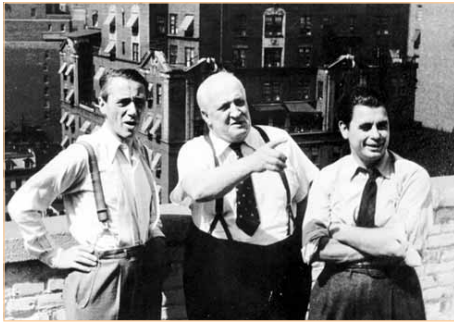


project had finally collapsed altogether. Initially he was hoping to get a job in a film laboratory so as to acquaint himself with this side of the film profession but when Ivens invited him to come and work for him on 14th September 1929, Hin did not hesitate for one minute, even if the wages offered to him were minimal.¹⁰ Within a fortnight he was knocking on Ivens' door.

Assisting Ivens

The idea was for Hin to assist Ivens during the shooting and, later, the editing of WIJ BOUWEN (WE ARE BUILDING). This was a feature length documentary, commissioned by the Dutch construction workers' trade union (Algemene Nederlandse Bouwarbeidersbond). Ivens stated that: 'The central theme was the professional pride of the building workers. This was essentially the old guild idea: the pride and importance of a man who works with his hands, who builds factories,



Hans Richter, Robert Flaherty and Joris Ivens in New York, 1940. Photo Helen van Dongen Collection Joris Ivens Archive / EFJI

houses, schools and dams. The pride of labour in itself, in its results and its function in society, and the feeling of dignity, solidarity, and force that comes through that pride.¹¹ Ivens and his colleagues filmed, amongst others, pile driving (resulting in a short film, released separately as HEIEN), the work on the new headquarters of the *Telegraaf* newspaper in Amsterdam, and the building of the dykes to close off the Zuiderzee (also released as a separate film, ZUIDERZEEWERKEN). Hin was soon asked to take over part of the film on his own. This became the short film IMPRESSIES UIT EEN STEENHOUWERIJ (IMPRESSIONS FROM A STONEMASONRY), which was not included in the final version of WIJ BOUWEN, but was screened separately by the Filmliga early in 1930. A film critic of the *NRC* newspaper commended the film highly: 'The short film only contains a fugue of remarkable shots of machines, cutting through the frame, edited in an almost musical rhythm, rich in lights and shadows on the steel, on the stone and on the trickling water.¹² While Ivens left for a lengthy trip through the Soviet Union after the premiere of WIJ BOUWEN in January 1930, he kept encouraging Hin through a number of letters, and even recommended which particular 35mm equipment to purchase.¹³

After his return in April 1930, Ivens had a job for Hin to do. He had sold a number of Dutch avant-garde films to the Russians. This transaction had to be dealt with by the Soviet Trade Delegation in Berlin. As he knew the Berlin film world only too well, Hin was the right man to travel to the German capital and take care of the production of the film prints for DE BRUG (THE BRIDGE, 1928), REGEN (RAIN, 1929), ZUIDERZEEWERKEN (1930), HEIEN (PILE DRIVING, 1929) and MOL'S KRISTALLEN (CRYSTALS, 1928) and their delivery to the Soviet Trade Delegation.¹⁴ It is not known whether Hin became aware of the escalating political situation in Berlin. But a year later he was directly confronted with it -

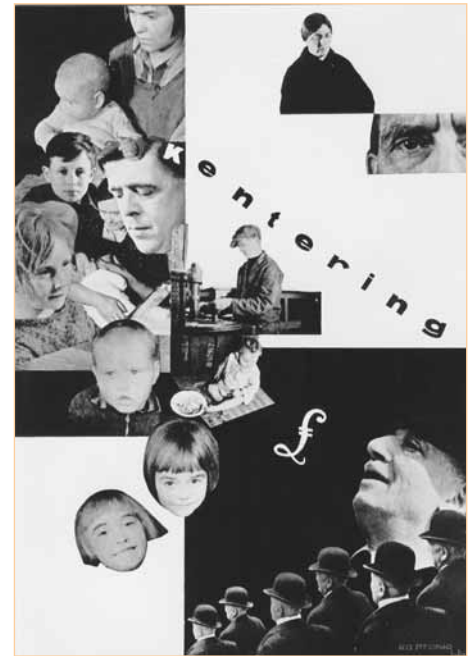
the Berliner with whom he had stayed in 1929 sent him a letter, in which he proudly announced that he had been appointed film critic of *Der Angriff*, a Nazi newspaper founded by Joseph Goebbels. Convinced that the Dutchman would appreciate this, he enclosed a cutting from *Der Angriff*, in which he praised the young filmmakers in the Netherlands, as they were making films without the help of 'Jewish businessmen.'¹⁵ However, it is doubtful whether Hin actually sent him the ten Guilders that he had asked for, in order to gain some respite from his creditors.

Studio Joris Ivens

When the Studio Joris Ivens was launched in the Autumn of 1930, Jan Hin was inevitably one of those involved. Other members included Capi staff members Helen van Dongen and Joop Huisken, free-lancers Willem Bon, Mark Kolthoff, Lou Lichtveld, Hans Wolf, Frans Dupont, John Fernhout, and the Frenchmen Eli Lotar and Jean Dréville. The idea for the Studio Ivens was that the name of the director of THE BRIDGE and RAIN would be a guarantee for quality in the eyes of potential commissioning bodies. The first client had already presented itself in the form of the Nederlandse Uitgeversbond (Dutch Association of Publishers), providing a commission to allow Willem Bon to direct HET BOEK (THE BOOK) soon after the Studio opened. There was talk of a Studio Ivens production that Hin would direct together with Ivens to cover the anniversary celebrations of the Union of Rotterdam Women Students, but for financial reasons the project was cancelled.¹⁶ But in June 1931 Capi asked Hin to help on a film about the Bouvigne Castle near Breda.¹⁷ During one of his trips, Capi sales representative Joop Huisken had a conversation with Professor L. Frenken, director of a centre for the catholic youth belonging to the Eucharistic Cross Association, where film shows were regularly held with projection equipment obtained from Capi. Professor Frenken told Huisken of the forthcoming consecration of the Bouvigne Castle near Breda as a holiday home for the Catholic Youth Movement KJV. He asked the Capi representative whether it would be possible to make a film of this event and how much this was going to cost. Back in Amsterdam, Huisken reported the matter to his superiors, who were immediately thinking of Hin as the person to make the film. Dr. Wim Ivens, Joris's brother, quoted 'an exceptionally low price' for the KJV.¹⁸

On 27th and 28th June 1931, Jan Hin, a catholic, and his Studio Ivens colleague Mark Kolthoff, a Communist, were in Breda to record both the activities prior to the event and the consecration itself. As many as 1,800 young girls had come from all parts of the Netherlands to add lustre to the event. A couple of weeks later Hin returned with his younger brother Toon to shoot some additional material. In August 1931, the KJV FILM was handed over to Professor Frenken. In half an hour the film showed that girls of different backgrounds belonged to the KJV, followed by coverage of the consecration and ending with footage of girls enjoying their holiday in Bouvigny Castle. The film adds little to the artistic legacy of Hin and Kolthoff, but one must assume that the KJV was happy with the result, as some months later a second print was ordered.¹⁹

In the meantime, Hin had also started a career as an independent filmmaker. The Catholic Association for Combating Tuberculosis 'Herwonnen Levenskracht'



Film poster for Jan Hin's *A Turn of Tide* (1932). Design Kees Strooband



Joris Ivens, Jan Hin and Helen van Dongen on a roof at Ivens' apartment Het Singel, Amsterdam



At home in the top of a mast of a sailing boat, climbing this fire ladder in order to film a demonstration of the Catholic Trade Union Movement in September 1931 posed no problem to Jan Hin



Jan shooting on his boat 'The White-tailed Eagle', (1936)