the arrival of the fire department." "Kino-eye, kino-eye," runs the murmur through the crowd.

The Hall of Columns in Moscow's Palace of Unions. Lenin's body lies in an open coffin placed on a raised bier. Day and night the workers of Moscow file past. The entire square and adjoining streets are filled. Nearby, in Red Square, the Mausoleum is being built at night under floodlights. A heavy snow is falling. Covered with snow, a man with a camera stands watch all night lest he miss something important or interesting. This, too, is kino-eye.

"Lenin is dead, but his cause lives on," say the workers of the Soviet Union, and they labor to build a socialist country. At a reconstructed cement plant in the city of Novorossiisk two men are in an aerial car suspended above the sea. A supervisor and a cameraman. Both have cameras and are filming. The trolley moves swiftly. The supervisor crawls out onto the side of the car for a better vantage point. A moment later he's knocked on the head by an iron girder. The cameraman turns around and sees his comrade, bloody and unconscious, clutching his equipment, half-dangling into the sea. He turns his camera around, films him, and only then comes to his aid. This, too, is the school of kino-eye.

Moscow, the end of 1919. An unheated room. A small vent-window with a broken pane. Next to the window, a table. On the table, a glass of yesterday's undrunk tea that has turned to ice. Near the glass is a manuscript. We read: "Manifesto on the Disarmament of Theatrical Cinematography." One variant of this manifesto, entitled "We," was later (1922) published in the magazine *Kinofot* (Moscow).

The next major theoretical statement of the kino-eye adherents was the well-known Manifesto on Nonacted Cinema, published in the journal *LEF* (1923) under the title *Kinoks: A Revolution*.

LEF. A journal whose title stood for "Left Front of the Arts," founded in Moscow in 1923 by Mayakovsky and a group of intellectuals and artists. Mayakovsky described it as follows: "LEF is the envelopment of a great social theme by all the weapons of Futurism. This definition does not exhaust the matter, of course—I refer those interested to *LEF* itself. Those who united: Brik, Aseyev, Kushner, Arvatov, Tretyakov, Rodchenko, Lavinsky. . . . One of the slogans, one of the great achievements of *LEF*—the deaestheticization of the arts of production, constructivism. A poetic supplement: agit-art and economic agitation; the advertisement."—ed.

These two manifestos had been preceded by their author's work, from 1918 on, in the newsreel section where he put out a series of current *Kinonedelias* and some thematic newsreels.

At first, from 1918 through 1922, the kinoks existed in the singular, that is, there was only one kinok. From 1923 through 1925 there were already three or four. From 1925 on kino-eye's ideas became very widely known. As the original group grew, the number of member-popularizers of the movement increased. And it's now possible to speak not only of the group, of the kino-eye's school, not only of a sector of a front, but of an entire front of nonacted documentary cinematography.

Kinoglaz or *kinooko*. Hence the *kinoglazovtsy* or kinoks. The kinoks' primer gives a short definition of *kino-eye* with the formula, "kino-eye = the kino-recording of facts."

Kino-eye = kino-seeing (I see through the camera) + kino-writing (I write on film with the camera) + kino-organization (I edit).

The kino-eye method is the scientifically experimental method of exploring the visible world—

- a. based on the systematic recording on film of facts from life;
- b. based on the systematic organization of the documentary material recorded on film.

Thus, kino-eye is not only the name of a group of film workers. Not only the name of a film (*Kinoglaz* or *Life Caught Unawares*). And not merely some so-called artistic trend (left or right). Kino-eye is an ever-growing movement for influence through facts as opposed to influence through fiction, no matter how strong the imprint of fiction.

Kino-eye is the documentary cinematic decoding of both the visible world and that which is invisible to the naked eye.

Kino-eye means the conquest of space, the visual linkage of people throughout the entire world based on the continuous ex-

change of visible fact, of film-documents as opposed to the exchange of cinematic or theatrical presentations.

Kino-eye means the conquest of time (the visual linkage of phenomena separated in time). Kino-eye is the possibility of seeing life processes in any temporal order or at any speed inaccessible to the human eye.

Kino-eye makes use of every possible kind of shooting technique: acceleration, microscopy, reverse action, animation, camera movement, the use of the most unexpected foreshortenings—all these we consider to be not trick effects but normal methods to be fully used.

Kino-eye uses every possible means in montage, comparing and linking all points of the universe in any temporal order, breaking, when necessary, all the laws and conventions of film construction.

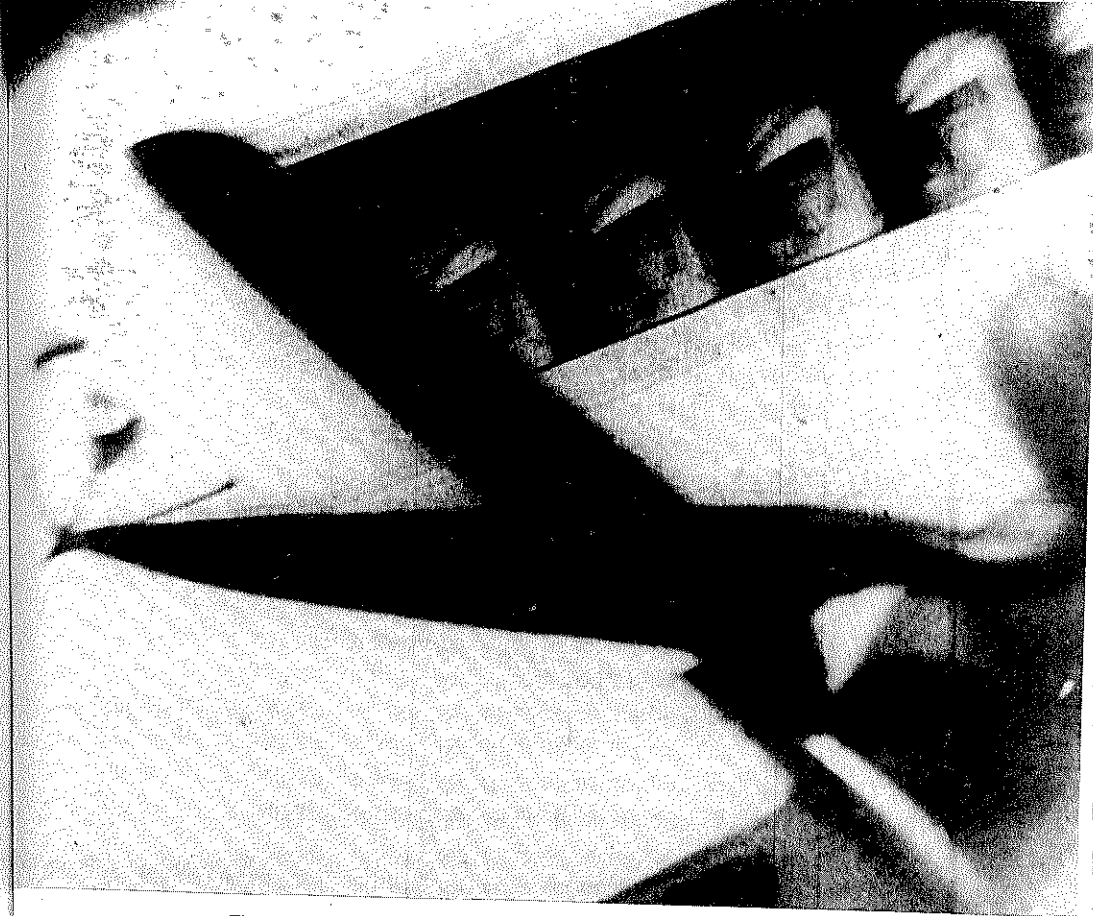
Kino-eye plunges into the seeming chaos of life to find in life itself the response to an assigned theme. To find the resultant force amongst the million phenomena related to the given theme. To edit; to wrest, through the camera, whatever is most typical, most useful, from life; to organize the film pieces wrested from life into a meaningful rhythmic visual order, a meaningful visual phrase, an essence of "I see."

III

Montage means organizing film fragments (shots) into a film-object. It means "writing" something cinematic with the recorded shots. It does not mean selecting the fragments for "scenes" (the theatrical bias) or for titles (the literary bias).

Every kino-eye production is subject to montage from the moment the theme is chosen until the film's release in its completed form. In other words, it is edited during the entire process of film production.

Within this continuous process of editing we can distinguish three stages:



The Man with a Movie Camera

The first stage. Editing is the inventory of all documentary data directly or indirectly related to the assigned theme (in the form of manuscripts, objects, film clippings, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, etc.). As a result of this montage-inventory, through the selection and grouping of the more valuable data, the plan of the theme crystallizes, becomes clearer, emerges in the editing process.

The second stage. Editing is the human eye's summing up of observations on the assigned theme (the montage of your own observations or of reports by informants and scouts). A shooting plan, as a result of selecting and sorting the human eye's observations. In making this selection, the author takes into account the indications of the thematic plan as well as the special properties of the "machine-eye," of the "kino-eye."

The third stage. The central editing. The summary of observations recorded on film by kino-eye. A numerical calculation of the montage groupings. The combining (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factoring out) of related pieces. Continuous shifting of the pieces until all are placed in a rhythmical order such that all links of meaning coincide with visual linkage. As the final result of all these mixings, shifts, cancellations, we obtain a visual equation, a visual formula, as it were. This formula, this equation, obtained as a result of the general montage of the recorded film-documents *is* a 100 percent film-object, the concentrated essence of "I see"—"I kino-see."

Kino-eye is:

Montage, when I select a theme (choosing one from among thousands of possible themes);

Montage, when I make observations for a theme (choosing what is expedient from thousands of observations on the theme);

Montage, when I establish the viewing order of the footage on the theme (selecting the most expedient from thousands of possible groupings of shots, proceeding from the qualities of the film footage as well as from the requirements of the chosen theme).

The school of kino-eye calls for construction of the film-object upon "intervals," that is, upon the movement between shots, upon the visual correlation of shots with one another, upon transitions from one visual stimulus to another.

Movement between shots, the visual "interval," the visual correlation of shots, is, according to kino-eye, a complex quantity. It consists of the sum of various correlations, of which the chief ones are—

1. the correlation of planes (close-up, long shot, etc.);
2. the correlation of foreshortenings;
3. the correlation of movements within the frame;
4. the correlation of light and shadow;
5. the correlation of recording speeds.

Proceeding from one or another combination of these correlations, the author determines: (1) the sequence of changes, the sequence of pieces one after another, (2) the length of each change (in feet, in frames), that is, the projection time, the viewing time of

each individual image. Moreover, besides the movement between shots (the "interval"), one takes into account the visual relation between adjacent shots and of each individual shot to all others engaged in the "montage battle" that is beginning.

To find amid all these mutual reactions, these mutual attractions and repulsions of shots, the most expedient "itinerary" for the eye of the viewer, to reduce this multitude of "intervals" (the movements between shots) to a simple visual equation, a visual formula expressing the basic theme of the film-object in the best way: such is the most important and difficult task of the author-editor.

This theory known as the "theory of intervals" was put forward by the kinoks in a variant of the manifesto "We" written in 1919.

Kino-eye's position on intervals is most clearly illustrated in our work on *The Eleventh Year* and particularly *The Man with a Movie Camera*.

IV. On Radio-Eye

In their first statements concerning the future of the not yet invented sound cinema, the kinoks (now the radioks) defined their course as leading from kino-eye to radio-eye, that is, to an *audible kino-eye, transmitted by radio*.

My article, "Kinopravda and Radiopravda," published several years ago in *Pravda*, speaks of radio-eye as eliminating distance between people, as the opportunity for workers throughout the world not only to see, but also, simultaneously, to hear one another.

In its day, the kinoks' statement on radio-eye was hotly debated in the press. Later, however, attention paid this question diminished, and it was regarded as one for the distant future.

However, kino-eye workers did not restrict themselves to the struggle for nonacted cinema; at the same time they prepared to meet the transition fully armed, anticipating work within the radio-eye plan, the plan for nonacted sound cinema.

In *One Sixth of the World* the titles were already replaced by a word-radio-theme in contrapuntal construction. *The Eleventh Year* was constructed as a film-object of sight and sound, edited to be heard as well as seen.

The Man with a Movie Camera is constructed in the same manner, moving from kino-eye to radio-eye.



Kinoglaz

The kinoks' theoretical and practical work (in contrast to acted cinematography, caught off guard) was in advance of our technical possibilities; they have long awaited the *overdue* (in relation to kino-eye) technical base for sound film and television.

The latest technical inventions in this field place a most powerful weapon—in the struggle for a nonacted October—in the hands of those who support and work with the sound documentary film.

1929

From the History of the Kinoks

Among the early works of kino-eye, political caricatures and animated films are to be noted. Their shooting involved setting in motion intertitles, drawings, charts, blueprints, etc. It was the



Kinoglaz

dynamic geometry of the shot that interested us. All this was then in a rudimentary state.

The first decisive experimental study was called *The Battle of Tsaritsyn*. It was done with very fast montage and no titles. It was, so to speak, the ancestor of *Kinoglaz* and *The Man with a Movie Camera*, which appeared later. The montage construction of this early study relied on film-language; there were no verbal titles. The montage was already done in frames. Measurement went not according to the metrical system, but by a decimal system of frames: 5, 10, 15, 20 . . . roughly like that. Once the following incident occurred. I told someone to splice the pieces of *The Battle of Tsaritsyn*. As long as the pieces were ten or fifteen feet long, the editing woman spliced them. When, however, she came to short pieces several frames long, she dumped these frames, without thinking, into the wastebasket as odd scraps, waste. Everything had to be redone. Once again I sat at it for about eight days. Once again I put it all back together. This second time I myself looked after the