

## FROM THE MANIFESTO OF THE BEGINNING OF 1922

You—cinematographers:  
directors without occupation and artists without occupation, flustered cameramen  
and scenario writers scattered the world over,  
You—the patient public of the movie houses with the tolerance of males under the load of served emotions.  
You—the impatient owners of the not-yet-bankrupt movie theaters, greedily snapping up the scraps off the German table, and, to a lesser extent, the American table—

You wait,  
Debilitated by memories, you day dream and pine for the MOON of the new six-reel feature . . .  
(nervous persons are asked to close their eyes),  
You wait for what will not happen and what you should not expect.

My friendly warning:  
Don't bury your heads like ostriches.  
Raise your eyes,  
Look around—  
There!

Seen by me and by every child's eye:  
Insides falling out.  
Intestines of experience  
Out of the belly of cinematography  
slashed

By the reef of the revolution,  
these they drag  
leaving a bloody trace on the ground, shuddering from terror and repulsion.

All is ended.

DZIGA VERTOV

## FROM A STENOGRAPH

. . . A psychological, detective, satirical, or any other picture. Cut out all scenes and just leave titles. We will get a literary skeleton of the picture. To this literary skeleton we can add new footage—realistic, symbolical, expressionist—any kind. Things are not changed. Neither is the interrelationship: literary skeleton plus cinematic illustration.

Such are all our and foreign pictures, without exception.

## FROM THE MANIFESTO OF 20/1-1923 COUNCIL OF THREE TO THE CINEMATOGRAPHERS

. . . Five full-blooded world-daring years have entered you and left leaving no mark. Samples of prerevolutionary art hang like ~~things~~ and still attract your prayerful entrails. Foreign lands support you in your confusion, sending into the renovated Russia the unregretted remains of movie dramas dressed with an excellent technological sauce.

Spring is coming. Studios are expected to start work. The Council of Three does not hide its regret as it watches how the producers leaf through literature looking for pieces suitable for conversion into scenarios. The names of theater dramas and poems slated for possible production are floating through the air. In the Ukraine, and here in Moscow, several pictures have already been made bearing witness to all qualities of impotence.

Pronounced technical backwardness, the loss of ability to think actively as a result of the doldrums, the orientation on the six-reel psychodrama, that is, the orientation on one's own behind—condemns in advance all their attempts.

The organism of cinematography is poisoned by the frightful venom of habit. We demand being given an opportunity to experiment with this dying organism, with an objective of finding an anti-toxin.

We offer the unbelievers to be convinced; we agree to try out our medicine first on the "rabbits," on the movie *études*.

Council of Three

## RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THREE 10/IV-1923

Resolution on the cine-front: Consider not in favor.

First Russian productions shown us, as expected, are reminiscent of the old "artistic" models in the same way that the NEP-men remind us of the old *bourgeoisie*.

Projected production schedules for the summer, here and in Ukraine inspire no confidence.

Possibilities of wide experimental work is in the background.

All efforts, all sighs, tears, and hopes, all prayers are to her—~~the~~ six-reel cine-drama.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Council of Three, not

for the admission of Kinoks to production and, in spite of the desire of Kinoks to realize by themselves their own projects, forgoes for the moment the right of authorship and decrees:

publish immediately for broad distribution the general basis and credos of the impending revolution through the Movie newsreel, for which purpose Dziga Vertov is hereby directed, along the lines of party discipline, to publish these passages from the book, *Kinoks Revolution*, which describe the substance of the revolution.

Council of Three

Carrying out the resolution of the Council of Three of April 10, 1923, the following excerpts are published:

1.

Watching the pictures that came from the West and from America, taking into account the information we have on the work and searching abroad and here—I come to the following conclusion:

*Verdict of death, decreed by Kinoks in 1919, to all motion pictures without exception, is in effect to this day.*

The most careful inspection does not reveal a single picture, a single searching, that tries correctly to unseface the camera, now in pitiful slavery, under orders of an **LEGALIZED MYOPIA** imperfect shallow eye.

We do not object if cinematography tunnels under literature, under theater; we fully approve the utilization of the cinema for all branches of science, but we recognize these functions as accessory, as offshoots and branches.

The fundamental and the most important:

Cinema—the feel of the world

The initial point:

The utilization of the camera, **WAY FOR THE MACHINE** as a cinema eye—(more perfect than a human eye for purposes of research into the chaos of visual phenomena filling the universe.)

The eye lives and moves in time and space, perceiving and recording impressions in a way quite different from the human eye. It is not necessary for it to have a particular **DOWN WITH—** stance or to be limited in the number **16 PHOTOGRAPHS** of moments to be observed per second. **PER SECOND**

The movie camera is better.

We cannot make our eyes better than they have been made, but the movie camera we can perfect forever.

To this day, the cameraman is criticized if a running horse moves unnaturally slowly on the screen (quick turn of the camera) or,

conversely, if a tractor ploughs too fast (the slow manipulation of the camera crank).

These, of course, are incidental, but we are preparing a thoughtout system of these incidents, a system of apparent abnormalities that organize and explore phenomena.

To this day, we raped the movie camera and forced it to copy the work of our eye. And the better the copy, the better the shot was considered. As of today, we will unshackle the camera and will make it work in the opposite direction, further from copying.

Out with all the weaknesses of the human eye. **DO NOT COPY FROM THE EYES MACHINE AND ITS CAREER**

We hereby ratify the eye, which is groping in the chaos of motions for a movement of its own and in its own right; we validate the eye with its own measurement of strength and in potentially before the self-ratification.

2.

... to induce the viewer to see in a way that is best for me to show. The eye obeys the will of the camera and is directed by it to that sequence of moments of action that best brings out a cinematic phrase, the sequence that raises and lowers dénouement with the greatest brilliance and speed.

*System of the Continuity of Actions*

Example: Shooting a boxing bout not from the point of view of a member of the audience, but on the basis of showing off as best as possible the sequence of holds of the boxers.

Example: Shooting a group of dancers—but not from the point of view of the audience, sitting in an auditorium and having in front of it scenes of a ballet.

For the viewer of a ballet haphazardly follows the whole group, or incidental performers, or some legs—a series of scattered observations, different for everyone in the audience. **THE MOST INEFFICIENT, THE MOST UNECONOMICAL RENDITION OF A SCENE IS THE THEATRICAL RENDITION**

The movie viewer cannot be presented with this. The system of consecutive actions demands filming the dancers or the boxers in a way which would account for consecutive events with certain details

Hand actions forced upon the viewer, so that there is no chance for him to miss these.

The camera drags the eyes of the viewer from hands to legs, from legs to eyes, in a way that is the most efficient. It organizes the parts into an edited orderly study.

3.

You are walking on a Chicago street today in 1923, but I make you nod to comrade Volodarsky, who is, in 1918 walking down a street in Petrograd; he acknowledges your greeting.

MONTAGE IN TIME  
AND SPACE

Another example: They are lowering the coffins of national heroes (shot in Astrakhan in 1918), they fill in the graves (Cronstadt, 1921), cannon salute (Petrograd, 1920), memorial-service hats come off (Moscow, 1922). These actions go together even in the ungrateful, not specially filmed, material (see *Kino-Pravda*, No. 13). Crowds greeting Lenin in different places, in different times are also in this category (see *Kino-Pravda*, No. 14).

... I am eye. I am builder.  
I implanted you, a most remarkable chamber which did not exist until I created it today. In this chamber, there are twelve walls, photographed by me in various parts of the world. Manipulating shots of walls and details, I have succeeded in arranging them in an order that pleases you and in constructing correctly a cinematic phrase, which is the room.

HUMAN RACE OF  
KINOKS COUNCIL OF  
THREE, MOSCOW, HALL  
OF INTERVALS TODAY.  
TODAY APRIL

3

REPORT BY DZV ON  
THE THEME  
CHAMBRE  
CINEMA-PHRASE  
BEGINNING 8:30 P.M.

I am eye. I have created a man more perfect than Adam; I created thousands of different people in accordance with previously prepared plans and charts.

ELECTRIC YOUNG MAN

I am eye.

I take the most agile hands of one, the fastest and the most graceful legs of another, from a third person I take the handsomest and the most expressive head, and, by editing, I create an entirely new perfect man.

4.

... I am eye. I am a mechanical eye.  
I, a machine, am showing you a world, the likes of which only I can see.

I free myself from today and forever from human immobility, I am in constant movement, I approach and draw away from objects, I crawl under them, I move alongside the mouth of a running horse, I cut into a crowd at full speed, I run in front of running soldiers. I turn on my back; I rise with an airplane, I fall and soar together with falling and rising bodies.

This is I, apparatus, maneuvering in the chaos of movements, recording one movement after another in the most complex combinations.

Freed from the obligation of shooting sixteen-seventeen shots per second, freed from the frame of time and space, I coordinate any and all points of the universe, wherever I may plot them.

My road is toward the creation of a fresh perception of the world. Thus, I decipher in a new way the world unknown to you.

... Let us agree once more: The eye and the car. The car pecks, the eye eavesdrops.

Distribution of functions.

Radio-car-edited, "Hear!"

Cinema-eye-edited, "See!"

There it is, citizens, in the first place instead of music, painting, theater, cinematography, and other castrated outpourings.

In a chaos of movements running past, streaking away, running up and colliding—only the eye enters life simply. The day of visual impressions is past. How to convert

ORGANIZATION  
OF OBSERVATIONS  
BY A HUMAN EYE

the impressions of the day into a functional whole—into a visual study? To film everything that an eye has seen will result in a jumble. To edit artfully what had been photographs would result in a greater clarity. It would be better yet to scrap the annoying rubbish. Thus we get organized memoirs of impressions of a simple eye.

A mechanical eye—that's the movie camera. It refuses to use the human eye as if the latter were a crib-sheet; it is attracted and repelled by motion, feeling through the chaos of observed events for a roadway for its own mobility and modulation; it experiments, extending time, dissecting movement, or, on the contrary, absorbing

into itself the time, swallowing years and, thus, diagramming some processes unattainable to the normal eye.

... In aid to the eye-machine is the Kinok, the pilot, who not only steers the apparatus, but also trusts it in experiments in space and in whatever may follow. Kinok, the engineer, directs the apparatus by remote control.

This concerted action by the liberated and perfected apparatus and the strategy-making brain of man—directing, observing, compensating, will result in an unusual freshness, and even the most commonplace will become interesting.

... They are many who, hungering for spectacles, lost their pants in theaters.

They run from weekdays, run from the "prose" of life.

And yet the theater is almost always only a scabby surrogate of this very life plus an idiotic conglomerate from balletic contortions, musical squeaks, clever lighting effects, stage sets (from those smeared on to those constructed) and sometimes good work from literary masters perverted by all this hogwash.

Some theater overseers enlist help: bio-mechanics (a good pursuit by itself), cinema (bestow it honor and glory), literatures (not bad by themselves), constructions (some are not bad), automobiles (how can we not respect them?), rifle shooting (dangerous and impressive thing in the front lines). But, on the whole, not a goddamn thing comes out of it.

Theater and nothing else.

Not only no synthesis but no orderly mixture either.

Could not be otherwise.

We, Kinoks, resolute opponents of premature synthesis ("To synthesis at the zenith of accomplishment"), understand that to mix the crumbs of achievements is to have the infants perish from crowding and disorder.

In general—

### ARENA IS SMALL

Please come into life.

Here we work—craftsmen of seeing—organizers of visible life, armed all over with the maturing eye. Here work the master-crafts-

### DECOMPOSITION and CONCENTRATION of

### VISUAL PHENOMENA

### BRAIN

men of words and sounds, the most skillful editor-cutters of the heard life. To them, I also dare slip over a mechanical ever-present ear and megaphone—radio telephone.

This is

### NEWSREEL RADIO NEWS

I promise to wangle a parade of Kinoks in Red Square in case the futurists come out with No. 1 of their edited newsreel.

Neither the newsreel of "Pathé" nor of "Gaumont" (newspaper chronicle) nor even the Kino-Truth (political chronicle), but a real Kinok-type of a chronicle—a dashing survey of visual events deciphered by the movie-camera, fragments of actual energy (as against theatrical energy), with their intervals condensed into a cumulative whole by the great mastery of an editing technique.

Such structure of a cinematic thing allows a development of any theme—be it comical, tragic, or anything else.

It is all a matter of juxtaposition of one visual moment with another, all a matter of intervals.

This unusual flexibility of edited structure allows to introduce into a movie continuity, any political, economic, or any other motif.

Therefore

As of today cinema needs no psychological, no detective dramas,  
As of today—no theatrical productions shot on film,  
As of today—no scenarioization of either Dostoyevsky, or Nat Pinkerton.

Everything is included in the new concept of the newsreel.

Into the confusion of life, hereby decisively enter:

- 1) The Eye, disputing the visual concept of the world by the human eye and offering its own "I see" and
- 2) Kinok-editor, who organizes, for the first time, what had been so perceived into minutes of life structure.

Translated from the Russian by Val Telberg

### FROM THE NOTEBOOKS OF DZIGA VERTOV

I began early. By writing various fantastic novels (*The Iron Hand*), by writing brief sketches ("Whale Hunting," "Fishing"), poems ("Masha"), epigrams and satirical verse ("Purishkevich," "The Girl With Freckles").

Later, all this was transformed into a fascination with a montage

of stenographic notes and sound recording—in particular, a fascination with the possibility of documenting sounds in writing, in attempts to depict in words and letters the sound of a waterfall, the noise of a sawmill, in musical-thematic creations of word-montage, "Laboratory of Hearing."

Later, in the fall of 1918, came the shift to film, life on 7 Gnezdnikovsky Street, and work on the magazine, *Cinema Weekly*. Ideas on the "armed eye," on the role of the camera in the study of the living world. Early experiments with high-speed shooting, the concept of the "cinematic-eye" as a rapid eye (in the sense of a rapid thought).

The early sixteen frames per second became obsolete. Not just rapid filming, but multiplication filming, microfilming, macrofilming, reverse filming, filming with a moving camera—all became commonplace.

The "Kino-Eye" is in the realm of "that which the naked eye does not see," a microscope and telescope of time, an X-ray eye, the "candid" eye, the remote control of a camera.

All these various definitions mutually complement each other; the "Kino-Eye" includes:

- all film methods,
- all cinematic images, and

- all methods and means by which the truth can be shown.

Not the "Kino-Eye" for its own sake, but the truth by the means of the "Kino-Eye." Cinematic truth.

The "candid camera," not for its own sake, but to show people without their make-up on; to catch them through the camera's eye at some moment when they are not acting; to capture their thoughts by means of the camera.

The "Kino-Eye" as a means of making the invisible visible, the obscure clear, the hidden obvious, the disguised exposed, and acting not acting.

But it is not enough to show bits of truth on the screen, separate frames of truth. These frames must be thematically organized so that the whole is also truth. This is an even more difficult task. There is little theoretical study of this problem. Hundreds, thousands of experiments must be conducted, in order to master this new field of cinematographic work.

The "Kino-Eye," which has set for itself the task: "To combine science with cinematic depiction in the struggle to reveal truth . . . to decipher reality," was born in dozens and hundreds of experiments. These experiments, which aided the over-all development of

descriptive and scientific filming, continued month after month, year after year. During all this time, it was necessary to overcome great difficulties, not only of an organizational and technical nature, but, for the main part, difficulties caused by our inability to demonstrate the inevitability and necessity of this work. In this experimental work, we can distinguish three periods.

The first period began in 1918. These experiments took place during the Civil War, when *Cinema Weekly* was being published, and filming was being conducted under battle conditions on all fronts. To this period belong such films as *Battle at Tsaritsyn*, *The Action of Mirnov*, *Discovery of Sergei Radonezhsky's Remains*, *The VTIK Train*, and others. This period closes with a long film in thirteen parts: *History of the Civil War* (1921).

The second period begins in 1922. This period could be called the period of *Kino-Pravda* (*Cinema Truth*). Review films, sketch films, verse films, film poems, and preview films made their appearance. Each release of *Kino-Pravda* brought something new. Considerable work was also being done in the utilization of new methods for subtitling, transforming them into pictorial units equal to those of the images.

Long experimental films, like *The Kino-Eye* (1924) *Forward Soviet!* (1925), *The Sixth Part of the World* (1926) were released.

The third period—*The Kino-Eye in the Ukraine*, *The October March*, *The Eleventh Year* (1928), *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), a film without words, and *Enthusiasm* (1930), a symphony of noises, were released in rapid succession.

With *Three Songs of Lenin* (1934), that "symphony of thought" began the third period of experiments. *Three Songs of Lenin* was already a many-sided experimental synthesis that, with its far-reaching roots, delved into the unwritten creative folklore of the Soviet people.

February, 1940

### Early Thoughts

Nineteen-eighteen. I moved to Gnezdnikovsky, #7. Did a risky jump for a slow-motion camera.

Didn't recognize my face on the screen.

My thoughts were revealed on my face—irresolution, vacillation, and firmness (a struggle within myself), and, again, the joy of victory.

First thought of the Kino-Eye is a world perceived without a mask, as a world of naked truth (truth cannot be hidden).

## ABC of Cinema

Ilya Ehrenburg, apparently impressed by the first series of the *Kino-Eye*, once wrote:

"The work of Vertov is a laboratory analysis of the world-complex, painstaking. *Kino-Eye* takes reality and transforms it into several basic elements—if you will—into a cinematic alphabet."

Nowadays, we all know that those who worked on *Kino-Pravda* and *Kino-Eye* created a cinematic alphabet, not for its own sake, but to show the truth.

## My Views

In 1918, I switched to film. At that time, I was working on a film journal (*Cinema Weekly*), on historical films (*History of the Civil War*), film sketches, film verse (see No. 23 of *Kino-Pravda*), film caricatures (*Today, Chervonets, Grimaces of Paris, Soviet Toys*), films of various war campaigns and actions, experimental studies (*Battle at Tsaritsyn*), and longer film poems (*Kino-Eye, Forward, Soviet!*, *The Sixth Part of the World, The Eleventh*;) songs without words (*The Man with a Movie Camera*), sound symphonies (*Enthusiasm*), and, finally, the recently finished *Three Songs about Lenin*. All totaled, counting the smaller works, not less than 150 works.

My attitude toward these films is that of an inventor toward his invention. Much is outdated and seems to be a little farcical to me, like a Buster Keaton comedy; but in their own time, these funny experiments did not evoke laughter, but a storm of controversy, ideas, and plans.

These films were less of "widespread demand," than "films pre-cursing other films."

April, 1934

## Three Songs About Lenin

I've managed to make *Three Songs About Lenin* (at least to some degree) accessible and comprehensible to millions. But not at the price of cinematographic language, and not by abandoning the principles which had been formulated earlier. No one would demand this of us.

The important thing is not to separate form from content. The secret lies in unity of form and content. In refraining from shocking the spectator by introducing objects or devices that are unnatural or extraneous to the work. In 1933, while thinking about Lenin, I

decided to draw from the source of the people's creative folklore about Lenin. I would like to keep on working in this direction.

If he saw darkness, he created light.

From the desert, he made orchards.

From death—life.

or

A million sand grains make a dune.

A million peas make a bushel.

A million weak—a great strength.

Are these images and songs of nameless poets of the people any poorer than the images of the most refined formal works?

The subject in which I am working is the least studied, the most highly experimental subject of cinematography.

The road along which I am going, in an organizational, technical, down-to-earth manner, and in all other senses, demands super-human efforts. It is a thankless and, believe me, a very difficult road.

But I am hopeful that, in my field, I will be able to defeat formalism, to defeat naturalism, to become a poet not for the few, but for the ever increasing millions.

It is far from simple to show the truth.

But truth itself is simple.

## Mayakovsky

Mayakovsky—his work is a *Kino-Eye*. He sees what the eye does not.

I liked Mayakovsky from the start, without reserve, from the first book I read. The book was called *Simple as a Bellow*. I knew it by heart. I defended him from vilification as well as I knew how; I explained. I did not know Mayakovsky personally at the time. When I first met the poet at the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow, I was not disappointed. He was just as I had imagined him. Mayakovsky noticed me in a group of excited young people. Of course, I looked at him with admiring eyes. He came up to us: "We're awaiting your next book," I said. "Then get your friends together," he answered, "and demand that it gets published more quickly."

My meetings with Mayakovsky were always brief. Sometimes in the street, or at a club, or at a station, or at a cinema. He didn't call me Vertov, but Dziga. I liked that. "Well, how's the *Kino-Eye* doing, Dziga?" he once asked me. This was somewhere on the road, in a railroad station. Our trains met. "The *Kino-Eye* is learning," I replied. He thought awhile and said: "The *Kino-Eye* is a lighthouse of the film world."

The last time I met Mayakovsky was in Leningrad, in the lobby of the Europa Hotel.

Mayakovsky asked the waiter, in a gloomy voice, "Is there going to be a cabaret tonight?" He noticed me and said, "We should have a leisurely talk together. A serious talk. Let's have a 'feature length' creative discussion today."

I waited for Mayakovsky in my room.

It seemed to me that I found the key to filming documentary sounds.

I walked back and forth in my room, waiting for Mayakovsky and rejoicing at having met him again.

I wanted to tell him about my attempts to create a film poem in which montage phrases would rhyme one with the other.

I waited for him till midnight.

I don't know what happened to him; he did not come.

And, in a few weeks, he was gone.

### Some More About Mayakovsky

My love of Mayakovsky's works did not in any way contradict my ideas about creativity of the common people.

I never considered Mayakovsky to be obscure and unpopular.

There is a difference between popularity and popularization.

Mayakovsky is understandable to all who want to think. He does not write for the man who does not think. His work is far from being a popularization, but he is popular.

Unity of form and content—that's what strikes one in the works of the people, and that's what strikes in Mayakovsky.

I work in the field of the poetic documentary film. That's why I feel so close to both the folk songs and the poetry of Mayakovsky.

I am striving in my future works for greater unity of form and content than in *Three Songs About Lenin*, because unity of form and content guarantees success.

### On Scenarios for Documentary Films

If we want to achieve continuity and coherence in our scenes not at the cutting table, but much earlier, during filming,

if we want

this continuity and correspondence of scenes to result in an irresistible movement forward, from the old toward the new quality, by overcoming difficulties, obstacles, contradictions, by the struggle between the old and the new,

if we want

to genuinely solve this most difficult problem of all, then we have

to rely on the small scenario. Or even the microscenario. Or even the minutest of directions. The smaller it is, the more accurate and complete it should be. And the more accurate and complete we make it, the more difficult it is to make it. Nonetheless, it is vital to complete such scenarios.

Because once they are completed,

then the cameramen themselves (each in his own way) attempt to take down, in their notes, preliminary schemes of the subject, sometimes making notes in the text of the subject, sometimes in film direction, sometimes in accurate scenario plans.

One may say:

Not every cameraman is a specialist. Many of our comrades need assistance. But can they not be helped by our young, energetic specialists?

We have a new group of young men and women, blooming, strong, fiery, and talented.

There are many specialists among them.

Why shouldn't they, with their fiery vigor, kindle the flames of enthusiasm in our old specialists?

Why shouldn't our young scenario writers (arm in arm with the cameramen) discover the secrets of small scenario writing for film subjects?

Why shouldn't they become authors of small film novels?

Why shouldn't they take up this basic task, if it really is basic?

Maybe only young people have the right to make the first steps in this direction?

Maybe my thoughts on this are not very clear. My comrades should correct me, and make my ideas clearer.

The point of this whole thing is this: Is there in all that I've said a useful grain of truth?

Is there within it even some noticeable approximation of truth?

Use of these ideas in practice will give us the answer.

Thus, if the small scenario actually does become the key that will open doors to a new quality of subject, then I will have the right to say to myself:

Practice has shown that my assumptions were not wrong or useless.

And practice is the criterion of truth.

### Creative Plans, Testimonials, Ideas

1. If *Kino-Pravda* is truth shown by means of the cinematic eye, then a shot of the banker will only be true if we can tear the mask from him, if behind his mask we can see the thief.

2. The only way we can divest him of his mask is by concealed observation, by concealed photography: that is, by means of hidden cameras, supersensitive film and light-sensitive lenses, infrared film for night and evening shooting, noiseless cameras. Constant readiness of the camera for filming. Immediate shooting of a perceived object.

Not in the theater, but in life, the thief plays the role of the cashier in order to rob the cash register. Or else the confidence man plays the role of a doting suitor to seduce and, then, rob a woman. Or else the hustler plays the simpleton in order to fool his victim. Or else the prostitute plays the-girl-with-a-bow to make a fool of the nincompoop. Or else the hypocrite, the flatterer bureaucrat, the spy, the bigot, the blackmailer, the contriver, etc., who hide their thoughts while playing one role or another, take their masks off only when no one can see them or hear them. To show them without their masks on—what a difficult task that is, but how rewarding.

3. All this when a man plays someone else's role in life. But if we take a professional actor, playing a role in the theater, to film him through the "Kino-Eye" would be to show the agreement or disagreement between the man and the actor, the correspondence or lack of correspondence between his words and his thoughts, etc. I am reminded of one actor who was playing in one of the old silent films. Dying from wounds in front of the camera, showing suffering on his body and face, he was at the same time telling an anecdote which was amusing everyone—apparently showing off his ability to act while not feeling the emotions he was portraying. If the convulsions of the wounded man could have been recorded for sound, then in place of moans we would hear, to our astonishment, something directly opposite to what we were seeing on the screen: words with double meaning, jokes, giggling . . .

Apparently, the actor had to die so many times before the camera that it had become automatic; he did not have to use his mind to act. His mind was free to tell jokes. This—the ability to dissimulate, to affect two identities—seemed quite disgusting to me at the time.

To show Ivanov in the role of Petrov, as seen through the "Kino-Eye," would be to show him as a man in life and as an actor on the stage; not trying to pass off acting on the stage as life, and vice versa. Complete clarity. Not Petrov in front of you, but Ivanov playing the role of Petrov.

4. If a fake apple and a real apple are filmed so that one cannot be distinguished from the other on the screen, this is not ability, but incompetence—inability to photograph.

The real apple has to be filmed in such a way that no counterfeit

can be possible. The real apple can be tasted and eaten, while the artificial one cannot—a good cameraman can understand this easily.

### Films About Women

I am a film writer. A cinepoet. I do not write on paper, but on film. As with every writer, I have to make work notes. Observations. Not on paper, however, but on film. Together with longer poems, I write short novels, sketches, verse. Many writers took their heroes from real life. For instance, *Anna Karenina* was based on the life of one of Pushkin's daughters. I thought about recording on film the history of Marya Demchenko from the life of Marya Demchenko. The difference was that I could not write on film events that had already occurred. I can only write simultaneously, as the events are occurring. I cannot write about the meeting of the Komsomol after it has taken place. And I cannot, like some correspondents, write an article on events, on spectacles, on carnivals several days after they have taken place. I do not demand that the cameraman be at the scene of a fire two hours before it breaks out. But I cannot permit that he go to film a fire a week after the fire has gone out. I received permission to film a Kolkhoz meeting, to film Demchenko, and soon, from the directors when there was already nothing to film. This we used to call "directorial permission."

Now I am working on films about the woman. This is not one subject, but a series of themes. These films will be about a school-girl, about a girl at home, about a mother and child, about abortion, about the creative female youth, about the differences between our girls and those abroad, about recreation and work, about the first steps and first words of a child, about the infant girl, about the teenage girl, about the mature woman and the old woman . . .

I will also write about specific people, living and working. My selection of people may be planned. I will film the development of the man from diapers to old age. All this will be possible only with organization of the endless research, filming and editing work. The endless process of taking creative notes on film. The endless process of observation with camera in hand.

Some sort of workshop or laboratory should be started where one could work under special conditions—conditions where creative thoughts and organizational forms would not conflict and nullify each other.

1944

Translated from the Russian by Val Telberg



## Kino-Eye, Lecture I

*note*  
The history of Kino-Eye has been a relentless struggle to modify the course of world cinema, to place in cinematic production a new emphasis on the "unplayed" film over the played film, to substitute the document for *mise en scène*, to break out of the proscenium of the theater and to enter the arena of life itself.

Let me attempt to sum up the results obtained in this direction by the Kino-Eye.

1. The manifesto of the "Kinoks" on the cinema, free from the actors, was published and later developed and popularized in a number of articles and in several public discussions.

2. In order to confirm the contents of the manifesto, there were produced and exhibited about 100 films without actors. These were of a wide variety, from primitive newsreels to extremely complex documentary films of the "cinethings." We can cite, for example, the *Weekly Reels*, *History of the Civil War*, *Calendars of Goskinof*, and the *Cine-Translations*. Outstanding among those films, which were responsible for heavy blows at the theatrical cinema, must be mentioned: *The Struggle Under Tzarism*, *Life Caught Unaware*, *Lenin's Truth*, *Forward Soviets!*, *The Sixth Part of the World*, *The Eleventh Year*, and, finally, *The Man with the Movie Camera*. Among the films produced by some of my pupils may be mentioned: *Moscow Nursery*, *For the Harvest*, *A Holiday for Millions*.

3. We have developed a language, proper to the cinema, special methods of shooting and montage, which are not those of the enacted film. The language of the film has become absolutely distinct from that of the theater and literature. We have created the conception of documentary cinematography.

4. We have established an experimental studio for the recording of facts, and later *Pravda* on July 24, 1926, published plans for a "factory of unplayed film," a "factory of facts," that is to say, pure documentary.

5. At an open meeting that took place in Moscow in 1924, followers of Kino-Eye revealed the existence of a directive by Lenin that pointed out the necessity of changing the proportion of fact-films on film programs. Finding support in this directive, the followers of Kino-Eye declared that they demanded an immediate reorganization of all Soviet film production and exhibition; they requested an internal apportionment, that is to say, a certain proportion between the theatrical cinema, the enacted film, the cine-plaything on the one hand, and, on the other, the cinema which is not played, the cine-eye, the fact-film.

This proposal was boldly called the "Leninist Film Proportion." Attempts were made to publish the proposal in the cinematographic press. N. Lebedev, the editor-in-chief of the only movie magazine appearing at that time, *Kino-Journal*, returned the manuscript to me, declaring that he protested the term "Leninist Film Proportion" and that he was against this attempt to utilize an "accidental" phrase by Lenin, and to present it as a sort of testimonial directive. The proposal of the "kinoks," rejected by the cinema press, was nevertheless published later by *Pravda* on the 16th of August, 1925. The very term itself, "Leninist Film Proportion," was not current for very long, and it is only today, in 1929, that it has been taken up again.

6. Kino-Eye has exerted considerable influence on the theatrical film, the language of which it has modified. More and more, our cinema has borrowed the methods of Kino-Eye, superficially, at least, to create what is known as the "art" film. We cite as examples *Strike*, *Potemkin*, and others. These borrowings have been sufficient to arouse attention and have created quite a stir at home as well as abroad in the domain of the theatrical, enacted film.

Nevertheless, these directed films, the methods of which were superficially taken from Kino-Eye, present only a particular and incidental facet of the Kino-Eye movement, the spread of which continued uninterrupted.

7. Kino-Eye has exerted a considerable influence on almost all the arts, notably in the sphere of music and literature. We will recall here that in their manifesto of the unplayed film, the exponents of Kino-Eye asked workers in the word, workers in letters, to initiate the oral chronicle, radio chronicle. We recall that following this, in *Pravda* in 1925, N. Ossinski asked that literature engage itself upon the road traced by Kino-Eye, that is to say, that it attempts to present facts—documentary elements—in an organic form.

"Vertov is right," wrote O. Brik in *Soviet Cinema*, No. 2, 1926, and he demanded of photography that it follow the example set by Kino-Eye. "It is necessary to get out of the circle of ordinary human vision; reality must be recorded not by imitating it, but by broadening the circle ordinarily encompassed by the human eye."

In their earliest declarations on the subject of the sound film, which was not yet even invented then but which was soon to come, the Kinoks, who now call themselves the "Radioks," that is, followers of Radio-Eye, traced their path as leading from the Kino-Eye to the Radio-Eye; in other words, leading to the sound Kino-Eye transmitted by radio.

A few years ago I wrote an article entitled "The Radio-Eye" which appeared in *Pravda* under the general heading "Kino-Pravda and Radio-Pravda." I stated in that article that Radio-Eye was a means of abolishing distances between men, that it offered an opportunity for the workers of the world not only to see themselves, but to hear themselves SYNCHRONOUSLY.

The declaration of the "Kinoks" provoked at the time most passionate discussions in the press. I remember a long article by Fevzelski, "Tendencies in Art and Radio-Eye." I recall a special publication, *Radio*, which devoted one of its issues exclusively to Radio-Eye.

The followers of Kino-Eye, not confining themselves solely to the development of the unplayed film, were preparing themselves to work on the Radio-Eye, the talking and sound film without the play of actors.

Already in *The Sixth Part of the World*, the subtitles are replaced by an oral theme, by a radio theme, contrapuntally adapted to the film. *The Eleventh Year* is already constructed like a visual and sonal cine-thing, that is to say, that the montage was done in relation not only to the eye, but also to the ear.

It is in the same direction, in passing from Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye, that our film *The Man with the Movie Camera* was mounted.

The theoretical and practical work of the kinoks-radioks (differing in this respect from theatrical cinematography, which has found itself caught off-guard) have run ahead of their technical possibilities and, for a long time, have been awaiting a technical basis the advent of which will be late, in relation to Kino-Eye; they await the Sound-Cine and Television.

Recent technical acquisitions in this area lend powerful arms to the partisans and workers of *documentary sound cinergraphy* in their struggle for a revolution in the cinema, for the abolition of play, for an October of Kino-Eye.

From the montage of visual facts recorded on film (Kino-Eye) we pass to the montage of visual and acoustic facts transmitted by radio (Radio-Eye).

We shall go from there to the simultaneous montage of visual-acoustic-tactile-olfactory facts, etc.

We shall then reach the stage where we will surprise and record human thoughts, and, finally

we shall reach to the greatest experiments of direct organization of thoughts (and consequently of actions) of all mankind.

Such are the technical perspectives of Kino-Eye, born of the October Revolution.

(Excerpts from a lecture given in Paris in 1929)

## KINO-EYE, LECTURE II

Kino-Eye is a victory against time. It is a visual link between phenomena separated from one another in time. Kino-Eye gives a condensation of time, and also its decomposition.

Kino-Eye offers the possibility of seeing the living processes in a temporally arbitrary order and following a chosen rhythm, the speed of which the human eye would not otherwise be able to follow.

Kino-Eye avails itself of all the current means of recording ultra-rapid motion, microcinematography, reverse motion, multiple exposure, foreshortening, etc., and does not consider these as tricks, but as normal processes of which wide use must be made.

Kino-Eye makes use of all the resources of montage, drawing together and linking the various points of the universe in a chronological or anachronistic order, as one wills, by breaking, if necessary, with the laws and customs of the construction of cine-thing.

In introducing itself into the apparent chaos of life, the Kino-Eye tries to find in life itself an answer to the questions it poses: To find the correct and necessary line among the millions of phenomena that relate to the theme.

### Montage and a Few Principles of Kino-Eye

To make a montage is to organize pieces of film, which we call the frames, into a cine-thing. It means to write something cinematic with the recorded shots. It does not mean to select pieces to make "scenes" (deviations of a theatrical character), nor does it mean to arrange pieces according to subtitles (deviations of a literary character).

Every Kino-Eye production is mounted on the very day that the subject (theme) is chosen, and this work ends only with the launching of the film into circulation in its definitive form. In other words, montage takes place from the beginning to the end of production.

Montage being thus understood, we can distinguish three periods:

*First period:* The "Montage Evaluation" of all the documents that are directly or indirectly related to the chosen theme (manuscripts, various objects, film clippings, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, etc.). As a result of this montage, which consists in picking and grouping the most precious documents or those simply useful, the plan indicated by the theme becomes crystallized, appears more evident, more distinct, more defined.

*Second period:* "Montage Synthesis" of the human eye concerning the selected theme (montage of personal observation or of re-