

The fourth question: "Was *The Eleventh Year* made without a script?" Yes, like all kino-eye films, *The Eleventh Year* was made without a script. You know, in exploiting this rejection of the script our numerous opponents have attempted to present things as though we are against planned work altogether. Whereas, contrary to prevailing notions, the kinoks devote far more labor and attention to a preliminary plan than do workers in dramatic cinema. Before setting to work, a given theme is studied with great care in all of its aspects; literature on the issue is studied; in order to gain the clearest possible understanding of the matter every source is used. Before shooting, thematic, itinerary, and calendar plans are drawn up. How do these plans differ from a script? They differ in that all of this is the *plan of action for the movie camera* once the given theme appears in life, but not a *plan for staging* the same theme. How does the filming plan of an actual battle differ from a plan for staging a series of separate battle scenes? The difference between kino-eye's plan and the script in artistic cinematography amounts roughly to this.

The final question concerns titles and has been put by many comrades in this form: "How do you explain the abundance of titles in *One Sixth of the World* and the lack of them in *The Eleventh Year*?" In *One Sixth of the World* we were experimenting by putting titles in parentheses through the creation of a specific series of "word-themes." The word-theme has been abolished in *The Eleventh Year* and the significance of the titles reduced nearly to zero. The picture is constructed through the interweaving of film-phrases, without using titles. Titles have almost no significance in *The Eleventh Year*. Which is better, then? The first experiment or the second? I feel that both experiments—the creation of word-themes and their abolition—are equally important and of very great significance, for kino-eye and for all of Soviet cinema.

1928

The Man with a Movie Camera

Work on *The Man with a Movie Camera* required greater effort than previous works of kino-eye. This can be explained by the greater number of locations under observation as well as by com-

plex organizational and technical operations while filming. The montage experiments demanded exceptional effort. These experiments went on constantly.

The Man with a Movie Camera is straightforward, inventive, and sharply contradicts that distributor's slogan: "The more clichés, the better." That slogan prevents us, the workers on this film, from thinking of rest despite great fatigue. We must make the distributors put aside their slogan with respect to the film. *The Man with a Movie Camera* needs maximal, inventive presentation.

In Kharkov I was asked: "How is it that you're in favor of stirring titles, and suddenly we have *The Man with a Movie Camera*—a film without words or titles?" My response was, "No, I'm not in favor of stirring titles, not in favor of titles at all—that's the invention of certain critics!"

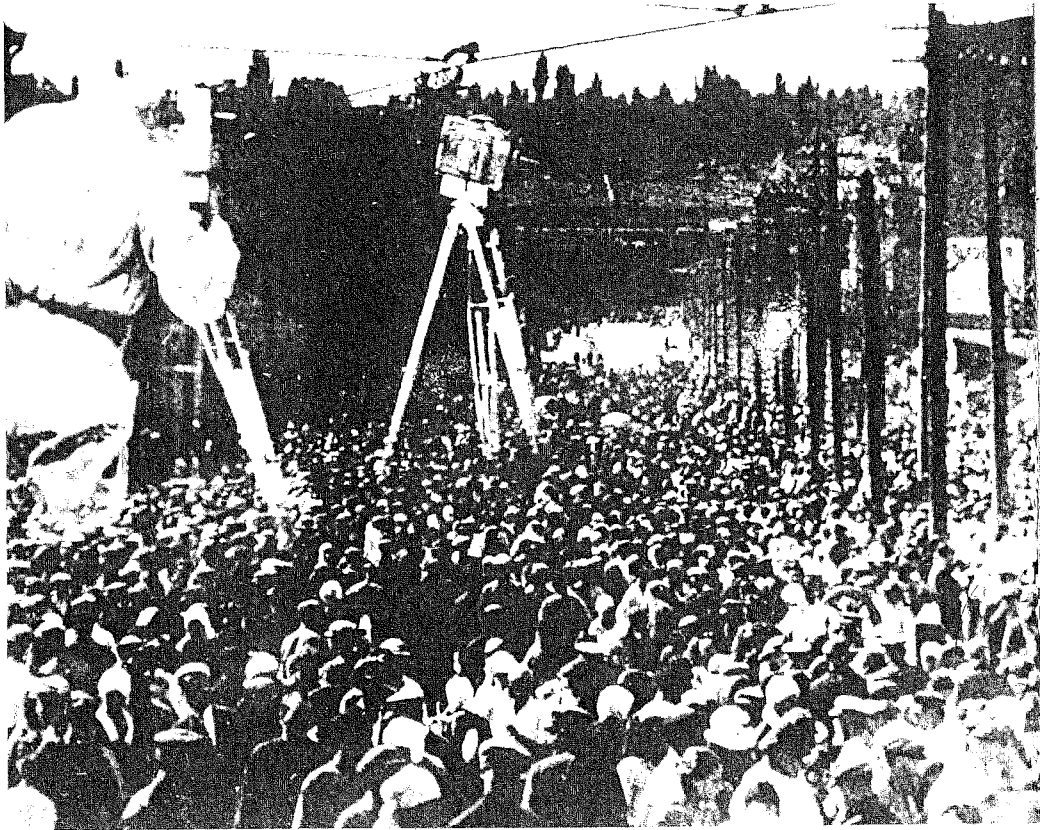
Indeed, the kino-eye group, following its renunciation of the film studio, of actors, sets, and the script, fought for a decisive cleaning up of film-language, for its complete separation from the language of theater and literature. Thus, in *One Sixth of the World* the titles are, as it were, factored out of the picture and isolated into a contrapuntally constructed word-radio-theme.

"Very little room is devoted to titles in *The Eleventh Year* (their modest role is further expressed by the graphic execution of the titles), so that a title can be cut out without in any way disturbing the film's force." (*Kinofront* no. 2, 1928).

And further: "In its specific weight and practical significance the intertitle in a genuine film-object (and *The Eleventh Year* is such) is just like the quotation about gold from *Timon of Athens* in Marx's analysis of money in *Capital*. Incidentally, for the most part these titles are precise quotations, which might stand for the text during the layout of a book." (*Kinofront* no. 2, 1928).

Thus the complete absence of titles in *The Man with a Movie Camera* does not come as something unexpected, but has been prepared for by all the previous kino-eye experiments.

The Man with a Movie Camera represents not only a practical result; it is, as well, a theoretical manifestation on the screen. That is apparently why public debates on it in Kharkov and Kiev assumed the aspect of a fierce battle between representatives of various trends in so-called art. Moreover, the dispute took place on several levels at once. Some said *The Man with a Movie Camera* was an experiment in visual music, a visual concert. Others saw the film 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

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



KINO-**O**-EYE

THE WRITINGS OF DZIGA VERTOV

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Contents

- Translator's Acknowledgments, xi
- Preface, xiii
- Introduction, xv

THE WRITINGS OF DZIGA VERTOV

From Articles, Public Addresses

- WE: Variant of a Manifesto, 5
- The Fifth Issue of *Kinopravda*, 10
- Kinoks: A Revolution, 11
- On the Organization of a Film Experiment Station, 21
- Advertising Films, 25
- On the Significance of Newsreel, 32
- Kinopravda* [1923], 33
- On the Film Known as *Kinoglaz*, 34
- On the Significance of Nonacted Cinema, 35
- Kinoglaz* (A Newsreel in Six Parts), 38
- The Birth of Kino-Eye, 40
- On *Kinopravda*, 42
- Artistic Drama and Kino-Eye, 47
- The Essence of Kino-Eye, 49
- To the Kinoks of the South, 50
- Kinopravda* and *Radiopravda*, 52
- The Same Thing from Different Angles, 57
- The Factory of Facts, 58
- Kino-Eye, 60
- On *The Eleventh Year*, 79
- The Man with a Movie Camera*, 82