

THE

ivens

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in this edition :

Ivens and Hemingway

ALEX VERNON, STACEY GUILL, DAN MILLER
AND SUZANNE CLARK, NICOLAS BLAYO

International avant-garde and the Chinese National Anthem

LIANG LUO

Joop Huisken

GÜNTER JORDAN



3 **Joris Ivens Award**

CINÉMA DU RÉEL

5 **From Shanghai with Love**

WORLD EXPO SHANGHAI

14 **Joris Ivens
as I know him**

FU HONGXING

25 **Ivens sculpture in Paris**

BRYAN McCORMACK

42 **Ivens and Chile**

TIZIANA PANIZZA

43 **Ivens and Australia**

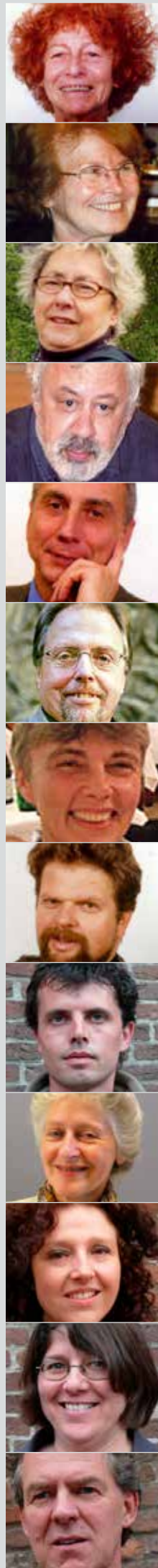
ROBERT HAMILTON

42 **New:
Cinepoem Competition**

RENS VAN MEEGEN

46 **Komsomol and The Giant
and the Builder**

MILENA MICHALSKI



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Joris Ivens and Ernest Hemingway in Hollywood, July 1937
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MAGAZINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Presentation Joris Ivens Award, Cinéma du réel
- 4 Interview René Ballesteros
- 4 Presentation German DVD box, Leipzig,
- 5 Joris Ivens weekend at the Dutch Culture Centre in Shanghai
- 6 International Avant-garde and the Chinese National Anthem: Tian Han, Joris Ivens, and Paul Robeson
LIANG LUO
- 14 Joris Ivens as I know him
FU HONGXING
- 15 Commemoration of 100th birthday Huimin Situ
- 16 The Foundation update
- 18 Hemingway, Ivens and The Spanish Earth
NICOLAS BLAYO, STACEY GUILL, AXEL VERNON, DANIEL MILLER AND SUSANNE CLARK
- 24 Ivens and contemporary art
BRYAN MCCORMACK
- 25 **ANTHONY FREESTONE**
- 26 The film worker Joop Huisken, an almost forgotten colleague and collaborator of Joris Ivens
GÜNTER JORDAN
- 42 First Cinepoem Competition
RENS VAN MEEGEN
- 42 Joris Ivens and Chile
TIZIANA PANIZZA,
- 43 Review Joris Ivens and Australia 'IndonesiaCalling'
ROBERT HAMILTON
- 44 Doc's Kingdom: The Archive Image
RENS VAN MEEGEN
- 46 Construction and reconstruction: Komsomol and The Giant and the Builder
MILENA MICHALSKI
- 50 New publications
- 52 Short Cuts

AND THE JORIS IVENS AWARD GOES TO...

'Le Prix Joris Ivens' at Cinéma du réel



ANDRÉ STUFKENS

Marceline Loridan-Ivens presenting the Joris Ivens Award to director René Ballesteros on 27 March 2010. Photo © Marion Saltel / Cdr
The audience at the 31th Cinéma du réel award evening. © Gaëlle Delort / Cdr

Javier Packer-Comyn, artistic director. Photo © Marion Saltel / Cdr

Sophie Goupil, president l'Association des Amis du Cinéma du réel. © Marion Saltel / Cdr

SINCE 1978, THE 'CINÉMA DU RÉEL' INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL IN PARIS HAS BEEN AN OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT, WHERE THE PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONALS DISCOVER THE FILMS OF EXPERIENCED AUTHORS AS WELL AS NEW TALENTS, THE HISTORY OF DOCUMENTARY CINEMA AS WELL AS CONTEMPORARY WORKS. THE FESTIVAL PROGRAMMED THIS YEAR 226 FILMS FOR ITS VARIOUS SECTIONS, SCREENED AT THE CENTRE POMPIDOU, THE CENTRE WALLONIE-BRUXELLES, THE MK2 BEAUBOURG FILM THEATRE AND SEVERAL OTHER THEATRES IN THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE AREA.

For decades 'Le Prix Joris Ivens' was granted at this festival, but the 2010 edition of the festival gave a new impulse to this award. Artistic director Javier Packer-Comyn says: 'The timing is perfect. Indeed we launched a new competitive section 'Premiers films / First films' dedicated to young filmmakers. 'Cinéma du réel' presents this new section in order to promote the debuts and the Joris Ivens award as something really important. Next to our main prize this is the most important award. In this section the festival shows the best 'first and second films' of the whole competitive selection of the festival. Both Marceline Loridan-Ivens, the European Foundation Joris Ivens and l'Association des Amis du Cinéma du réel are supporting the new competition with a total grant of 7,500 euro. After all this fits Joris Ivens' ideals, who during his lifetime spent much effort in supporting and encouraging young filmmakers wherever he could.

the new Joris Ivens Award it established an attentive look at the boldest young contemporary creation.

La Quemadura

In the documentary the Chilean director René Ballesteros tells the story of his mother, who disappeared during the dictatorship 26 years ago. It is filmed from the perspective of René and his sister Karin, who at the age of almost 30 are attempting to discover the true reason for their mother's strange disappearance. The film also makes many references to the Chilean publishing house Quimantú, which was born as a project of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular government to make literature more accessible to vulnerable sectors of society. However, its books were burned after the coup d'état, and the few copies that remain add to Ballesteros's story, which uses them to understand the past. Next to the 'Joris Ivens Award' *La Quemadura* did won the Award of Best Filmmaker at the SANFIC Festival (Festival Internacional de Cine de Santiago de Chile) and the First Prize of the Jury in the Original Full-Length Documentary Section at the festival Documenta Madrid.





• René Ballesteros
Filmstill La Quemadura
/ The Burn © R. Ballesteros

Interview René Ballesteros

Can you describe the presentation evening, what did it mean to you personally?

Ballesteros: 'It was an exciting soirée. I was not expecting this at all. It's my first film and the world premiere was at Cinéma du réel. I imagined that people who received awards at festivals, were discreetly advised by the organization. When they began to describe the film that won the Joris Ivens Award and when they spoke of a director who made a film searching for its missing mother it went through my head in a moment that someone had done a movie with the same subject as me and how it was possible that I had not seen this film in the program. When I was asked on stage and stood in front of Marceline Loridan-Ivens I could not believe it. The only thing I managed to say was that it was like in Chronique d'un été. She laughed and said 'but it was almost 50 years ago!'. It was very nice to receive the prize, Joris Ivens means so much to me as a filmmaker as well as the special relationship Ivens had with Chile. And to meet Marceline. Unforgettable.'

Does this price, the Prix Joris Ivens helps you in the next project?

Ballesteros: 'The award for La Quemadura, my first film, a documentary that tried to relate the story of my family with the history of my country and having received this recognition is certainly a driving force, something that makes me confident. For me it means that what I do can be welcomed and appreciated by others.'

Which trends do you see in contemporary documentary?

Ballesteros: 'In contemporary documentary I see not one but many paths. The documentary draws on contemporary fiction, contemporary art, video, and I think that it's a secret source that feeds the fiction. The relationship between documentary and fiction is today, similar to that of poetry and prose.'

What do pioneers and predecessors like Ivens mean to you?

Ballesteros: 'Ivens's work, Michel Brault, Pierre Perrault, the Maysles brothers is indicative of the strength of documentary. I think they are authors who always emphasized both the filmmaker's position as the characters in their movies. They never start from scratch. Their films are about life but also about cinema. And the films of Ivens, for example, is a cinema that is both experience of human desire as cinema in itself. In addition, Joris Ivens had a special relationship with Chile. He supported the creation and reflection in my country. It is a cinema that always takes risks, aesthetic and political. And the risk is a vital component to create. For me, the existence of these authors is a fertile, real presence like good company in this often lonely work.'

What is your next project?

Ballesteros: 'Before making films I worked for several years as a psychologist in southern Chile. I specialized in working with adolescents in prisons and street children. In my next movie I would like to work with youth in prisons in southern Chile, and build a sort of psycho-social horror film. What happens in those environments at the time made me think of a horror movie. And I'd like to do a mix of fiction and documentary, a psychological horror film. It's a risk-taking project, but it's something I want to do.'

DOK-Leipzig

At the 52th DOK Leipzig Documentary Festival the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv presented its 50th Retrospective with an homage to Ivens with 20 films, a publication and debates. Molto Menz (Absolut MEDIEN) launched the German version of the 'Joris Ivens Filmmaker of the World DVD box-set' on 28 October 2009.



- 1- Karl Griep (director Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv), Monica Maurer (filmmaker, interpreter), Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Claas Danielsen (director DOK Leipzig) opening the Ivens retrospective. Photo Monika Kaiser © B-F
- 2- Opening event with Claas Danielsen. © DOK
- 3- The Audience
- 4- DOK Podium, 29 October, a public conversation between Marceline Loridan-Ivens and film critic Ralph Eue.
- 5- Wolfgang Klaue receives a special Ivens DVDbox set from André Stufkens. The German book is dedicated to Klaue, to honour his enormous merits for safeguarding German film art. Photo Monika Kaiser © B-F
- 6- The Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv received for the Ivens retrospective the Award for best archival film programme, presented by the DEFA-Foundation. In the middle Barbara Heinrich-Polte (organizer) and Karl Griep.

FROM SHANGHAI WITH LOVE

Joris Ivens at the World Exhibition



'WE LOVE SHANGHAI...IT'S THE KIND OF BIG CITY WE'RE USED TO. LARGE CROWDS, THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENT STORES. CURIOSITY, CONSTANT MOVEMENT...'...READS THE COMMENTARY TEXT, WRITTEN BY JORIS IVENS AND MARCELINE LORIDAN-IVENS FOR LA PHARMACIE: SHANGHAI / THE DRUGSTORE: SHANGHAI IN 1976.

Since then Shanghai even more rapidly grew into today's vibrant metropolis of 20 Million inhabitants, the largest city of China and the largest port in the world. This year Shanghai hosted the World Exhibition on the banks of the Pudong river, with an expected 70 Million visitors. The Netherlands presented its cultural qualities both on the enormous exhibition site with a Pavillion called 'Happy Street', as well as outside this area downtown Shanghai. Here the Dutch Culture Centre showed an inspiring variety of programmes, among others the Joris Ivensweekend on 9 and 10 July, with the attendance of Marceline Loridan-Ivens.



A long history

Joris Ivens' personal relationship with Shanghai shows a history spanning half a century. Already in 1934 Ivens intended to travel to Shanghai and shoot on location a feature film based on André Malraux's novel 'La condition humaine'. The book dramatized the Communist uprising in 1927, but Ivens' adaptation for screen wasn't realized. However four years later, in Spring 1938, Ivens succeeded in reaching China for the first time. He made *The 400 Million* in which he included footage about the devastating bombardment on Shanghai by the Japanese fascist airforce. Shanghai became the décor of three parts of the *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*-series, where Ivens and Loridan-Ivens during the first months of 1973 captured city life in *An impression of a city: Shanghai*, *The Pharmacy* and *The Generator Factory*. Images of Shanghai also appeared in Ivens/Loridan-Ivens final film in 1988: *A Tale of the Wind*.

Vivid debates

The Dutch Cultural Centre, established in a renovated textile factory, programmed 12 films for an enthusiastic and very keen audience. Marceline Loridan-Ivens was received like a vedette, the deeply felt friendship resulted in applause, gifts, interviews and warm affection. She from her side invited the audience to participate in open vivid debates. 'The images of Shanghai during the Cultural revolution are exactly as I remember this period myself', a man recalled. A woman said: 'The sequences of the pharmacy and post office in are very dear to my mother, because she lived there and all buildings are gone now. These are the only images left'. Another man criticised the wearing of white shirts in *The Football Incident*. According to his memory pupils didn't wear these kind of shirts at that time. Was it manipulated? Marceline Loridan-Ivens spoke sincerely about the production and explained that nothing was re-enacted. No actors were involved and especially the new way of direct filming created this sense of spontaneous reality. It was a hard fight to gain trust and let the people be themselves. But of course every filmmaking needs a 'mise-en-scene', special lighting, compositions etc. For this audience the Yukong-series proofed to be a completely unique testimony of Shanghai in the 1970's. 'We had this intense idea of creating a bridge between East and West, between the Western world and China', Marceline Loridan-Ivens explained about her intentions. This successful Joris Ivens weekend strengthened this bridge.



- The Dutch Culture Centre in Shanghai, 9 July 2010. Design keyvisuals: Walter van Rooij.
- Marceline Loridan-Ivens opening the debate. Photo © Liu Lung Shang
- Marceline Loridan-Ivens and André Stufkens. Photo © Liu Lung Shang
- The audience. Photo © André Stufkens
- The vice-consul general of the Netherlands Marceline Loridan-Ivens with a filmcrew



International Avant-garde and the Chinese National Anthem: TIAN HAN, JORIS IVENS AND PAUL ROBESON

THREE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF 'MARCH OF THE VOLUNTEERS' (YIYONGJUN JINXINGQU), THE FILM SONG THAT BECAME THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AFTER 1949, FRAME THIS ESSAY. THE FIRST, AND THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE SONG, CAME FROM THE 1935 CHINESE FEATURE FILM *LOVERS IN TROUBLED TIMES* (FENGYUN ERNÜ). WRITTEN BY TIAN HAN (1898-1968), WHO HAD INTIMATE CONTACT WITH GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM AND RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDE WHILE SOJOURNING IN TOKYO AND BECAME A LEADING CULTURAL FIGURE IN SHANGHAI AT THE TIME, THE OPENING LYRICS OF THE SONG URGED THE CHINESE TO RISE UP IN FACE OF JAPANESE INVASION.

LIANG LUO

ONE SONG, THREE RENDITIONS

In the original film, the song opens with close-ups on a beating drum and a blowing bugle, and it initiates the music in the style of a military march. A male intellectual and a young girl lead the crowd: their faces in close-ups, glowing with determination and happiness. Their mixed voice singing, especially the male voice, dominates the whole song. Everyone, men or women, young or old, marches on to fight the Japanese in a resolute unison, as shown in repeated close-ups on their marching feet.

Three years later, in Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens' (1898-1989)

documentary *The 400 Million* shot on location in China in 1938, it is this popular film song that was heard accompanying the raising of the flag of the Republic of China. 'March of the Volunteers,' again sung by a chorus of mixed voice, permeates a tightly edited one-minute sequence linking a series of activities: an opening shot of the back of two military band members with their Sousaphones, a low angle shot of the rising Nationalist flag cuts to a group of men gazing up towards it, female students in Red Cross uniform shouting 'long live the Republic of China' leads to a chorus

leader rhythmically conducting a group of students singing, and actors tearing down Japanese flag and shouting slogans with raised fists replaced by a young girl on an elevated platform passionately urging her audience to donate money and join up to fight the Japanese on the warfront.¹ Another three years later, Paul Robeson (1898-1976), the African American singer, actor, athlete, and activist, recorded 'Chee Lai: Songs of New China' with a Chinese chorus in New York in 1941. 'Chee Lai,' or 'Arise,' was the first line of 'March of the Volunteers,' and Robeson sang the song first in Chinese, and then in English. The English translation was reportedly translated by the then exiled Chinese conductor Liu Liangmo, in consultation with Tian Han, writer of the original lyrics, though it is likely that Robeson himself also contributed to some of the wording, including adding keywords such as 'freedom' and 'democracy,' which was hinted but never explicitly stated in the Chinese original. Robeson would sing 'March of the Volunteers' on many more occasions since the release of the 1941 album, and his live performance at the World Peace Conference in April 1949 in Prague, might have even contributed to the song being designated as the temporary National Anthem of the People's Public of China at its founding in October 1949.

From the 1935 Shanghai film song to the 1938 soundtrack of a documentary film made by a Dutch filmmaker from Hollywood,² from the singing of the same song in both Chinese and English by an African American actor and activist in the United States in 1941 to the spread of the song in Europe in early 1949, this cluster of voices and images suggest that the production, circulation, and consumption of 'March of the Volunteers' and the making of the film song into the Chinese National Anthem had as much to do with the joint effort of an international avant-garde as with the rise of nationalism in Chinese politics.

THE INTERNATIONAL AVANT-GARDE

I emphasize the connection between the interwar international avant-garde and the future Chinese national anthem through the figures of three men: the Chinese writer of the film story and lyrics of the song, Tian Han, the Dutch filmmaker who used the song three times in his documentary, Joris Ivens, and the powerful singer and propagator of the song in both Chinese and English, Paul Robeson. They represent the diversity and interconnectedness of the interwar international avant-garde, from China, Europe, and the United States.

What do I mean by 'international avant-garde,' anyway? From Poggioli to Calinescu, and from Bürger to Murphy,³ the idea of the 'avant-garde' has been defined and redefined throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In the context of 'March of the Volunteers,' the male intellectual and the young girl were indeed the 'avant-gardes,' in the sense that they were charging ahead as 'vanguards,' leading the other volunteers in their military march. Related to the military origin of the concept of the 'avant-garde,' I am also highlighting its association with utopian socialism. French utopian socialist Saint Simon first used the term in the sense of art as social engineering. The politics of the avant-garde was further emphasized when German philosopher Hegel referred to the avant-garde as 'the first teacher of the people,' and the 19th century witnessed realists and artists like Van Gogh and their commitments to society and their increasing self-identification as artistic Messiahs. The disaster of World War I made possible the rebirth of artists as visionaries and prophets of the new age. And the radicalization of the avant-garde in the twentieth and thirties culminated in the Spanish Civil War, a 'war of artists.'⁴ This leads us to the mid-1930s moment in the de-

velopment of the international avant-garde, the moment when 'March of the Volunteers' was born in China. Tian Han, Joris Ivens, and Paul Robeson were all born in 1898, as well as the German composer Hanns Eisler who composed for Ivens' *The 400 Million*, and the German playwright Bertolt Brecht who wrote lyrics for Ivens and wrote plays on China. The Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, whose *Battleship Potemkin* came to represent the Russian avant-garde and had direct influence on both Tian Han and Joris Ivens, was also born in 1898; as well as the Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, who was the key reason that Ivens frequently returned to China to film for over half a century from 1938 to 1988. All of them belong to the generation who came of age in post-WWI Berlin, Tokyo, Paris, New York, Amsterdam, and Shanghai.

Hailing from the Dutch city of Nijmegen, Joris Ivens began studies at the Technical University in Berlin in 1921. He frequented theatres, art galleries, and other cultural venues. Germaine Krull was Ivens' 'Red Salome,' as the Russian-educated An E was to Tian Han.⁵ Ivens and Krull met in the spring of 1923, and the former radical revolutionary introduced him to the Romanische Café, where the Expressionists and revolutionaries both gather in post-WWI Berlin.⁶

Germaine Krull was Ivens' 'Red Salome,' as the Russian-educated An E was to Tian Han

When Ivens returned from study in Berlin and found Film-liga in Amsterdam with like-minded friends in 1927, Tian Han had spent six years studying in Tokyo from 1916 to 1922. As an eighteen-year-old in 1916, Tian found himself situated in an overwhelming and exciting cultural environment: he frequented modern drama performances, especially Western adaptations, and was first introduced to the 'dream



Tian Han, Joris Ivens and Paul Robeson, all born in 1898.

world' of Hollywood and European films. He claimed to have become a 'cinema fan' the first year in Tokyo. He was in close contact with the earliest development of Japanese filmmaking, especially the Taihatsu, where Thomas Kurihara, an actor and director returned from Hollywood, worked side by side with Tanizaki Jun'ichirō in their endeavor to develop a 'pure' Japanese cinema as a reaction against Hollywood, in the same fashion as Joris Ivens and Tian himself came to declare in Amsterdam and Shanghai around 1927.

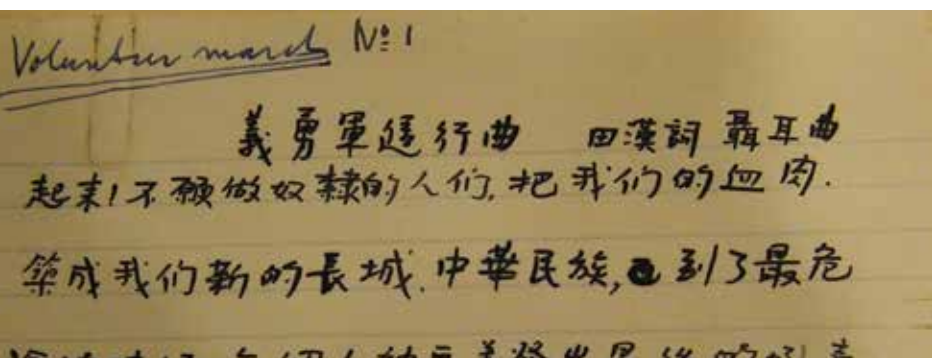
A son of a runaway slave, Paul Robeson raised the issue of race and called for a New Idealism in his 1919 commencement oration at Rutgers University. His remarks on the WWI presented a powerful statement of self-determination, 'a new vision and a new American spirit,'⁷ which corresponded with what Tian Han wrote in 1919 linking Whitman and Wilson in a democratic vision of a new Americanism.⁸ From 1919 to 1926, Robeson reveled in the excitement of the unfolding

Zhao Weimin, Nanjing Road, from a series of Views of Shanghai, after 1932. Coll. Shanghai History Museum.



Paul Robeson singing

- Paul Robeson singing
- Joris Ivens, film still from *The 400 Million*. © JIA/EFJI
- Ivens' personal note with Chinese text of 'Volunteer March', 1938. Coll. Joris Ivens Archives.
- Pathé record of 'The March of the Volunteers', 1935
- The score of 'March of the Volunteers'



Harlem Renaissance. He was introduced to the best of the Greenwich Village bohemian artists in the same fashion as Tian Han was at the center of a bohemian artistic circle in Shanghai in 1926. Robeson's rescuing 'Negro Spirituals' as folk music suitable for concert performance was comparable to Tian Han's reforming Chinese local operas throughout their careers. James Joyce, Ernst Hemingway, and Langston Hughes were among the admirers of Robeson's concert performances as well as his records.⁹ More important, Paul Robeson came to represent the political engagement of the avant-garde as he increased his intimate contact with Labor Party activists in Britain in the late 1920s.¹⁰ Throughout the 1930s, Robeson's racial identification with his own black cultural roots led him to use China as a model for Africa, and after his experience in Spain and his exposure to the Soviet Union, and his contacts with the Chinese resistance movements during the WWII, he came to increasingly identify with a powerful revolutionary internationalism.¹¹ The interwar international avant-garde and their shared identification with Soviet Union and China as alternative cultural resources against the decaying of bourgeois societies originated in a cluster of shared cultural texts: Swedish playwright August Strindberg influenced both Joris Ivens and Tian Han greatly, and his *Ghost Sonata* was on stage with Provincetown Players during Paul Robeson's association with Eugene O'Neill and the Players. Strindberg's *A Dream Play* was playing in Berlin in 1921 by Max Reinhardt's company and Ivens recorded his excitement of seeing it.¹² Around the same time, Tian Han was creating one of his very first stage plays in Tokyo. He inserted a 'dream scene' in his three-scene play 'The Holy Light' (originally entitled *Female Faust*), where the female protagonist Meili (Chinese transliteration of Mary) was lead by Mephistopheles to bear witness to the suffering of the refugees, in a similar fashion as the Christ-like female protagonist Agnes was lead to experience in *A Dream Play*.¹³ Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* premiered in Berlin and Tokyo almost simultaneously in the early 1920s, and Sergei Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* was shown by Tian Han in Shanghai in 1926, and by Ivens' group after its founding in Amsterdam in 1927.¹⁴ In the same year, Tian Han founded Nanguo Film and Drama Institute to make his first film *V Narod (To The People)* with a Russian and Germanic motif in Shanghai. Joris Ivens was associated with a group of artistic friends in Berlin, Amsterdam and Paris around the same time, who agreed about notions of anti-bourgeois morals and the desire for innovation. Hendrik Marsman was the Tian Han figure in this group, who wrote, 'Art and life are one, undivided and undistinguished.'¹⁵ This attitude of social involvement is something Joris Ivens, Paul Robeson, and Tian Han remained loyal to all their lives, with the latter advocating 'the artification of life' in their daily practices in Shanghai.

Both Joris Ivens and Tian Han were deeply influenced by trends in Russian literature and Soviet cinema. Gorki's

novel *Mother* influenced both, though Tian was mainly influenced by the original story and rewrote it as a one-act play in Shanghai,¹⁶ while Ivens was mainly influenced by Pudovkin's film adaptation of the original story. The October Revolution had ushered in a period of cultural freedom in which Futurists, Suprematists, Constructivists and other avant-gardists experimented with film, theater, music, literature and the visual arts, this had profound impact on Joris Ivens and Tian Han as early as in the late 1910s and on Paul Robeson in the late 1920s. Amidst the fever of all the cultural experimentations, the rise of sound as a dominating feature on screen in the global film industry and the mechanical reproduction and circulation of film songs brought about revolutionary effects. Joris Ivens' documentary *Philips Radio* became the first Dutch film with sound in 1931. He also joined the Communist Party of Holland in the same year. Tian Han joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1932, and went on to write some of the most popular screen songs in the mid 1930s. Although Paul Robeson was never a Communist Party member, his sympathy with the common people, originated in his humble beginning, intensified during his concert tours in Britain around 1928 to 1929. Hence the conversations between the making and propagating of a popular film song, the shared experience of an interwar international avant-garde, and the radicalization of the artists worked hand in hand.

TIAN HAN AND THE MAKING OF A POPULAR FILM SONG

It is thus important to step back and trace the conception of the song and its initial circulation through print, record, radio, and film, and how such processes were closely linked to an international milieu of interwar avant-garde centered on the figure of Tian Han in Shanghai in the mid 1930s. Written by Tian Han as two short stanzas of an unfinished epic poem in a film story in January 1935, the simple and colloquial expressions in the lyrics contain some of the most 'catchy' phrases of the time. Expressions such as 'Great Wall made of flesh and blood' (*xuerou changcheng*), 'final outcry' (*zuihou de housheng*), as well as 'ten thousand with one mind' (*wanzhong yixin*),¹⁷ both consolidated images widely circulating in the popular imaginary, and further established their canonical status in the Chinese national imagination.

Composed by a young composer Nie Er, the music, was 'a good example of what some musicians are trying to do now—that is, in brief, to copy the good points from Western music without impairing or losing our own national color,' according to the author of a New York Times article and the Chinese editor of a 1939 bilingual songbook, in which this song was included. 'This stirring 'cry of pain and rage' spread over the country like fire,' the editor wrote in his explanatory notes.¹⁸

The film, from which the song originated, was made by Denton Film Company in Shanghai in 1935. The company was first founded to sale sound recording equipments, specifically the domestically produced Sanyou recording machine.

It was taken over by the then underground Communist Party, and a film company was established in 1934. The party connection has always framed the story of the Denton Film Company ideologically, while glossing over other important aspects such as technology, market, and profit, all of which can be linked to the development of an international network of talented artists and activists.

At the time of writing the story for the Denton film, Tian Han was head of the Music Group of the 'Soviet Friends Society,' a United Front style organization initiated by Madame Sun Yat-Sen and Tian himself in early 1933. Ren Guang, An E, and Nie Er were among the initial members of the group. Nie Er, the talented young composer for 'March of the Volunteers,' died under unclear circumstances in Japan on his way to the Soviet Union in 1935. Ren Guang, a returned student from France, at the time the music director at the French-American music giant Pathé-EMI, who lived in a Western villa, equipped with piano and high quality radio, provided not only a space for the gathering of the Music Group, but also the necessary technical facility for their direct communication with Soviet music via short wave broadcast. An E, the Russian-educated female writer who later became Tian Han's wife, had joined Ren Guang at the music department of Pathé-EMI in 1933, and collaborated with him on one of the first screen hit songs in China. Hence the people involved in the Music Group were also part of the international avant-garde occupying important industrial positions in Shanghai at the time. The popularity of film songs made the Music Group a core institution in reaching out to the masses: Liu Liangmo, the future active campaigner for mass-singing through the Shanghai Y.M.C.A. who taught Paul Robeson to sing 'Chee Lai' in Chinese, was also a member of this group in 1935.

'March of the Volunteers' was central to the making of the film, as Denton Company was determined to make the song a market success even before the film premier so as to attract more audience. He Luting, sound director at Denton, was entrusted with the task of arranging instrumental accompaniment for the song. At He's invitation, Russian composer Aaron Avshalomov, whose creative life was lived essentially in China, from 1918 to 1947, composed the orchestra

Shanghai and Man's Fate

The first attempt of Joris Ivens to create a film in China was not in 1938, but already four years earlier. After French novelist André Malraux published his novel *Le condition humaine (Man's fate, 1933)*, for which he received Le prix Goncourt, Ivens and Malraux decided to adapt the novel to a screenplay. *Le condition humaine* depicted the 1927 Communist uprising in Shanghai and the party's later disintegration in a purge and massacre led by its ally Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist forces. At first a French film producer was interested, but the project was soon cancelled. Later on the Mezrapbhom Studios in Moscow took over. Although being a fiction film it was Ivens' desire and plan to travel to Shanghai and film it on the spot. It would deepen the realistic, documentary approach. Later on there were negotiations with Meyerhold's theatre group who wanted to adapt the novel to a theatre play. Also Skljjoet, the script writer of Eisenstein, became involved and he wrote a script. At the end all attempts led to nothing. Decades later other attempts by Zimmerman, Bertolucci and others also failed.



accompaniments to 'March of the Volunteers' in May 1935. In the same month, an elaborate advertisement campaign started on the popular Shanghai newspaper Shenbao. A full-page print advertisement listed Seto Waiman (Situ Huimin), Communist party member, filmmaker, and cousin of Situ Yimin, an American-educated engineer who helped create the sound recording device, as one of the sound recording technicians, and He Luting as in charge of musical accompaniments. It also reported that Ren Guang, the music director at Pathé-EMI, had recorded 'March of the Volunteers' sung by the Denton chorus members on May 9, 1935. Hence the advertisement also contained a short line advertising this gramophone record.

From an unfinished poem to a full-fledged film song with highly sophisticated instrumental accompaniment, the making of 'March of the Volunteers' was an essential component of the making of the 1935 film hit. Though orchestrated by Denton Film Company, itself an enterprise based on the newly invented sound recording device and supported by the underground Communist party, this 'chorus' could not have been formed without the coordinated effort from all the technical, musical, and commercial personnel involved. Many of the 'singers' and 'actors' in this 'chorus' were closely associated with the post-WWI international avant-garde and had a keen sense of product marketing in a media society.

I have found multiple connections with Joris Ivens throughout the process of the making and further propagating of 'March of the Volunteers.' Situ Huimin, one of the sound-recording technicians for the original film song, would become a close contact in China for Joris Ivens in the 1950s.¹⁹



- Film Poster for *Lovers in Troubled Times* (1935)
- Filmstill, *Singing 'March of the Volunteers' in Lovers in Troubled Times* (1935)



• Li Hua, Roar, China, 1935, woodcut. Coll. Lu Xun Memorial Hall.
 • Robert Capa, Joris Ivens and John Ferno shooting *The 400 Million*, 1938.



Ivens would find, most possibly, the 1935 Denton record of the song during post-production in Hollywood in late 1938, the only record of a Chinese song that he could locate in Hollywood at the time.²⁰ Most important, on April 22, 1938, Tian Han, the mastermind of the song and head of the Music Group in 1935, then the bureau chief in charge of propaganda in the United Front of the Nationalists and Communists in Wuhan, representing 14 groups and more than 200 cultural figures present, personally welcomed Joris Ivens when he returned from Tai'ierzhuang to Hankou. Ivens' concluding words at the welcoming meeting were recorded as follows: I represent countless people in Europe and North America, who sympathize with the anti-Japanese war in China. In order to defend truth and humanity, I am filming a true record of the courageous war effort in China, so as to have it spread all over the world.²¹

JORIS IVENS AND *THE 400 MILLION*

Joris Ivens, who, with Ernest Hemingway, made *The Spanish Earth* documenting the Spanish Civil War in 1936, arrived in China in February 1938 to make *The 400 Million*, a documentary of 'the people's war in China against Japan.' Alongside his shooting notes on the 'flag-raising scene,' Ivens included lyrics of *Yiyongjun jinxingqu* ('March of the Volunteers,'

which he translated as 'Volunteer March') written out for him in Chinese characters, and regarded the song as the 'Chinese National Hymn,'²² mistakenly, but perhaps prophetically, giving it an identity it would only assume more than a decade later.

Ivens is well informed in identifying 'March of the Volunteers' as the first song for the flag-raising sequence in his film. Facing clear external threats and a single national enemy, 'March of the Volunteers' functioned as an important call to arms summoning a new Chinese nation and a new type of Chinese citizen into being. The global political climate between the two World Wars, from the rise of anti-colonial nationalism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,²³ to the formation of an internationalist political solidarity, provided fertile grounds for the reemergence of the 'masses' and 'volunteers' as important religious, political, and popular cultural categories. Italy's annexation of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) after the Second Italo-Abyssinian War in 1936, like the Japanese annexation of Manchuria after the Mukden Incident in 1931, triggered writers and artists to create figures of suffering and humiliation;²⁴ and the sounds and images of the International Brigades at the Spanish Civil War popularized by Joris Ivens, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Capa, and Paul Robeson,²⁵ have been etched into a fervent collective political aspiration.

Even before Paul Robeson's 1941 bilingual album was published, Ivens had encountered the resounding 'Chee Lai' while on location in China in 1938: '...after dinner in an old barn, each of us sings songs from his country. John and I sing old Dutch songs, sailor songs, and love songs. Captain Carlson plays *Working on the Railroad* on the harmonica. In a hoarse, melancholy voice Capa sings songs of the Hungarian plains and then we all sing a Chinese war song we have learned: *Chi-Lai!*'²⁶

Hemingway, Ivens, and China

During the years following their collaboration for *The Spanish Earth* on the war front in Spain Ivens and Hemingway shared similar experiences on the war front in China. In February 1938 Ivens flew to China to film *The 400 Millions*, during which he was confronted with severe censorship by generalissimo Chang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalists. Despite his limited access Ivens had a secret meeting with Zhou Enlai, leader of the Communists in Wuhan. This would be the start of a longtime friendship. In January 1941 Ernest Hemingway went to China on his honeymoon with Martha Gellhorn, while covering their travel for newspapers and magazines in the US. One day on the marketplace of Chongqing (or Chungking) Gellhorn was approached by a woman, who asked her whether she and her husband would like to meet Zhou Enlai. The name meant nothing to Gellhorn. Afterwards, when she asked Hemingway, he recognized the name, saying that he was 'a friend of Joris'. After their illegal meeting Hemingway considered Zhou Enlai an incredibly charming and intelligent man and Gellhorn stated that he was the only decent man she met in China. Hemingway noted that the Communists made serious effort to attract the attention of Western artists and journalists, like Ivens, Snow, Smedley, Epstein, Hemingway and others.

Source: Peter Moreira, *Hemingway on the China Front. His WWII Spy Mission with Martha Gellhorn*, Washington 2006, p. 127-129.

Portnoy's Complaint and the National Anthem

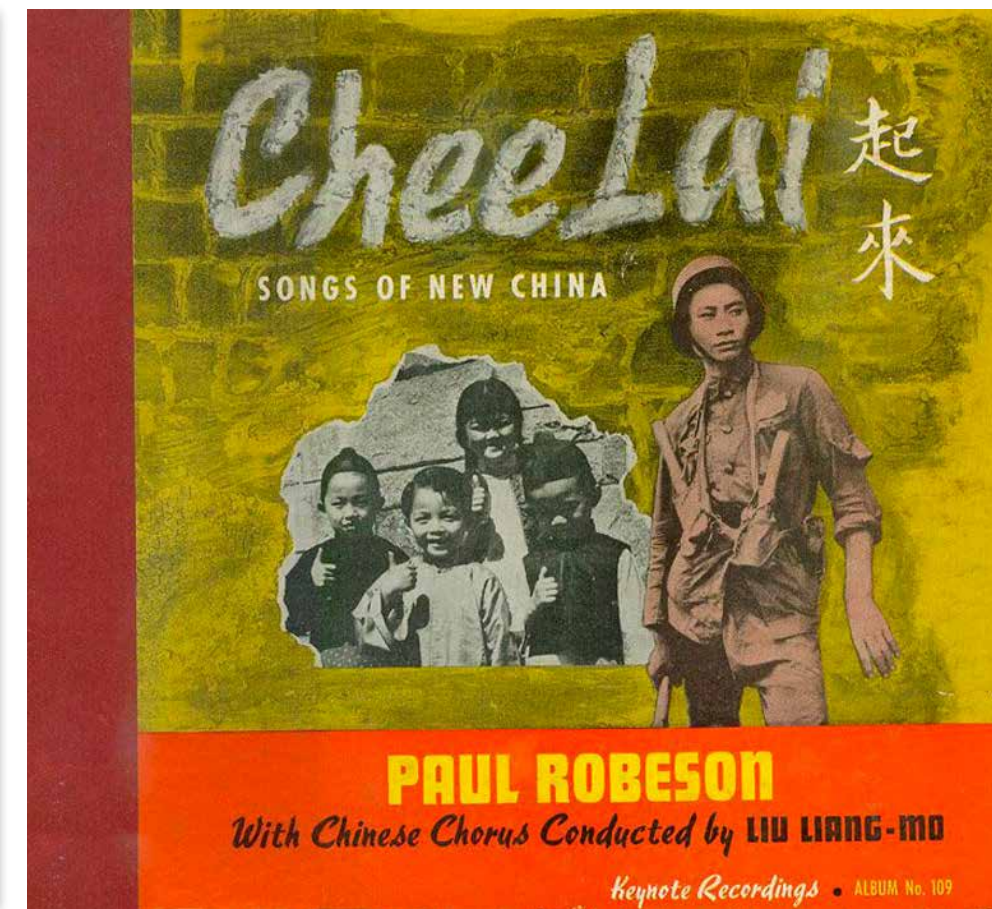
Joris Ivens' misinterpretation of 'The March of the Volunteers' being already China's National Anthem in 1938 was not unique. Alexander Portnoy, the protagonist of Philip Roth's 1969 novel *Portnoy's Complaint* made the same mistake when remembering the song: '...Just the rhythm alone can cause my flesh to ripple, like the beat of the marching song of the victorious Red Army, and the song we learned in grade school during the war, which our teachers called 'The Chinese national Anthem'. 'Arise, ye who refuse to be bond-slaves, with our very flesh and blood' – oh, that defiant cadence! I remember every single heroic word! – 'we will build a new great wall!' And then my favourite line, commencing as it does with my favourite word in the English language: '*In-dig-na-tion* fills the hearts of all of our coun-try-men! A-rise! A-rise! A-RISE!' (This is the exact translation as in Pao-chen Li's bilingual songbook published in Chongqing in 1939 and reprinted in *Music Educators Journal* by the National Association for Music Education in the United States in 1942.)

The text is also living proof of the popularity of 'The March of the Volunteers' in the US during WWII due to the dissemination of the song through Robeson's record and Ivens' film.

Here 'Chi-Lai,' or 'March of the Volunteers,' provided a common language and a common expression for the Dutch filmmakers, the American Captain, and the Hungarian photojournalist, in the 'catchy tune' composed by Nie Er and possibly in the original Chinese lyrics written by Tian Han. Ivens reported again how, after the battle of Tai'erzhuang, 'a volunteer song of North China, a war song' was sung during a night march, 'one of the officers up front on the road starts the song, another picks it up, then a third, and then we all sing.'

Now it seems only natural for Ivens to have included 'March of the Volunteers' as the number one song in his film. John Fernhout (John Ferno), 25 at the time and already a seasoned cameraman who collaborated with Ivens since *Regen* (Rain, 1929), one of the representative pieces of European avant-garde documentary, introduced a chorus sequence with masterful control of the camera in *The 400 Million*. The scene opens with the camera panning from left to right through faces of singing young girls in medium shots. Behind the girl students are boys in military uniform, possibly new recruits at this recruiting gathering in Xi'an, as the big banners in previous scenes indicated. The camera highlights the girls who prominently occupy the front row, with one of them holding a triangular flag with characters read 'propaganda team' (*xuanchuan dui*).²⁷ Then the scene cuts to a longer shot from the opposite angle, revealing the chorus formation. The previous scene is indeed part of a chorus formed by two rows of female students in front, and one row of male students in uniform in the back. The crowd is gathering and the camera again pans from left to right to disclose the location of the chorus leader. Now surrounded by his chorus from the left, and the spectators on the right forming a half circle, the skinny young man, in his well-tailored Zhongshan suit, passionately conducts the chorus while leading the singing himself.

Accompanying the masterfully edited sequence is 'March of the Volunteers' sung by a chorus of mixed voice (most possibly from the Denton record Ivens located in Hollywood, as it was not the all-male chorus recorded in Hankou), in the



same fashion the song may have been sung by the enthusiastic mass-singing participants on screen, though there is no intention to match the song with the movements of lips or the conductor's baton on the screen. Hence the singing of 'March of the Volunteers' can be read as both diegetic and non-diegetic: it speaks for all the human activities connected through this mass-singing scene and could be issued from sources both on and off the screen; it is also part of the commentary and represents the filmmaker's deliberate choice.

In defining 'Montage of Attractions,' Sergei Eisenstein highlights their 'shock' effects in producing spectators. 'The spectator himself consists the basic material of the theatre,' famously says Eisenstein, and 'the objective of any utilitarian theatre is to guide the spectator in the desired direction.'²⁸ Eisenstein highlights the role of popular music, or what he calls the 'emotive vibration' in montage, to demonstrate the bodily effect on the audience and spectators.

It is thus important to reexamine the remaining scenes accompany the song in Ivens' film from the viewpoint of the role of sound and music in intensifying 'montage of attractions.' Visible to the spectators (both on and off screen) are actors tearing a Japanese flag into several pieces and shouting slogans with the broken flag in their fists. Audible to the audience's ears are the following comments: 'actors leave their theatres, play on the street corner. They instruct the audience how to resist the enemy.' All the while, 'March of the Volunteers' plays in the background, stitching the visual and the audio into a deliberately pedagogical statement, albeit an emotionally persuasive one.

Ivens, after returning to the United States for post-production of the film, gave a lecture at the Museum of Modern Art on subjectivity and montage in documentary film in 1939. In this lecture, he considered documentary as part of the avant-garde emerging in Europe in 1927 to give film artistic and educational values, but insisted that pure aesthetic brings films to an artistic dead end. For him, it is much more important if a film is connected with a social movement, and he openly announced: 'Yes, we are propagandists! Art-

Paul Robeson, Record Chee Lai, Songs of New China, 1941.

Liu Liangmo conducting a 700-people chorus in Shanghai in 1936



ists must take sides!' He highlighted the subjectivity of documentary filmmakers, and their necessary emotional involvement with their subject. In the true Eisenstein tradition, he emphasized the crucial importance of montage in producing spectators and achieving emotional persuasion. The case of *The 400 Million* was used to illustrate the harmony and close collaboration between music and editing.

PAUL ROBESON AS THE VOICE (FACE) OF CHINA

What Ivens and Ferno captured in Xi'an in May 1938 was only a single note in a symphony of mass-singing activities throughout China at the time. Liu Liangmo, the chorus leader and future teacher of Paul Robeson in singing 'March of the Volunteers' in Chinese in the United States, was captured in a memorable black and white picture conducting a 700-people chorus: in their student gowns, some girls rais-

Painting Fight of China against Japanese invader, 1938.



ing their heads following the elevated conductor, others, songbook in their hands, concentrated on singing. It seems that gender, as well as female-centered performance, still occupies important symbolic location in such events; so as individual genius and agency amidst the gigantic collective: the skinny male figure balancing on the high ladder looks strikingly similar to the skinny and passionate conductor in Ivens' film.

Liu Liangmo was mentioned in a November 30, 1941 New York Times article as 'the Shanghai Y.M.C.A. secretary who communicated his enthusiasm to many others and was called to teach at the front,' and praised as the inspiration of this mass singing of patriotic songs in China. As a result, the author quotes Lin Yutang, the famous bilingual author, that 'China is finding her voice!'

This article was penned by *New York Times* music editor Howard Taubman, who was introducing a new album, *Chee Lai*, indeed 'March of the Volunteers' with new English lyrics, with Paul Robeson singing in Chinese and English, and Liu Liangmo singing with a Chinese chorus. Taubman considered Robeson's performance 'with power and passion,' and concluded that, 'the songs tell us more about China's valor than about her music, and at the moment her fight is more momentous than her art.'

However, Taubman would soon come to the conclusion that the distinction between 'fight' and 'art' are not so clear-cut after all. He wrote again in *New York Times* on June 27, 1942, half a year after Pearl Harbor, on Liu Liangmo's appearance in a Town Hall music program under the auspices of the 'Negro Publication Society of America.' Liu was reported as 'singing and speaking for the valiant Chinese,' who 'offered 'Chee Lai,' which means 'Arise!'' This time, Taubman appreciated the songs in a more wholesome fashion, as he claimed that the singers 'fight for their liberty with songs on their tongues as well as with guns, tanks and planes,' and that 'they were true to the spirit of their songs and was delightful for that reason.' Liu's connections with the African American communities and his encounter with Paul Robeson in the United States has become legendary: Liu taught Robeson, who recently returned from Europe, to sing 'March of the Volunteers' in Chinese, and the latter, the leading African American actor-singer of his time, became an astonishingly powerful spokesman for the Chinese resistance against Japanese aggression.

When the Pacific War broke in 1941, 'March of the Volunteers' was sung in Singapore, Malaysia and other countries and areas of Southeast Asia, and became a major marching song in the international anti-Fascist movement. During WWII, radio stations in England, USA, USSR, and India often broadcast the Robeson version of the song. And in 1944, 'March of the Volunteers' became the opening music of the Chinese language broadcast at Delhi Radio Station, India.

At the World Peace Conference in Prague in April 1949 and on the occasion of Pushkin's 150th anniversary in Moscow, Robeson would twice sang 'Chee Lai' in Chinese and record records to mark history, months before 'March of the Volunteers' assuming the official status of a 'temporary' national anthem of the People's Republic of China at its founding on October 1st, 1949. The video recording of Robeson singing 'Chee Lai' in Chinese at the Prague Conference is nothing less than sensational. One can only imagine the musical, bodily, and emotional effect on such a receptive international audience and the possibly audience back in China, when an African American singer singing in Chinese the words that have been etched into the consciousness of 'the 400 million' for so many years.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Joris Ivens and Tian Han's linkage through *March of the Volunteers* of 1935 and *The 400 Million* of 1938 were consolidated by the meeting of the two on April 22, 1938 in Hankou; Paul Robeson and Tian Han were connected by Robeson's singing of *March of the Volunteers* since 1940 and in the early 1950s, especially Robeson's creative translation of the Chinese lyrics as mediated by Liu Liangmo in New York in the early 1940s. When I interviewed Tian Han and An E's son Tian Dawei in Beijing in the spring of 2004, he mentioned to me how Robeson kept sending royalties of the song from the US to the family, even after Tian's death in 1968. Although Ivens and Robeson may have met before, in Europe or the Soviet Union, their linkage was tightened through the making of *Song of Rivers* during the years of 1953 and 1954, as Charles Musser puts it, an expression of 'utopian vision in Cold War documentaries.'²⁹

Music and Poetry served as enduring themes in all three artistic worlds: Ivens in his *Song of the Rivers* continued the musical tradition in his early City Symphony style filmmaking. The structure of the film is musical. Poetry provided a closely related model, and the sound track (or in silent films, the intertitles) was poetic in structure. The mode of songs conveniently brought these two impulses together.³⁰ Robeson singing *Song of the Four Rivers* for the US Popular Front movement in the 1940s and 50s foreshadows his singing Brecht's lyrics in *Song of the Rivers* with an updated anti-Cold War theme. Tian Han's identity as a young poet and playwright who constantly injected songs into his 'spoken drama' prefigured his writing opera in the early 1950s when *Song of the Rivers* was being made in East Germany by Ivens and his group.

'March of the Volunteers,' aided by the power of mechanically reproduced records and films, had indeed become the embodiment of an internationalist political solidarity in face of rising fascism. The original film story and lyrics by Tian Han, the documentary of Joris Ivens and the bilingual record of Paul Robeson, demonstrated a collective international imagination of modern Chinese nationalism. Popularized by Tian Han, Joris Ivens, Paul Robeson, among others, the Chinese fight against Japanese fascism were but one among many in such a context. In this context, 'March of the Volunteers' became the anthem of a post-WWI international avant-garde whose 'obsession with China,' after the baptism of the Spanish Civil War, went hand in hand with their search for a political and artistic utopia.

- Joris Ivens, *The 400 Million*, 1939 (USA / 53.51 min / b-w / sound / 35 mm). 'March of the Volunteers' appeared from 20:20 to 21:20 for a full minute.
- Joris Ivens went to China to film as a member of 'History Today Inc., Motion Picture Production,' a New York venture with Ernest Hemingway, Lillian Hellman, and Ivens himself as members of Board of Directors. Hans Wegner Archive, document no. 91, European Foundation Joris Ivens, Nijmegen, the Netherlands.
- Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-garde*, translated from Italian by Gerald FitzGerald, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968; Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch*, Indiana University Press, 1978; Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde*, translated from German by Michael Shaw, University of Minnesota Press, 1983; Richard Murphy, *Theorizing the Avant-Garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- André Stufkens, 'Lust for Life: An Introduction to Ivens and the 20th Century,' in *Cinema Without Borders*, European Foundation Joris Ivens, 2002, 14.
- An E (Zhang Shiyuan, or 'Miss Sonia'), based on whose articles Tian Han wrote his first article on Soviet film in 1930, had returned from Moscow to Shanghai in 1929. She worked as an underground Communist Party agent and played an important role in connecting Tian Han with the Soviet film scene. See Tian Han, 'Lessons from the Development of Soviet Film Art and the Future of Film Movement in Our Country,' in *Nanguo yuekan (Nanguo Monthly)*, 2: 4 (20 July 1930); included in *Tian Han quanji (Complete Works of Tian Han)*, 18: 74-95.
- Hans Shoots, *Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam University Press, 2000, 27-8.
- Paul Robeson, Jr., *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson, An Artist's Journey, 1898-*

- 1939, Wiley, 2001, 37-8.
- Tian Han, 'On the Centenary of People's Poet-Whitman,' *Shaonian Zhongguo (Young China)*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July, 1919), 6-22.
- The Undiscovered Paul Robeson*, 143.
- ibid.*, 155.
- Paul Robeson, *A Biography* by Martin Duberman, New York: The New Press, 1989, 172-175.
- Living Dangerously*, 24.
- Tian Han, *Lingguang (The Holy Light)*, *Taiping yang (The Pacific Ocean)*, vol. 2, no. 9, (January 1921), 5-28.
- Living Dangerously*, 25.
- André Stufkens, 'The Song of Movement. Joris Ivens' First Films and the Cycle of the Avant-garde,' in Kees Bakker (ed.) *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*, Amsterdam University Press, 1999, 54.
- Tian Han, *Muqin (Mother)*, based on Gorki's novel, included in *Tian Han daibiaozuo (Representative Works of Tian Han)*, Shanghai, San-tong shuju, 1941, vol. 1.
- Given Tian Han's background, it is possible to read *wanzhong yixin* as borrowed from and now used as an implicit polemic against the Japanese slogan that one hundred million Japanese beat as one heart (*ichioku isshin*).
- Lee Pao-chen ed., *China's Patriots Sing*, Chungking: The China Information Publishing Company, 1939.
- Situ Huimin's sons' New Year card to Ivens, 1958, China. European Foundation Joris Ivens, Nijmegen, the Netherlands.
- According to Ivens' retrospective accounts written in 1945, he most possibly got hold of a copy of the Denton record in Hollywood. It was recorded by Ren Guang with the Denton chorus in 1935 in Shanghai. The availability of 'March of the Volunteers' in Hollywood in 1938 and its prominence in *The 400 Million* reminded us the rather unusual flow of mechanically reproduced sound bytes from China to the United States, which then came to represent a 'real' China in 1938 via a European filmmaker who connected China and Hollywood artists and activists through his filmmaking. See Joris Ivens, 'How I Filmed *The 400 Million*,' *Joris Ivens and China*, Beijing: New World Press, 1983, 29.
- 'World-famous photographer Ivens returns from Tai'erzhuan to Wuhan. Wuhan cultural groups welcome him. The anti-Japanese documentary will be spread to the world.' *Wenhui Daily (Shanghai)*, April 30, 1938, 3.
- See Joris Ivens' handwritten notes in Hankow (Hankou) in 1938 on sound effect recording for *The 400 Million*, Joris Ivens Archives, no. 238, European Foundation Joris Ivens, Nijmegen, the Netherlands.
- For in-depth discussions on this topic, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Tian Han, *Abixiniya de muqing (Mother of Abyssinia)*, in *Limin zhiqian (Before Sunrise)*, Shanghai: Beixin shuju, 1937.
- Robert Capa ascended to world fame through his expressive photographs taken at the warfront during the Spanish Civil War. He was invited by Joris Ivens and went to China as a photographic assistant and a reporter for *Life* magazine in 1938. See Alex Kershaw, *Blood and Champagne: The Life and Times of Robert Capa*, New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, 2002; Paul Robeson went to Spain in 1938 in support of the International Brigades. He also appeared, together with Madame Sun Yat-Sen, in London in a Save China performance later the same year. See Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* by Martin Duberman, New York and London: The New Press, 1989, 217-222.
- Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, Berlin, Seven Seas Books, 1969, 158. The typescript of this book was drafted in the USA during the years 1943-1944.
- Propaganda is an inadequate, if not incorrect, translation for the Chinese word *xuanchuan*, which literally means to announce and to spread. *Xuanchuan dui*, in the Chinese context, is often understood as a singing and dance troupe with a mission, often less connected with a negative connotation as in the English usage of a 'propaganda team.'
- Sergei Eisenstein, 'Montage of Attractions,' Daniel Gerould trans., included in Rebecca Schneider, Gabrielle H. Cody eds., *Re: Direction: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*, Routledge, 2002, 303-304.
- Charles Musser, 'Utopian Visions in Cold War Documentary: Joris Ivens, Paul Robeson and Song of the Rivers (1954),' *Cinemas: revue d'études cinématographiques / Cinemas: Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 12, n° 3, 2002, 109-153.
- ibid.*, 121

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JORIS IVENS AS I KNOW HIM

BY HONGXING FU

A TALL SLIM OLD MAN, WITH HIS SILVER HAIR FLUTTERING IN THE BREEZE, WAS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY A RED-HAIRED SHORT WOMAN. THE IMAGES OF THESE TWO LAOWAI (FOREIGNERS) WHO WERE VERY DAZZLING IN BEIJING TWENTY YEARS AGO STILL REMAIN ENGRAVED IN MY MIND. THE ELEGANT TEMPERAMENT OF THE OLD MAN CORRESPONDS WITH MY IDEAL IMAGE OF A GREAT ARTIST.



Fu Hongxing, Director of the China Film Archive, and Marceline Loridan-Ivens, April 2008.

It was in the year of 1985 that I graduated from Fudan University in Shanghai and found a job of shooting documentary in China Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio (CNDFS) — the biggest documentary film studio of its kind in the world. CNDFS professors told me that the tall old man was Joris Ivens, a Dutchman living in France, who was a well-known adviser of CNDFS. The first movie camera of Yan'an Movie Group, precursor of CNDFS, was presented by Joris Ivens. He was an old friend of Zhou Enlai, the first Prime Minister of New China. Many veteran cameramen and scenarists of CNDFS were his friends. Besides, Joris directed many cameramen as well as many students of CNDFS. All this makes me feel deep respect for him.

In the studio's yard, I often saw Joris, with a smile, talking in a light-hearted and interesting way with his Chinese friends — my teachers and doyen. Two years later, I watched Joris' exciting film — *A Tale of the Wind* in the studio's screening room twice without stop. I think Joris tells us the story of his life in this 90 minutes' long film, revealing his sincerity, and leads the viewers to his inner world. Joris comes to realize the world with true spirits and hopes people understand him. I felt his indistinct loneliness of his inner world and his indistinct grievances. But what impressed me most is his pouring down passion and talent of a poet.

I was totally convinced by this film although I had never known that a documentary could be shot like this. I hold that is a true film. Film directors, who bring you omnibearing new feelings of hearing and seeing, write on the screen just like poets write on paper. The power of reality drives film directors to change impossibility into possibility. Wind

is invisible and impalpable but it is shown by Joris Iven in his film.

Many Joris' films are preserved in CNDFS' vaults. As our teachers recommended to us fresh-hands who were learning shooting documentary films must watch some of these films. Later in my work or life, many of my teachers, colleagues and bosses mentioned Joris Ivens absently. They talked about their contacts with him, cooperation with him and more about Joris' friendship with Chinese people as well as those lifelong unforgettable techniques passed on by Joris — the great master of documentary.

Li Zexiang, former vice editor-in-chief of CNDFS and idol in the hearts of those young people who were learning documentary shooting twenty years ago, is famous for his accomplishments and achievements on documentary photography. It is Li Zexiang who followed Joris to shoot the film series named *How Yugong Moved the Mountains*. Holding the camera, he can use a non-stop full-length shooting to finish all the subjects from outside to inside the room, and from under sunlight to lamplight. Moving figures in camera lens are always changing but they must be focused. Mise-en-scène must be accomplished at one sitting, so as to show clearly the characters and plot, and making easy for post production by scenarist-directors later. All of these are finished by body movements of the cameraman himself. At this moment, the cameraman observes with one of his eyes how things are going on in the scene and the other eye gazing at the viewfinder (frame) of the camera. The cameraman stably and organically turns around upper part of the body and waist while stably moving on his feet. He also uses one hand to carry the heavy camera with his shoulder against the camera to make the machine and shots stable, and the other hand to change different scenes, depth of field and adjust the focus. At the mean time, the cameraman has to bring moving characters of shots (shooting objects) focused. If moving from outside with sunlight into inside with lamplight, the cameraman will draw off Wrtnen 85 color filter from the front lens, and then adjust aperture into a safe range for inside exposure according to your own experience and eyeballing.

Li Zexiang owes the techniques of shooting documentary to Joris Ivens. Previously CNDFS cameramen preferred point shooting. This is because films were very expensive then and few films can be used for shooting documentary. It is impossible to shoot documentary by using full-length shot without turning off the machine or any stop. Point shooting means the cameraman has to turn off the machine in 10 or 20 seconds and then turns on again after changing angle and camera lens. The disadvantage of point shooting is that the traces of swinging shooting can be easily found in documentary films.

Joris Iven taught Li Zexiang for nearly three years and often told him about his own practical experiences of docu-

mentary shooting in the past 60 years. It is from Joris that Li Zexiang learned the reality of documentary is from nature instead of decoration or artistic approach of naturalism. Li Zexiang also learned the fact that synchronous sound was applied to documentary films and that fine shooting consists of profound consensus for theme, tacit agreement and understanding coordination by director, cameraman, sound engineer and illumination engineer.

Yang Zhiju is a retired cameraman as well as a professor granted special allowance of the State Council of China. Ten years ago, one of my friends from the Ministry of Forestry flaunted that scenes shot by Yang Zhiju can be easily made into a film without post-editing in machinery room. Actually I knew Yang Zhiju's shooting skill very well. He followed Joris Ivens for a long time shooting the series film *How Yugong Moved the Mountains*.

I am even overwhelmed with admiration for a scene showing a train past by in the early morning light in *A Tale of the Wind*. This famous scene was shot by Bai Kunyi who followed Joris Ivens not very long. I have recommended Bai Kunyi to Professor Zhang Tongdao, who majors in documentary researching and creating in Beijing Normal University, as the cameraman in Professor Zhang Tongdao's first documentary. Now Professor Zhang is one of the most important experts in researching Joris' documentaries.

Guo Weijun is China's first-grade illumination technician. Every cameraman would like to cooperated with Mr. Guo because he has good skills most of which were imparted by Joris Ivens.

Joris Ivens gave three lectures in 1957 to CNDFS create personnel and then directed them to shoot the documentary — *Early Spring* in 1958. Later on, *Roaring of Six Hundred Million People* was accomplished with the assistance of Joris as an adviser. From 1972 to 1975, Joris and his wife Loridan guided CNDFS' staff members in China's Beijing, Daqing,

Shanghai, Nanjing, Qingdao, Xinjiang and other places shooting many people with different social backgrounds, such as workers, farmers, fishermen, professors, students, soldiers, salesmen, actors, handicraftsmen and so on. All of these shots were finally made into a documentary film — *How Yugong Moved the Mountains* which was composed of 12 separate films. Its title was from one of Chairman Mao Zedong's famous essays. During the period between 1984 and 1988, Joris and Loridan finished his last documentary film — *A Tale of the Wind* with the assistance of many of CNDFS staff members.

Many Joris' Chinese friends are still living around me. I often meet them and talk about that 'flying Dutchman'. Joris' story can be made into a book. Actually it seems to me that Joris has never left us. I can feel his breath and touch him. What he has brought to Chinese people is invaluable. Qian Xiaozhang, former CNDFS director, recollects the first time he met Joris in 1938 in Wuhan, China, 'I was deeply touched by his (Joris Ivens) passionate sincere emotions and agreeable attitudes towards his Chinese fellows of the same profession in their primary meeting. It was the first time that I saw a foreigner who was so kind to Chinese people. Joris is very unlike those foreigners I frequently met in the Bund, who lifted up their horns and showed disdain to our Chinese people. He is our real friend.' Today the techniques imparted by Joris to Chinese documentary directors are still widely applied by many documentary working staff in hundreds of TV stations.

One day in April of the year 2008 in Paris, I visited Ivens-Loridan's old apartment close to the Louvre and saw a traditional Chinese painting of dragon hung on the wall of the sittingroom, the most vivid and beautiful one I had ever seen before. It seems to me that Joris Ivens has already transformed into a dragon flying in the wind.

I dedicate this essay to Joris Ivens with my respect.



Huimin Situ

On 21 May 2010 members of the Situ family and people from the Chinese film industry gathered at the China Film Archive to commemorate the centenary of Huimin Situ's birthday. They honored the merits of this renowned film artist and movie technology expert. During his 50 years relationship with China Ivens befriended Huimin Situ, one of the longest and most intense friendships, which influenced Ivens film career in various ways. Huimin Situ studied in Japan and returned to China in the 1930's, where he became involved in the film industry in revolutionary Shanghai. Thanks to Huimin Situ an independent film studio was created in 1934, which during its short existence produced four classic films supporting the fight against the Japanese invader. Huimin Situ himself directed *Spirit of Freedom* (1935). At the end of the 1950's Ivens and Situ collaborated on several

documentaries, when the Dutchman was appointed advisor and teacher at the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio in Beijing, at that time headed by Situ. In October 1964 Ivens proposed to him on a small note a film project entitled *A Tale of the Wind*, after Ivens met much trouble with the interrupted production of *Pour le Mistral*. Situ immediately agreed, but he had to wait almost 25 years before this idea 'to film the impossible' was realized. In the 1980's Situ was vice-Minister of Culture and did his utmost to support this wind film of Ivens and Loridan-Ivens. After Huimin Situ's death his sons continued the artistic family tradition: Zhaoguang Situ became a professor in sculptor and made two portraits of Ivens, Zhaodun Situ was a much respected filmmaker and film teacher. They are keeping warm memories about their father and his Dutch friend, who used to pay visits to the family.

- Photo left: Ceremony at the CFA, 21 May 2010 © Sun Xiangong, CFA
- Photo right: Huimin Situ, in between his daughter and Joris Ivens, Beijing, 1958. © Eva Siao, Coll EFJI.

the foundation update



Marceline Loridan-Ivens

On 14 July, the national celebration day in France, the ministry of culture and communication announced this year's appointments for the prestigious decorations of the 'Légion d'honneur'. Marceline Loridan-Ivens (1928), who was already 'chevalier' since 1992, now was promoted to 'officier de la Légion d'honneur'. She received this award because of her merits for film art, as a filmmaker and producer. In the cultural field next to her among others architect Jean Nouvel, actress Isabelle Adjani, director Emir Kusturica, musician/composer Claude Bolling, singer Mireille Mathieu and actress Charlotte Rampling received various grades of the 'Légion d'honneur'. Loridan-Ivens published her autobiography in 2008, is touring with her films and is preparing a new film.



Tineke de Vaal

In October 2010 Tineke de Vaal left the board of the Ivens Foundation after decades of dedicated support to improve the Ivens archives. She started working in the film archival field in the early 1960's at the Netherlands Filmmuseum, restoring film prints. After her marriage with director Jan de Vaal she became a close friend of Joris Ivens. Together with Ivens and Bert Hogenkamp she created in 1978 the travelling exhibition 'Joris Ivens, 50 years filmmaker of the



• Marceline Loridan-Ivens in Shanghai. Photo © Liu Lung Shang
• Jan de Vaal, Joris Ivens and Tineke de Vaal, 1985. Photo © Henk de Smidt

world' which was presented in eleven countries around the world. After the death of her husband in 2001 she continued to be a loyal supporter of the Ivens archive. She proved to be an enormous source of information about film history in the Netherlands.

The board thanked her heartily for her lifetime achievement.

Sabine Lenk



The successor of Tineke de Vaal as board member of the European Foundation Joris Ivens is Dr. Sabine Lenk (1959), an international filmscholar and very much experienced in the filmarchival world. She studied Cinema and Theater at the universities of Erlangen and Paris III and worked at filmarchives in Paris, Rochester, Brussels, Amsterdam, Düsseldorf and Hilversum and at universities in France, Belgium and The Netherlands. At the moment she is curator at the Cinémathèque de la ville de Luxembourg. She is co-founder and co-editor of KINTOP, for research and publications devoted to early cinema and published numerous articles and books about film history, film preservation and early cinema.

Rain in Amsterdam

In the large Music Theater in Amsterdam, the crème de la crème of the international history scientists were treated to an ensemble on stage dressed in yellow boots and typical Dutch sou'wester rain caps. During the official opening ceremony of the 21th International Congress of Historical Sciences they played new music composed by Huub de Vriend to accompany the silent movie *Regen* (Rain, 1929, Joris Ivens / Mannus Franken). While the rain was pouring down on screen musicians played on a huge Rain Machine. To present the historical context to the 1.700 historians the film also was shown mute.

Eye and the City

The educational project 'eyeandthecity' created by the European Foundation Joris Ivens wants to inspire students at school to study 'city photography' from the 19th Century up to today and make city photos themselves on a higher level. This project already started three years ago, and included an exhibition about Wilhelm Ivens (Joris Ivens' grandfather), a very much appreciated outdoor exhibition on panels and



this interactive website. Since last June the first schools started to work with the website 'eyeandthecity', toured along the streets with their cameras, made the assignments and uploaded their pictures on this website. The first results proof that students make city photos of a higher quality.

50 years Mali, 50 years 'Demain à Nanguila'

In May 1960 Joris Ivens filmed in Mali *Demain à Nanguila*. Although this is a rather unknown Ivensfilm, in Mali it was a big success. In a screening van the film prints toured around the country. For many people in the villages it was the first time they could ever see film on a big screen. With this film that is recognized as an African film instead of a western film the national film culture of Mali started from scratch. It motivated the new government to put up a film



production company. This year Mali, along with Nigeria and 15 other African countries, commemorates half a century of independence and freedom from colonial rule. In Spain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands screenings of the film were held. For this occasion the European Foundation Joris Ivens digitized the film and provided subtitles.

Charley Toorop and Joris Ivens

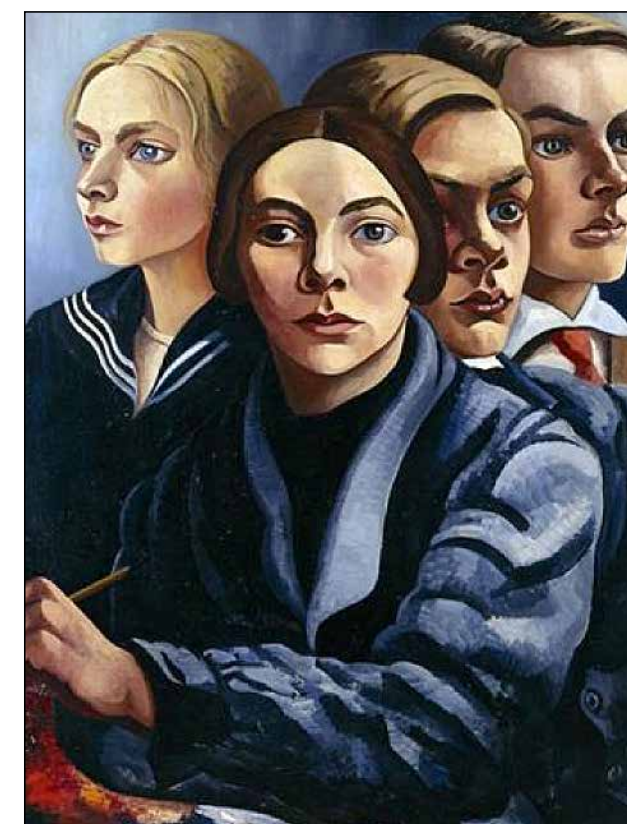
From 19 February until 9 May 2010, the Museum for Modern Art in Paris exhibited the first retrospective of the oeuvre of Dutch painter Charley Toorop (1891-1955). Next to 85 of her paintings, also works of other artists were included, among them Charley Toorop's father Jan Toorop, and friends and fellow artists such as Piet Mondriaan, Gerit Rietveld, Pyke Koch, Fernand Léger and Joris Ivens. Early Ivens films, e.g. *Etudes de mouvements à Paris* (1927) and *The Bridge* (1928) were screened continuously during the course of the exhibition. From 1908 onwards relationships between the Ivens and Toorop family were developed.

Personel office

In March 2010 Rob Comans left the office after his term was finished. In his place Hilke Lekkerkerker started listing archives from the Ivens Archival collections. She studied Cinema and English. Anne Jaspers finished listing of 5.000 clippings. Not only the titles, sources and themes of the clippings were listed, but also queries to facilitate researchers in finding very fast the requested texts. Merel Geelen finished listing the Jan de Vaal collection.

Retrospectives around the world

Last year saw Ivens retrospectives with many films in Leipzig (Germany), New Caledonia, Thessaloniki and Athens (Greece), Shanghai (China), Maputo (Mosambique), Lisbon (Portugal) and Seville (Spain). In 2011 requests for large retrospectives already are received from Equador, Mexico and Valparaiso. See www.iven.nl/agenda



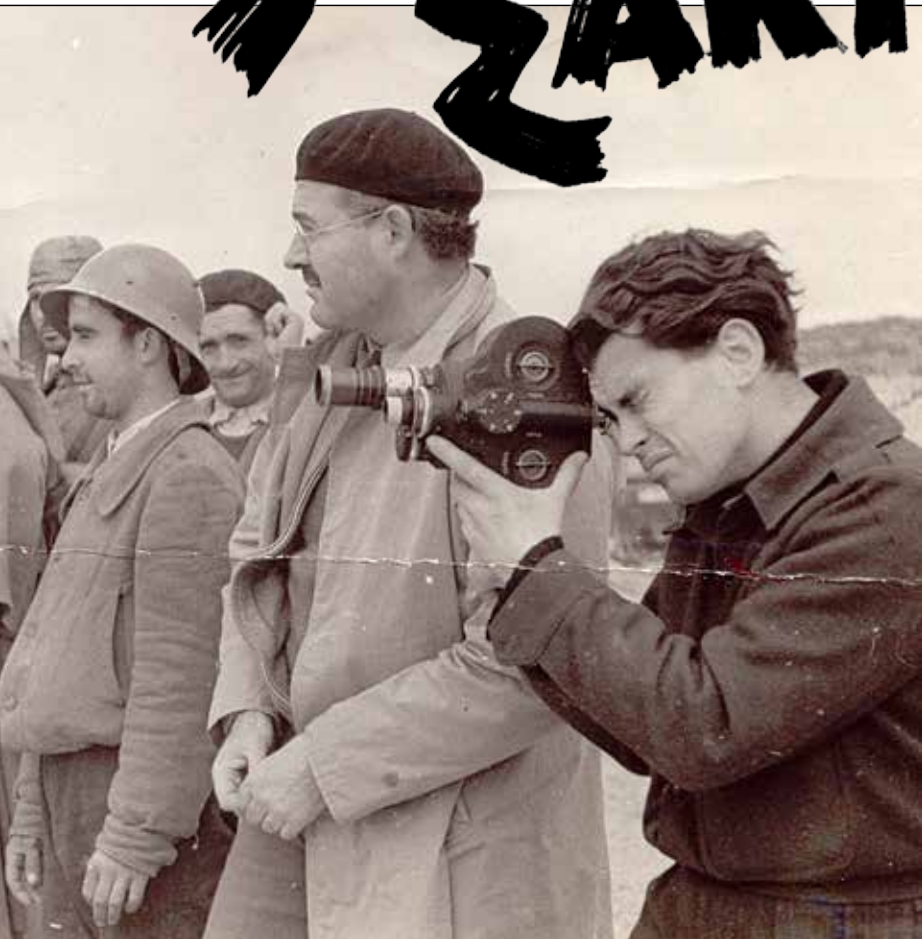
• Live music performance and screening of *Rain* at the International Congress of Historical Sciences, August 24. Photo © Henk Wals
• Poster Festival de Cine Africano de Tarifa, Spain
• The Best DVD Award 2009 Il Cinema Ritrovato
• Charley Toorop, Self Portrait with Children, 1927 oil on canvas, Coll. Groninger Museum.

IVENS & HEMINGWAY IN SPAIN

THE SPANISH EARTH

14th
Hemingway
Conference
in Lausanne

SINCE A LONG TIME THE HEMINGWAY SOCIETY IS ORGANIZING BIENNIAL GATHERINGS OF SCHOLARS WITH RIGOROUS ACADEMIC SESSIONS AND SOCIAL EVENTS. FROM 25 JUNE TILL 3 JULY THE 14TH HEMINGWAY CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE AT THE BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE, WITH A PANORAMIC VIEW ON THE LAKE. THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE CONFERENCE 'HEMINGWAY'S EXTREME GEOGRAPHIES' WAS VERY APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS HEMINGWAY'S STAY IN SPAIN DURING THE CIVIL WAR IN 1937-1939. IVENS' DOCUMENTARY *THE SPANISH EARTH* INSPIRED FIVE LECTURERS TO FOCUS ON HEMINGWAY AND IVENS AND THE ARTWORKS DERIVING FROM THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR. ALTHOUGH BEFORE SEVERAL SCHOLARS DID RESEARCH AFTER THIS SUBJECT, IT'S ONLY AT THIS CONFERENCE THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME THE IMPORTANCE OF *THE SPANISH EARTH* FOR HEMINGWAY'S ARTISTIC OUTPUT HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED AND DISCUSSED. NICOLAS BLAYO, SUZANNE CLARK, STACEY GUILL, DAN MILLER AND ALEX VERNON WROTE SUMMARIES OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CONFERENCE.



Ivens, Hemingway and The Spanish Earth

After his experience as a volunteer in Italy during World War I, Ernest Hemingway had declared that he would decline 'any further enlistment'. However, when the Civil War broke out in Spain, he decided to commit himself in order to defend a democracy that was threatened by fascism, embodied by General Franco. Arrived in March 1937 in Madrid, Hemingway would contribute to the project of making an anti-fascist film directed by Joris Ivens, *The Spanish Earth*, a project launched by Contemporary Historians, which united various American intellectuals as Hemingway himself, John Dos Passos, Lillian Hellman, Fredric March, etc. Living and working at the Hotel Florida, in the centre of Madrid, shelled by the guns of the francoist forces and bombed by the German aviation, Hemingway experienced a real excitement facing danger and went beyond the mere role of a newspaper man acting as an adviser among Loyalist officers, or even firing a machine-gun in the frontline, on April 10th 1937. The military aspect of the conflict was obviously fascinating Hemingway much more than the social issues taken up by the film. Dos Passos, who was initially supposed to write the commentary, made locations

in the village of Fuentidueña de Tajo, where the film starts and ends, and he would probably have stressed on this side but a disagreement with Hemingway ended up with their cooperation and Dos Passos left for France at the end of April 1937. His translator to Spanish, José Robles, had been arrested and very likely shot by Stalinists, but Hemingway was quite displeased by Dos Passos' enquiries to find out what had happened to his friend, as he seemed to be convinced that Robles was an agent of the fifth column. The film, the title of which, *The Spanish Earth*, turns the public onto that matter however, only dedicates a third part of the running time to the agricultural question of the earth, one of the essential causes of the war, and the two thirds left deal with the military achievements of the Republic to gain ground, as well as the humanitarian consequences of the shelling of Madrid. The link between these two points of view is made by the character of Julián, a young countryman who enlists to defend his land, and comes back on leave to instruct future recruits. Hemingway's commentary, essentially focused on the armed conflict, contemplates the work of the countrymen as fit into a war economy and less

than into a historical process of claiming land by a people despoiled by centuries of landowners domination, an angle that the very President Roosevelt suggested should be developed after being shown the film at the White House on July 8th 1937.

The weight of historical circumstances and the relative rarity of moving images of that period turned *The Spanish Earth* into an object of historical study and one tends to see it only as a document in the rough when it has an aesthetic dimension absolutely gripping, in the continuity of Joris Ivens' coherent works which include films with a strong social impact as *Komsomol* or *Borinage*, but also pure marvels as *The Bridge*, *Rain*, *Study of Movements* or *New Earth*. With the passing of time, these films seem to be precursors of *The Spanish Earth*, for the dynamic images of trucks which cross the shot this way and that, the work on the lines or the movements of the crowd, interpolated with very suggestive close-ups, recall the previous films of the Dutch documentary maker. Joris Ivens and his cameraman John Ferno achieved an unequalled work and their images were exploited hundreds of times in subsequent documentaries focused on the Civil War. Some lack of knowledge of Hispanic cultural subtleties led to choose as music *sardanas* typical of Catalonia, unique element that creates discrepancy in the reception of the film by a certain public. In spite of the

remarkable work of Ivens and Ferno, Hemingway covered himself in glory with *The Spanish Earth* because he was already very famous and his deep dramatic voice saying an understated commentary gave the impression that he was the author of the film as some newspapers wrote it.

His stay in Spain and participation in the making of *The Spanish Earth* meant for Hemingway a crucial period of transition in his life as a writer. This new experience of war, the persons he met and his affair with Martha Gellhorn as well as the discovery of Joris Ivens' point of view would nourish his subsequent works, in particular the writing of the masterpiece *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, his first great novel since *A Farewell To Arms*, but also his dispatches as a war correspondent, short stories and his unique play, *The Fifth Column*.

Nicolas Blayo is lecturer (PRCE) at the Université Paul Verlaine-Metz (France). He is preparing a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Jean-Claude Seguin, about fictionalisation of History in the Spanish Cinema of the Democracy. His first contribution, « L'histoire, entre nostalgie et mémoire, dans le cinéma de Fernando Trueba », was published in *Shanghai, entre promesse et sortilège* (Lyon, Le Grimb, 2004), and the last one in *CinémaAction* n° 130, *Mémoire du cinéma espagnol (1975-2007)* (Paris, Corlet, 2009). He has also written various papers in France, Europe and New Zealand, already published or to be published, about Spanish historical cinema of the three last decades.



Aviación! Aviación!'. The Interpretation of A New Warscape in The Spanish Earth and 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'

'They move like no thing that has ever been. They move like mechanized doom' (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 97). In 1921 an Italian general and military theorist, Giulio Douhet, predicted that recent advances in aeronautics would eventually create an ominous new warscape.

Nothing man can do on the surface of the earth can interfere with a plane in flight . . . No longer can areas exist in which life can be lived in safety and tranquility, nor can the battlefield any longer be limited to actual combatants. . . There will be no distinction any longer between soldiers and civilians. (9-10)

Just as Douhet anticipated, saturation bombing of civilian populations from the air emerged as a new and horrific form of modern warfare during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). During the three years of this bloody conflict, which took the lives of nearly 500,000, over 10,000 Spanish civilians were killed in aerial bombing raids--courtesy of air power provided to Franco by Hitler and Mussolini.

The visual and emotional reality of this new warscape was captured in photojournalism, newsreels, posters, paintings, films, and even children's drawings, from which haunting themes and compelling iconographic images emerge: panicked and fleeing women and children; faces, distorted with fear, looking skyward; skies darkened with multitudes of enemy planes; homes and cities reduced to rubble; and casualties of all ages.

During the filming of 'The Spanish Earth,' Joris Ivens and Ernest Hemingway witnessed first hand this terror delivered by air and the physical and psychological impact it wreaked upon the Spanish people and both shared a commitment to bear witness to the tragedy. Ivens and Hemingway dedicated part of 'The Spanish Earth' to this theme and Hemingway

intensified his attention in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* where the fear of planes becomes a major preoccupation of the main characters throughout the novel.

In what Sidney Meyers and Jay Leyda deemed 'the greatest single section of *Spanish Earth*' (166) the sound of falling bombs splits the air accompanied with a child's voice

STACEY GUILL



- top: Filmposter 'The Spanish Earth' in Madrid
- Stacey Guill during her lecture at the Conference.
- Programme flyer 'The Spanish Earth, with the image of the 'mechanized doom' Coll. JIA - EFJI



NICOLAS BLAYO

Ernest Hemingway and Joris Ivens during the shooting of *The Spanish Earth*, April 1937. Coll. Joris Ivens Archives.

crying out 'Aviación! Aviación!' Hemingway's commentary is interjected:

Before, death came when you were old and sick, but now it comes to all in this village. High in the sky in shining silver it comes to all who have no place to run, no place to hide. ('The Spanish Earth')

Discussing the editing of the bombing scene in the film, Ivens explained how he endeavored to recreate the stages of the psychological trauma evoked by this terror from the skies: In the 14 shots that compose the core of the sequence of the bombing of the village, the editing follows an emotion-idea line: tension before the bombing; the threat; the fright; the explosion; the destruction; the horror of not knowing what it's all about; the running around of the women; the start of activity, searching for victims; the slight happiness of a baby; then the horror of corpses and the accusation against the enemy. (*Camera* 127-8)

With the simplest of strokes, the images in the playbill for the premier of the film in New York City also demonstrated the film's engagement with the collective artistic testimony to this historic moment: shark-like silhouettes of the ominous planes and a helpless woman and child who have, in Hemingway's words, 'no place to run, no place to hide.' In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), Hemingway demonstrates his continuing concern with this horrendous new war tactic by the fact that there are over 100 references to planes throughout the novel, and, moreover, every major character

iterates an intense fear of them. The ability of the bombers to strike randomly and at will, virtually unimpeded, evokes an intense paranoia and uncontrollable fear among the guerilla band. For example, Pablo remarks, 'If they know we are here and hunt for us with planes, they will find us.' The peasant Anselmo confesses 'I do not think that I could control myself under the bombardment of the planes.' Primitivo describes them as 'bad omens,' and Rafael exclaims: 'They give me a horror.' Young Maria can only say that the planes look like 'death.' Even Pilar, the embodiment of strength, courage, and steady nerves admits: 'For each one there is something. . . For me it is those [planes].' Raphael reacting to a 'sky full of airplanes' predicts that they have the power to 'kill us back to our grandfathers and forward to our unborn grandsons including all cats, goats, and bedbugs.'

Between 1936 and 1939, Spain became the testing ground for a bestial new war tactic--massive bombings of civilians for the purpose of demoralizing an enemy. The endless horrors made possible by the development of this 'mechanized doom' would soon reveal itself to citizens of London, Dresden, and other European cities and, a mere eight years after the bombing of Guernica--Hiroshima.

This new landscape of war generated extraordinary powerful and poignant artwork as countless artists, including Joris Ivens and Ernest Hemingway, attempted to interpret the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of what the world would soon experience as 'total war.'

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The Spanish Earth makes a Book

ALEX VERNON



Young Jasper Wood, Photo courtesy Denis Wood

In March 1938, Rollin Dart wrote to Ernest Hemingway asking him what he thought of a proposal by Jasper Wood to publish a book version of *The Spanish Earth*, the film directed by Joris Ivens for the sponsoring entity The Contemporary Historians, Inc.

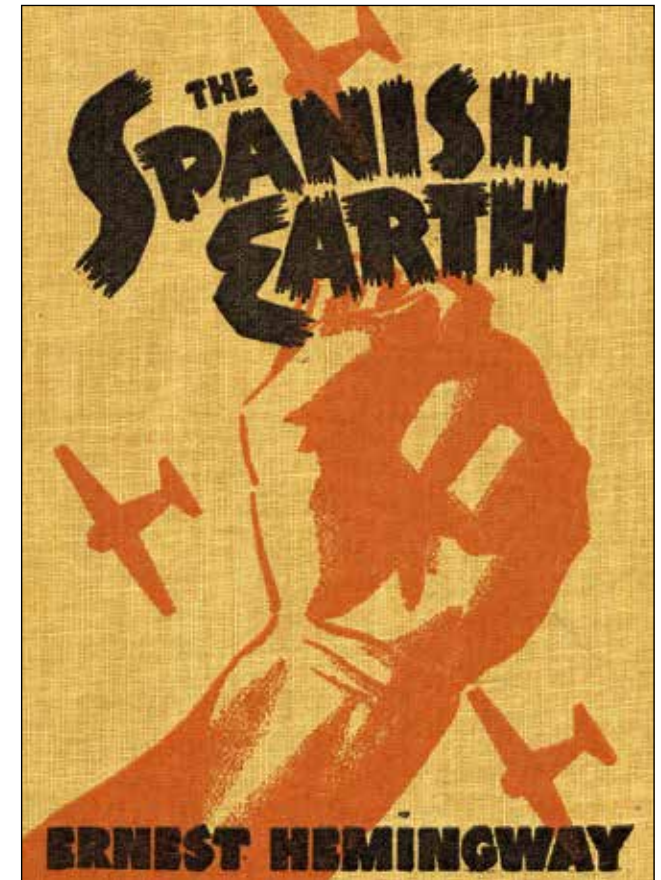
Dart was a Canadian aviator serving in the Spanish Republican infantry whom Hemingway met in Spain and for a few months permitted to handle his affairs in New York, such as finding a theatrical producer for *The Fifth Column* and working on the movie rights to *To Have and Have Not*. He turned out to be more trouble than he was worth, and after three months an ireful Hemingway let him go. Dart returned to Spain.

Jasper Wood was a seventeen-year old kid from Cleveland, Ohio. Seeing *The Spanish Earth* in early 1938 inspired him to write Hemingway for permission to put together a book version. Initially Dart served as the go-between. He bears some fault for the book's problems. The commentary he provided did not match the final recorded commentary, and while Wood wanted and Hemingway expected photographic stills to accompany the text, Dart failed to send publishable photographs.

When Hemingway saw the published book, one of his chief complaints was the absence of the photographs. That complaint reveals what Hemingway potentially imagined for the book. Over a year earlier, in late May 1937, his fellow Contemporary Historian Archibald MacLeish exchanged several letters with Louis P. Birk at Modern Age Books on the subject of a possible short book about the war to be written by Hemingway and to consist largely of photographs. Birk was the editor working to bring out the book of Luis Quintanilla's war sketches, eventually published as *All the Brave*; his company sided with the Republic. Birk first suggested a book of fifty to sixty thousand words and thirty-five to sixty pictures, with a healthy first run of eighty thousand paper and twenty thousand cloth copies to be seriously promoted, promising the most fanfare of any Hemingway book. Modern Age also wanted to publish the book as quickly as possible.

MacLeish wrote back, airing his supposition that Hemingway would not be interested in a book of that word count. Birk replied by dropping the minimum to thirty-five or forty-thousand words. Anything shorter would not appeal to the public as a full book (an argument he had already made with the fifty-thousand minimum length). Birk appealed directly to Hemingway, promising mass distribution and asking after any plans he and Ivens might have for a book of photographs designed according to the film. But MacLeish advised Hemingway to decline the offer, and instead of having to write another forty or fifty thousand words for a Modern Age Books edition, publish a few photos in *Life* magazine with very limited text. Hemingway settled for the four-page spread in *Life* with eighteen images from the film and his accompanying captions. 'The War in Spain Makes a Movie' appeared in the July 12, 1937 issue in conjunction with the film's initial screenings.

Wood's proposition for a book combining film stills and the commentary promised what neither of these earlier opportunities did. It's quite possible that Hemingway harbored a distinct and high ambition for a book version of the film. Highbrow circles had begun not only to see the photographic image as significantly complementing the written word, but the word as significantly and artistically complementing the image. Throughout the 1930s, magazines such as MacLeish's own *Fortune* ran photo-essays that gave equal weight to image and word, and several book-length photo-essays—what William Stott's excellent *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* calls documentary books—also began to appear. MacLeish in fact published one of his own, *Land of the Free*, in 1938. For Stott, this trend coalesced in November 1937 with Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's *You Have Seen Their Faces*, a financial and critical success hailed by reviews as 'a new genre' and 'a new art.'¹ Had such a book version of *The Spanish Earth* appeared in July, Hemingway might have beat Caldwell and Bourke-



- Cover book 'The Spanish Earth', text by Hemingway.
- Spread of LIFE magazine with Robert Capa's wellknown photo of 'The Fallen Soldier' and behind it the pages of The Spanish Earth, with subtitles by Hemingway.
- Robert Capa, Death in the making, photobook (1938)
- Programme flyer The Spanish Earth, 1937. Coll JJA/EFJL.
- Photoseries of the 14th Hemingway Conference in Lausanne. In the middle: James Meredith, president of the Hemingway Society. Photos © Dan Miller.

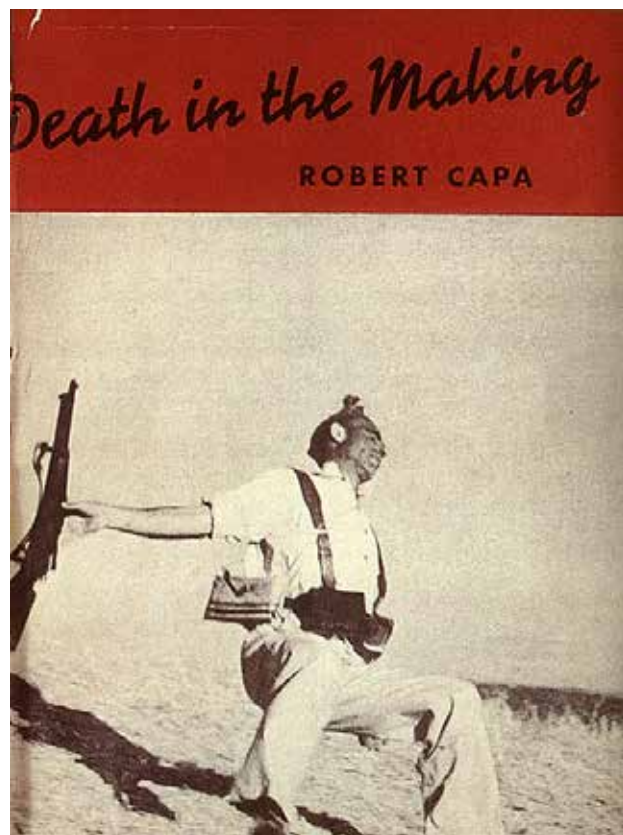
White to this bragging right.

As Stott observes, most documentary books 'had a social purpose,' and two 'were unabashed propaganda: Fredrick Barber's *The Horror of It: Camera Records of War's Gruesome Glories* (1932), and Laurence Stallings' *The First World War: A Photographic History* (1933),² the latter of which Hemingway owned in Key West. Both were about war, as would be Robert Capa's propagandistic documentary book on the Spanish Civil War, *Death in the Making* (1938). Jay Allen translated and provided the preface to Capa's book, which included photos by Gerda Taro, and served as Capa's unstated memorial and tribute to her. Indeed Hemingway perhaps had in mind photos by Capa and Taro. Taro (perhaps accompanied by Capa) might have visited the filming site at Fuenteduena, and they had a large collection of combat shots that would have added to the film stills and photographs taken by Ivens and John Ferno.

A year before his own documentary book appeared, Stallings wrote this review: 'Certain books...remain forever out of literary categories and become, according to the depth of originality in the writer, a work unto themselves. Their influence is not to be calculated. So it is with 'Death in the Afternoon.'³ Published in 1932, Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* used eighty-one photographs, but that number



- Robert Capa, *Death in the Making*, photobook (1938)
- Programme flyer *The Spanish Earth, 1937*. Coll. JIA/EJL.



was a compromise, down from 200. Words, Hemingway knew, were inadequate. Still, *Death* might have prompted Stallings' documentary book and can be seen to have contributed to the rise of the documentary photo-essay book.

Without photographs, Wood employed a local illustrator, Frederick K. Russell, to provide graphic accompaniment. Jasper found models for Russell in a local leftist bookstore. A black-and-white woodcut-like illustration dominates the title page for each reel and corresponds to its focus. A bearded soldier clutches a rifle for Reel Two, women and older men line up for food on a village street for Reel Four, a couple embrace as the man begins to turn away to head to battle for Reel Five, and soldiers battle behind a wood barricade for a small arched stone bridge for Reel

Six. The picture for Reel Three, of a large clenched fist raised against three airborne planes above, appears in a slightly modified form on the cover and communicates the film's thematic scheme pitting the natural, earth-based Republic against the hierarchical, technophilic fascists. It also leads into the image of 'the clenched fist of Republican Spain' raised by those attending the Salle de Goya meeting, where Republican leaders addressed elected representatives from military units. A final illustration, opposite the final text, completes the story visually: from a small tree withering in the sun at Reel One to this illustration of a tall, healthy tree standing beside an irrigation ditch.

For all of Wood's missteps in his seven-page introduction, including failing to acknowledge Ivens's role sufficiently for Hemingway, we can still laud his gumption and recognize the missteps as those of an ambitious teenager oversure of his talent and writing himself between the same covers as his idol. We should also admire his speed, from receiving permission after March 14 and publishing it on June 15. By early November, according to Jasper, the book was turning a profit and he expected to run out by Christmas. And the book Hemingway wanted has been exiled to our imaginations.

Adapted with permission from Alex Vernon, *Hemingway's Second War: Bearing Witness to the Spanish Civil War*, forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press.

- 1 Sigmund Aaron Lavine and Malcolm Cowley quoted in Stott, 211.
- 2 Stott, 213.
- 3 Quoted in Reynolds, *Hemingway: The 1930s*, 101.



Photoseries of the 14th Hemingway Conference in Lausanne. In the middle: James Meredith, president of the Hemingway Society. Photos © Dan Miller.

The Aesthetic of Risk: Joris Ivens, Ernest Hemingway, and The Spanish Earth

His long commitments against war as well as his commitments to telling the truth in his writing make questionable any claim that Ernest Hemingway was seduced into becoming a propagandist for the Soviet Union when he worked on *The Spanish Earth*. What he shares with director Joris Ivens and what appears as the central act of the film they are making is their deep affection for those whose faces and gestures are so lovingly featured in the film, as well as their conviction that justice is on the side of the Spanish people. The beloved images and the simple dignity of the words Hemingway uses to accompany them make the connection between the everyday work of a village and of the building of an irrigation ditch and the everyday work of the war as the people untrained in weapons turn from their trade to their defense.

In *The Spanish Earth* we see that telling such a story also depends upon risking one's life, as the two artists and Ivens's photographer, John Ferno, filmed under fire, sharing the artillery bombardment with the people of Madrid, the bullets hitting the walls around them of the ruined apartment looking over Campo de Bello and the University City where the Rebel troops held out.

Hemingway wrote his 'Dispatches' about the Spanish war for NANA from the front where the film was being made. The stories are certainly meant to be journalistic reports, although they did not get the featured publication Hemingway hoped for, but their existence and their style testifies to the situation of filming with Ivens, on the front lines, where the resources of writing and of filming are tested, and that sense of writing/filming under fire lends a perspective that makes judgments.

Just as we were congratulating ourselves on the splendid observation post and the non-existent danger, a bullet smacked against the corner of a brick wall beside Iven's head. Thinking it was a stray, we moved over a little and as I watched the action with the glasses, shading them carefully, another came by my head. . . Joris thought that Ferno had left the camera at our first post, and as I went back for it a bullet whacked into the wall above. I crawled back on my hands and knees and another bullet came by as I crossed the exposed corner.'

Ivens tells Peter Davis that Hemingway was importantly involved with the spontaneity of the filmmaking, not only later when he wrote the commentary:

You know that Hemingway . . . had an advantage on the other journalists... I could get much closer to the front, even to the first lines, which the other correspondents couldn't, so Hemingway liked to go with us, and we used him very well, because he was strong, he took the cameras, also helped us, and really was a good friend and helpful at that moment. You know, something about the story-line also I had to ask him.²

Hemingway goes along with the film crew and carries the heavy cameras and consults with Ivens as they go about constructing the story line. They are writing the film as they go at this point. They are not able to follow the script that Ivens had planned out earlier with Archibald MacLeish, and while the shooting in the village had taken place earlier, more or less according to plan, what Ivens finds is that he then has to let the events of the battle determine what he films--they have to tell the story on the spot, he and Hemingway alike, adapting to events.

That is, in spite of not having the equipment for it, Ivens is forced into a kind of direct cinema in making this part of the film, some thirty years before he will be able in 1967 to use the synchronous sound techniques and lighter camera equipment of direct cinema to film *The Seventeenth Parallel* in Vietnam.³ He is filming as Robert Capa, with the lighter camera, is able to film his still photographs of the battle. When Bill Nichols⁴ compares the dogmatism of Leni Riefenstahl's camera work in *Triumph of the Will* to this film, he notes her significant lack of spontaneity in addition to the newsreel-like style of the fascist film. Ivens opens his filming to the influence of the unexpected situation.

Therefore one must insist on the significance of risk; not only the danger of the war zone, but also the risk of not planning how the filming will go, the loss of control by the filmmakers. The shared risk created a bond between the filmmaker and the writer, both of whom measured the significance of their work by the truthfulness such extremity was able to capture, in film, and in words.⁵

- 1 Ernest Hemingway, 'Dispatches,' 25.
- 2 From transcript of a June 4, 1981 interview with Peter Davis.
- 3 Marceline Loridan-Ivens, whom Ivens married in the sixties and who worked with him on his films after that, argues that Ivens's work should be seen in the context not of ideology but of the history of wars of liberation. She told us that she did the sound work and techniques of direct cinema with Ivens, beginning with the 1967 *17th Parallel*. She told us how she and Ivens struggled to record directly, and to resist staged performances such as they encountered later in China. But Ivens first came to her attention when she saw a screening in the 1950s of *The Spanish Earth*. And she notes that of course as in that film there is already something of the ideal of a direct cinema in the images of earlier Ivens films, as well as his enduring wariness about embracing the unplanned excesses of direct cinema. Interview recorded December 8, 2009 in Paris by Daniel Miller and Suzanne Clark.
- 4 Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 2001 Bloomington, p. 108.
- 5 Marceline Loridan-Ivens in fact attributes the strength of her relationship with Ivens, joining work and marriage, to the fact that they had the same capacity to take risks. It was she who wanted to film in the little village on the 17e parallel where the bombs fell. She tells the story of being denied permission to go there because it was too dangerous, and she looked like a Parisian. At that moment she encountered Ho Chi Minh. 'All of a sudden this old gentleman with a beard arrived and sat down next to us--they were in the process of talking to the prime minister, Phan Ban Dung--and he saw her number, and he said to her: 'You were in Auschwitz, little one, and they didn't burn you there?' 'You can do what you wish in my country.' Interview, Paris, December 8, 2009.

DANIEL MILLER AND SUZANNE CLARK



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Dan Miller is Associate Professor at the University of Oregon. He is the founder of the Long Island Documentary Project and the Oregon Documentary Project. He is an award-winning documentary film director and has guided students in producing award-winning documentaries for public and commercial broadcast. He is a featured contributor to the book 'Inventing Vietnam'. Suzanne Clark is Professor in English Literature at the University of Oregon. She published articles and books on women in 20th century literature like Julia Kristeva, on Hemingway, Cold war and the Spanish Civil War. In 2000 her book 'Cold Warriors: Manliness on Trial in the Rhetoric of the West' was published (Southern Illinois University Press) and in 1991 'Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word.' (Indiana University Press).



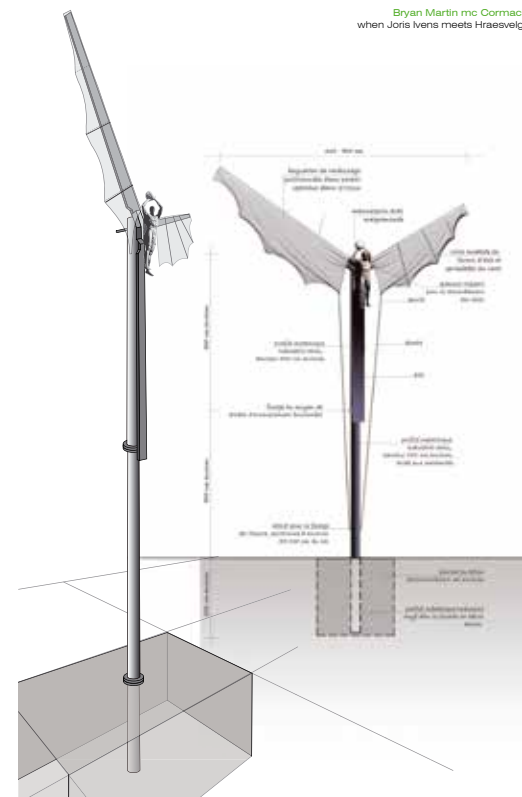


Bryan McCormack,
 "When Joris Ivens meets Hraesvelgr",
 Parc de Saint-Cloud, Paris
 Copyright artist.

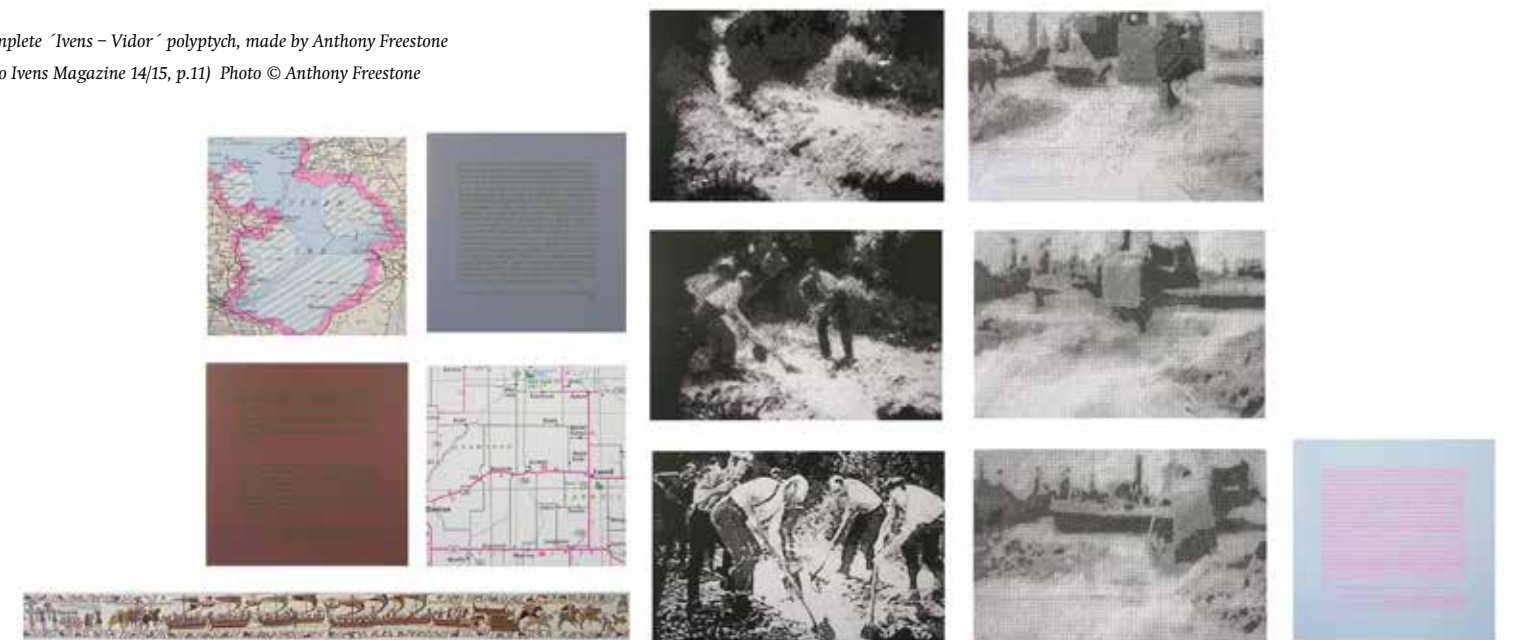
Joris Ivens and contemporary Art

On Saturday May 29 French Minister of Culture, Frédéric Mitterrand, revealed a 12 meters high outdoor sculpture about Joris Ivens, created by Irish artist Bryan McCormack. The ceremony in the Parc de Saint Cloud was attended by Marceline Loridan-Ivens. The title of the moving statue "When Joris Ivens meets Hraesvelgr" refers to Ivens' films and the wind giant from Norwegian mythology.

Photo of sculpture
 © Bryan Mc Cormick; Photos
 ceremony © Djamilla Cochran.



The complete "Ivens - Vidor" polyptych, made by Anthony Freestone
 (see also Ivens Magazine 14/15, p.11) Photo © Anthony Freestone



An almost forgotten colleague and collaborator of Joris Ivens

THE FILM-WORKER JOOP HUISKEN (1901-1979)



GÜNTER JORDAN

I CAME TO THE DEFA STUDIO FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS IN 1969, AND I CAN STILL SEE HUISKEN'S TALL FIGURE CLEARLY IN MY MIND: A 'SCHLAKS' OF A MAN AS THEY SAY IN BERLIN, A MIXTURE OF A NOBLEMAN AND A RASCAL, WITH A TOUCH OF MOCKERY IN THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES AND MOUTH. THEY SAID HE COULD DRINK ANYBODY UNDER THE TABLE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE COULD DRAW EVEN WITH A DIRECTOR GENERAL AS WELL. HE LOVED DISCUSSIONS, BUT WITHOUT BEING A KNOW-ALL, AND HE WOULD ALWAYS HAVE A JOKE TO TELL. WHEN HE SPOKE, HE DID SO IN A SIMPLE AND COMPREHENSIBLE WAY, CREATING HIS OWN 'DUTCH IDIOM' OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE. WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO ASK SUCH A MAN?

I was preoccupied with myself, had to see how to get my feet on the ground and learn how to take my first steps as a director. Ten years later he had passed away. I did not see his films until in the early 80s, when I, originally a filmmaker, started taking a closer look at the early history of DEFA. By then it was too late for a conversation. The results of my investigations found their way into a manuscript that I worked out as my dissertation in 1990 and that was published in 1994. After the monographic study by Alfred Krautz (1969)¹ and the obituaries written by Bert Hogenkamp and

Rolf Richter (1979)², this was the first time Huisken was finally mentioned again. To me he was a shining light. How would I write about him today?

From Amsterdam to Berlin

Joop Huisken was born in Amsterdam on April 30th of 1901. His father was a worker and slaughterer at the municipal stockyard, his mother a seamstress. As a boy, he experienced the arduous existence of a proletarian family and the great strike of 1911. Huisken went to a Christian primary school, worked as an assistant in different offices and as an apprentice in a bank. Because of his physique and his state of health, his dream job was out of the question for him. 'My brothers became metalworkers, but I couldn't because of the way I moved and the way I looked. But my family background has been decisive. Throughout my whole life I have been around workers, dockers, metalworkers.'³ Huisken took evening classes and at the age of 19 became an accountant at a bank. A few years later he lost this job. 'I did not want to work in my own profession any more, because stock dealing is not only pointless, but also felonious.'⁴ He worked as an unskilled worker for a while and then on a

barge on the Rhine, until in 1926 he joined the Amsterdam branch of the Capi company whose director was Joris Ivens. There, he started working as a sales assistant and representative for optical equipment. Everything he learned about optics, electrical engineering and photography was self-taught. The 'Capians' were not just employees of the company, they were actively involved in the activities of the Nederlandsche Filmliga (Dutch Film Society, 1927-1933) and the filmmaking of Joris Ivens.⁵ 'At that time, I hardly knew anything about the problematics of artistic film design, but was almost an outsider in this respect.'⁶ Huisken initially collaborated on Ivens' films as a technical assistant, p.e. as a cyclist for *Regen (Rain)*, taking Ivens and his camera on the carrier and the crossbar, then as a cameraman (*Wij bouwen/We Are Building*, *Zuiderzee*, *Philips Radio*, *Nieuwe Gronden/New Earth*). The classic sequence of the closing of the dike in *Zuiderzeewerken* and *New Earth*, was partly shot by cameraman Huisken, when Ivens was abroad. To speak of a teacher-student relationship, as it has been done over and over again in the texts on Huisken, is out of the question. Ivens was only three years older than Huisken, he was rather a more or less conscious role model to him. For everybody participating, even for Helen van Dongen and John Fernhout, it was all learning by doing. Huisken was there to see the foundation of the Filmliga the meetings of the European film avant-garde and the discovery of the Soviet film which culminated in the invitation of Pudovkin to Amsterdam. It was through Ivens that Huisken got in touch with the Vereniging voor Volks Cultuur (VVVC, Association for Popular Culture, 1928) that also produced a newsreel (*VVVC-journaal/VVVC newsreel*, 1930) and that changed into Vereniging van Vrienden van de Sowjet-Unie (VVVSU; Association of the Friends of the Soviet Union, 1931). Huisken became co-founder of its Internationale Filmonderneming (IFO; International Film Company, 1933), a film distributor for Soviet films that continued the work started by the Filmliga in its own field. In 1933 he visited the Soviet Union with a workers' delegation recording this trip with his camera, just as Ivens had done with his trip three years before. The Dutch censor was only prepared to give the *Arbeidersdelegatiefilm (Workers' delegation film)*, 1934) a certificate, if no less than 23 captions and several shots were cut. This film was followed by *De Markthallen van Parijs (The Market-halls of Paris)*, 1934, Director: Paul Schuitema). Together with Mark Kolthoff, a painter and photographer who was part of the Capi group, Huisken started the company Studiefilm in 1935. Set up to distribute educational films to schools, it started with only two films. One was a version of Ivens' *Zuiderzeewerken* which, ironically, had been especially adapted using the instructions of the same censor – an expert in educational cinema – who had so drastically mutilated Huisken's *Arbeidersdelegatiefilm*. Studiefilm did not last long, according to Kolthoff because he and Huisken lost interest.⁷

In the 1930's photography was another (neglected) activity of Joop Huisken. With Joris Ivens, Mark Kolthoff and John Fernhout he belonged to the founding members of the Vereniging van Arbeidersfotografen (Association of Worker Photographers), which had been established in 1931 with the aim 'of training the workers in the work of photography, in order to make them fit for taking pictures with regard to the activities of the revolutionary workers' movement.'⁸ He was listed as a contributor for the new periodical *Foto en Film*, which Kolthoff, Schuitema and some others were hoping to start in 1935.⁹ And he was also actively involved in the organisation of Foto '37, the seminal showcase of Dutch 'New Photography' organised by the Bond ter Verdediging van Culturele Rechten (Union for the Defence of Cul-

tural Rights) in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.¹⁰ None of Huisken's 1930's photographs have survived.

The Filmliga had ceased to exist in 1933 and Ivens was on his way to the battlefields of world history. According to a close German friend, '[i]n his profession as an operator for culture and documentary films, there were hardly any career options for the local filmmakers in the Netherlands because of their limited possibilities'¹¹. When Huisken saw an opportunity to make a film though, he grabbed it with both hands. Thus he directed *Een medicus over Spanje (A Doctor about Spain)*, 1937), a 35mm sound film for the Commission Aid to Spain featuring its secretary, the well-known medical practitioner and socialist councillor Ben Sajat. A year later followed the silent 16mm film *Hier is de VPRO (Here is the VPRO)*, 1938). Huisken and graphic designer Piet Marée co-directed this low-budget propaganda film for the liberal protestant broadcasting association.¹² In 1938 he also made a documentary about the electrification of the railroad between Amsterdam and Utrecht. One year later he again made a film with Piet Marée entitled *Vier vrienden winnen een wedstrijd (Four Friends win a Match)*, 1939).

Huisken was the director of the VVSU from 1934 and 1938 and repeatedly went to Moscow for negotiations, got to know Ernst Busch in Amsterdam and Hans Rodenberg in Moscow. There was enough to do in the Netherlands alone: strengthening the alliance between the workers and intellectuals and the antifascist movement, collaborating with the Internationale Arbeiterhilfe (IAH; Workers International Relief/WIR) in order to support the victims of nazism. Huisken repeatedly delivered messages and illegal literature from Amsterdam to Berlin. The above mentioned confidante confirmed that he was 'very reliable and prudent in this task', a 'good comrade, always willing to help'.¹³

During the War

After the occupation of the Netherlands by the German Wehrmacht in May 1940, Joop Huisken was drafted to work in Germany in August of the same year. He came to Potsdam-Babelsberg to Universum Film AG (Ufa), other Dutchmen received jobs at the city's department of public works, p.e. as tram drivers, in local firms according to their professional qualification, or likewise at Ufa as ancillary lighting technicians or unskilled workers.⁹ After first being accommodated in private homes, they were soon relocated in shacks on the Ufa premises, but could move around quite freely compared to the East European workers.¹⁰ Huisken was lucky. Because of his professional experience, he was first employed as a trick technician and from March 1941 on as a camera assistant in the Ufa department of rear projection where he enjoyed a regulated work schedule, vacation and salary according to a contract of employment and wage regulations. At his own request and after having presented his 'Aryan descent', he was accepted into the 'Fachschaft Film' of the Reichsfilmkammer (Film Chamber of the Reich) in May 1942. His department must have had an urgent interest in this, too, because from then on he could be employed as an independently shooting assistant in the whole Reich without any further formalities. This was even more important since the studio was highly frequented, even after the extensive work on special effects done for the movie *Münchhausen* (1942/43) which he had a part in. The conscriptions of staff members to the Wehrmacht added to this as well. His 'foreman' was the cameraman Ewald Krause (born in 1907). Thanks to his somewhat civil life – he lived in the Moabit district of Berlin, officially as a tenant', in reality with the woman he was going to live and start a family



• Mark Kolthoff, Joop Huisken (at the background) and Joris Ivens during the shooting of Philips radio, 1931. Coll. JIA/EFJL.

• Joop Huisken and Willem Bon, working at the studio of the Filmtechnische leergang (Film technical Study course), ca. 1934. Coll. JIA/EFJL.

• Joop Huisken, Filmstill Electrification Railroad Amsterdam-Utrecht, 1938. Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/

with after 1945, and between 1943 and 1945 he had a second home in the 'Stern' area of Potsdam - Huisken was able to get information about the war situation that his fellow countrymen, being interned in the Ufa shacks, did not have such an easy access to. He later never said a word about this situation, even though he must have been conscious of it, and neither did he talk about his work for Ufa and about his privileged situation, he only spoke of the forced labor, which of course it was.

After the end of the war he stayed in Berlin. He actively supported the creation of the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renovation of Germany in the Tiergarten district of Berlin. For the State Picture and Film Archive he made some film recordings of the destroyed city of Berlin. He had managed to obtain a camera, whencesoever. Initially, Sowexport provided the raw film, later the DEFA did. And that's where he stayed. After all these years, Huisken had to reinvent for himself what a documentary film was and could be. His downy 'social background, political decision, initial encounter with the avant-garde and revolutionary film' and the technical training at the Ufa constituted a unique fundament for this. He was a cameraman, a director and a production manager in one person. 'At that time, when I started, you did it all on your own, and I believe this is an essential factor, that we had to do everything by ourselves, that we were also able to do it and knew what it meant when somebody else was doing it.'¹²

Huisken remained Dutch.¹³ In 1946, the Soviet Military Administration in Germany gave him permission to go home.¹⁴ The Dutch Military Mission extended his residence permit for Germany at the request of DEFA, 'because we urgently need him here as an important worker for the cinematic reconstruction in Germany'¹⁵, and managed to get an interzonal passport for him. The following year, Huisken went to the Netherlands again and explored the possibilities of a distribution of DEFA films. 'We (have to) proceed carefully in this matter, because the general opinion in the Netherlands is still anti-German.'¹⁶ As a result of his talks with the Regeeringsvoorlichtingsdienst (Netherlands Government Information Service), the Netherlands started exchanging newsreels with DEFA.

Between 1927 and 1940, Huisken was a member of the Dutch Communist Party. 'In 1927, when I got to know many progressive artists, I learned about the objectives of the Communist Party and I came to appreciate them. Ever since then, I have been committed to the cause of communism.'¹⁷ This commitment was intuitive and lasted until the end of his life. And it was naive. The intimate comrade from his illegal work observed: 'Owing to his artistic work, he has this volatility that is generally inherent in artists and that stands in the way of the methodical work of the party officials.' After his decision to stay in Germany and work for DEFA, it was just a natural course of action for him to organize. In February 1947, he applied to become a member of the SED and was accepted in December. 'Nobody ever talked about an official authorization by the Dutch party concerning my residence in Germany and I don't think anybody ever thought about it.'

In late fall 1949, a slanderous charge issued to the head inquisitor of the SED and chairman of the Zentrale Parteikon-trollkommission (ZPKK, Central Party Control Commission), Hermann Matern, set in train a dangerous machinery against Huisken. 'He maintains personal and material relations to leading Dutch Trotskyists.' To understand this, one

has to know: At the beginning of the year 1949, the conversion of the SED into a 'party of a new type' according to the Soviet model had started. In September 1949, the Noel-Field campaign, operated from Moscow, had been initiated in the countries with a people's democracy, followed by the Rajk and the Slansky trials. This led to extensive investigations on 'subversive elements' and emigrants from the West and to detentions, also in the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany. The ZPKK consequently requested Huisken's personal documents and curriculum vitae and summoned him for a questioning. In the meantime, the SED party leadership's resolution on the 'Lessons Learned from the Trial Against the Slansky Centre of Conjuraction' had been published¹⁸, which in the party's magazine was closed with the sentence: 'A new chapter in the development of our party is beginning.' Every thoughtless phrase, every deliberate denunciation could be used against anybody. Huisken's time of forced labour was being re-evaluated in a different light: 'During the whole time of the war, he was living freely in Germany.' According to rumours, some of his Dutch comrades considered him a renegade because he had worked for Ufa and had stayed in Germany after the end of the war. Who had given him the interzonal passport, why the trips to the Netherlands? The allegation that he was a Trotskyist proved to be untenable. 'The consultation conducted with H. did not produce any hints of links to subversive circles. There are no objections to allowing him to remain a member of the party.'¹⁹ The only question remaining was if a Dutchman could be a member of the SED. In order to answer this, the 'brother party' had to be included. Queries with the Dutch Communist Party remained unanswered. The Central Commission for the Exchange of Party documents deleted him from its lists and in October 1951 closed the file Huisken.

From Potsdam baut auf to Turbine I

Two weeks before the occupation of Potsdam by the Soviet troops (April 27th 1945), the city center of Potsdam had been destroyed in an Allied bomb attack (April 14th 1945). In the following time, considerable efforts were required in order to re-establish a minimum of municipal and civil life. The



Joop Huisken shooting for the Ufa, ca. 1943. Photo Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv

rubble all around was equal to the devastations in peoples minds. Everybody's own mental block had to be broken. Beginning in May 1946, the city administration looked for a direct contact between administration and population in order to encourage them to collaborate. The mayor's report from July 1946, which was distributed in the whole city, brought about a particular amount of resonance. 'A look back at the events clearly conveys that in spite of everything and in proportion to the number of workers, immense accomplishments have been achieved. (...) These are results that nobody can fail to notice if he wants to see. (...) The year 1946 has to be the decisive starting point of the reconstruction and all the means available have to be employed in order to lead this start to a final and decisive success.'²⁰

One of the means was film. It is not recorded in the documents if the proposal came from DEFA or from the city and in the end it does not matter: the City of Potsdam commissioned DEFA to produce the Potsdam 'Archive Film'²¹, it was immediately approved by the military censors. City and DEFA were in constant communication anyways because of the takeover of the Althoff studios in Nowawes (Babelsberg), whose trustee was the city. Here, the foundation ceremony of DEFA took place on May 17th, 1946. Under the circumstances of that time, the film was not exactly cheap for the city (12,300 Reichsmark), but it played a public and moral role that money could not pay for.

Joop Huisken had assumed the responsibility for script, direction and camera. The question if he had applied for this film or if DEFA had offered it to him cannot not be answered at this point. Huisken had been there during the Allied air raid on Potsdam and the devastation of large parts of the city, among them the Ufa premises, he knew Potsdam and he had a camera. His assistant and independently shooting second cameraman was his previous Ufa 'foreman' Ewald Krause. There were no grounds for jubilation and Huisken operated in an accordingly careful manner. 'I did not want to show it in such a way either and give a wrong impression of the facts, but still let the observer feel that we are well on the way to clear away the chaos.'²² He also wanted to set a mark with his film that caused reflection. He made it start in Sanssouci, to follow the path from Frederick II past Hindenburg to Hitler, and began with the words: 'When a man opens up to a path of injustice, at the same time he opens up to a path of doom and the time comes when the first leads into the second.' After everything had fallen to pieces, the city's inhabitants started cleaning up. Huisken put this into images in an almost classical way. Collective cleaning up of the rubble and Beethoven's 'Leonora' Overture combined and simultaneously excluded each other and that way commented the present situation in a way words were still unable to. The film used the (reenacted) inauguration of the city councillors of Potsdam as a starting point for the rendering of account on the reconstruction work done by the city administration and the population of Potsdam during the year following the end of the war: documents of the reestablishment of communal life, of the city's department of public works, of the streets, the tram network, the small businesses. But even the re-enactment of the presentation of the department heads became a document, because the expression on the faces of everybody involved still reflected the circumstances surrounding their work. The mayor of Potsdam hoped that the film would 'be able to show later generations, to whom our present time will have turned into a historical past, a realistic and true image of the chaos and the general hardship as well as of the courageous attempts to master and overcome this hopeless situation.'²³

With intentional scarcity of devices, Huisken obtained a drastic effect. 'The cameramen have created images that achieve an incredible forcefulness through their composition and their technical perfection. (...) It's the merit of the German film production that recommenced after the great catastrophe to base its artistic standards on an intellectual attitude, that is to say the critical examination not only of given real circumstances, but especially of a mental situation.'²⁴

The *Potsdam* film was simple and contained essential characteristics of Huisken's filmmaking which would further develop in the following years: an eye for processes and gestures and objective rationality, not without empathy and not without photographic beauty. The image was always 'intense'. Simply Dutch realism. If there was anything 'ideological' about it, then it was his interest in the working man. His films were not meant to be emotionally touching, just as little as ideologically persuasive. Neither will one find twirls and arabesques in them, or that solemn physicality known from educational films that could be seen in the Dresden and Halle versions of these cinematic reports (*Dresden; Sachsen-Anhalt am Werk/Saxony-Anhalt Works, 1946*); only *Berlin im Aufbau (Berlin in Reconstruction, 1946)* was ruthlessly sober. His filmmaking could not disclaim the early influence of the Capi circle, and it probably did not want to deny it either, this 'hybrid mixture of spontaneous report, reenacted scenes and lyricism of the images' that André Stufkens has discovered in Joris Ivens' films.²⁵

Huisken was definitely not an observer of the beginnings, he was a participant and helped shape the conditions in film and reality and he moved along the narrow ridge between reproducing and exerting an influence without sliding into purism and agitation. 'We showed that people in the whole country were using their hands in order to pursue a peaceful job and, as far as possible and as far as the circumstances permitted, restart production, get the factories and machines going. And since through the documentaries we had the opportunity to show the people in the North what the people in the South had already set in motion again and to show those in the South what had been set in motion in the North, this created a common feeling: We will make it, we will move ahead!'²⁶

With the *Potsdam* film he had started his work for the German film and had introduced his subject straight away: the life and works of working people. This happened in the middle of the century which was also the middle of his life. It was now high time to uncover everything that his natural abilities provided and that had been inwardly ripening during all these years. It was time to create his own works. He was not indifferent to the situation in Germany. DEFA was giving him work and a roof. With the separation from his wife, the ties to Amsterdam were severed, a new family in Berlin was being started. So he stayed in Germany.

At DEFA he was initially working days and nights for the newsreel *Der Augenzeuge* (The Eyewitness). This was an innovative newsreel, but that is not part of the subject. In a time of utmost material and technical restrictions, during the course of three or four years it stood out with its open-mindedness, its imagery, its scenic profiles and its subjects with soundbites succeeding *The March of Time* that were looking for their kind at that time. Everybody did everything, the cameraman carried out the production management, the production manager directed, the main point was to get back to the studio with a good subject. Film training in real time.



Joop Huisken, Filmstills Stahl (Steel), 1948. Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H. © DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

The film *Aus eigener Kraft* (From Own Power, 1947) was a straightforward report of the achievements of the 'IG Metall' (Metal Union) but it was still hardly a film, just as little as straightforwardness was an aesthetic category. The following film *Stahl* (Steel, 1948) showed that Huisken had been learning. The subject was simple. The steel makers of Riesa had to charge the furnaces manually because they did not have any cranes. They were unable to build one on their own because they lacked the pieces. Some enterprises in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt responded to their call for help by sending single parts that were often in need of repair themselves. The charging crane could be built, the working conditions made easier, the productivity increased. The storyline was based on an actual occurrence that had been broadcasted and written about in the newspapers under the slogan 'Riesa needs cranes'. The film refused to present a mere success story. It exposed the backbreaking work and then antithetically followed the operation of the crane. Every gain of ideas and pieces of the crane was followed by a new failure which was overcome through new ideas and new activities. Operation cycles depended on men who cursed and then rolled up their sleeves again. The pressure under which the steel makers worked was portrayed through cross-cutting and rhythmic cutting. This way of sticking to the operation brought a dramatic effect to the film that was produced by filmic devices, but not dominated by them. The cause itself and the people pushing it forward were the driving forces. The commentary took up the course of the action and served the increasing pace by laconically repeating the crane formula and the direct quotes from the workers. *Stahl* was Ivens' model from *Zuidersee* in German.

Because of the antithetical structure, for the first time the construction of a plot was possible in a documentary. Idea, script and dramaturgy by Huisken's author Gerhard Klein already contained the promise of realism in sight and form. Years later, this was to make Gerhard Klein a master of neo-realism in Berlin where he made feature film history at DEFA (*Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser/Berlin - Schönhauser Corner*, 1957, a.o.). This opened up the cinematic space for Joop Huisken's strong points which he brought into DEFA documentary filmmaking. 'To capture the concreteness of a situation - that is the first and essential aspect that Ivens taught me.'²⁷ As a filmmaker, Huisken was not an ideologist, but a skilled worker at his object just as any other worker.

The production of documentary films, still located in Potsdam-Babelsberg, started to propagate the two-year plan in the Soviet Occupation Zone. Andrew Thorndike, who had returned from Soviet captivity a year before, became the political and artistic director. Harry Funk: 'Joop Huisken, who had already worked with Joris Ivens in his early years, had gotten to know a different kind of documentary film, a politically committed, sociocritical documentary film. This is why his films from that time where those that came closest to the international standard of documentaries.'²⁸ Huisken towered above them all, not just in a physical sense. Eva Fritzsche: 'Joop Huisken was almost the only one of us who was already really experienced in the area of filmmaking. (...) We all learned a lot from each other. For example Joop Huisken: He knew it all, you could always ask him for advice. Sometimes he did not feel like talking at that moment, but he was a real friend, a pal as you could not imagine any better one.'²⁹ This continued in the fifties when the next bunch of young unexperienced filmmakers entered the studio. Again it was Huisken who took them aside and explained to them in a practical way what filmmaking is

about. Alfons Machalz: 'This man absolutely thrived on being able to pass on his knowledge and his experiences to others. He would discuss with you late into the nights in the canteen or in a bar, he would drag you to the cutting room or to the showing of a film in order to make you understand the 1 x 1 of cinematography.'³⁰

In spring 1950, the production of political documentaries was connected more closely with the newsreel. The group moved to Berlin, the Department for Newsreels became the Department for Newsreels and Documentary Films, then the Department became the Studio of the same name (1952). The director and cameraman Joop Huisken became the Brigade Huisken, that managed to shoot five films in one year, political films produced by commission like *1952 - Das entscheidende Jahr* (1952 - The Decisive Year, 1952) and *Nach 900 Tagen* (After 900 Days, 1953) with the usual afflictions of that time: lush narration that was accompanied by footage. Films of that kind always brought the same slogans, linguistic stereotypes, political simplifications, the never changing cadences of the language, the propagandistic fervour, the background music fraught with meaning into the movie theaters. Nobody in the audience could use this for new observations, new experiences. This was not just a consequence of the Cold War times and spirit. It was also fostered by the firm belief in the miracle of being able to restructure and reprogramm a society in no time and particularly use filmmaking for this enterprise. When a man like Huisken adapted to this, this did not do any good neither to his films nor to himself. It was not until *Turbine I* (1953) that he dropped out of this formula, only with this film did he return to himself.

In *Turbine I*, Huisken tracked the general repair of a turbine that was supposed to be carried out according to a newly developed high-speed procedure. Following the model of *Stahl* and for simplicities sake, Huisken wanted to stage certain operations. But the workers objected. They did not want to set up anything, not even themselves. And the film could not be done without the cooperation of the workers. The worker Bowens, initiator of the matter, said: 'They came here with a preconceived opinion and they had to adapt. But Joop quickly understood what it came down to. This was unknown territory for the film crew as well. Then they spent day and night at the enterprise, sat on the palisade with their camera and shot the individual stages of the process. It was supposed to be something special. And the film also showed when something did not work out. The work rhythm was precisely planned, interruptions could hardly be made up again.'³¹ The matter was carried out by workers who understood it as their proper matter. 'Anybody thinking about the first years of our republic should watch



Turbine I. That way he can observe how attitudes developed that became the foundation of our life.'³² The fact that he immediately understood the situation and abandoned all the conditions common to film production at that time spoke very well for Huisken. This was only possible because of the political reputation that Huisken had acquired with his previous productions and that now yielded added value in an artistic sense just like well-invested capital. That way the documentary could not just tell about the workers but be created in direct cooperation with them. The author of the commentary, Karl Gass, was also caught by this spirit and therefore stuck to the style of a report instead of turning it into a state supporting affair. The red flag had not been put up by the film crew, it hang there because of the times. Huisken pushed ahead with the demonstration of the working process as if it was a sports report, similar to the way he had done it in *Stahl*, which resembled a report from a six-day race, and the *Potsdam* film, which was not light on dramatic effects either. This showed the competence and superior ease he had achieved in dealing with subject and form. The conclusion of *Turbine I* laconically proved this: a crate of beer, a drink together, a last sign of solidarity resembled a fading away after having crossed the finish line.

When the documentary was finished, the worker Bowens travelled all over the country with it and popularized his method of the high-speed repairing procedure. 'You can talk or write a lot, but images speak volumes. That's why it was important that the film was so honest. That's why it could cause an effect.' That way, until the early sixties, the documentary produced an economic value of several hundred millions of marks. To this day, it is regarded as an important experiment for the development of socialist art and as the rare case of a film where utility value and artistic value come together.

What could have become an aesthetic example, however, did not cause imitation: While in 1948/49 Huisken's position had been too weak in both an artistic and political sense in order to contribute to shaping the DEFA documentary style, in 1953 it was too late to alter its basic arrangements.

There was nobody who could hold a candle to him. Only Hugo Hermann topped Huisken's *Turbine I* with *Stahl und Menschen* (Steel and Workers, 1956). From what is heard, the two men, almost of the same age, one a Dutchman, the other one Austrian, could not stand each other. Huisken's following documentary *Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe* (So that a good Germany may flourish, 1959) was to be understood as a response to this challenge: I am still the top dog, I can still do it. At that time, however, Hermann had long since become a victim of a political intrigue and had been driven out of the studio.

Excursus Joris Ivens I

In summer 1948, Joris Ivens had written an unexpected letter to Joop Huisken. This contained the characteristic essentials and marked the beginning of his later DEFA work. 'I heard about DEFA in this city (Prague) and in Belgrade and every once in a while I also see something on film production published in a magazine. It's an enormous task for film production to be collaborating in the effort to finally convert Germany into a habitable country, on a democratic basis and living in peace with all its neighbours. If you want to and think that I could be of any help for you, make sure the DEFA management sends me a letter now and then. That



way I can come to Berlin for a few days to talk to you. (...) However, we will need a lot of coordination and contact. We are organizing a world congress for documentarists in Prague and somebody from your studio has to come as well (or several people) (but certainly you!).'³³ For reasons unknown today, this idea was not carried out.

They were only reunited by a job, *Freundschaft siegt* (Friendship Triumphs, 1951/1952), a reportage in colour on the third world festival of youth and students. The documentary was a co-production of DEFA and Mosfilm. Joris Ivens, together with Iwan Piryev, was the director. After all his jobs in Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia he thought he was suited to do this, but in style and organisation, this film was characterized by the Soviet way of working. Surrounded by a whole army of assistant directors, Joop Huisken had no choice but to simply do his job, as one would say today. Ivens was impressed by the progress Huisken had made. 'He did exactly the opposite of what Johnny (i.e. John Fernhout) did and became a fantastic man.'³⁴ This changed when Ivens shot his next big international documentary, *Lied der Ströme* (Song of the Rivers, 1953/1954). Huisken was now the independently working director of the German shootings. For his next project *Die Windrose* (The Windrose, 1954), Ivens hired Huisken as a cameraman. This was the documentary fiction film about the life of women all over the world for which the episodes were filmed by different directors and then put together by Alberto Cavalcanti. The idea for this had come from Ivens and the commissioner IDFF and DEFA had entrusted him with the responsibility of the artistic overall management. Ivens highly esteemed Huisken's abilities and his reliability and Huisken in turn enjoyed to be included in ambitious projects that brought him together with filmmakers from all over the world. Not least of all with Alberto Cavalcanti, whom he had come to know and appreciate in 1928, 'one of the most important directors in this time who had a valuable and stimulating influence on the development of the realistic film and on every one of us. (...) In our discussions in the Filmliga in Amsterdam, which frequently lasted the whole night, his films always played a role because they contained so many innovations.'³⁵

It was not just because of Ivens' life and works that this renewal of their professional relationship did not develop into a pure friendship between men and artists. Both were on the one hand straightforward, but on the other hand headstrong. Huisken could be quite stubborn sometimes. That's how they had come to know each other at Capi and that's what Helene van Dongen had benefited from as a secretary and manager.³⁶ Huisken always called Ivens 'the old man', but in a respectful and friendly way, and Ivens always teased him by cordially and sarcastically calling him 'stubborn buddy' ('Gnatzkopf' in Dutch).

Joris Ivens and Joop Huisken during the shooting of *Freundschaft siegt* (Friendship Triumphs, 1951/52)
© DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

Joop Huisken and Joris Ivens during the shooting of *Lied der Ströme*, 1954
coll. JJA/EJJI
© DEFA-Foundation, Berlin



Joop Huisken pointing the film crew of *Freundschaft siegt* at something, on the right Joris Ivens. Coll. JJA/EJJI
© DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

The relationship between Huisken and Ivens especially suffered from Ivens' authority which was built up from the outside and which structurally put Huisken at a disadvantage. Ivens was frequently appointed as an artistic director by the studio. The most well-known –and oddest– case is *Mein Kind (My Child, 1953)* by Alfons Machalz and Vladimir Pozner, which Ivens only got to see until after the opening night. This was directly followed by the China movie, for which the studio wanted to appoint him as a supervisor. But Ivens neither had an interest nor a stake in this. The name says it all: it did not happen all too often that a studio had a living seal of quality at its disposal! Huisken, whose name by that time also sent out a message, had to live with the fact that, just as in the story of the hare and the hedgehog, Ivens was always there before him. The only time that Huisken had a lead was in 1961 when he was granted the academic title of a professor; Ivens did not receive the honorary doctorate from the Karl Marx University in Leipzig until seven years later.

Ivens was friendly and mindful towards Huisken, he sent greetings, asked about him and interceded on his behalf. When Huisken died in early April 1979, Ivens sent a telegram that was publicly posted at the studio entrance next to Huisken's picture. This not only constituted a record of their relationship, but also a documentation of the loyalty the DEFA Studio for Documentary Films felt towards Ivens even in times of his marginalization in the GDR.

China – Land zwischen gestern und morgen

Starting in 1951, one or two Chinese movies had been displayed at the movies each year. In most cases, they dealt with the struggle and victory of the Peoples Liberation Army and the foundation of the Peoples Republic. Foreign films about China, as from the Soviet Union (1951) and Czechoslovakia (1954), were made in co-production with the Chinese studios. *China – Land zwischen gestern und morgen (China – Between Today and Tomorrow)* was probably the first completely foreign production shot in China throughout the world. The Chinese partner was the Association for Cultural Foreign Relations.³⁷

Joop Huisken during the shooting of China – Land zwischen Gestern und Morgen (1956). Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H. © DEFA-Foundation, Berlin



The documentary came into being in the course of the German-French film relations in the second half of the fifties as a co-production of the DEFA Studio for Newsreels and Documentary Films in Berlin and Procinex in Paris, a company closely allied with the French Communist Party. It was originally planned to have a length of 600 meters with a shooting period between October and December 1954.³⁸ Fostered by the adventures and experiences on site, the French favoured the conversion of the documentary into a feature-length film. DEFA accepted this proposal which of course entailed new arrangements, cost estimations and contracts. The shooting lasted until May 1955. The main responsibility for the production of the film and the carrying out of the shooting was assumed by Procinex, DEFA took care of the material provision, the copying (work print and dupe negative) and shipment from Berlin; Paris was responsible for reshipments from China. The work in the film laboratory and the editing dragged on for a year, the mixing at DEFA took place in October 1956.³⁹

The French partners chose Robert Ménégos as a director for the project, who had caused sensation with his first work *Vivent les Dockers!* (1950) and who since his collaboration on Ivens' *Lied der Ströme* (1954) was known at DEFA as well. During that job he had worked with Joop Huisken who was nominated by the German side. As an insurance policy, Procinex incorporated a clause in the contract with DEFA which committed the latter 'to entrust Mr. Joris Ivens with the artistic supervision of the film.'⁴⁰ Ivens refrained from accepting this, as production manager Wegner wrote to Huisken, who was in Peking, by return of mail, inasmuch as 'you are two grown-up artists and apart from a few personal discussions with you he considers this film to be a Huisken and Ménégos documentary'.⁴¹ Robert Ménégos and his cameraman Jean Penzer had to return to Paris by the end of the year 1954, so that from then on Huisken alone was responsible for the continuation of the shooting, including research, direction and camera.

'The Chinese ancillary staff, of which there is plenty, is even learning during this kind of filming, so they cannot contribute to the acceleration of the process to a considerable extent.⁴² Idea and budget were oriented to silent pictures, complete synchronized sound would have resulted in higher expenses, different technical equipment, additions to the crew, limited shooting time and the loss of immediateness. Again, he got his own way of adapting the conditions of the production to the ideas: if he was already there, he wanted to make something good out of it, even if this required more time, an extra 18,000 meters of color film additional to the planned 7,000 meters (outside the total quota of the GDR film production!) as well as new cash resources; there was no way of getting foreign currency.

The way the project had materialized was strange anyhow. The newly established Hauptverwaltung Film (HV Film; Head Office Film) of the Ministry of Culture had not even been correctly informed about the short film project. The approval of the journey was given in the belief that the HV director knew about it. However, he only found out about it by coincidence through Joris Ivens and not through the studio he was in charge of. When the French partners arrived in Berlin for the transformation of the project into a feature film, the state official in charge had still not been informed about the plan, but was convinced that everything was in order.⁴³ The only thing he was lacking was a practical idea of the realization of a feature film with unknown partners in an unknown, faraway country and a shooting period of

nine months. In a word: Huisken and Ménégos embarked on a project that had been prepared in a completely insufficient way. Or to put it in a different way: Chaos as the source of progress. Because this film was definitely a progress.

The movie led into the landscapes of China, into villages and cities, onto the Yangtze River and into the mountains, it showed the old, venerable China of the pagodas and caravans, of the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, and it showed the construction of new works, of railway lines and dams. The composition of the pictures, the atmosphere and the color conveyed a fascinating impression of the land and the people and their work. The problem was how to translate the semiofficial shooting proposals into stories of people. This was nothing obvious nor was it common habit, neither in China nor here in this part of the world. Huisken's accomplishment consisted in the fact that he wanted to do this and did it. Against the background of a steel mill, he told the story of Pao Tung, the traveling tinker, he told about the wedding of Sien Jiens next to the rural rice harvest, about the first assignment of Tschao Lin, the young female construction engineer, after a journey up the Yangtze River. The protagonists of this cinematic tale were represented by actors. (A practice as in *Potsdam baut auf or Stahl*, where real people reenacted an event, could neither be communicated nor carried out under Chinese circumstances and a different method, according to which the camera could freely follow the events would only be introduced to film history a decade later.) That way, a stylistically unbroken connection between general and individual representation was achieved.

The commentary for the (East) German version was written by Bodo Uhse, a renowned and cosmopolitan writer, editor-in-chief of the literary magazine 'Aufbau' ('Reconstruction') and secretary of the section for poetry and cultivation of language of the German Academy of Arts, a friend of Ivens ever since *Borinage* and therefore close to Huisken, too. Uhse knew China from his own experience and had written about this in 'Tagebuch aus China' ('Diary from China', 1956). That made him interesting for Huisken and DEFA. The text for the film oscillated between poetization and information, but only awkwardly worked with the images as Pozner had shown how to do in the first half of *Lied der Ströme* or as Hermlin would do two years later for *Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe*.

According to a new contract between Procinex and DEFA in 1956,⁴⁴ aside from the world distribution in the Western countries, the French company was also responsible for the production of the German version for West Germany, West Berlin, Austria and Switzerland. On the one hand, this allowed for the distribution of the film under the title of *Im Schatten der chinesischen Mauer (In the Shadow of the Chinese Wall)* by Union Française du Film, but on the other hand it caused the renunciation of the DEFA title. DEFA and HV Film agreed and after having compared both versions did not have any objections against the reductions and narration of the French version. This version was released in 1959, but in the face of the starting distribution of Carlo Lizzani's *Hinter der großen Mauer (Behind the Great Wall)*, which had been filmed with huge technical array as a full-length movie in color and TotalScope, it did not have any chance.

Film-Echo critically commented on the Italian movie that the otherwise quite talkative commentator concealed the work and censorship conditions under which the Italians

worked in China.⁴⁵ This reservation could have been raised against Huisken's China film as well. And would not have been justified. Of course the film was a hymn to the new China, which had only come into being five years before, through its own struggle, not created from outside as had happened with the two Germanies. But every critique requires familiarity with the circumstances and a minimum of empathy, at least dealing with a documentary film that wants to overcome the limitations of the educational film on the one hand and the newsreels on the other hand. Huisken loved images that actually deserved that name, nevertheless 'cinematic whitewashing'⁴⁶ was just as suspicious to him as it was to Ivens. The attitude of this film receives its nobility from the fact that it does not talk the grandeur of this people and of its awakening into being, but negotiates it at the level of the street, the field, the construction site and refrains from using the emblematics commonly used in Europe concerning a people's democracy.

Excursus Joris Ivens II

After the successful production in China from 1954/1955, DEFA prepared for a new film. Toward the end of 1955, a treaty of friendship had been signed between the People's Republic of China and the GDR, further bilateral contracts, like the one concerning commerce and maritime shipping, were in preparation, the bilateral relations were progressing positively. What was more obvious than backing them up through a new cinematic 'German-Chinese joint production'. In 1957, Joop Huisken stayed in China for preliminary talks and in order to film the first consignment of (East) German trucks, and was pondering on the conception of this film. The Chinese did not have any idea about the subject matter and the topic, but they did not want to settle for less than a feature-length color film in CinemaScope and standard format. DEFA proceeded assuming that everything would work out fine, just as it had done three years before. In early 1958, the German film crew traveled to China.

What they did not know and would not find out about: At the very same time, Joris Ivens arrived in Peking. He came there following an invitation from the Chinese government to help advance the Chinese documentary film production with help and advice. This implied lectures and seminars at the Peking Film Academy and two film productions with the participation of young film adepts according to Ivens' principle of learning by doing (*600 Millionen mit euch/600 Million with You and Vorfrühling/Before Spring*). In addition to that, Ivens was under contract with the Central Studio for Newsreels and Documentary Films as a general consultant. 'Everything was presented to me for consultation. They trusted me in the area of cinematic art.'⁴⁷ Reading this, it is even more surprising that an international film project like the one with DEFA would not have been presented to him. Only the Chinese sources would be able to clear this up, because nothing has been handed down from neither Ivens nor Huisken.

Both filmmakers were driven by the same basic thought: 'China is the country that is predestined for being one of the greatest among the great'⁴⁸; 'I have the strong feeling that a great time of Chinese history has started'.⁴⁹ Both did not care to make a propaganda or an educational film. They focused on the relation between man and nature, landscape and environment, on construction, work, change, but that was at the same time protecting the centuries-old traditions and rites. In contrast to Ivens, who carried out a 'big jump' from 1938 (*400 Millionen/The 400 Million*) to the



GDR Minister of Culture Klein, signing the contract for the Chinese Film. Joop Huisken in the middle. Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H.

present time of the year 1958, Huisken and Wedding had been there to see the development of the new China almost step by step. A comparison of both filmmakers' preconditions and results could have provided a lovely insight into the workshop of documentary film, the more so as both directors came from the same stable. Furthermore, both undertakings were joint enterprises. But their outcome could not have been more different.

The work of the DEFA crew started with difficulties. Paul Wojcinski, unit manager: 'We were hanging around for weeks without knowing what we were supposed and allowed to film. All the Chinese offered were pioneers and parades and tickets for the Peking Opera as a consolation for the long waiting periods.' The studio in Peking had appointed a script writer who was quickly afterwards sent to a people's commune without being substituted. The interpreter had an insufficient knowledge of German. There were no documents or information on the objects to be filmed, so that, as Huisken reported, 'we found ourselves in the grotesque situation that we had to get information about the New China indirectly through the New Germany, which we received from Berlin with a delay of several weeks.' Germans and Chinese were talking at crossed purposes, misunderstandings were piling up. The main obstacle was the lack of interest of the Chinese studio in a fundamental discussion of artistic issues, including the perceptions of what a documentary film is and is able to do. 'According to the Chinese, our controversies in the areas of ideology and art were fundamentally different; that we wanted to arrange situations cinematically that, according to Alex Wedding's opinion, were possible, but had never happened in real life, and this conception of ours, according to their view, was contradictory to the principles of documentary film itself.'

Huisken and Wedding were in search of people's stories.⁵⁰ 'We proposed to show people that were typical of the New China, people who change their country and in doing so reach a higher level of progress themselves. We wanted to show a worker who not too long ago had still been a farmer. Our Chinese colleagues responded that such workers no doubt existed. But a worker who had before been a farmer was now a worker. And it did not comply with the principles of socialist realism to portray him as a farmer because then he would have to act like a farmer.' And that's the way it went on. The differences of opinion became so strong and irreconcilable that Huisken canceled the shooting and DEFA no longer pursued the project. The filmed material was used in the sequence of films *Bilder aus China* (*Images from China*, 1959, Director: Heinz Fischer) for the German Central Institute for Teaching Material. DEFA henceforth did not have any desire for another adventure in China and after the Sino-Soviet split and the 'Cultural Revolution', this matter was obsolete anyway. Huisken remained loyally silent; he would never say anything against a people 'that he loves from the bottom of his heart'. Apart from the final report, not a single critical word ever passed his lips. He never shared Ivens' enthusiasm for China in the context of the seventies, however.⁵¹

It is strange to think that Huisken and Ivens stayed in China at the same time and never knew anything about each other and that the institutions in Peking (The Ministry of Culture, the Central Studio for Newsreel and Documentary Films) did not bring them together. While Ivens turned down the government's request for a documentary on the people's communes and proceeded into the province, Hu-

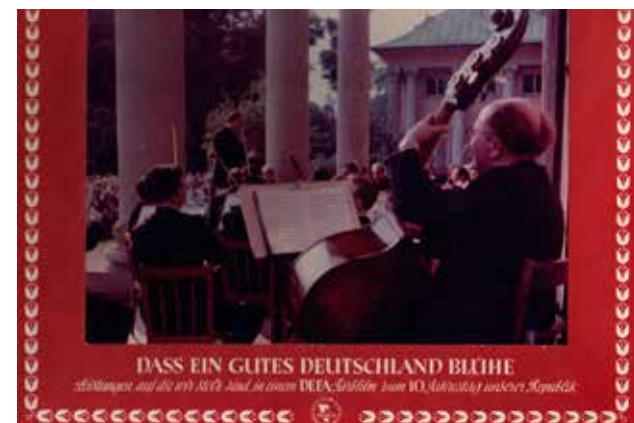
isken was being referred to the major operations. While Ivens was delivering lectures on the new documentary film at the Peking Film Academy, Huisken ran aground on the Chinese film dogma. While Ivens' *Before Spring* had its festive opening night in Peking, Huisken had to justify himself against allegations from Peking after his return to Berlin. Even the Great Prize in Montevideo for *China – Land zwischen gestern und morgen* could not compensate for all this.

But something that is also strange is that so far the coincidence of the undertakings to China of both 'Capians' has never been considered or questioned by film historians. While Ivens' comeback in China is openly discussed in the books, Huisken's failure is locked up in the archives. Documentary film in China is tightly linked to the name of Ivens. The spotlight that is shed on Ivens is so dazzling that it blinds out everybody and everything else: the Chinese newsreel and documentary film production, productions and coproductions between East and West in and with China. The 'others', too, wanted to allow the language of film to advance by turning towards new matters and raising new issues, especially in China. And Ivens himself talked about these others, no matter if they were called Huisken, Ménégoz, Lizzani or Vautier. From this point of view, the question about Ivens' share 'just like anybody else's' becomes more veritable, evenhanded and productive.

Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe

The tenth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic on October 7th, 1959 was planned to be celebrated with the presentation of a feature-length film that was different from anything previously produced. Gustav Wilhelm Lehmbrock, head of the script department at the DEFA Studio for Documentary Film, co-author of the film, together with Joop Huisken, wanted to 'show the human being and the human condition'⁵² which was the same as 'to interpret and arrange the subject in a poetic way'. This was something new and at the same time not so new.⁵³ Brecht had already pointed out: 'As necessary as it is to produce films which are half reportage and as good as they may be, we also need poetic films all the same, that appeal to the masses in a different way.'⁵⁴

The film was divided into five stories from a village, a huge smithy, a steel mill, the Leipzig Trade Fair, the Dresden Gallery, complemented and reflected through the war cemetery Halbe, a manifestation in Buchenwald, a glance into the People's Chamber and the SED politburo and a long, peaceful exposition. The authors were well aware of the risks of producing a compendium film, therefore abstained from employing the conventional compiling cutback and based the film entirely on that special day, 'in order to give a stronger profile to the thought of today's perspectives of our Republic and of every single person.'



The script was finished by the end of March 1959, the film was shot by the middle of August, there was a week of time between the end of the shooting and the voice recording, in which the raw editing had to be finished and the final version of the text was generated. In a major effort beyond comparison, the commissioning date in the last week of August was met. There were no further obstacles to a distribution in October.

The photography (Wolfgang Randel, Horst Orgel) was absolutely excellent, the portrayals of working situations constituted the best that had been accomplished in this area. The images from the world of work were not just visual detailing of working processes, following Ivens' work, they were a close approximation to what determines the existence of the worker. He was 'down-to-earth', his picture that of a creator, mover, ruler, he created the abundance of the country: with physical effort at the forging hammer, with brains at an automatic charging unit, with sensitivity amidst the alignments of thread in the spinning mill, with precision at the nuclear reactor and in the aircraft factory. This was not only alleged or talked into existence, one could see it and experience it in the game and the harshness of reality, in images of unstrained calmness and tremendous self-confidence.

The narration was written and spoken by the poet Stephan Hermlin. He was not the rhetorical executor of general knowledge, he did not put up a banner. He contributed to the film as an individual and respected the people on and in front of the screen as individuals, too. This attitude found its way into Hermlin's voice, it was spirit and gesture of reflexion in the instance of achieving awareness of the moment, in the swinging of the word, in the melody of the sentence. He translated the spirit of a subject into the gesture of language. And made the common uncommon. The sentences were simple and short, sometimes just a word, stuck to the events and left the image available to phantasy. It was a voice, his voice, that kept the film together and provided it with a soul.

At the final commissioning date at the studio, all the participants were deeply impressed, it was praised without end and even recommended to be classified as 'artistically valuable', which was already done at the state inspection and approval. But at the presentation for a commission of the SED's Politburo of the Central Committee in the middle of September, to which the filmmakers were not admitted, the approved and classified version was strongly rejected. 'The entire political concept of the film lacks what we understand as the content of 'German Democratic Republic'. The studio received instructions for the revision of both the part of the images and the text. 'A new commentary has to be made, which bears a clear character according to partylines and apt for publication. (...) It was a mistake to consign a lyricist like Hermlin with this task.'⁵⁵

Huisken received the instructions for the changes on paper. They mainly concerned the text, which was now written by the party publicist Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler. The changed version did not meet with any interest in the audience when it was released half a year after the anniversary. The copies of the original version made for the capitalist countries were allowed to be shown there, but had to be sent back by return of mail.

The creators of the film were not involved in this quarrel. Huisken had updated Hermlin about the new version,

assuming that he had been informed about the outcome of the story. However, the people in charge had eluded this responsibility. Hermlin recorded this prohibition in a file note. 'The narration that I wrote for the documentary on the GDR was prohibited. It took exactly two months until somebody talked to me about this; the only reason, I repeat, the only reason the prohibitors have found to this day, and it is only too justified that they do not produce this reason without awkwardness, says that the text is 'too poetic'...'⁵⁶

The rare case of a film with the same images but different commentaries brought one thing to light: Hermlin translated from the political language into the language of poetry. This was not just an exchange of vocabulary, the paraphrasing of terms, the finding of ornamental words. It was the recreation of a self-contained world. He sented what it was about and fulfilled it in the space of poetry. That was the only way it could appear before the audience in its full meaning. In Schnitzler's version, the images, which had only just been glowing through the warmth of a poet, were degraded and devalued by the customary political language. For the third time in a row, after Vladimir Pozner (*Lied der Ströme*, 1954) and Günther Rucker (*Du und mancher Kamerad/You and Some Comrade*, 1956, Director: Andrew Thorndike), a DEFA documentary had debilitated the proclamatory character of the commentary and searched for a new relationship between word and image, for seeing and thinking. None of the cases had brought about any effects concerning the general quality.

Huisken's film has to be placed within the international context of the transformation of the documentary film and of the questioning of its capacity. It received an immediate and unexpected echo at the Leipzig Week for Documentary Film in 1960 when the question of poetry became a central issue in the discussions. With *La Seine à rencontré Paris* (*The Seine Meets Paris*, 1957), Joris Ivens had brought a cinematic declaration of love that did not neglect the social background, but instead of shaking its 'fist' at the audi-



Filmposter *Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe* (1959). © DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

Film promotion material *Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe* (1959). Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H. © DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

ence presented a 'rose'. The claim for poetry by this dedicated documentarist brought together a strange faction of state officials and filmmakers against this 'betrayal' of the pugnacious documentary film. Behind this problem, a basic change in the relationship between man and society and in the role arts played in the East and likewise in the West asserted itself. The utilization of poetry exceeded the mere scope of arts and shed a special light on the political aspect of art. Poetry was not a device of art, but a social relationship, a particular relationship of man to himself. Art, poetry as a sovereign acquisition of history, which obtains exemplary importance for the conscience of the people, for its communication about itself, its experiences and longings.⁵⁷ Poetry was the indicator of the Copernican Revolution of the way world and the society were seen in the sixties. The poets stripped the political terms and slogans of their end in itself and placed themselves as the new end. This touched on the 'essential'. In the sixties, they would find out to what extent literature occupied this word and how rigidly politics deprived literature of the right to do so. It became more and more clear-cut, Hermlin summed up in 1964, that true poets do not wear the uniforms of pre-fabricated ideas, but 'that the painful struggles of our age for a more human, for a poetic society are raging in every single poem of every single one of these poets.'⁵⁸ This way of equating both worlds of imagination was a major quintessence of those years. A poetic strategy, the strategy of poetry was to be based on this.

Huisken has never publicly commented on the history of this film, not even on the injuries he must have sustained even though the attack was not directed towards him, but towards the studio and the script department. It remains uncertain if the film, had it been released the way it was planned, would have had a strong influence on filmmaking. The workers' film of Huisken's imprint hit its peak and was simultaneously brought to a close with *Dass ein gutes Deutschland blühe*. The new generation of DEFA documentarists did not continue to follow this path, but found their own solutions as directors, cameramen and dramaturgs, of which Jürgen Böttcher's film *Ofenbauer* (*Furnace Builders*, 1962) was the starting point. But even for this one, Huisken



Joop Huisken. Coll
Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv
© DEFA-Foundation, Berlin

was the one who built the bridge⁵⁹: Huisken had gotten to know the director of the Iron and Steel Combine in the hospital, had heard about the planned displacement of the blast furnaces and immediately recognized the filmic idea. He himself could not make the film, so he gave the idea to Jürgen Böttcher. This again was due to a concealed reason: Böttcher's debut feature *Drei von vielen* (*Three Among Many*, 1961) had been politically thrown back into the faces of director and studio by the Department of Agitation of the SED's Central Committee with a scandal beyond comparison and then been prohibited. This had cast a shadow on Huisken, too, who was the mentor of Böttcher's director of photography Christian Lehmann. 'The three of us were sitting together at a table, around us the whole crew. It was horrible. Then we meekly went to Joop's place and sat there for another hour without knowing what to do.'⁶⁰ The success of *Ofenbauer* also served for his own inner rehabilitation and as an indication that his work was carried on. Joop Huisken kept the synopsis of this film for the rest of his life.⁶¹

German Cinematic Art

Huisken received some recognition for his filmmaking. For the photography of the first documentary film in color, *Immer bereit* (*Always Ready*, 1950), he received the 3rd Class National Prize. The Heinrich-Greif Prize was conferred to him three times: 1st class for 1952 – *Das entscheidende Jahr* (1953), 3rd class for *Turbine I* (1954) and 3rd class for *China – Land zwischen gestern und morgen* (1957). He received all these prizes 'in a collective'. That reduced the prize money, but it emphasized his role in the film crews.

After the first recognitions, his name resounded beyond the small circle. He was then called into committees: Section Film at the Committee of the Society for German-Soviet Friendship (1953), Artistic Council (1954) and the Acceptance Committee of the Studio (1958), Film Advisory Council for the Minister of Culture (1970). He joined the Club of Film Creators (1960) and became a member of the Club of Creative Artists (1961).

His admission to the Editorial Board of German Cinematic Art (1959) was the real step into the public. There, he encouraged a more persistent and deeper examination of documentary film in order to put an end to its isolation and turn it into a matter of discussion between film artists, critics and audience. 'Our documentaries generally do not have the value they should have.'⁶² Even the outstanding contents could not hide this fact. 'It happens very often indeed that people forget that a film consists of moving images and that one has to work according to the laws of the moving image.' Which possibilities remained for documentary film? 'Those that contain the attempt to restart making art, documentary film art. (...) Therefore it's the human problems we have to turn our attention to.'⁶³

The basic problem was that documentaries had to disengage from being a description and show an interest in the course of events. The course of events, however, was always a course of dispute, therefore: conflict. 'We have already tried to give expression to conflict with documentary devices on many occasions without having fully succeeded. During the conflict itself the camera can hardly ever be a witness, and that is why the conflict cannot be visualized without reconstruction.'⁶⁴ Documentarists had adopted this method from educational film and converted it into an effective means that helped up its cumbersome technology. However, it was not just a matter of technology, but

also and predominantly one of doctrine. Notions of impact and objectives of the genre were looked for outside the films. 'The main function of documentaries has to be to pay attention to problems of those social groups that are united by a common idea or the struggle against a common threat.' Film turned out to be a means to proclaim a doctrine, propagate policy, popularize certain standards.⁶⁵ It was forced into a functionality where propaganda counted instead of studies, know-all manner instead of insight, paternalism instead of exchange of experiences. How could, under such circumstances, conflict be claimed as a constitutive element of documentaries as well, how man as his own creator? How could one even think of realism as a basic attitude in order to achieve a documentary? The path previously taken had come to its end. Everything back to the beginning?

'Every worker has certain job characteristics about him that are well-known and that the audience notices. These job characteristics cannot be portrayed by an actor without loss of veracity. However, cautious direction of the workers that arises out of the situation of the production process can be beneficial.' This was opposed by the fact that the technical apparatus was an alien element when it entered a factory. 'This is why the documentarist has to make an effort to take a position that turns him into a part of the enterprise.'⁶⁶ This can only work out when he knows what he wants in the face of a worker who knows what to do. First of all, the filmmaker has to understand what is happening in front of his eyes. A worker puts his force (and brains) into a production process at the end of which there is a product or the part of a product that is more than it was before because of the work done. This is what happens eight hours a day, five days a week and fifty weeks a year. Therefore, power has to be rationed. For that very reason a worker works with prudence, does not waste energy, does not squander material, looks after machine, tools and equipment. The film-worker Huisken knew what he wanted to shoot, he measured his shots with exactitude, did not use up more film material than necessary; his shooting ratio was exemplary. This discipline was not a corset, it allowed him to take alternative decisions on location or to violate the rules. The main issue was to 'not just do anything, but shoot only those images of which you certainly know that you will need them.' For this, a standpoint was needed. To quote Huisken: 'The standpoint determines the perspective.' The standpoint was not only a political question. The standpoint was important at the shooting, it decided whether the camera would see anything and what it would see. Huisken's spoutings on this were numerous. 'You have to take a firm standpoint. Your standpoint will determine the perspective you have, the way you see things, the way you think and your attitude towards what you have to do. Part of this standpoint is that you have to be human and, like a human, have a social attitude. You have to be a human being that has to attempt to know as much as possible, to gain experience and to get to know his technology to the extreme.' The example of *Zuidersee* lasted a lifetime. 'Nowadays, you sometimes see that the operation plays a leading part and the human being is just a concomitant phenomenon. It has to be vice versa. The primary aspect of the whole process, of the operations, are the human beings. (...) And I believe that this is the most important aspect for documentaries, that one starts out from the human being and his psyche, from the physiognomy and the nature of a human being, from his character, how it is shaped by his occupation.'⁶⁷

Huisken did not consider the DEFA Studio for Documentary Film to be in the condition for such an artistic advance. 'Unfortunately, in our studio nobody cares if you make a film quickly, if you do a good or a bad job or if you are slow. Those are things that do not play a part in the evaluation. The only decisive aspect is the continuous pursuit of appointments and meters. (...) I believe that there are few production sites where everything proceeds as individualistically as it does here. We do not even get to see the films our colleagues make. Everything is based on coincidence. That is why there are no artistic discussions and debates about our work and our problems. One could even say that our studio is not a production site of art, but a production site of meters. (...) I do not think there are any artistic assistants in this studio who are familiar with even a small part of the foreign production. In the long run, however, this is a completely intolerable state.'⁶⁸

Even a decade later, he wrote down: 'Somebody should investigate to what extent the complacency of filmmakers in the German Democratic Republic has an influence on the effort and intensity they apply during their work activities. Once you have gained a foothold in film production, you are sure to get by quite comfortably for the rest of your life. (...) It is extraordinarily difficult to make good films. Extraordinary films are rarely made.' How raise the production to a higher level? 'Not by organizing a conference once or twice a year, but confrontation and discussion on a daily basis.'⁶⁹

The professor

In the German Academy of Film Art in Potsdam-Babelsberg (founded in 1954, since 1969 Academy for Film and Television), documentary exercises were part of the schedule for everybody, but they could not replace a specific formation for documentaries and popular scientific film. The Ministry of Culture sent a signal by bestowing the academic title of a professor upon Joop Huisken on the occasion of his 60th birthday (1961). With this honour, the GDR first of all adorned itself. To Huisken, it was an awkward situation. 'Time and time again, they try to theorize about documentary films, to draw comparisons of films with completely different contents, not only thematically but also concerning their function. (...) If they attempted to find a theory for documentaries that was like an instruction manual for the production of documentaries, then this would stop the individual treatment of topics and narrow down the versatile possibilities.'⁷⁰ The granting of the title was an ornamental solution, but was it also a functional one?

Huisken had been committed to the Academy of Film Art since 1958, initially as a member of the Commission of Experts for Camera for the entrance and the final examinations, since 1961 as the leader of the camera division with teaching assignment. He made himself scarce, according to the students' memories, he was there, but still not there. He was too much of a practitioner than to be tempted by a permanent university job. He did not feel responsible for concepts, curricula and regulations. 'Every young person should develop according to his individual predispositions and talents, to his own perceptions, his style, otherwise we will never get out of the old rut.'⁷¹ Being a member of the senate, he criticized the semi-official vocabulary ('educational work', 'prime examples', 'control'), since they were talking about human beings.

The students certainly had to get used to his way of getting to the heart of matters. 'One always has to think twice – once straight forward and then backwards. By think-

ing, the essential part of the work is already done before you shoot.⁷² He did not see himself as a teacher standing in front of them, but rather as an older, experienced colleague. 'When we are standing here opposite each other, according to what I feel and think, this is the wrong position. We have to try to stand next to each other and complement each other. We have to try to achieve the objectives we have defined in a joint effort. (...) Now I would like to try to explain my standpoint in the area of our filmmaking. Subsequently, we are going to discuss this and I plead you to candidly express your opinion, because this is the only way we can understand and comprehend each other.' He was not uncritical, but he saw the onus on the university. 'During my first two encounters with this group of students, out of lack of knowledge about the circumstances, I assumed their knowledge and skills to be better than they actually were. They were lacking the most elementary skills of filmmaking. In order to achieve a fruitful further education, it has to be tried to rectify this as soon as possible. (...) We need to wholeheartedly instruct them and make them acquainted with the basic knowledge of film technology. Cameras, tripods, lenses: their application and their possibilities. Their employment in practice. At all costs, we have to demand that they take more photos using common sense and reason, as a thorough preparation for their future work with the film camera. Everybody takes a photo of (p.e.) the same person. (...) The purpose is to detect: How do we see our environment? How do we use and make use of our technical possibilities? How do we narrate something using images?'⁷³

Huisken did not get tired of insisting on starting point and objective of filmmaking. 'You have to know exactly why you are doing something in order to make money or become famous. That's complete nonsense, you don't get anything out of that and you can't do anything good with it either. You can only make something good when you honestly and straightforwardly stand by your subject, to your task, to yourself and to your fellow s.' Joop Huisken would not be himself, if he had not added one further sentence. And, correct, he does not forget it: 'And this standpoint will determine your perspective.' He really binds his students to this: 'Film design without personal involvement is cold and incomprehensible. **Absolutely futile!** Production only makes sense if it is done for the general good, for the well-being of mankind. For the people. For this purpose, it's self-evident that you understand the language and learn from the peo-

ple you are talking to. Language is not to be understood as a purely linguistic matter, it means that you have to be able to get to know and comprehend the way those people feel and see. You have to become one of them.'⁷⁴

This was put to the test with the documentary *Schweißerbrigade* (*The Welder's Brigade*, 1961), that was set at the Warnow shipyard in Rostock and for which the graduates Renate Drescher (dramaturgy) and Christian Lehmann (camera) wrote the script. Both spent some time living with the workers and learned welding in order to understand the work routine and be able to see from this perspective. The result exceeded all expectations. 'The visual part and the composition of the film reveal that here, a quality above average can be anticipated.'⁷⁵ Christian Lehmann: 'We hadn't expected that this man who had been honoured with such high decorations would take care of us in such an uncomplicated manner: above all an unselfish way! He didn't care to make us assistants, directors, cameramen who could servingly stay at his side, from the very first moment he was concerned to make us stand on our own feet, to prepare us for our own ways. He always remained steadfast, even when there were difficulties and therefore his at that time still very broad back became necessary.'⁷⁶ With Christian Lehmann, Jürgen Böttcher and other graduates from the academy, a new generation of cameramen and directors with a new motivation stepped into the studio. 'At that time, we were looking for something that did not exist yet', Jürgen Böttcher remembered and named the few models: 'We saw Hugo Hermann's *Stahl und Menschen* with greatest excitement, also *Turbine I* by Joop Huisken.' These films represented the baton that was passed from the founding generation to the generation of the sixties that programmatically lined up 'to report on the life of the workers'. The outcome of this was a style that went down in history as the DEFA style of documentary films and that with its code of ethics acquired brand value

Huisken's significance for the new generation cannot be overestimated. They took up his slogans, consciously or unconsciously: Approach humans as a human (Richard Cohn-Vossen), You have to know that it is needed (Volker Koepp), Let's move something (Kurt Tetzlaff), How serious are we about filmmaking (Gitta Nickel)⁷⁷. When he entered the studio canteen, he did not sit down with his colleagues from the old times, but with the young ones. 'He took a great interest in us, the young ones, and we accepted him, because we had seen him at the academy', says Wolfgang Dietzel, who worked with Huisken as a cameraman. 'I think that was the most important thing for us youngsters: There was somebody who had already delivered something, who had already done something. He simply had an attitude towards the world, but also towards this profession, cameraman, which first of all is a very nice and noble craft. Ideally, art is then added to it.' Christian Lehmann: 'I realized that, if you want to make documentaries, and I only wanted to make documentaries, that it is all about getting to know humans, holding humans in great respect, and those were the films I wanted to make, those that have to do with respectable humans. And I think that with Joop's support, I learned quite a lot about this and was able to work with it.' Among themselves, the youngsters called him 'Joopje', even though they correctly addressed him as Mr. Huisken, while for the old colleagues he was 'Hannes' or 'Johannes'.

The 6th International Leipzig Week of Documentary and Short Film in 1963 was a stroke of luck. Next to Karl Gass as the chairman and Peter Bokor (Hungary), Frans Buyens

(Belgium), Theodor Christensen (Denmark), Julio Garcia Espinosa (Cuba), Roman Karmen (Soviet Union), Derrick Knight (Great Britain), Jean Lods (France) and Ludwig Perski (Poland), Joop Huisken, too, was among the highly qualified members of the jury. This festival brought about the turn in the acceptance of new tendencies in documentaries throughout the world and at DEFA. The jury crowned Chris Marker and *Le joli mai* (*The beautiful month of May*) bearer of the Golden Dove, and Chris Marker admired Jürgen Böttcher's film *Stars*, which he considered to be 'one of the greatest', because it 'reflects reality the way it is and (...) leads the audience (...) to a comprehension of the real world.'⁷⁸ For Huisken, who was there, this was a confirmation that the works of the forerunners were in good hands. Furthermore, at the same festival, the first German retrospective of Joris Ivens' films was hosted. Huisken had to wait almost another twenty years until his work, too, was recognized as that of the 'Trailblazers' in an international retrospective. Leipzig, in the meantime, became the mecca of documentarists. This enabled DEFA employees to get to know and compare international standards and satisfied the demands Huisken had formulated in 1960.

The late works

In the last two decades of his life, Huisken shot more films than in the years before, among these favorite works that he had always wanted to take in hand and commissioned works that he executed in a reliable manner. Compared to what he had previously done, the topics became smaller. His fatigue was obvious, even though he 'still walked upright like a candle'. It was not granted to him to leap into the new dimension of documentaries with composition of original sounds and 16 mm technology, as Joris Ivens managed to.

He preferred portrayals of writers and artists, for example of Gerhard Hauptmann (1962) and Arnold Zweig (1963). However, compilation films were not his strong point. The *Masereel* film (1961) not only brought him together with the famous artist and his woodcut series, but also with the legendary collector and rescuer of books Theo Pinkus from Zurich, who was the script writer and who also developed the idea and script for *Fremdarbeiter* (*The Foreign Workers*, 1964), a study on immigrant workers in the FRG, which in its details was correct, but in its generalization missed the point. Against the backdrop of the international summer course of the Palucca School in Dresden, a portrayal of Gret Palucca as a dance teacher (1966) was produced.

Alongside, films about history and art history came into being. *Die Alliierten* (*The Allies*, 1966), a film commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stood out among the state-commissioned works because of its reduced propagandistic tinct. Choice of archive material, interview partners, montage and soundtrack were supposed to link up with the personal experience of the foreign audiences in an emotionally effective way. Commissioner and production conditions in the GDR with their extensive number of committees, concepts, discussions, decisions and orders did not permit to make a similarly personal film. *Frauen in Ravensbrück* (*Women in Ravensbrück*, 1968), a film commissioned by the Committee of Anti-fascist Resistance Fighters of the GDR, remained within the bounds of ritualized memory. Huisken was unable to override these obstacles, this would only be achieved by the next but one generation. A female Dutch companion had been interned in the Concentration Camp Ravensbrück, one of his German friends had been executed: very personal reasons for a personal film! *Lebendige*

Traditionen (*Living Tradition*, 1960) and *Die Albrechtsburg in Meissen* (*The Albrecht's Castle in Meissen*, 1972), that served as introductions into art history, continued what had been started by *Weißes Gold seit 1710* (*White Gold since 1710*, 1957), complemented by *Schloß und Park Pillnitz* (*The Castle and the Park of Pillnitz*, 1970). Before he took up with museum art (*Mit Kerstin und Silke in der Galerie/With Kerstin and Silke in the Gallery*, 1973; *Bewahrt und aufgehoben/Protected and Kept*, 1976; *Kleinplastik/Small Sculptures*, 1979), he turned towards a subject he was not yet familiar with, life in the country: *Schönes Land* (*A Beautiful Country*, 1963), *Freie Bauern* (*Free Peasants*, 1966), *Notizen aus Berlstedt* (*Notices from Berlstedt*, 1967). The last film caused criticism because of his affirmation of the subject, an agricultural production cooperative, and the relationships among the people. However, in this discussion nobody took into consideration that Huisken had never conducted an analysis of mankind and society in any of his films, but had rather looked for beauty and rhythm of work and working people within functional structures. That was no whitewashing, but cinematic poetry related to reality, and if anything deserved to be criticized, then rather the aspect that this poetry became independent or attached to the wrong or inappropriate matter. 'Such a topic has rarely been arranged with so much feeling for the effects of images.'⁷⁹

In Huisken's work and in the DEFA film production in general, the films *Die Schöpfung* (*The Creation*, 1966) and *Vom Wachsen* (*Above Growth*, 1966) occupied a special position, a major construction site and a shipyard as allegories for creation and creativity: films that are moving, connecting, assembling, only guided by image and music. Ivens' *De Brug* (*The Bridge*, 1928) saluted from a distance. 'In the first part, everything is moving horizontally, then the processes pass into vertical operation.'⁸⁰ As beautiful as they were and did not find equals among other films, they still missed the taste of the audience. The suspicion that this might be a new kind of ideological imposition played a role in this and the desire to speak and hear plain language. This cinematic culture was not trained and did not have any cultural base. The only film of such kind, *Mein Kind* (1953), had suffered from this lack itself and had not been imitated. This was different in France and also in Poland; further to the east, the famous Riga School of Poetic Cinema came into being. Huisken did not have any success in Leipzig with such films, even when after the debate about politics and poetry in documentaries (Faust vs. Rose) the excitement had calmed down. *Denn das Meer steht hinter allen Dingen* (*Then the Sea Stay Back of all the Things*, 1967) on the 'Darss', well-known as beach, artists' colony and primeval forest between Baltic Sea and Bodden, was his last film with a message and an effect: untouched landscape, nature formed by men. The film took over the vibrations of the landscape and dissolved them into image composition and film sequences. The beauty of the circumstances and relations in a natural area as an expression of human longing.

The last-mentioned films once again drew attention to the fact that Huisken's filmmaking was never only committed to the content, but also wanted to fulfil formal criteria. Those who confused one aspect with the other exchanged beauty's art of design for an affirmation's power of persuasion. Huisken's example especially shows that the relation of meaning and form in documentaries hardly penetrated the general conscience. A voice like that of the film theorist Alfred Krautz is very rare: 'Huisken's talent has two sides: First of all, his trained rationality, his logic, his technical skills and the ability to reflect an operation or an event in

Joop Huisken. Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H.





Joop Huisken, Joris Ivens and Jürgen Böttcher discussing in a café during the Leipzig Documentary Filmfestival, 1963. Coll. Filmmuseum Potsdam/N.J.H.

an objective and instructive way. Second, his affinity to a poetic and picturesque way of composition, his feeling for the poetic rhythm of things, while no sentimentality or romanticist aspects would ever shine through. Huisken had an eye for clear relations in space, and this always helped to bring the elements depicted into a firm structure. The single object is (...) always initially sensed from the visual side, from the pictorial and optic standpoint, while the clearness of the structure the recorded images have is emphasized.⁸¹

Epilogue

The Dutchman Huisken was one of the (most) important documentarists in Germany in the first two decades after 1945. His films constituted a bridge from the vanguard of the late twenties into the new times, and this even more and even more strangely so since Joris Ivens, the avant-gardist per se, himself worked at DEFA. Bert Hogenkamp called Huisken a 'pioneer of documentary film'⁸². He did not form a school and has never really been understood and accepted in his importance in spite of external honours. For what and whereby could Huisken arouse new interest?

The new German film⁸³ had not set out in 1946 to win the audience's favor at any cost. It went for their power of judgement, in fact both concerning reality and its portrayal in films. The path led from reflection to a critical conscience and from there to self-awareness, and this path was the goal. The new concepts and outlines proved to be able to take the load of a social way of functioning and taking effect and of an artistic form of documentaries. The approach to develop a new model, parallel to the rhetorical one handed down, according to which filmmakers, protagonists and audience are all on the same level, relate with each other as partners and in a common effort try to find out the truth, was not developed any further, probably not even recognized in its significance and therefore wasted. This robbed the audience of social awareness, political debate and aesthetical pleasure. The task to lift this blockade had to be too much for any single person. This is exactly the reason why it was so important that there were such individuals who knew their task and who always returned to their rut. Simply trailblazers. Joop Huisken was one of them. His background told him that a worker does not educate another worker, but consults with him. He handed down different ways of life to the audience. Watching closely, everybody could learn as you can always learn

from narration – or refrain from it. Huisken had confidence in the narrative power of an operation. And he had confidence in the cognitive ability of the audience.

As film history always goes, this legacy and its value had to be uncovered again during the late DEFA investigations. Not to mention the knowledge and the acquirement and handling of it in the old Federal Republic of Germany. Work and workers were not a subject there and, if at all, only found its way into film as supplementary images in educational or industrial films. Even in the sixties, the West German film only hesitantly turned towards this subject, despite the prior literary efforts by Wallraff and von der Grün, Wellershoff and Troppmann as well as the photo books by Chargesheimer. With his *Wilhelmsburger Freitag* (*Wilhelmsburg's Friday*, 1964)⁸⁴, Egon Monk drew attention to this dilemma, but this feature film did not change neither television nor cinema. For the time being, the New German Film, that stepped up against 'grandfather's cinema', had different objects and objectives. 'The professional world, everyday life, has hardly been shown on screen in German movies so far. Even the young directors who wanted to renew our cinema, are noticeably sliding into isolation or adaption; codification or consumerist kitsch tagged 'jet generation' seem to be the only alternatives at the moment.' (Wolfram Schütte, 1968)

Klaus Wildenhahn was the first one to seriously take up this topic and get a new artistic form for documentary film out of it. While Wildenhahn's name and importance are not in dispute in Germany, name and importance of Huisken are unknown among filmmakers and film historians apart from a few insiders. In this respect, DEFA documentary film and with it Joop Huisken's works deserve to be reconsidered, because it is necessary to understand GDR film history as a part of German film history and continue writing about it.

Huisken started working in films in Amsterdam, broadened his technical knowledge at Ufa, but he became a real documentarist in the GDR. This question is not aiming at a eulogy of this state, it is only asking for the circumstances of time and place. He was not a 'world cineast', but a director employed at a state-run film studio. He was not a major filmmaker like Andrew Thorndike, even though he had produced some major films. He was not the head of an artistic workgroup that was named after him. He only wanted to make films. Not always did he have the freedom to choose the subjects and topics. But even the so-called commissioned films were not 'gaga', as one would say today. Huisken knew that Ivens had shot excellent films 'by commission', and maybe he even remembered a certain issue of the *Filmliga*, which he used to sell before the events⁸⁵, in which Henrik Scholte considered the film *Wij bouwen*, a commissioned work for the General Association of Skilled Construction Workers, as another proof of the fact 'that Ivens, the film worker, can best work with the stimulus of a 'commission'.⁸⁶

Huisken exerted an influence through his personality and his films. Seen from the distance of the years, the best ones still exist, being documents of the time and evidence of the art to produce contemporary documents. An artist's life between departure, adaption, compromise and stubbornness. Ivens' life was the same, this was not unfamiliar to anybody.

This is not about defending Huisken against himself. He was a committed communist, friend of the Soviet Union, active sympathizer with the GDR. This was not his reason to make films, but vice versa, his view of life and film brought him to these movements and circumstances. He did not float with the tide. He did not need the 'workers' and farmers' state' in order to make films on workers and farmers. He would have shot these films anyway. He shared his ideals and illusions with other, more eminent contemporaries, who rectified their errors and aberrations through work without betraying or abandoning their original plan. They lived out their frustrations and deceptions, they gave up, failed or continued.

One year before his death, Joop Huisken made a statement to the Staatliche Filmdokumentation (SFD, State Film Documentation) about the beginnings of DEFA and filmmaking. Looking at this, we know the way he looked and spoke. And we have the quintessence of his filmmaking.

'Finally, I have something to tell about Joop that may be funny', says Christian Lehmann. 'Once, I had to go to the clinic in Berlin-Buch and on my way back, it was midsummer, very hot, I thought, gosh, you could stop by the cemetery and check up on Joop, he really deserves it. So I go there, and about two meters away from his grave there is a lawn sprinkler that always turns around and in order to get to his grave I had to get close and pass and then again get close and pass and I got soaking wet. And I heard Joop giggling.'

- 1 Alfred Krautz, 'Joop Huisken', in: *Filmdokumentaristen der DDR*, Berlin 1969
- 2 Bert Hogenkamp, 'Ein Pionier des Dokumentarfilms. Zum Tode von Joop Huisken', *Film und Fernsehen (F+Fs)*, 10/1979; Rolf Richter, '500 Millionen Mark und ein Film', *F+Fs* 10/1979
- 3 Joop Huisken, 'Wir sind gestartet, um vorwärtszukommen', in: 'Alltag des Dokumentarfilms. Erinnerungen an die Jahre des Anfangs 1946-1950', compiled by Günter Jordan, *Podium und Werkstatt* 24 (1987) (hereafter: *Alltag*)
- 4 Curriculum vitae Johannes Huisken, 2-7-1950 [BArch DY 30/IV 2/11/v.2293]
- 5 André Stufkens, *Joris Ivens Weltenfilmer*, Nijmegen 2009, p. 97 (hereafter: Stufkens)
- 6 Joop Huisken, in: *Alberto Cavalcanti*, Berlin 1962, S.46 (hereafter: Cavalcanti)
- 7 Curriculum vitae Huisken, I.c.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Cf. *Auslandswoche* 612/1943
- 10 Kees de B. Tells about this in his report 'Ik werkte in Duitsland' (Amsterdam 1945, FMP-S); from recent literature: Almuth Püschel, *Verwehte Spuren. Zwangsarbeit in Potsdam* (with bibliography), Wilhelmshorst 2002.
- 11 Ufa foreign worker, personal card 1945 [BArch, R 109 I/6428]
- 12 'Alltag', p. 73
- 13 Huisken kept the Dutch nationality until his death. Information from his son Peer Huisken, 10-07-2010
- 14 Letter from DEFA/Lindemann to SMAD/Dymschitz, 30-9-1946 [BArch DY 30/IV 2/9.06/203]
- 15 Letter from DEFA/Lindemann to Niederländische Militärmission, 4-12-1946 [BArch DR 117/21811]
- 16 Johannes Huisken, 'Bericht über Holland', 3-10-1947 [BArch DY 30/IV 2/9.06/203]
- 17 Curriculum vitae Huisken, I.c.
- 18 Lehren aus dem Prozess gegen das Verschwörerzentrum Slansky', *Neues Deutschland* 1.9.1950
- 19 Curriculum vitae Huisken, I.c.
- 20 Der Aufbau der Stadt Potsdam', July 1946 [Stadtarchiv Potsdam 348]
- 21 Die DEFA dreht für die Stadt Potsdam', *Märkische Volksstimme* 6.6.1946
- 22 *Märkische Volksstimme* 11.11.1946
- 23 Bevorstehende Uraufführung des Potsdam-Films', *Märkische Volksstimme* 16.11.1946
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Stufkens, p. 21
- 26 *Alltag*, p. 75
- 27 *Alltag*, p. 72
- 28 *Alltag*, p. 84
- 29 *Alltag*, p. 81
- 30 Alfons Machalz, 'Mein Kind, As if it were Ivens' Child', in *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*, Amsterdam 1999, p. 107
- 31 Richter, I.c.
- 32 Richter, I.c.
- 33 Letter from Joris Ivens to Joop Huisken, 7-6-1948 [BArch DR 1/4506]

- 34 Hans Schoots, *Gevaarlijk leven. Een biografie van Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam 1995, p. 320 (hereafter: Schoots)
- 35 Cavalcanti, p. 46
- 36 Schoots p. 74
- 37 Letter from DEFA/Wegner to MfK/HV Film, 22-12-1954 [BArch DR 1/4200]
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Correspondence Procinex-DEFA Studio for Newsreel and Documentary Films, 1954-1956 (BArch DR 118/1872)
- 40 'Vertrag Procinex-DEFA', 1-1-1955 (BArch DR 118/1872)
- 41 Letter from DEFA/Wegner to Huisken, 29-1-1955 (FMP-S, NL Huisken)
- 42 Letter from DEFA/Wegner to MfK/HV Film
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Contract Procinex-DEFA Studio for Newsreel and Documentary Films, December 1956 (BArch DR 118/1872)
- 45 'Hinter der großen Mauer', *Film-Echo* Nr. 78/1959
- 46 Stufkens p. 226
- 47 Schoots p. 344
- 48 Joop Huisken, quoted in: Hans Wegner, 'Joop Huisken', *Deutsche Filmkunst* (DFK) 6/1957
- 49 Joris Ivens, quoted from: *Vorfrühling*, 1958
- 50 The female writer Alex Wedding, author of the film, had lived in Peking with her husband, the author and CSR ambassador F.C. Weiskopf, between 1950 and 1952. The much-read narration 'Das eiserne Büffelchen' (The Iron Buffalo, 1951) stemmed from this time. On her script with the title *Schatz der Erde und weißer Schnee* (Treasure of the world and white snow), she had taken a note: 'In memory of F.C. Weiskopf. He loved the New China.'
- 51 Joop Huisken / Alex Wedding, 'Bericht', 24-7-1958 [Filmmuseum Potsdam, Collection, Legacy Huisken (FMP-S, NL Huisken)]
- 52 Gustav Lehbruck, 'Strengere Masstäbe für unsere Dokumentarfilme', *DFK* 2/1957
- 53 Id., handwritten note, without date (1958) [BArch DR 118/2101]
- 54 Brecht, *Texte für Filme I*, p. 316
- 55 Report on the presentation (...) before members of the politburos, 25-9-1959; Memorandum on the presentation of the film, 29-10-1959 [BArch DR 117/v.S 100]
- 56 Letter from Stephan Hermlin to MfK/Wendt, 19-1-1960 [BArch DR 1/7729]
- 57 Sylvia Schlenstedt, *Stephan Hermlin*, Berlin 1985, p. 145
- 58 Stephan Hermlin, 'Lektüre', Berlin 1973, p. 249
- 59 I owe this information to Christian Lehmann, who to this day calls Huisken his teacher
- 60 Christian Lehmann, 'Joop Huisken', *Sonntag* 16/1979 (29.4.1979) (hereafter: Lehmann)
- 61 'Blast furnace III, Synopsis, 1962 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 62 'Regisseure antworten der Redaktion', *DFK* 3/196
- 63 Joop Huisken, 'Menschliches Erlebnis mit künstlerischer Gestaltung verbinden', *DFK* 4/1960
- 64 'Regisseure...', I.c.
- 65 Jerzy Bossak, 'Authentie und Wahrheit im Dokumentarfilm', *film-Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen (FWM)* 1/1963
- 66 Joop Huisken, 'Menschliches Erlebnis...', I.c.
- 67 *Alltag* p. 74, 72
- 68 Joop Huisken, 'Menschliches Erlebnis...', I.c.
- 69 Joop Huisken, 'Notiz', 13-12-1971 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 70 Joop Huisken, 'Notiz', 13-12-1960 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 71 Joop Huisken, 'Menschliches Erlebnis...', I.c.
- 72 *Alltag* p. 72
- 73 Joop Huisken, 'Notizen', 1962 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 74 Joop Huisken, 'Seminar.Ms', 1966 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 75 BArch DR 118/2557
- 76 Lehmann, I.c.
- 77 Dokumentarfilm-Fernsehpublishistik-Publikum, *F+Fs*, 2/1976
- 78 Chris Marker, 'Beitrag auf dem Freien Forum in Leipzig', (FWM) 1/1964, p. 201
- 79 Krautz, p. 290
- 80 Joop Huisken, 'Die Schöpfung', 30-12-1965 [FMP-S, NL Huisken]
- 81 Krautz p. 291
- 82 Hogenkamp, I.c.
- 83 Cf. Christiane Mückenberger/Günter Jordan, 'Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst...' Die DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949, Marburg 1994
- 84 Wolfram Schütte 1968, in: *Klaus Wildenhahn, Retrospektive*, Leipzig 1990
- 85 Schoots, p. 52
- 86 Henrik Scholte, 'Joris Ivens', *Filmliga* 2/1929, quoted in: Joris Ivens, *Berlin*, 1963, p. 210.



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Günter Jordan is filmmaker and filmscholar. His dissertation at the Humboldt University in Berlin was about the early DEFA-documentary films and newsreels. During the years he became the specialist scholar on the history of DEFA. In 1996-2000 he published, together with Ralf Schenk *Schwarzweiß und Farbe. DEFA-Dokumentarfilme 1946-1992* and in 2009 *DDR. Daten Fakten Strukturen* (Filmmuseum Potsdam 2009), reviewed as 'Der Grosse Jordan': 'The Big Jordan'. He loves to make documentaries about live music.



Joris Ivens and Chile

'...A Valparaíso: documentary between poetry and social critic.'

TIZIANA PANIZZA



Joris Ivens, Filmstill ...à Valparaíso, 1963. Coll. JLA/EFJL.

The film '*...à Valparaíso*' (1963), directed by the Dutch master of documentary, Joris Ivens, has become legendary in Chile. As Chileans, we are aware it exists, but know little else about it and almost nothing regarding Ivens' intriguing visit to Chile. So now we started Ivensresearch at the Filmschool of the University of Chile in Santiago de Chile.

When he came to Chile in 1962, invited by the Universidad de Chile to give a series of talks to young filmmakers from the Centro de Cine Experimental, Ivens was at the high point of his career. His time in Chile produced a creative storm, which would engulf Pablo Neruda, Chris Marker, Jacques Prévert, Raúl Ruiz, Sergio Bravo and Pedro Chaskel, and others.

Ivens' relationship with Chile provides a chance to repair the damaged fabric of Chile's cultural history. The military coup in 1973 brought an abrupt end to the creative flow of local cinema and left analysis of the explosion of activity during the 1960s and early 1970s pending. Therefore, Ivens' visit provides a platform to investigate aspects of Chilean cinema at that key time. Even before Ivens' arrival, Chilean filmmakers had begun to regard cinema as a tool for social and political change, taking a deliberate step towards a New Chilean Cinema, and towards a convergence on the continent with New Latin American Cinema.

For the historical background, the research initially focused on seeking out the young people who had worked with Ivens on the production of the films. Some of them, such as Luis Cornejo, Rebeca Yañez and Fernando Belle, had passed away. Others, such as Joaquín Olalla, Patricio Guzmán and Gustavo Becerra, were scattered across the globe. The permanent and unwavering support of Pedro Chaskel was important, as were the long telephone conversations with Joaquín Olalla in Sweden. Thanks to his vivid recollections, and the packages he sent, we were able to build a picture of Ivens' methodology during the making of *...A Valparaíso*. Because of Luciano Tarifeño's generosity, we were able to find out about the world of the pioneers of cinema in Valparaíso. Although we exchanged a few words via email, it was

too late to meet the Chilean composer Gustavo Becerra. He lost his battle with cancer in Germany, on January 3rd, 2010, and leaves the analysis of one of the most beautiful musical compositions in Ivens' filmography pending.

In 2009, as the Universidad de Chile's Cineteca sought to recover its heritage for its permanent reopening, we were able to share in an important discovery. Hundreds of unclassified pages were discovered, including documents and notes handwritten by Joris Ivens, with research and location information, filming notes and production lists. Before us we had the genesis of the creation of *...à Valparaíso*. Around that time, we also received an envelope from Canada sent by Patricio Guzmán Campos, one of the directors of photography on the film. It contained the final version of the film script for *...à Valparaíso*. For the first time, information had been found that would allow the story of the creation of the film to be told and which would reveal its methodological and aesthetic relationships.

But the surprises would not end there. We travelled to Holland and discovered the images. In the city of Nijmegen, in the archives of the European Foundation Joris Ivens, we found photographs of the filming in Valparaíso and letters showing the bond that Ivens maintained with Chilean filmmakers, even well after his last visit to the country.

During the writing of this research, we began to understand that we were in the middle of an open area trying to establish bridges towards at least two cardinal points - the past and the future. The relevance of the film today stems from the fact that it was made in the tradition of the avant-garde, with the spirit of works which seek to explore rather than keep to tried and tested forms. This makes sense to those of us who believe in non-fictional cinema as a context for experimentation, as an open space, a place where one should not be afraid to take risks with cinematic language. In many ways, *...à Valparaíso* is close to contemporary forms such as film essays, cinepoems and other hybrids that push the boundaries of the genre to expand its horizons. We believe the works that stand the test of time serve not only to illustrate the past but become an active memory, able to exert an influence and be a reference for films seeking to examine the world today.

The European Foundation Joris Ivens, Wintertuin (a Dutch pioneering production house crossing borders between literature, poetry and modern art), and Go Short International Short Film Festival Nijmegen, will organize the first Cinepoem Competition between the 16th and 20th of March 2011.

The career of Joris Ivens started with the production of a cinepoem. *Rain* was filmed in 1929 and is now included in the Film Canon of the Netherlands. Later he made several lyrical films such as *... a Valparaíso*, *Pour le Mistral* and *La Seine a rencontré Paris* that won the Golden Palm for best short at the film festival in Cannes. Joris Ivens wanted to create a new poetic cinematographic language and during

Joris Ivens and Australia

Indonesia Calling: Joris Ivens in Australia

Indonesia Calling: Joris Ivens in Australia is Australian Writer-Director, John Hughes' visually beautiful, ground breaking documentary detailing the confusion, fear and surrealistic beginnings of an abrupt and contested end to an age of Netherlands *imperium*, and of the position that Ivens' film, *Indonesia Calling*, occupies in that interregnum. Hughes certainly takes the long road. Distilling the stories of Ivens' life, the historical background to decolonisation, and the making of *Indonesia Calling* into 90 minutes was always going to be a mammoth undertaking, even for a film-maker of Hughes' ability and sensibilities. However, as the resulting film shows, although Hughes was aware of the enormity of the task he was clearly undaunted by it.

It is obvious that an extensive amount of research and reflection underpinned and informed Hughes' methodology. *Indonesia Calling* was made in support of an autonomous, self-governing Indonesia, at a critical time when the Allies were engaged in the serious and unlovely business of attempting to gain control of the decolonisation process in the former Netherlands East Indies. On a larger stage, the film was at the vanguard of an emerging genre in post-war films dealing with decolonisation as Europe's colonial empires found their powers fragmented and diminished and struggled to negotiate the *realpolitiek* of the twin historical themes that emerged to dominate the post-war period, Decolonisation and Cold War World.

Here is where Hughes' grasp of the nuances of the topic and mastery of his craft ensure that while the viewer is made aware of the obstacles, rather than act as distractions they serve to complement the viewer's journey and draw the audience into the film as active participants in negotiating such complex and polarising topics. The structure of the film is created through interplay between a series of iterations which shift between interview, excerpts from *Indonesia Calling*, primary visual and document sources, and voiceover, which coalesce to construct a series of poetic metaphors and real life encounters with the key protagonists. The effect is to reduce the distance between Ivens and

his audience to produce a form of haptic imagery so that rather than using the screen as big canvas, the camera becomes an extension of Hughes' senses, and probes into the many layers of meaning associated with a liminal historical moment.

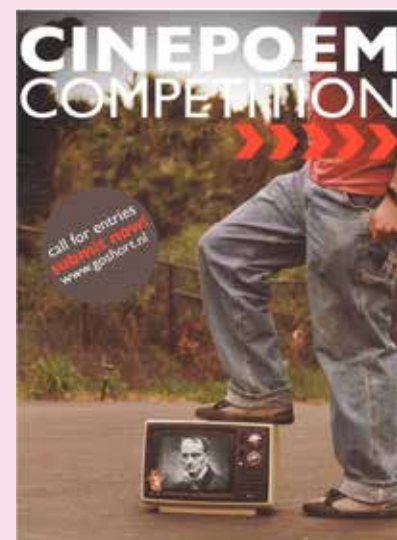
However, this approach can be Janus faced as the film does not conform to a familiar film language, and the result is that this is not an easy film to watch. The collaboration between Hughes and his Editor, Uri Mizrahi, puts one in mind of Claude Lévi Strauss's notion of the collision of disparate yet intersecting universal forces of nature, epitomised by the bricoleur and the engineer. There is an engagement with putting pre-existing things together in new and unfamiliar ways running in parallel with the procurement of the necessary tools and materials. The result does not arrive at a synthesis of ideas, but rather offers a layering of image and text to create meaning which is thick and dense in the fashion of symbolic anthropology.

Indonesia Calling: Joris Ivens in Australia is a film that needed to be made and John Hughes and the Early Works team should receive high praise for their labours. Hughes does not shrink from rendering as antiquarian nit-picking, a persistent criticism of Ivens' use of recreated scenes, enabling the viewer to decide whether this matters given the much broader importance of the film and its place at that historical moment. Then there are the exquisite moments of absurd irony, such as the revelation that *Indonesia Calling* was being played in cinemas back to back with 'Gone with the Wind' in 1947 Republican held areas of Indonesia, during the bloody campaign leading to final recognition of Indonesian independence in 1949. Despite his self-deprecating comments that his work is too long, arcane, and minority audience work, I suspect that Hughes has elevated *Indonesia Calling* beyond the province of a partisan civil rights and labour audience to a larger and broader constituency. *Indonesia Calling: Joris Ivens in Australia* was nominated for the 2010 Foxtel Australian Documentary Prize, was the Winner of Best Documentary Public Broadcast, and is a nominee by the Australian Directors Guild for the award of best Documentary Feature, to be announced on September 23 at Star City in Sydney.

ROBERT HAMILTON



John Hughes, Filmstill Indonesia calling, Joris Ivens and Australia, 2009. © Early Works.



Cinepoem: A NEW FILM COMPETITION

CINEPOEM IS A NEW TREND IN FILMMAKING. ACCORDING TO CHRISTOPHE WALL-ROMANA, PROFESSOR IN FRENCH LITERATURE AND MAIN RESEARCHER OF THE POETRY FILM GENRE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME AESTHETIC FEATURES CAN BE IDENTIFIED, BUT DEFINITIVE PRINCIPLES ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE. HE ARGUES THAT CINEPOETRY CAN TAKE MANY FORMS. AS A STARTING POINT, WE HAVE CHOSEN THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION: 'A CINEPOEM IS A FILM BASED ON A POEM, OR A FILM THAT FOLLOWS THE FORM, AESTHETICS AND RHYTHM OF POETRY.'

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The career of Joris Ivens started with the production of a cinepoem. *Rain* was filmed in 1929 and is now included in the Film Canon of the Netherlands. Later he made several lyrical films such as *... a Valparaíso*, *Pour le Mistral* and *La Seine a rencontré Paris* that won the Golden Palm for best short at the film festival in Cannes. Joris Ivens wanted to create a new poetic cinematographic language and during

his career he encouraged new filmmakers to experiment with new forms of cinema. In this tradition we would like to curate a quality survey of contemporary cinepoems and stimulate a production environment that encourages young talent.

The history of the cinepoem goes back to the early days of film where surrealist Mallarmé made a first attempt to bring film and poetry closer together. The film avant-garde in the 1920's with artists like Man Ray, Paul Strand, Fernand Léger and Joris Ivens created cinepoems as an attempt to elevate film to an art form.

Nowadays the genre sees a revival. Because of a democratized means of production and distribution, creative productions and artistic

collaborations can be faster, cheaper and more easily achieved. This stimulated the fusion of various disciplines. It's reflected in the rise of graphic poems, photo-stories, web comics and in the rising popularity of the cinepoem.

With this competition we want to address to a new generation of 'culture consumers'. Just as there is a new generation of creators, there is a new generation of readers /viewers. Where a previous generation grew up with a handful of pursuits, this generation grows up with a multitude of media and expressions that require attention. In addition to books, television and radio, new media like games, internet, social networking, etc. This generation has not become illiterate, as some observe, but has be-

come multiple literate, we are used to more input from multiple (hybrid) media simultaneously. The organizations consider the cinepoem therefore a form that is appropriate to the changing demands of a changing audience. We explore a way that can present poetry and a poetic cinematographic language to new generations. Since several years the ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival in Germany is giving serious attention to the cinepoem. Their selection proofs how interesting and wide the genre of poetry film can be. We are now aiming for a similar platform in the Netherlands.

RENS VAN MEEGEN

Call for entries: www.goshort.nl

Doc's KINGDOM 2010

The Archive-Image

THIS YEAR'S EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON DOCUMENTARY FILM IN SERPA (PORTUGAL) HAD A FOCUS ON THE ARCHIVE-IMAGE. THE FILMS THAT WERE SELECTED ALL WORKED WITH PREVIOUSLY EXISTENT FOOTAGE. THIS YEAR HARTMUT BITOMSKY (GERMANY), EDGARDO COZARINSKY (ARGENTINA) AND SUSANA DE SOUSA DIAS (PORTUGAL) WERE PRESENT. TOGETHER WITH THE AUDIENCE THEY DISCUSSED THE IDEA OF GATHERING IMAGES AS A RETURN TO AN ORIGINAL STATE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, AS CREATIVE IMPULSE. THE ARCHIVE AS A (RE)FOUNDING SPACE.



Filmstill *Das Kino und der Wind und die Photographie*. © Hartmut Bitomsky

Hartmut Bitomsky

is used to work with archival footage. *Deutschlandbilder* (1983) is a compilation film that focuses on the contents of Nazi's culturefilms that preceded the feature films in German movie theatres between 1933 and 1945. The shorts reveal that men and women workers were idealized and optimism was the goal. We get to see healthy people with happy faces and without the militant parades and images of Hitler these classic lies are difficult to tackle. Bitomsky is working hard though, in this film, to show us the truth behind these images. Eager to dismantle its effect he overloads us with narration: 'This is a circumscription of their usage as documents, and as such, they are entrusted with a twofold function. They are supposed to show how fascism really was, they are supposed to say what fascism said at that time. The old message, once more. But this time, as a message of terror. [...] And, simultaneously, they are supposed to testify against themselves, as one would do it with agents who defected and were turned. And they speak, and it is a fact that we still understand them. We are not confronted with some incomprehensible babble or stammering of a foreign language we cannot work out.'

The next Bitomsky film is *Das Kino und der Wind und die Photographie* (1991). It's a kind of anthology of documentary film. The filmmaker and his staff inquire freely, from extracts to citations, on documentary images and their 'truth'. We meet The Lumiere brothers, Flaherty,

Ivens, Robert Frank, Peter Nestler, Jean Vigo, Bunuel etc. All characteristics and prejudices against the genre of documentary pass but luckily Bitomsky's reflections goes beyond the scholar clichés. Every topic is dealt with in an original and always entertaining and enlightening way. While the staff controls the video players the director lectures. *The Bridge*, another film made by Ivens. It shows a lever bridge in careful details. Just like a draughtsman would do before construction. Ivens developed a plan of the bridge and each detail represents a picture, a camera shot. It's as if the bridge is being build before our eyes for the second time. This gave me the idea that a documentary does not represent truth. It shows us how reality is created. What we perceive is the creation of reality, the creation of a second reality.'



Susana de Sousa Dias

The award winning Portuguese director presented her latest film *48* at Doc's Kingdom. The film is about the 48 years of dictatorship under Salazar and it won the 'Grand Prix Cinéma du réel' at the international documentary film festival in Paris. The film is a series of archival photographs taken from political prisoners by the PIDE (Portuguese dictatorship secret police).

1 In your film the images are very minimal. We only see the face of the victims at the moment their prison photo was taken by the PIDE. Why did you choose to use only this image and make a long film with it? Was it because of practical reasons that forced you to be creative. Maybe because the footage from the archive was too expensive to use, something that we have heard over and over again on this seminar, or did you have other reasons to work this way?

Not exactly... In the beginning, a few years ago, when the PIDE Archive rejected my request for authorization to film photographs of the political prisoners, I was far from understanding that this would lead to a new film beginning to take shape. In the face of my insistence, the management justified his refusal by invoking the «right of image». Hence, to film the photographs, I would have to obtain the consent of each political prisoner individually. In the course of this, I spoke with dozens of political prisoners. Inevitably, I began to be drawn to their stories, sometimes accompanied by comments made about their own prisoner photographs: «Look at the jersey I'm wearing»; «Do you know why I'm smiling like that?»; «Have you seen my hair?». 48 was embarked upon with a single certainty: that it is possible to tell the history of the regime just through those pho-

For two reasons mainly: I don't show the face of the former prisoners today. Instead, I give their presence in a different way: precisely through this tiny sounds that nobody pay attention, this kind of noises that are understood as imperfections in a 'straight' film. Nevertheless, these king of noises give us the physical presence, the body of the people that are talking. The second reason is that these noises, along with the noises from the environment (a dog barking, a car, a plane, a lift, etc...) are creating the filmic space.

4 Ivens is known for being a political filmmaker. The position that you take in your film is clearly in favour of the political prisoners and against the tortures of the dictatorial regime. I don't want to compare your politics with Ivens but when we talk about taking a political stance.

tographs. Of course I had lots of doubts in the beginning of the process! I didn't know if the idea would work. It was a very difficult process, to achieve the final form.

2 For me as a spectator something happens because we see each face, from the front and from the side, for several minutes and we listen to the person in the picture now, looking back at that time. Without you showing it after a while I started to clearly see the prison and the torturing. Is this what you intended?

The whole idea of the film is to put the viewer looking at the pictures, actually seeing them. Being forced to watch them carefully, beyond the surface. This requires time. As far as the sound is concerned, the same principle is applied. I want that the viewer can listen to the words the prisoners are saying, can listen them carefully, and that they have time to think about them within the film itself, during the screening. So, the way I worked temporality in the film is very important. I just wanted to give time for the viewer to mentally interact with the film so that he/her could create his/her own images.

3 Then there is a certain richness in the sound. What is striking are the small noises that we hear before a speaker starts. The swallowing, heavy breathing, a chair moving a cough. Sounds that a filmmaker would normally want to remove but in this film it works really well. Why did you choose to leave these detail in.

When I started making the film, I thought the voices had to be recorded as clean as possible. I even consider the possibility of recording the interviews in a studio. But a studio is never the ideal place to interview people specially the kind of interviews I use to do and also because of the subject. So I filmed in various locations according to the preference of the former prisoners. Throughout this process (filming, editing), I have been noticing that these noises that you refer to were fundamental.

What drives you to take this one so strongly?

Portugal is undergoing a process of erasing the memory of the dictatorship. The political prisoners are in a kind of limbo; nobody speaks about them, or at least, only rarely. So, for me, this is urgent, to work with them where they are still alive. Tortures are not described in the documents that make part of the Political Police Archive (Arquivo PIDE/DGS).

Is your opinion shared by the Portuguese in general?

My film was almost ignored by the Portuguese. What we are witnessing, as Fernando Rosas, one of the most important Portuguese historians, puts it is a struggle for the hegemony of the memory. In other words, a struggle about what will be considered 'real history' in the near future. As a matter of fact, there are two major opinions on the April 25th revolution and what it meant for Portuguese history. One camp says that revolution was as an uprising against an authoritarian regime based on oppression, violence and control of people's mind and therefore positive. The other group - and in my opinion this interpretation is especially now growing stronger and stronger - claims that the revolution interrupted a transitional process towards democratic society. And this group of people correspondingly denies the violent aspect of the 48 years of Portuguese fascism and wants to keep it buried in the past.



Antonia Cunha Landscape of Alentejo (Portugal), surrounding the village of Serpa. © artist



Screening room Doc's Kingdom, 2010, Serpa.

Filmstill 48, © Susana de Sousa Dias, Kintop

Construction and deconstruction

KOMSOMOL and 'THE GIANT AND THE BUILDER'



THIS ARTICLE BRINGS TO LIGHT PARALLELS BETWEEN JORIS IVENS' KOMSOMOL AND THE 'USSR IN CONSTRUCTION' PHOTO SERIES 'THE GIANT AND THE BUILDER', NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF THEME (CONSTRUCTION), BUT ALSO IN METHODS OF CREATION (RECONSTRUCTION OR STAGING EPISODES). THIS FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VANGUARD PHOTOGRAPHY, LITERATURE AND CINEMA AS WELL AS THE ENORMOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR IVENS' FILMMAKING.

Ivens first went to the USSR in 1930 and showed *The Bridge, Rain, Pile Driving* and *Zuiderzee Works*. While there he met numerous filmmakers and artists, like the graphic designer Valentina Kulagina (the wife of Gustav Klutsis), who even created a striking poster for *Pile Driving* and montage of several clippings with articles about Ivens' films and Germaine Krulls' photos. There was mutual interest and influence.¹ Documentary filmmaker Esfir' Shub was deeply impressed by Ivens' use of the Kinamo, also her camera, and parallels can be drawn between his early work and her 1932 documentary *K.Sh.E. (Komsomol – Chief of Electricity)*, stylistically as well as thematically. Shub noted, admiringly, that Ivens' audience of Moscow construction workers wished that Soviet films would have as strong a grasp of the material as the foreigner's.²

Ivens left the USSR keen to return and make a film there. In planning his Soviet documentary film in late 1931, upon his return, Ivens visited many sites and made so many notes that the resulting epic script about the Komsomol and industrialization in the northern Caucasus, the Urals and Central Asia was deemed unworkable by the Mezhrabpom studio. In January 1932 the film director Vsevolod Pudovkin advised Ivens to narrow his focus. Shortly after this it was suggested that Ivens visit Magnitostroi, the blast furnace construction site at Magnitogorsk in the Urals.

Also in January 1932, to coincide with the initial firing of the first blast furnace at Magnitostroi, the magazine 'USSR in Construction' published the photo series 'The Giant and the Builder'. The innovative propaganda journal was published in English, German, French and Russian, and aimed to 'reflect in photography the whole scope and variety of the construction work now going on in the USSR.'³ The photographs were printed by retrogravure, which gave a rich texture and soft-focus, making the images appear dramatic.⁴ The journal included much statistical data, presented in the form of charts, maps and diagrams (a result of the USSR's adoption in 1931 of Otto Neurath's Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics, the influence of which is also felt in *Komsomol*).

'The Giant and the Builder', created by the journalist Aleksandr Smolian, the photographer Maks Al'pert and the artist Nikolai Troshin, is a 40-page propagandistic, narrative, documentary and 'staged' photo series, with a striking combination of text and image. Conventional layouts of photos and captions feature alongside photomontages. The series was controversial when first published, but has been largely neglected since, despite being fascinating both ideologically and aesthetically.⁵

Al'pert explains how he devised the narrative about Magnitostroi and Viktor Kalmykov: 'The construction site impressed me greatly and I had the idea to show not only the birth of this 'giant', but also the 'reconstruction' of a person who had come to work there', a young man with no education, training or ideological consciousness. The photo series begins with images of the undeveloped land with primitive huts and peasants visible, then on p.4 the river is depicted, whose energy will be harnessed for the construction project, and on p.5 the young peasant

Kalmykov is presented arriving on a crowded train in autumn 1930. The reader is told: 'Together with many others Victor Kalmikov left for Magnetostroi to take up new work and plunge into a new life', and it is constantly emphasized that Kalmykov is a type, an individual who represents countless young men from collectivized state farms. The rest of the series shows how Kalmykov learns to read and write, becomes politically conscious and joins the Party, marries, moves from a tent into barracks and then into a room, and finally is awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, and given a suit and tie, and is featured in the newspaper *Magnitogorsk Worker*.⁶ The caption of the final spread states: 'many thousands have followed the same course. A new man makes his appearance on the arena of history, Socialist construction creates this new man.'

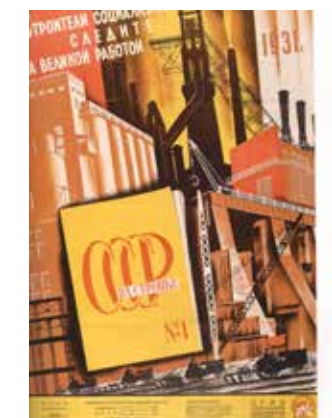
The workers' commitment is visually signified by a double-page spread on pp.24-25, which shows images of the blast furnace and the site to the left and the right of the fold between the pages, and features the heads and shoulders of 11 exemplary workers flowing down from the top left of p.24 and across the bottom of both pages, in an L-shape. Each has his name and position written below him, Kalmykov is the last one at the bottom right of p.25. The top left hand corner of p.24 has the following heading: 'Comsomol blast-furnace No.2 – the pride of Magnetostroi', below which it says: 'A brigade of comsomols (members of the Communist Youth League) who helped erect the furnace, manifested heroism and unbounded enthusiasm in their efforts to compete the job as soon as possible. They beat all world records in setting up blast-furnaces. Work was carried on day and night'. This, in essence, is Joris Ivens' *Komsomol*.

'The Giant and the Builder' is an important turning point for 'USSR in Construction', as it was conceived to be a 'mobilizing' photo series, intended to motivate and inspire readers to join the struggle for rapid industrialization, and to convince foreign delegations who 'want to see specific documentary evidence, not merely agitational facts'.⁷ The photo series is a turning point in the way it was photographed too. Although it purports to be documentary some of the scenes were staged. In depicting the arrival of Kalmykov as an uneducated peasant, Al'pert asked the now literate and smartly dressed young man to put on the same old clothes he had got off the train in and pose for the camera. Al'pert was vehemently criticized for this by those who felt it undermined the authenticity of the piece, but he defended himself against accusations of falsification of reality by insisting that anyone can check that Kalmykov actually exists, anyone can find his address and can read about him in letters from his co-workers published in the newspaper 'The Magnitogorsk Worker' ('Magnitogorskii rabochii') of 4th March 1932.⁸ The 'reconstructed' nature of the series is evident if one considers that the newspaper is dated 1932 and Kalmykov's arrival 1930, yet the photographs were all taken in 1932.⁹ Al'pert was forced to defend his method of reconstructing reality for ideological ends, and the accusations reflect those Ivens was to face with *Komsomol*.

Around the time of 'The Giant and the Builder's' publication, Ivens formed a collective to work on his film: a young

MILENA MICHALSKI

- opposite: Maks Al'pert, Coke chemical plant. Silos towers for coal'. Photo ©Maks Al'pert
- Joris Ivens, Filmstill *Komsomol*, 1933. ©JIA/EFJI
- Valentina Kulagina, *Press on Dutch Cinema* (compilation of mazzines with filmstill of Joris Ivens), 1929
- Nikolai Troshin, *USSR im Baul*, 1931.





Russia in construction 1932.

Russian, referred to simply as Andreev, became the crew's representative, and Herbert Marshall, an English student at Moscow's GIK film school, where Ivens lectured occasionally, was appointed assistant director, and Iosif Skliut (a student of Pudovkin's scriptwriter) was the scriptwriter. In March, once the script had been approved (by the Komsomol committee, the script department and the Mezhrabpom studio management), the team set off for Magnitogorsk.

Herbert Marshall explains the geography of the film: 'On the map two names stand out in great red letters: Magnitogorsk, Kuzbass. Magnitogorsk, on the borders of the Urals, Kazakstan, and Central Siberia. [...] The one important raw material not found on the spot is coal, and that is supplied from Kuzbass. [...] These were to be our objects together with Moscow as the centre.'¹⁰ As with 'The Giant and the Builder', Ivens' main subject is Magnitostroi, what Marshall describes as the 'all-singing, all-talking [...] giant of the Five Year Plan.'¹¹ Yet the work being done there is not only the construction of the site, but also the reconstruction of the worker, in this case Afanasev, thereby illustrating that 'in thus changing nature, man changes human nature.'¹² In the same vein, Ivens writes about the twofold process, 'the creation of a new industrial basis and the creation of a new kind of man', hoping to have managed to show how the masses of young people (11,000 of whom are Komsomol members) are being educated and involved in the socialist construction.¹³ These statements echo Al'pert's words and idea completely.

Komsomol begins with Hanns Eisler's rousing music over the credits, and then a kind of introduction to the film, establishing it as a contrast between the capitalist west and the socialist USSR, a classic 'them and us' opposition, very common in Soviet art and journalism, fiction and documentary of the time. The first images are of German factories with closed gates, and the caption that life is being extinguished there. Factories are followed by demonstrating strikers with banners supporting the USSR. The marching crowds are filmed from an extreme height to appear miniscule, as in Rodchenko's work (particularly 'To the demonstration', 1928-29), and there is even a shot of trumpeters filmed from below, identical in angle to his 'Pioneer with Trumpet' of 1930. The film is dedicated 'To you, Komsomol of the West, on the front lines of the class struggle...' The film proper begins after a black screen.

A map appears with various place names relating to Soviet industry, then the focus narrows to 'Moskva' (Moscow), radiating concentric circles symbolizing sound waves: 'Attention, this is Moscow speaking. We start with a Komsomol radio-appeal to the entire Soviet Union.' The hyphen between 'radio' and 'appeal' is a stylized zig-zag,

rather like a flash of electricity. 'The workers of Moscow notify the party and government. Huge industrial plants have been put into operation. A ball-bearing factory, the Stalin Automotive Plant and others. These are all in need of metal.' Other factories in need of steel are shown on the map, and appeal to Magnitogorsk and Kuzbass, then comes the text 'Respond, Magnitogorsk. Magnitogorsk' as the letters of Magnitogorsk increase incrementally in size until they fill the breadth of screen.

The film then presents the first of several statistics designed to impress: '300 million tons of high-grade ore will be contributed to the socialist construction by Magnetic Mountain.' The construction site is then shown, with drilling brigades, horses and carts, Bucyrus excavators, and the production processes in action. With no warning an animated fantasy sequence shows how production could one day be, with little tractors being rhythmically and rapidly churned out in criss-crossing lines of motion. Again, this is a stylized scene, using a device which reflects a common practice in the Soviet Union of the 1930s, that of showing the future in the present. In one of the most famous construction novels, Valentin Kataev's 'Time, Forward!' (1932), also centered around a day in the life of a shock worker brigade in Magnitogorsk as the men compete to break a record, one character looks down at the site from an airplane and sees it as a blueprint, unfinished: 'He saw it as it would look a year hence.'¹⁴ A Stalin quotation frequently referred to in 'Time, Forward!' appears to explain this scene: 'We will follow the road to socialism through industrialization at full throttle and leave the perennial "Russian deprivation" behind us. We will become a nation of automobiles and tractors.' The next title links the film directly to Al'pert's photo series, and countless other works, as it refers to Magnitostroi as a 'giant'. Finally, Afanasev, a 19 year old former shepherd from a Kolkhoz farm in Samara, Kyrgyzstan, applies to work there. He is illiterate and not a Party member, and — amazed at the enormity and noise of the construction site — he sets to work with enthusiasm. Eisler explains how he created a grand orchestral piece for the scenes in which Afanasev first walks through Magnitostroi in wonder, 'to convey to the audience the fundamental importance of this incident', adding that people are transforming the steppe, and Magnitostroi is transforming its builders, 'a new type of man is emerging in the process.'¹⁵ The rest of the film follows Afanasev through his transformation, as he first helps to dig and create the foundation, then works on the masonry and then the riveting of the metal casing of the blast furnace. He also learns to read and write, improves his working skills and becomes a Komsomol member, and engineer. His brigade competes with another to complete the second blast furnace in the allocated time. In keeping with the style of 'Time, Forward!' and 'The Giant and the

Builder' Ivens inserts the title: 'Ishmakov's brigade broke the American record with 540 rivets in one day.' Later in the film there are similarly conventional propagandistic titles: 'At the Ural river the enthusiastic and heroic workers of Magnitostroi built a one-kilometre-long dike in only 150 days', and 'Two socialist giants are at work here in one and the same breath: Kuzbass for coal and Magnitogorsk for ore.' There are blackboards with shock worker brigade production figures, as in 'The Giant and the Builder'. Despite the enormous efforts, the two blast furnaces are not ready when intended, so in order to keep to the schedule the Komsomol decides on a 'nocturnal assault.' Shock brigades compete; the workers sing passionately 'The Party says Give us Steel! The Komsomols answer: In the time planned We will give you steel!' and: 'Ural, Ural, we've made you submit.' This is 'The Ballad of Magnitogorsk' with music by Hanns Eisler and lyrics by Sergei Tret'iakov.¹⁶ Eventually success is achieved, and the film closes with a view, the next day, of the blast furnace operating with full force.

Ivens' shots of the blast furnace, of smoke stacks and of workers, are similar not only to the still photographs of 'The Giant and the Builder', but also to frames in other documentary and fiction films. Aleksander Macheret, director of *Men and Jobs*, another 1932 film on the theme of construction, describes his research visit to Svirstroi, the site of a hydroelectric dam station, noting that in addition to building work there was a great deal of filming taking place, including of Shub's *K.Sh. E.* and Dovzhenko's *Ivan*. He writes that the workers knew that the filmmakers loved filming machinery in smoke and steam, so they would set up these scenes, noting wryly that 'the machine workers at Dneprostroi know more about cinema workers than the latter do about them.'¹⁷ Clearly various directors were filming the same material at the same time. Indicatively, the journal 'Film Art' (no.3, Spring 1934) has an image on the cover and inside of Joris Ivens and Herbert Marshall filming *Komsomol* from the top of a construction tower, and on other pages there are images from Dovzhenko's *Ivan*, one of Ivan himself, the other of cranes, which would not be out of place in *Komsomol* or other films of 1932. The ubiquity and importance of the construction theme in the arts is also apparent in the 1932 issues of the Soviet journal 'Moskauer Rundschau', published in Moscow in German for foreigners. These feature articles on the films *Komsomol*, *Ivan*, *Counterplan* (directed by Iutkevich and Ermler), and *Men and Jobs*, and extracts from Kataev's novel 'Time, Forward!' The newspaper also contains many reports from industrial sites themselves, including Dneprostroi, Magnitostroi and Svirstroi.

In September 1932, in Moscow, Ivens edited his film, now renamed *Song of Heroes* in Russian. Unfortunately quite

a few scenes had to be cut against the director's wishes, particularly of Afanasev, which makes the film more abstract than Ivens intended. The film was ready on 1 October 1932, in time for the 15th anniversary of the Revolution, as planned, but was not allowed to be screened due to criticism. It was first shown in Magnitogorsk on 2 November, but the Moscow premiere was not until 2 January 1933, a year after the publication of 'The Giant and the Builder'.¹⁸

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

This material is part of an interpretive and empirical study of various camera media I am working on, which examines Soviet fiction and documentary films, still photographs, photomontage and posters on the theme of construction during the First Five Year Plan.

- 1 See Margarita Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutis and Valentina Kulagina. Photography and Montage After Constructivism*, International Center of Photography, New York and Steidl, Göttingen, 2004, p.115 and 195. Tupitsyn is unaware of *Pile Driving* (Russian: *Svai*), suggesting erroneously that it might be part of *Komsomol*.
- 2 Esfir' Shub, 'Zhizn' moia - kinematograf', *Iskusstvo*, Moscow, 1972, p. 273.
- 3 'USSR in Construction' (English edition), 1930, no. 1, introduction, no page number. I use the standard transliteration of the original Russian ('Kalmykov', 'Magnitostroi'), rather than the sometimes strange spellings in the English version of the journal.
- 4 Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia. Rodchenko, Lissitsky, Moholy-Nagy 1917-1946*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1997, p. 171.
- 5 An exception is Erika Wolf, 'SSSR na stroike. From constructivist visions to construction sites' in the exhibition catalogue *USSR in Construction*, Foto Museet, Sundsvall, 2006.
- 6 In reality Kalmykov married a German, and in 1938 he was arrested and shot as a German spy (see Stephen Korkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a civilization*, University of California Press, Berkeley, London, 1997, p. 433). His widow is interviewed in Pieter Jan Smit's 1997 documentary *Magnitogorsk: Forging the New Man*.
- 7 See the report on the plenum held to debate 'The Giant and the Builder' in 'Proletarskoe foto', 7-8 (July-August), 1932, pp. 5-16, p. 9 and p. 11.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 9 Revealingly, the writer and photographer Sergei Tret'iakov, who wrote the lyrics for the 'Magnitogorsk Ballad' in *Komsomol*, wrote in 1931: 'I used to take only documentary snapshots, that is, I caught moments of reality as it is. Now [...] I also do photographs that have been organized in advance. These are photographs that are supposed to show not how work is actually done, but rather how it should be done...'. Elizabeth Astrid Papazian, *Manufacturing Truth. The documentary moment in early Soviet culture*, Northern Illinois University Press, 2009, p. 61.
- 10 H. P. J. Marshall, 'Moscow overtakes and surpasses', *Experimental Cinema*, no.5, 1934, pp. 41-42, p. 41.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 13 F. C. W., 'Bei Joris Ivens in Magnitogorsk. "Komsomol" Ein Film von der "Eisen- und Kohlefront"', *Moskauer Rundschau*, 19 June 1932, no.25 (178), p. 4.
- 14 Valentin Kataev, *Time, forward!*, transl. Charles Malamuth, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1995, p. 312.
- 15 http://www.clevelandorch.com/images/FTPImages/Performance/program_notes Accessed 4 March 2009.
- 16 Around this time Eisler and Tret'iakov were also working on an opera about Magnitogorsk, which seems to have been banned. See Hans Schoots, *Living Dangerously. A Biography of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2000, p. 80.
- 17 A. Macheret, 'Khudozhestvennyye tehnichia v sovetskom kino', *Iskusstvo*, Moscow, 1963, p.157-58.
- 18 Several years later USSR censors shelved the film when Tret'iakov fell out of favour (arrested 1937, executed 1939), and it was not shown there again until 1961. Op. Cit., Schoots, *Living Dangerously*, p. 81.

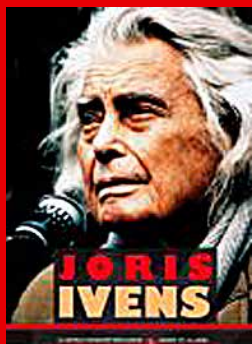
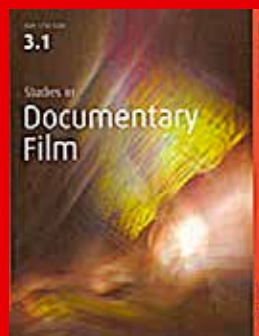


Maks Al'pert, Coke chemical plant. A sloping shaft for coal feeding. Photo © Maks Al'pert



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BY: SUN HONGYUN (GUEST ED.)
Magazine: Intellect Journals/Film Studies, Bristol (2009, English), 72 pages.

Since 2007 *Studies in Documentary Film* is a scholarly journal devoted to the history, theory, criticism and practice of documentary film. At the occasion of Ivens' 110th anniversary a special issue about Ivens was published in 2009. The articles derived from the lectures held at the '50 years of Joris Ivens and China' International Academic Conference in Beijing on 18-20 November 2008. Guest editor Sun Hongyun (senior lecturer at the college of Arts and Science of Beijing Union University) selected five lectures all related to the relationship between Ivens and China. Thomas Waugh is preparing a book on Ivens' oeuvre and is focussing in his article on *The 400 Million* (1938). There is a consensus in film studies about the pitfalls of Euro-American cinematic depictions of the postcolonial 'other', the liabilities of the foreign film-makers' gaze, even paradoxically those most well-intentioned films produced 'in solidarity'. Can these be traced in Ivens' first Chinese film too? Waugh calls for a nuanced reflection on this potential paradox and balance. Ivens intended to avoid Eurocentrism with its paternalism, exotic view and perspective of exploitation, but was confronted with a complex political and cultural situation, which forced him to adapt to unforeseen circumstances with censorship, blockades resulting in acrobatic vacillations between spontaneous cinematography and the much more prevalent *mise-en-scène*. In the second article Kees Bakker is confronting two opposite films with each other: *The 400 Million* with its Dutch-American view, supporting the Chinese against the Japanese oppressor and Fumio Kamei's film *Fighting Soldiers*, shot in the same year, but supporting the Japanese invading army. In the third article also Sun Hongyun is comparing two films, both started in 1972, with the aim to visualize an isolated China for a Western public. Both Michelangelo Antonioni and Ivens/Loridan-Ivens captured daily life in the same year, but with a distinct individual style and conception. According to Sun Hongyun Antonioni created a relationship between the director and the people of gazing and being gazed at. While, on the contrary Ivens/Loridan-Ivens revealed the languages, taste, gestures, ideas and inherent

value of the common Chinese people. 'The first thing in filmmaking is to hold a dialogue. That is what we tried to do', Ivens said, in a quote. The fourth and fifth article written by Zhang Tongdao and Jean-Pierre Sergent are describing an overview of the half a century relationship between Ivens and China. Zhang Tongdao concludes his article with this statement: 'the legend of Ivens and China is not simply a story in film history or a political myth. It is more a proposition of eastern and western culture on which research just has started.'

JORIS IVENS 1898-1989. DAS UNMÖGLICHE ZU FILMEN
BY: BARBARA HEINRICH-POLTE (ED.)
Book: Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin (2009, German), 56 pages.

To celebrate its 50th jubilee retrospective programme at the DOK Leipzig festival the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv decided to show 20 Ivens films and publish a German catalogue. Filmscholars like Günter Agde, Jeanpaul Goergen, Judith Kretschmar and Philipp Dominik Keidl wrote articles covering up-to-date research concerning Ivens and Germany. Agde gives an introduction on Ivens film oeuvre in 'In the rapids of world history'. The fascination of his films and personality attracted contemporaries, but still continues, even twenty years after his death. 'What persists?' is Agde asking. His films present histories from a previous era for a world with new and other social conflicts. Certainly, films alter, because the aesthetics of representation change as well as our perception. Ivens' cinematographical Social-Psychoprogramme however is gaining more and more the character of precious and valuable documents from a distant period. They belong to our Memory Culture of Nowadays. The interest of students for his films is continuing, they want to learn from his films. Although no explicit 'Ivens-School' of adherents exists one can trace lasting influence in every important Documentary film of recent years, states Agde. Jeanpaul Goergen describes Ivens' films made during the Weimar Republic, based on clippings and film programmes at the time. In a third article Kretschmar explores the contribution of Ivens to GDR-filmart when he was employed at the DEFA filmstudios from 1951 until 1956. He was responsible for the creation of six films, in various roles, as director, artistic advisor or assistant. Kretschmar proves that this period was difficult for Ivens, and provided

both successes as well as failures, like the feature film *Till Eulenspiegel*. This co-production with France gave him the opportunity to travel and stay in Paris.

Keidl gives his view through the eyes of a younger generation and answers the question why it is so difficult to discover Ivens.

JORIS IVENS
BY: DIMITRIS KERKINOS (ED.)
Book: Thessaloniki Filmfestival, (2010, Greek/English), 58 pages.

In a special Tribute programme the 12th Thessaloniki International Film Festival (Images of the 21st Century) showed twenty Ivensfilms and published a catalogue with articles written by Marceline Loridan-Ivens, André Stufkens, Tom Gunning and Greek film critic Andreas Pagoulatos. In his introduction word festival director Dimitri Eipides writes: 'For Ivens, the documentary was a platform for unlimited free expression, a field in which no compromise was tolerated, a creative 'land' in which he could create masterpieces. The multifaceted personality of the globetrotting, restless, uncompromising documentarist is reflected in his films which, in turn, become the remarkable setting for a meeting between the observer and the person participating in the events. Eipides states that Ivens' cinema springs from his innate obsession with capturing the truth of life and constitutes a kind of awakening of the audiences active relationship with the film. As a kind of answer Ivens admits in his dialogue with Pagoulatos 'the cinematographer, in my opinion should be more open to the contradictory wealth of human relations and attitudes.' Ivens reveals in this dialogue an unknown fact that he supported Greek fighters when after the war they asked him to help them with a film.

JORIS IVENS,
BY: JEAN COMMOLI (ED.)
Book: catalogue Âñû-rû âboro Film festival (2009, French), 56 pages

Jean Commoli, director of the peoples Âñû-rû âboro Film festival ('The Man's Shadow') in New Caledonia, states about the mission of his festival: 'For the peoples who are raising their voices in the world today to assert their dignity, their history, their values, it is vital to make documentary films that are outside

the dominant models, to make them circulate, to exchange them with others. Our era is that of the mass media, dominated by big media groups, serving market logic only. It is appropriate and desirable to show other ways of doing things, filming, looking and listening.' Accompanying the retrospective of Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens' films a nice booklet was published with a.o. an interesting personal view on the importance of documentary by the author Jean-Francois Corrat.

JORIS IVENS WELTENFILMER
BY: JORIS IVENS, MARCELINE LORIDAN-IVENS, A.O.
DVD/Book: Eur. Stiftung Joris Ivens Absolut MEDIEN (2009, German), 14.56' / 304 pages.

The German version of the DVD box set including Stufkens' accompanying book, launched at DOK Leipzig on 20 October, received good reviews. German reviews: SWR (SüdwestRundfunk)/FilmSPAICHer: 'Eine exemplarische Edition...eine technisch makellose DVD. Etwas für die ganz besonderen Momente im Leben' Der Standard (Dominik Kamalzadeh): 'Die mit großer editorischer Sorgfalt erstellte DVD-Box Joris Ivens: Weltenfilmer ermöglicht nun erstmals einen faszinierenden Überblick über die Arbeiten dieses zentralen Dokumentaristen des 20. Jahrhunderts.' Der Freitag (Matthias Dell): 'Wenn man bedenkt, dass es bis vor Kurzem von disparaten VHS-Veröffentlichungen abgesehen, nahezu unmöglich war, Spuren von Ivens' Werk zu finden, ist die Kollektion nicht hoch genug zu würdigen. Die Box umfasst beileibe nicht alle Filme, die der Regisseur in über 60 Jahren gedreht hat. Aber die Auswahl extrahiert das Wesentliche von Ivens' Werk, und es empfiehlt sich gerade, die nach Jahren geordneten Filme chronologisch zu schauen, weil sich dadurch die Bewegung eines Künstlers erschließt, für den Bewegung maßgebliches Kriterium war.' RAY Kinomagazin (Michael Pekler): '... das Musterbeispiel einer sorgsam, jahrelang vorbereiteten Edition. ... eine der wichtigsten DVD-Editionen dieses Jahres.' Berliner Zeitung (Ralf Schenk): '...zwanzig Arbeiten, die in der längst überfälligen, grandiosen DVD-Edition 'Joris Ivens Weltenfilmer' versammelt sind. Mit ihr folgen wir noch einmal den Stationen jenes 'fliegenden Holländers', wie er von seinen Freunden genannt wurde, tauchen

in seinen Zorn, seine Ideale und Illusionen ein, die denen des 20. Jahrhunderts entsprachen.'

LES AVENTURES DE TILL L'ESPIÈGLE (1956, PARIS/EAST-BERLIN)
BY: GÉRARD PHILIPPE, JORIS IVENS
DVD: TF 1, Paris (2009, French), 85'.

Till Eulenspiegel was a peasant trickster whose jokes and pranks became the source of many folk tales, originating in Germany between 1300 and 1350. In the figure of Till the individual gets back at society; the stupid yet cunning peasant demonstrates his superiority to the narrow, dishonest, condescending townsman, as well as to the clergy and nobility. Through the centuries his character was featured in many literary and musical works, including a well-known 19th Century novel by the Belgian writer Charles De Coster, who situated this character in the context of the Dutch and Flemish Revolt against the Spanish Empire in the 16th century. Ivens, in 1955 adviser of the DEFA, the state owned film production company in the GDR, and living in East-Berlin, was supposed to become the director, but during the shooting French leading film star Gérard Philippe, who acted the lead role of Till, became more and more dominant and took over direction. He directed himself, which didn't improve the balance and subtlety. Shooting took place on location and in studios in Germany, Sweden, Belgium and France. At the time the film enjoyed good runs both in Italy, France and Germany, although it was not considered critical a success. In his film oeuvre Ivens' feature film *Les Aventures de Till l'Espiegle* seems to be a rarity. But when watching the opening sequence on the dunes near the Northsea, with the two lovers, Till and Nell, looking and longing for each other, it's striking to notice similarity with the lovers sequence in *Breakers*, Ivens' first feature film in 1929. In *Breakers* also two lovers are running towards each other on the dunes, with the breakers of the Northsea at the background. This is just one of the many fascinating aspects of this film, now released on DVD by TF1. This almost completely neglected movie about the merry prankster Till sees a revival: during several Ivens retrospectives it was programmed in the Children section, and also a Family Pay Channel in France broadcasts this lively Franco-German production as a children film. Already in 1956, when the film was premiered,

critics noticed that thanks to the unsubtle stereotyping of the Spanish oppressor against the Flemish freedom fighters and the over-the-top drollery of Till, this film should not be taken too seriously. Spanish soldiers are routed by a gang of ice-skating rebels, the general of the leader of the Revolt, William of Orange, is a drunken coward and fat catholic priests are selling their souls. This fact urged Dutch censors to prohibit release in The Netherlands! As a children film it is still enjoyable and one can appreciate the attempts to reconstruct paintings of Pieter Breughel in the scenery. At the time Ivens already had many doubts about the result, but the primal intentions of Ivens and Gérard Philippe were completely serious. It was the first of four major feature films between 1956 and 1960 co-produced with the state-owned DEFA in the GDR and French companies. Ivens tried to create a popular film with social critique, but on the night the movie was premiered in November 1956, Soviet tanks invaded Budapest to crush the Hungarian Revolution. The intended symbolism of the story suddenly got an opposite effect. In our next Ivens Magazine #17 more about *The Adventures of Till*, Ivens and Philippe

501 DIRECTORS / 501 RÉALISATEURS
BY STEVEN JAY SCHNEIDER (ED.)
Book: Barron's Educational Series, Incorporated, New York (2008, English, French), 640 pages.

After he finished the best selling book '1001 Films You Must See Before You Die' Schneider made a similar comprehensive guide to 501 of the greatest filmmakers of all time. In chronological order (date of birth) all filmmakers receive at least a one-page entry which includes discussion of their work and influences, their filmography, and listing of awards they have received. Every entry is augmented with a photo of each director plus movie stills from his or her films and a quote of a critic. It's an A-to-Z compendium that profiles major figures as Sergei Eisenstein, Martin Scorsese, Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Federico Fellini, Steven Spielberg, Robert Altman, and Joris Ivens. In between René Clair and Lev Kouleshov the contribution of Ivens to film art has been described.

Kees Ivens and the Waalbridge

Joris Ivens shot many film sequences with bridges. This probably had to do with his youth, when as a kid and youngster he almost on a daily basis was confronted with his fathers' plans to build a large traffic bridge crossing the river Waal in his birthplace Nijmegen, the main river between Rotterdam and the industrial Ruhr area. Kees Ivens initiated in 1905 his visionary ideas about transportation and the construction of a bridge replacing the centuries old ferry. It took him 31 years of a hard fight before the queen could open the Waalbridge on 16 June 1936. In 2011 the 75th anniversary of this bridge, at that time the largest iron span bridge in Europe, will be celebrated with an exhibition, a book, a filmprogramme and several public events. The personality of Kees Ivens will be commemorated. The Ivens Foundation, Museum Het Valkhof, the Regional Archives Nijmegen and the local historical film society collaborate to organize this local event.

Book Robert Capa in China with Joris Ivens and Ferno

Rixt Boomsma wrote an article in the previous Ivens Magazine about Robert Capa's photos made in China, when he accompanied Joris Ivens and John Ferno during the shooting of *The 400 Million*. She found unknown photos and prints in US and Dutch photo archives. The most extensive collection of work photos made by Capa during his work in China can be found at the Ivens Archives (over 80 prints). Her research sponsored by the Manfred and Hanna Heiting Fund results in a book published by the Rijksmuseum. She is also preparing an exhibition with Capa's photos. Expected in December 2010: *Photography meets Film: Capa, Ivens and*



Fernhout in China, 1938 by Rixt A. Bosma. In the series Rijksmuseum Studies in Photography, published with the support of the Manfred & Hanna Heiting Fund. € 22.95, ISBN 978 90 71450 31 0. info: www.rijksmuseum.nl

Two avant-garde theatre plays with Ivens'films

At the end of the 1920's Joris Ivens collaborated in two avant-garde artworks, performed by students from the Technical University of Delft: the open air performance 'D.16.M.M.' (1928) and the theater play 'Donogoo Tonka' (1931). Film images from Ivens were integrated in the décor. Both theatre plays were performed during the manifestation 'The Group of Delft' that started on 15th of February and lasted till November 2010.

'D.16.M.M.' ('D 16 Mensch en Machine') was as a theatre play created in 1928 by Mannus Franken. It had a remarkable size of décor with a big machinery crushing people. In this machine Mannus Franken tried to visualise the battle between spirit and matter, men and machine, power and intellect. Franken wrote: 'A catastrophe was in the air, a fear that this Robot would become a Golem'. Ivens took care of the abstract film images and designed an equally remarkable modern décor of white cones. On



the 5th and 6th of June 2010 a reinterpretation of 'D.16.M.M.' was performed in Delft.

'Donogoo Tonka' is the original film script from 1919 written by the French poet and writer Jules Romains. A year later he published this story about a man with suicidal tendencies who was given the advice by a biometric psychotherapist and a geographer to go to a non existing country in South-America, to proof his luck,



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together with other treasury diggers. Because the film was not realised, Romains changed the text into a theatre play. On February the 7th 1931 the Delft Student Theater group (DSTG) performed 'Donogoo Tonka' in the Stadsdoelen. Joris Ivens shot images of fortune seekers, industrious looking for treasures in the dunes of the Northsea at Wassenaar.

Both experimental films of Ivens –the one surrealistic, the other abstract- got lost. We only find proof of the fact that Ivens made these films because the newspapers mentioned it and the Ivens Archives is keeping some stills.

Fake or fact?

In 1929 Joris Ivens fell in love with Anneke van der Feer, a young blonde Frisian with a strong personality. As an artist she was involved in several Communist groups, for which she made illustrations, drawings, posters and paintings. She also designed the film poster for *Philips Radio*, once awarded best film poster of the Netherlands ever. In 1931 she accompanied Ivens to Russia where she staid for a couple of years. Her artistic work is hard to trace, but suddenly in 2009 during an exhibition in the Dutch city of Veere several paintings appeared. More striking: the series of paintings involved some of the protagonists of Ivens' circle of friends in Amsterdam: Eva Besnyö, John Fernhout, his sister Annetje Fernhout, Joris Ivens and Anneke van der Feer herself. Was dropping these well known names merely a trick to raise more money for sale? Or was the quality of Van der Feers paintings that worse that one cannot recognize any of the persons mentioned in the titles? Watch the paintings and make your own judgement...

Anneke van der Feer, Annetje Fernhout, Joris Ivens, John Fernhout, and Eva Besnyö, Oil on Canvas, the 1930's. Private collection.



THE

ivens

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in this edition :

Ivens and Hemingway

ALEX VERNON, STACEY GUILL, DAN MILLER AND SUZANNE CLARK, NICOLAS BLAYO

International avant-garde and the Chinese National Anthem

LIANG LUO

Joop Huisken

GÜNTER JORDAN



3 Joris Ivens Award

CINÉMA DU RÉEL

5 From Shanghai with Love

WORLD EXPO SHANGHAI

14 Joris Ivens as I know him

FU HONGXING

25 Ivens sculpture in Paris

BRYAN MCCORMACK

42 Ivens and Chile

TIZIANA PANIZZA

43 Ivens and Australia

ROBERT HAMILTON

42 New: Cinepoem Competition

RENS VAN MEEGEN

46 Komsomol and The Giant and the Builder

MILENA MICHALSKI