

european foundation joris iven

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for Australian society

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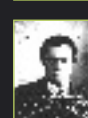
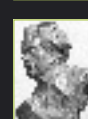
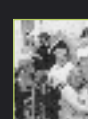
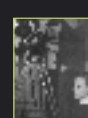
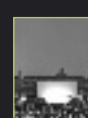
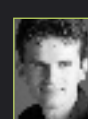
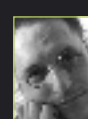
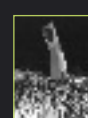
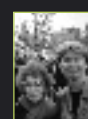
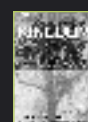
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Three lost Ivens films discovered

As a result of on-going research into the history of Dutch documentary film at the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision, three early films of Joris Ivens have recently been discovered, even though they were considered to be irretrievably lost. The three - VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID (Of Youth, Struggle and Labor, 1930), SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG (Railway Construction South Limburg, 1930) and BETONARBEID (Concrete Construction, 1930) – formed part of a commission by the Algemene Nederlandse Bouwarbeiders Bond (General Netherlands Building Workers Union). The discovery is all the more exciting as so many of the films that Ivens did realize between 1929-1931 – the most productive years in his long career – have been lost. Bert Hogenkamp, media historian at Sound and Vision, unearthed the three films among the thousands of reels in the collection of the Polygoon-Profilti newsreel company. In the following contribution Hogenkamp not only offers an educated guess as to how the prints ended up in that particular collection, but also discusses the significance of the discovery for the appreciation of Ivens' early career.

Really needed

In 1929, Joris Ivens had made a name with his 'movement study' DE BRUG (The Bridge, 1928) and the featurette BRANDING (Breakers, 1929) based on a short story by Jef Last, who also played one of the leading roles in the film. While he was still working on his next film REGEN (Rain), a lyrical cine-poem about Amsterdam in the rain, he was approached in May 1929 by E. Sinoo, the general secretary of the Algemene Nederlandse Bouwarbeiders Bond (ANBB). He asked Ivens to make a film on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of this trade union. This commission was a challenge that Ivens relished. As he would later write in his autobiography: 'Here it was. Somebody really needed my work. Here was a chance to give my work direction, purpose, fighting qualities and here was also an opportunity to devote my whole time to film making.'

The idea was to produce a feature-length documentary. For this Ivens could rely on the assistance of the 16 year-old John Fernhout and on the staff of the Amsterdam Capi branch, Joop Huisken in particular. But as the commission was simply too vast he

decided to engage some other assistants. They were a chemistry student (Willem Bon), a former Olympic Gold Medal winner and confirmed catholic, who had just left the Benedictine monastery (Jan Hin), a painter and active communist (Mark Kolthoff) and a French photographer/cameraman (Eli Lotar). Not only were they his contemporaries, but they also fully shared his admiration for the modernist film aesthetics propagated in the Netherlands by the Filmliga movement. Ivens needed their help, because he was not always able to liberate himself from his duties as a manager of the Capi photography shop.

As the central theme of the project Ivens chose the professional pride of the building workers. He regularly consulted general secretary Sinoo on the progress that was being made. The two men obviously got on very well together indeed. Apart from the obligatory shots of the union's activities (head office, meeting, youth outing, NVV congress), it was Ivens who determined what was being filmed and how. This was unusual, for as a rule trade union films were based on scripts that were written by full-time officials of the commissioning union, and between 1928 and

Bert Hogenkamp



Joris Ivens, still from CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION, 1930. © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

1931 quite a few of these were made in the Netherlands.² The Polygoon Company, for example, considered an elaborated script emanating from the commissioning body itself a perfect guarantee against any trouble that might arise over the film once it was completed. It had successfully followed this procedure with films like EN GIJ, KAMER-AAD? (And you, comrade?, 1928, for the Transport Workers Union), STALEN KNUISTEN (Fists of steel, 1930, Steelworkers Union) and TRIOMF (Triumph, 1931, Socialist Trade Union umbrella organization NVV).

Ivens used the freedom given by the ANBB to shoot footage on a whole range of different subjects on locations as far apart as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Arnhem, Limburg and Wieringen. After a while Ivens came to the conclusion that in order to do justice to some of the topics covered he had to edit the footage into separate films, not using it in the main film. This was particularly the case with the footage of the closing of the Zuiderzee and the reclamation of new land, which in the eyes of Ivens deserved a film of its own and would become the four-reel ZUIDERZEEWERKEN (Zuiderzee works, 1930). But first he released a one-reeler about the driving of heavy wooden piles into the swampy Dutch soil, HEIEN (Pile driving, 1929). With this film he wanted 'to obtain the full physical effect of the rhythmic powerful pounding.'³ HEIEN had its premiere for a Filmliga audience in the Amsterdam art house cinema 'De Uitkijk' in November 1929, more than two months before the ANBB film proper was released.

Many items

By January 1930 Ivens had so many of these items ranging from a half to four reels, all dealing with aspects of the building industry or the activities of the ANBB, that he had a hard time making up his mind on which ones to leave out of the final film, entitled WIJ BOUWEN (We are building). This had its premiere on 4 January 1930 in the main hall of the AMVJ Gebouw (YMCA Building) in Amsterdam. In The Camera and I Ivens recalled: 'While the first reel was going through the projection machine I was still busy cutting and splicing the last reel.'⁴ According to a contemporary source it was



Joris Ivens, still from CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION, 1930. © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl



Joris Ivens, still from *CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION*, 1930 © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

not as dramatic as this, but still it was not until 'the evening before the premiere of the film, at one o'clock in the morning, [that] De Groot had seen the film in its final version.' De Groot was Hugo de Groot, an experienced musician and film composer whose job it was to direct the full orchestra of the Socialist broadcasting organization VARA at the premiere of the (silent) film. He therefore 'only had a few hours to compose a fitting score to accompany the film.'⁵ Although the availability of sheet music to accompany *WIJ BOUWEN* was later announced in the ANBB newsletter *De Bouwer*, no score has survived in the personal archive of Hugo de Groot.⁶ Only the lyrics (written by NVV general secretary and former ANBB official Coen van der Lende) and music (De Groot) have survived of the 'ANBB March' which was first performed at the premiere of *WIJ BOUWEN* on 4 January 1930.

Although the ANBB was very pleased with *WIJ BOUWEN*, it was in fact quite unbalanced, being a succession of various shorter films and lacking an overall dramaturgy. After a title sequence it started with a more or less complete version of *HEIEN* (reel 1), followed by footage of the union, its history and activities, ending with a film report of an NVV congress (reels 2 and 3), a day out with the youth group, including a shot of Ivens enjoying an ice cream (reel 4), the construction of houses (reel 5), the building of the *Telegraaf* newspaper headquarters in Amsterdam (reel 6), bricklaying and a survey of examples of modern architecture, such as the Van Nelle factories in Rotterdam (reel 7), and the closing of the *Zuiderzee* (reels 8 to 11). The film ended with a short sequence reminding the spectators of the importance of building work and exhorting the building workers to be 'aware of your power.'⁷ Although the total length of the premiere version of *WIJ BOUWEN* amounted to 3,200 meters (10,498 ft) – more than two and a half hours when projected at a speed of 18 frames per second. An even longer version of 3,802 meters (12,473 ft) – over three hours – was submitted to the Netherlands Board of Film Censors.⁸ It is likely that the latter version included the three items that were screened alongside *ZUIDERZEEWERKEN* in the Amsterdam film theatre Rialto the day after the premiere of *WIJ BOUWEN*: *TIMMERFABRIEK* (Carpentry factory), *IMPRESSIONS UIT EEN STEENHOUWERIJ* (Impressions from a stonemasonry, directed by Jan Hin) and *SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-*

LIMBURG.⁹ The second title had a limited run in a Filmliga program of Dutch films, which also included *ZUIDERZEEWERKEN*. Although it was felt they deserved to be publicly screened, neither Ivens nor the ANBB had immediate plans for the release of these



Opening title CAPI Films *RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION SOUTH LIMBURG*, 1930 © coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum

films, which also included *BETONBOUW*, a three-reeler on the construction of concrete caissons in Rotterdam harbor.¹⁰ First Ivens had another pressing matter to resolve. Following Russian film director Vsevolod Pudovkin's short trip to Amsterdam in early 1929, he had been invited to visit the Soviet Union. On 13 January 1930 he boarded the train to Moscow, taking with him a selection of his own films (including *HEIEN* en *ZUIDERZEEWERKEN*) and those of his Filmliga colleagues.

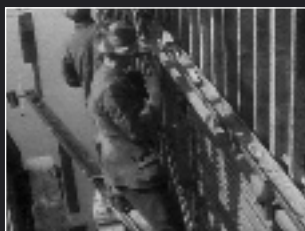
After a long visit which took him across the length and breadth of the Soviet Union, described in detail in his *The Camera and I*, Ivens returned to Amsterdam in April 1930. He was now a converted communist, who worked closely with the Dutch CP, particularly its mass organization *Vereeniging voor Volks Cultuur* (Association for Popular Culture).¹¹ Although the building workers union was, politically speaking, in a different camp – in the communist jargon of the day: the camp of the 'social fascists' – Ivens remained in touch with ANBB general secretary Sinoo. The two agreed that Ivens and his assistants would shoot some more films for the union, which was extremely pleased with the success of *WIJ BOUWEN*. On 11th April, the 75th screening of this film took place, with a total attendance of 33,000 spectators.¹² For a start Willem Bon covered a day trip in May of young building workers visiting the Amsterdam Zoo and the well-known tourist attractions Volendam and Marken, resulting in the two-reeler *AMSTERDAMSCHJEUGDDAG* (Amsterdam Youth Day). Then the ANBB arranged with its sister organization for Helmuth Niendorf, the head the film service of the German building workers union, to film the trip of a Dutch delegation to the Cologne and Rhine regions in late May. Ivens' company, Capi, took care of the Dutch subtitling of this film, entitled *JEUGDDAG DUITSLAND* (Youth Day Germany). Lastly, in June Ivens, Kolthoff and Huisken traveled to Vierhouten to cover a youth camp, resulting in another two-reeler *JEUGDDAG VIERHOUTEN* (Jeugddag Vierhouten). Although they enjoyed the comradeship with the youngsters, such trips and camps were hardly inspiring subjects for Ivens and his assistants. Only occasionally were they able to put their modernist ideas about film into practice.

New film

After a break during the Summer months the ANBB resumed their exhibitions of *WIJ BOUWEN* in September 1930. Sinoo exhorted union branches which so far had not done so to book the film: 'All we require is that one books a hall and takes care of the music.' He suggested that the film service of the *Instituut voor Arbeiders Ontwikkeling* (Institute for Workers' Education) would be able to help out. Sinoo added that if need be union headquarters 'would assist with projection equipment and accessories. The charges for the branch are so small, that no one needs to abstain. Moreover these costs can be recovered by charging admission.'¹³ He hinted at a new film 'which is as good as

New York, construction workers lunching on a crossbeam, 1932 © Charles Ebbett. Ivens' film *CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION* presents a similar image of modernity in the Netherlands





Joris Ivens, stills from



CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION



1930 © coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum



ready.¹⁴ In October 1930, he confessed that it would not surpass *WIJ BOUWEN*, 'but our new film will be equal to it, i.e. just as beautiful, just as captivating, just as important, and that is a remarkable feat... just as ordinary. Our second film too will derive from Labor and from our movement.'¹⁵ On 17 November 1930 the new film had its premiere in an entourage that was completely different from the first screening of *WIJ BOUWEN*. Instead of the 600 invitees and the full VARA orchestra that had filled the main hall of the AMVJ Gebouw, a hard core of ANBB officials and some film critics saw the film in the long narrow art house cinema 'De Uitkijk' in Amsterdam. Whether it was musically accompanied on the cinema's famous white grand piano is not known. The new film was consistently referred to it as *VAN ARBEID, JEUGD EN STRIJD* (Of Labor, Youth and Struggle) by the union organ *De Bouwer*, but the opening title of the first of the recently rediscovered films actually reads *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* (Of Youth, Struggle and Labor).

Like *WIJ BOUWEN*, *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* was a succession of six shorter films. It consisted of *JEUGDDAG TE VIERHOUTEN*, *SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG*, *BETONARBEID, AMSTERDAMSE JEUGDDAG*, *JEUGDDAG DUITSLAND* and finally *WIJ BLAZEN ALARM* (We sound the alarm). The last title had been produced by the Polygoon Company, famous for its newsreel, which at that time had close ties with the social democratic movement in the Netherlands. Commissioned by the Dutch Labor Party, it had been released earlier in 1930 under the title *ALARM*, to support the (unsuccessful) campaign against the renewal and extension of the Dutch Navy. As Sinoo pointed out, it 'has been added to our film as a spur to continue the struggle, under the motto *Never, never again war*'.¹⁶ Shortly after the premiere, four of the six titles (*ALARM* and *SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG* had already received an 'all ages' certificate) were submitted to the Netherlands Board of Film Censors. The board issued the required 'all ages' certificates, despite the fact that *JEUGDDAG TE VIERHOUTEN* broke 'at virtually every splice,' not to mention a paperclip which was stuck in one of the reels of *BETONARBEID* and 'which, if it had not been discovered beforehand, would have damaged both the film and the projection equipment.'¹⁷ This may seem symbolic for Ivens' lack of concern for *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID*, but the surviving correspondence between the Board of Film Censors and Capi is full of examples of films being submitted too late, forms being filled in incorrectly and fees waiting to be paid. Ivens simply did not care for film censorship at all.

It must be said though that Ivens did not show much interest in the film. He refrained for example from mentioning *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* to journalists, whereas he was regularly feeding the newspapers with stories about the sound film he was to make for Philips or the Studio Joris Ivens that he had set up to help young filmmakers. Later in life too, for example in his autobiographies, he never referred to it. Remarkably the ANBB too did not seem to embrace its second film as warmly as the first one. In January 1931 it obtained a brand new print of *WIJ BOUWEN* to replace the old one, as this film was still extremely popular with local branches.¹⁸ In the meantime *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* was booked only occasionally. The union's policy of allowing the screening of 'the new film only in

those places where the first has already been shown' did not help.¹⁹ But it soon turned out that the film simply lacked appeal. The three Youth Day films which made up the best part of *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* were really only of interest to those who had been present on the occasion. *WIJ BLAZEN ALARM* had lost its edge, for the political campaign for which it had been made had come to an end. This only left *SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG* and *BETONARBEID* as films in the same class as *WIJ BOUWEN*. Despite reassurances given in *De Bouwer* 'that we know already for sure, that this film [*VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID, BH*] will be a success,' it rapidly sunk into oblivion.²⁰

Lost and found

After a while *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* was taken out of circulation. The ANBB probably never had more than one copy of the film. What happened exactly with the negatives between the mid-thirties and the early eighties, when their presence in the Polygoon-Profilti collection can be traced back, is a mystery. It seems likely though that the only part of the film with which Ivens had nothing to do, *WIJ BLAZEN ALARM*, may have been the determining factor in the destiny of the negatives. My supposition is that Ivens never bothered to get the negatives back from Polygoon, where they had been sent to in the autumn of 1930 so that the first (and only?) print of the film could be made. After all, Polygoon had professional laboratory facilities in Haarlem, whereas Capi could only print small amounts of film by hand. Given the fact that the premises of Profilti in The Hague were destroyed by the RAF in March 1945, with a complete company archive, it is improbable that the sister company had acted as the keeper of the negatives.

Over the course of time the second reel of *JEUGDDAG TE VIERHOUTEN* and *AMSTERDAMSE JEUGDDAG* have been lost. But the rest of *VAN JEUGD, STRIJD EN ARBEID* has survived in remarkably good condition. The films have been transferred by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision from the original flammable nitrate carrier onto safety film and in order to safeguard the material, a master has been made. For consultation, there are video copies available on VHS and Digibeta. The films will be shown at the IDFA film festival in November 2005.

Only the first of the two reels of *JEUGDDAG TE VIERHOUTEN* have survived. Reel 1 shows what happened in the holiday camp: the pouring rain on the first day, getting up, washing and breakfasting, the country walk through the Veluwe national park (the sun is shining again), preparing the dinner, etc. One striking detail is that the camp participants are wearing jackets and ties for their country walk. Certain shots show Ivens' feeling for image composition but in general, the film does not rise above the level of a newsreel.



OF YOUTH, STRUGGLE AND LABOUR, Youthday in Vierhouten, youngsters of the General Netherlands Construction Workers Union washing, 1930 © Coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum



Joris Ivens, stills from



RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION SOUTH LIMBOURG



1930 © coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum



SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG is much more interesting as a film. The subject is the construction of the 'Millions Line' (so called because it cost a million guilders per kilometer to build), which was the railway line between Schaesberg, Kerkrade and Simpelveld. Enormous amounts of soil had to be shifted and the film shows how people did this work, by machine and by their own muscle power. It was a theme which Ivens placed at the centre of many of his films, i.e. that man was able to conquer nature (here, the earth), thanks to his ingenuity (the machines he invented) and the power of labor. **SPOORWEGBOUW ZUID-LIMBURG** contains shots which are typical of the avant-garde film style of the twenties, with workers filmed in frog perspective, and railway carriages moving diagonally across the frame.



Joris Ivens, RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION SOUTH LIMBOURG, 1930 © coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum

ANBB official Sinoo called **BETONARBEID** (also known under the title **CAISSONBOUW**) an 'educational film' and it is true that it does show how concrete caissons were made and sunk in the Rotterdam harbor, the Merwedehaven, to serve as an embankment. But **BETONARBEID** is more than just an 'educational film'. The film is also a testimony to Ivens' keen eye for the extraordinary skills of the ironworkers. Unwittingly he recorded how deficient safety conditions at the construction site actually were in 1930. Above all, the subject of the film offered him the chance to compose a 'symphony of labor,' by playing with light and dark, with lines and visual rhythms. A few shots are even reminiscent of the work of Mondriaan. In many respects, **BETONARBEID** closely resembles **GROEI** (Growth) (1930), a short film by Polygoon cameraman Jo de Haas about the construction of the Bijenkorf department store in Rotterdam.



Joris Ivens, still from CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION, 1930 © coll. Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum

Notes

¹ Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, Berlin, Seven Seas Books, 1969, p.43

² In *The Camera and I* (p.44) Ivens claims that he knew 'no example of a film made by a union for a union.' This is obviously a lapse of memory.

³ Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, op.cit., p.45

⁴ Idem, p.44

⁵ De Bouwer, 9 January 1930

⁶ The archive of Hugo de Groot is kept by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Hilversum.

⁷ Skrien, no.64, April 1977, pp.18-22

⁸ **WIJ BOUWEN** was issued certificate 8684 on 7 January 1930. Cf. archive of the Centrale Commissie voor de Filmkeuring, Nationaal Archief, The Hague

⁹ Het Volk, 7 January 1930

¹⁰ Apart from the titles mentioned Sinoo also listed a film about 'the construction of the third passage arm in The Hague'. In all it amounted to 'approximately 1,200 meters of film'. Cf. De Bouwer, 10 July 1930, pp.2-3

¹¹ See Bert Hogenkamp, 'Workers' Newsreels in the Netherlands (1930-1931)', in: Armand Mattelart, Seth Siegelaub (eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle 2. Liberation, Socialism*, New York/Bagnolet: IG/IMMRC, 1983, pp.157-164

¹² De Bouwer, 17 April 1930. Eventually over 50,000 people would see the film.

¹³ De Bouwer, 25 September 1930

¹⁴ De Bouwer, 28 August 1930

¹⁵ De Bouwer, 23 October 1930

¹⁶ De Bouwer, 27 November 1930

¹⁷ Correspondence Centrale Commissie voor de Filmkeuring – Capi, 1930-1931, Nationaal Archief, The Hague

¹⁸ De Bouwer, 18 December 1930

¹⁹ De Bouwer, 29 January 1931

²⁰ De Bouwer, 29 January 1931



Joris Ivens, *OF YOUTH, STRUGGLE AND LABOUR*, Youthday in Vierhouten, bread for the youngsters of the General Netherlands Construction Workers Union having a break, 1930. Coll. Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl



Bert Hogenkamp is a Media Historian at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. He also holds a professorship at Utrecht University. He published books on Ivens (Borinage), on Film and labour movement and on the history of Dutch documentary (1920-1940 / 1945-1965). Hogenkamp was also head advisor to the restoration project of the Joris Ivens Nitrate collection at the Filmmuseum in 1994.

Doc's Kingdom 2005

The 2005 international edition of Doc's Kingdom housed more guests and films than ever before. This bi-annual seminar on documentary film has a unique set-up. All meetings and screenings are plenary meaning that the maximum number of participants is equal to the number of seats in the large hall in the Camera Municipal in Serpa, a peaceful little village in the heart of the Alentejo region of southern Portugal. Each seminar aims to get all the guests participating in the numerous debates and asks that all the directors are there as well.

The European Foundation Joris Ivens is a partner of Doc's Kingdom. We picked out two striking films making their debut and interviewed the directors.



Li Yifan, still from BEFORE THE FLOOD (2005)

Name: Li Yifan, China

Filmography: BEFORE THE FLOOD (2005)

Because of the building of the Three Gorges Dam, a vast area in China will be flooded. Millions of people have to move as their towns and villages disappear beneath the water. The film shows this government-directed process and the human tragedy and relentless bureaucracy that comes with it.

Hello...

Ah, you are from the Ivens foundation? Ivens is a reference point of mine, as are Antonioni and Frederick Wiseman. Ivens provided another way of looking at China besides Communism. Before, Communism was everywhere, also in the schools. Ivens' view focuses on common things, not on the Party and the government officials, but on the ordinary people. He does not ask who is wrong and who is right, but shows the consequences of political changes in everyday life, with a non-political view. I have seen the HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS series and liked it very much.

Why did you start making documentaries?

I don't want to work in the big studios that are like machines. In China the documentaries made with government support are [just like] a speech in favor of them. Now, with low cost digital cameras it is very easy to make films and everything is possible. I choose the documentary genre because I want to show the many problems in China.

How would you describe your style/approach?

Just showing my point of view on China, not making everything beautiful. I want to film something I understand, that I'm inside of, concerned with. This film is not about the dam - that is just the background. I wanted to show how people change because the situation around them changes.

Do you want to change something with your film, make a difference?

Of course all major situations are too big for

one person to change, but this is my part. Also the media, strikes and protests have to do their part. I am not a political filmmaker, but one thing has already changed because of all this attention. Now the government cannot cut the power before the people have left their old houses, the ones that will be flooded.

Name: Maya Rosa, lives in France, born in Spain

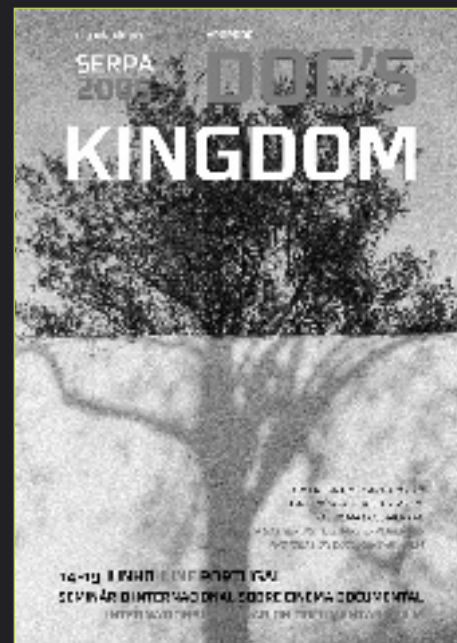
Filmography: IN THE GARDEN OF THE WORLD (2004)

Maya Rosa's film is focused on the Alentejo region, considered one of the poorest regions in Europe and once known as Portugal's granary. Nowadays, the immense plain is gradually becoming even more deserted, despite some progress and wealth. The film reflects on the 30 years since the fall of the dictator Salazar in the carnation revolution of 1974. She interviews the mostly elderly, the people with ordinary questions and gets unexpected answers. They start reciting pre-revolution rebel poetry, tell funny or shocking anecdotes and provide a valuable insight into a mainly forgotten part of history.



Li Yifan during Doc's Kingdom in Serpa, Portugal 2005.
Photo Bram Relouw

Bram Relouw



Poster Doc's Kingdom, 2005.

Why did you start making documentaries?

I always wanted to make films and chose documentaries because I wanted to say something about the world around me, trying to portray this world. Maybe I'll make fiction films later, now it's important for me to be nourished by the world.

How would you describe your style and your approach?

Simple and strong. Give space to people to express themselves and realize that every subject has its own form. I was formed in anthropology first.

I lived in the region when I was a kid. They have a very strong oral tradition and I wanted to record their history by letting them tell it. I tried just to quietly look and listen to a culture that is disappearing. Every image is like a scene where little bits of human history are conveyed like on a stage. Film is a way of recording traces of the past. Each screening of this memory keeps it alive.

Have you seen any films by Joris Ivens and what did you think of them?

I've seen THE BRIDGE, RAIN, PHILIPS RADIO and BORINAGE and liked them very much. I'm really eager to see more. World history speaks of a lot of domination and power and the poor people have no voice. To capture the rarely spoken of black holes in history - people suffering, being oppressed, dying - is important for me. Ivens also had strong ideas about showing these 'gaps' in history, the urgency to keep these memories alive. It's very important to stand up and say no to the oppressor.

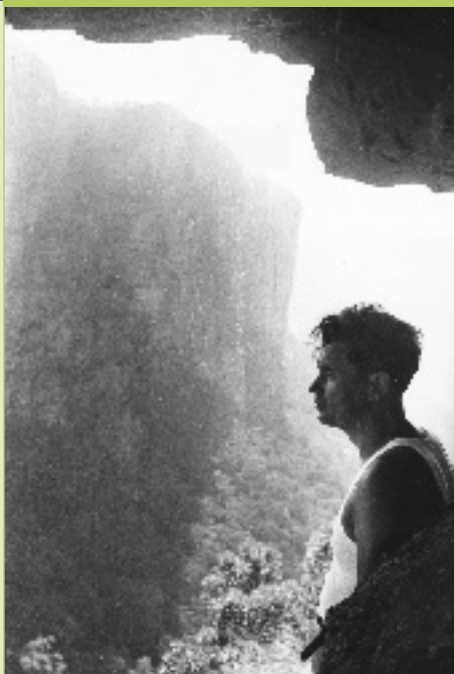
Li Yifan, still from BEFORE THE FLOOD (2005)



The progressive model of INDONESIA CALLING for Australian society

The film only lasted 22 minutes but the impact of INDONESIA CALLING! – ‘the story of the ships that didn’t sail’ was enormous. The cost to Ivens was an asthma attack which almost killed him and a longstanding conflict with the Dutch Government which was only healed toward the end of his life. The effect of the film as a source of comfort for the hopes of the young republic of Indonesia is virtually incalculable. INDONESIA CALLING became the 20th century equivalent of Max Havelaar in Dutch politics. However, the Australian context had not been explored fully. The film counteracted almost two centuries of the exclusive White Australia Policy. In INDONESIA CALLING, Joris Ivens anticipated and presented in 1946 his futuristic vision of the multicultural changes made in Australia decades afterwards.

Robert Hamilton & Laura Kotevska



Marion Michelle, Joris Ivens recovering in the Blue Mountains from severe asthma attacks, 1946 © Marion Michelle, Coll. MM / EFJI



Indonesians dancing a 1,500 years old dance in a Sydney club. Joris Ivens, still from INDONESIA CALLING!, 1946 © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

ry, decolonisation and Cold War World, dominated his oeuvre and inspired some of his most powerful works. For Australians, Ivens is perhaps best known for INDONESIA CALLING, the documentary made in 1946 in support of an autonomous, self-governing Indonesia, at the critical time when the Allies were engaged in the serious and unlovely

Norman Lindsay, 'Another Alien', published by The Bulletin 1934.



Reflecting on the social history of 19th and 20th century travellers, a close witness of both centuries, the novelist Henry James compared it to a 'gold-mine overgrown and smothered', a massive documentation characterised by 'a vast body of precious anecdotes, a long gallery of wonderful portraits, an array of the oddest possible figures in the oddest possible attitudes'. If a complete work could sum up the 20th century in film, James may just have well had in mind the work of the Dutch film lion, Joris Ivens. Wherever one looks in the history of twentieth century film, there is Joris Ivens. His long and peripatetic life (1898-1989) made him a close witness to the major socio-political transformations of the twentieth century and these are represented in his film work (1912-1988) which ranges across a raft of diverse topics. It is chiefly as a documentarist that Ivens is remembered and the twin political tides of the post-war twentieth centu-

business of attempting to gain control of the decolonisation process in Indonesia. This article reappraises INDONESIA CALLING in a new light as it examines the film's historical importance as Ivens' futuristic sketch of multicultural Australia, three decades before the notorious White Australia Policy was dismantled formally in 1975 as unworkable and undesirable.

The story of Joris Ivens' INDONESIA CALLING has reached legendary status in Australia, and especially in civil liberties circles. Immediately before the Second World War ended, the Dutch filmmaker, Joris Ivens accepted an invitation to come to Australia as Film Commissioner for the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). His engagement was to film the liberation of the NEI from the Japanese interregnum. The Netherlands Government had previously rejected Ivens for work on the grounds of his socialist tendencies, but was prepared to overlook his political colours to secure the best film man in the world for this very important mission. Once in Australia however, Ivens grew increasingly uneasy at the contradictory positions of the Netherlands and NEI Dutch on the future of the post-war NEI. Overall, the Netherlands' situation was grim. The NEI Government, which had representatives domiciled in Washington from 1943, was wholly dependent on American goodwill for the recovery of the NEI. However, the Dutch were confronted by an anti-colonial American press campaign animated by the slogan, "Not a drop of American blood for the revival of colonial lordship."¹ The Netherlands' Queen Wilhelmina set about placating American public feeling. In a series of speeches to the American Congress and radio audiences, the Queen adopted a liberal stand more in line with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, promising joint consultations aimed at political reconstruction of the Kingdom and its territories under a complete partnership.²

Two years after Queen Wilhelmina's assurances to America, a much different story was unfolding in Australia. Throughout 1945, Ivens witnessed at first hand, the overtly colonialist attitudes and practices of the 4000 strong Netherlands Indies Commission to Australia and New Zealand, a militarised administrative contingent attached to the Allied forces on the Pacific front line and the oil and rubber people based in Australia since their flight from the Japanese in 1942. Ever the *humaniste* and unable to ignore what he felt was an impending reneging of Atlantic Charter principles in the NEI, Ivens split from his employer in spectacular fashion, resigning his commission at a press conference in the Kent Room of the Hotel Australia in Sydney on 21 November 1945.

As the literature has it, Ivens almost fell into the making of INDONESIA CALLING by accident.³ Footage of the waterfront strike had been filmed in October 1945. Following his public defection from the Netherlands

administration, production began in earnest and continued up to July 1946, as Ivens began capturing on celluloid, the ban on Dutch shipping imposed by Australian water-side workers and trade unionists sympathetic to the Nationalist aspirations of the Indonesian Independence Movement. He soon found himself joined by a veritable "Who's Who" of Australian and British cinema working together, as he put it, "to give a young republic a little breathing space, ... a little oxygen" during the critical early months after Bung Sukarno's Proclamation of Indonesian Independence on 17 August 1945. Harry Watt took time away from his first feature for Ealing Studios, *THE OVERLANDERS*, to direct a scene and supplied precious short ends when film stock was virtually unobtainable. Marion Michelle, Katherine Duncan, Peter Finch (already with his own Commonwealth Investigation Branch dossier) and members of Australia's Commonwealth Film Unit, also joined. The outcome was *INDONESIA CALLING*, the first post-war film dealing with decolonisation in the Pacific.



Catherine Duncan, script writer of *Indonesia Calling!*, 1947. Photo coll. Screen Sound Australia

The struggle to make and screen *INDONESIA CALLING* has been well documented in a literature which follows the scholarly trend in cinema studies and film historiography in investigating issues surrounding the production, distribution, screening and reception of film. Ivens, his crew and supporters had to deal with *inter alia*, sub-standard production equipment and facilities, limited funds, a lack of film stock, surveillance by the New South Wales Police, and Commonwealth Investigation Service, and interference from the Federal Opposition in Australian government who sought political capital from attacking the Labour Government for its tacit support for the Indonesian cause. The oxygen metaphor became appropriate for Ivens himself when a complete health breakdown removed him from production and he was forced to retreat to the healthier, elevated currents of the Blue Mountains to convalesce. Ivens was perhaps a little hard on himself in blaming sinusitis and 'overstrained nerves' for his physical collapse.⁴ He could not have known that the time spent in central Sydney and around the foreshores of Sydney Harbour in spring and summer exposed him to *planatus* trees, now known for their dramatic effect upon asthmatics and their ability to trigger severe respiratory problems.⁵ During 1946, the notoriety associated with themaking and delayed

screening of *INDONESIA CALLING* eclipsed the controversy of events on the waterfront and obscured the issue for many Australians, of how to interpret the larger changes of decolonisation brought about by burgeoning nationalist movements to the near North.

In later years, Ivens was curiously reticent to comment on *INDONESIA CALLING*. He omitted the episode from *The Camera and I* and at the end of his life he rejected an approach from the historian, Eric van't Groenewout to make a documentary on the film claiming that in his mind the matter was closed.⁶ Of course there has been no shortage of critiques of the film. To date, commentaries on *INDONESIA CALLING* have focused on the mechanical and political obstacles associated with the film as symbolic of the nascent republic's fight for life. However, what they do not acknowledge is the domestic political context of *INDONESIA CALLING*. Ivens' gaze rested not just on the matter of the dilemma of the 'Indonesian question' but also on the politically sensitive matter of the White Australia Policy.⁷ His camera turned inward upon Australian society and had an eye for the future. *INDONESIA CALLING* is liberally peppered with beautifully framed vignettes in which Ivens forecast future directions for Australian society, and particularly the transition of a predominantly White Australian population to the multicultural model advocated by Australian Labor's Whitlam Government in the early 1970s.



Freedom for Pacific People. Joris Ivens, still from *INDONESIA CALLING!*, 1946 © Joris Ivens

'INDONESIA CALLING WHITE AUSTRALIA'

To have an appreciation of the subtle gravity of Iven's vignettes, some background on the White Australia Policy is necessary. Before the Pacific War, Australia was a British Dominion, part of the British realm. Like other European colonisers, Australia looked to other civilisations to furnish answers to the great questions of the time, particularly the ebb and flow of civilisations as an unceasing struggle for supremacy between East and West. To understand the modern world, an understanding of the struggle between East and West was fundamental in the minds of politicians, scientists and the majority of Australians anxious about their precarious position. White Australians in particular felt their isolated and ephemeral position keenly. Being white, resource-laden, under-populated and perched remotely on the edge of the Pacific Rim forced Australia to cling to the superiority of the British Navy, occasionally looking towards the United States as an alternative source of regional leadership.

Geographic determinism was augmented with extreme racism. As a nation, the overwhelming majority of Australians agreed with the necessity of preserving the social and racial homogeneity of its citizens. Early Australian political leaders such as Prime

Minister Alfred Deakin stated with confidence that Australia and its Asian neighbour's should show a growing convergence of political, geographic and even intellectual interests. However, such convergence could never extend to the domestic sphere of immigration, family, racial inter-marriage and children. The effect of this national neurosis for non-Europeans was prosaically summed up by the Australian utopian, William Lane, who quipped in April 1892 that he would rather see his daughter 'dead in her coffin than kissing one of them [non-European] on the mouth or nursing a little coffee-coloured brat that she was a mother to'.⁸ By the beginning of the 20th century, eugenic, genetic, psychological theorising, experiment and observation dominated proposals for the making of public policy and attitudes to non-Europeans were most clearly defined in the treatment of Aborigines and Asians and embodied in a complex series of legislative and administrative measures known collectively as the White Australia Policy, aimed at severely restricting non-European immigration.⁹

If it is possible to overlook the overt political imagery of *INDONESIA CALLING*, the film can be read as depicting another historically significant moment, as Australian audiences confront an alternative, previously unpalatable taboo, to encounter on film what a non-White Australia might look like. Pervading the history of Australian film and media are representations that exclude minority groups and thereby enforce binary codes of otherness. In just 22 minutes, *INDONESIA CALLING* overturned and counteracted almost 170 years of these oppositions and stock images of White Australia. Solidarity is achieved not merely on the waterfront. *INDONESIA CALLING* provides a site through which Asians are not 'constructed' through dominant racial discourses inherent to the period, but rather locates Indonesians within the context of white exclusivity and positions them as equal citizens; united against capitalist oppression, the threat of militarism, and racism.



Demonstration of Indonesian seamen in Sydney opposing colonial restoration in the Pacific and calling for respecting the Atlantic Charter, 1945. Coll. Marion Michelle /EFJl

Three discrete themes permeate Ivens' progressive vision of a model for a multicultural Australia; the overturning of Australian's fear of Asian invasion, the typification of intimate relations between Europeans and Asians, and the reversal of the 'Orientalist' stereotype of Asians as backward, fixated in time, barbaric, and less than human. The first tangible images reveal Indonesians in the central business district of Sydney. They act as an immediate corrective to the longstanding invasion metaphor evinced in the influential *Bulletin* cartoon of 1888 which demonstrates the obvious dangers to White Australia, of a demonic Asia within a child's cot meant to represent Australia.



Joris Ivens, film stills from first sequences of



INDONESIA CALLING presenting



multicultural city life in Sydney



'Young Australia confronts the Chinese dragon', cartoon from The Bulletin, 14 April 1888

INDONESIA CALLING depicts in a breathtakingly natural way, Indonesians buying newspapers outside Sydney's General Post Office in Martin Place, alighting from the now defunct city trams, mingling with other commuters and sharing a cigarette and a joke. Peter Finch's laconic voice over gives instant admission to multicultural Australia; 'Here in Australia, for years they have lived in our country as friends and fellow townsmen. Women learnt the names of our fruit. Mothers found that children were much the same in any language.' The images which follow show Indonesian and White Australian mothers and children engaging each other easily through the universal language of children and motherhood. This language, much like the language of freedom spoken by dockworkers and trade unionists, transcends cultural differences and seals a social compact predicated upon understanding and humanism. The innocence of children counterpoints the innocence of the young Indonesian republic. Each needed the opportunity of autonomous development and freedom from oppression. Such images act dually to punctuate the larger concerns of INDONESIA CALLING and redirect its focus from being a film solely about colonialism and geo-politics



Indonesians dancing a 1,500 years old dance in a Sydney club. Joris Ivens, still from INDONESIA

to a film that counteracts and offers an alternative version of multi-cultural Australia free of the encompassing notions of Australia being at risk and vulnerable to the threat of Asian invasion.

Ultimately, Ivens created something unique in the Antipodean context, as his images recognised the possibility of a new form of social organisation underpinned by citizenship and not race. These visions reframed the discourses of 'otherness' as he promulgated ideas of what would happen if one took the 'other' and made it part of the 'self.' No where is this more apparent than in



'One day he put a new pipe before me...', The Bulletin, 1902.

the dance scenes. White Australia grew out of and codified in law, a horror for and even prohibition of white intimacy and sexual relations with non-whites. The 'East' was corrupt, tainted, and feckless and too close a contact was synonymous with contamination and diminution of the physical and intellectual fitness of an emerging Australian national type. The Bulletin cartoon, '**One day, he put a new pipe before me ...**' leaves no doubt as to the revulsion White Australia held for Asia and of the dire personal and national consequences of white females having sexual relations with Asians, and the fear of miscegenation.

Ivens unraveled this national neurosis frame by frame, step by step in the indoor dance scene in which white Australian women dance cheek to cheek with Indonesian merchant seamen, KPM employees and other Indonesian male escapees from the Japanese invasion of the NEI. The fleeting dance scene with its high shot normalises the connection between Indonesian and Australian and typifies their natural relationship. The effect is a lyrical almost ethereal vignette in which the dancers seem unaware of the camera. This beautiful scene is a prescient, richly symbolic window into Australia's future.



'The Hague still afraid of Indonesia Calling!'. Even after 18 years Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns tried to stop screening of INDONESIA CALLING! Coll. JIA/EFJI

It is a testament to Ivens' that INDONESIA CALLING reversed the 'Orientalist' stereotype of Asians to offer a liminal moment in the history of Australian society captured for posterity. Under Ivens' perceptive mind and deft touch, decades of inculcated racism slough away as one by one, he removes their last vestiges to represent a model for a truly modern, egalitarian Australian society. In contradistinction to the biological determinist imagery of non-Europeans as fierce, fixated in time, barbaric,

and under-civilised, Ivens introduced Australians to his ideal of *sama rata sama rasa*, a sense of equality among people and of satisfaction in society by its members. The grammar of the film, the use of sweeping shots, high angles and panning blurs the distinctions between Australian and Indonesian to reunite the *orang rampasan*¹⁰ with their Australian hosts in a celebration which restores both harmony and pragmatism. In George and Margaret Street Sydney, Manadonese, Javanese and Ambonese men rejoin their brothers as international citizens of the world, resplendent in western style suit, tie and hat, as equally at home in Carnaby Street London or Collins Street Melbourne. Ivens was not flirting with fiction in his depiction of the Indonesians as urbane, sophisticated and politically attuned to the moment. Australian born Molly Bondan, later to marry CENKIM's¹¹ Mohammed Bondan recalled how easily Australian women were charmed by the men many of whom had traveled the world, spoke several languages, were beautifully dressed, and 'whose mental development was without exception far beyond that of their Australian girlfriends'.¹²

In a similar vein, INDONESIA CALLING gives a compelling image of the Indonesians as 'Men's Men', after the mould of the Australian male. Chief among the possessions valued by his contemporaries are 'mate ship', self-reliance, belief in one's own ability, and a healthy skepticism for misplaced authority. The Australian historian Russel Ward charted the origins, development and features of this peculiar form of nationalism in his Australian Legend.¹³ Ward's central argument was that the egalitarian ideals and socialist tendencies of 20th century Australia were drawn from the values of the agricultural and pastoral workers of colonial Australia and transplanted to an emerging urbanised and industrialised bourgeoisie. The national narrative became formulated around national development and a national consciousness which owed much to the manliness, heroism and resilience of the early pioneers as they struggled against the elements and the worst excesses of human nature. Joris Ivens taps into these iconic themes as Indonesian and Australian alike are cast into this heroic mould, emerging together from the ANZAC buffet at the Allied and British Service Club, donating funds for the Victory Loans, gathered around a short-wave radio, pitted against the vicissitudes of oppressive colonial capitalism in their waterfront strike, and ironically, standing shoulder to shoulder against Japanese militarism in the Pacific!

Film is a discourse in which every frame is motivated and cut with a purpose. It is therefore impossible, from an Antipodean point of view, to discount the significance of INDONESIA CALLING's contribution to Australia's national narrative. Sparse though these images are, Ivens ensured that this progressive model was included in the final cut. His letter to Tom Brandon of Garrison Film, who took charge of international sales for INDONESIA CALLING leaves no doubt of the considerable obstacles Ivens had to overcome. 'The film was chiefly donated, all ages, lengths and speeds and hardly any indication of which, in the cutting room no moviola, so the editing had to be done like tailor's measure length of goods, but it was good that I remembered my Holland training in the silent days. The Australian genius for making ice-boxes out of old tin cans was evident in the sound head and synchronizer, which was as difficult to set up as a jigsaw puzzle and took

about half an hour to prepare for four reels – no image of course – and it would only wind in one direction. The little studio had only an old hand splicer and the method of getting emulsion off was scissors and spit, scissors and spit. We had to cut the negatives ourselves in the same dusty room'.¹⁴

Ivens certainly left Australians with a rare historical treasure in INDONESIA CALLING!

Acknowledgements

The authors like to acknowledge the help given by the archivists and librarians of the following institutions: the National Archives of Australia, Canberra; Katherine Rogerson from ACP Magazines for permission to reproduce *Bulletin* cartoons, Screen Sound Australia, National Screen and Sound Archive, Sydney and Canberra Office; The European Foundation Joris Ivens, Nijmegen. We are particularly grateful for the help and advice of André Stufkens, Director of The European Foundation Joris Ivens.

'A brotherhood of nations' crossing the Sydney bridge. Joris Ivens, still from INDONESIA CALLING!, 1946 © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI



'A brotherhood of nations' crossing the Sydney bridge. Joris Ivens, final sequence from INDONESIA CALLING!, 1946 © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI



Laura Kotevska studies Modern History and Literature at the University of Sydney. She was a former student of the Georges River College in Sydney. This is her first publication.

Notes

¹ New York Times, 2 October 1943, p. 2.

² Transcript of a Speech made by the Queen of the Netherlands, 6 December 1942. Commonwealth Record Series A989/1 Item 43/600/5/1/5, Australian Archives.

³ G. Cutts, 'Indonesia Calling and Joris Ivens', in A. Moran & T. O'Regan, (eds.), *An Australian Film Reader*, Currency Press, n.d., Sydney.

⁴ H. Schoots, *Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam University Press, 2000, p. 206.

⁵ Recent research conducted by the Asthma Foundation and NSW Department of Health into planatus or Plane Trees in the Central Business District of Sydney and Harbour Foreshores reveals that they pose a substantial and severe health risk for asthma sufferers and for persons with respiratory disease.

⁶ Schoots, op. cit., p. 360.

⁷ In the 2003 edition of *Newsmagazine*, Gerda Jansen-Hendriks did allude to INDONESIA CALLING's portrayal of the solidarity between people of all colours and creeds and ideal multicultural and multi-ethnic society in cosmopolitan Sydney. However, she did not persist with this theme.

⁸ W. Lane in the *Wagga Hummer* newspaper, April 1892. Quoted in H. McQueen, *A new Britannia*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1986, p. 35.

⁹ G. Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2005, p. 7.

¹⁰ Describes those Indonesians who claim they were literally snatched by the Dutch in the final evacuation of the Netherlands East Indies.

¹¹ Central Komite Indonesia Merdeka: the central body used in Australia to coordinate the political struggle for independence.

¹² M. Bondan, *In Love with a Nation: Molly Bondan and Indonesia*, Sydney, 1995, p. 22.

¹³ R. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, Melbourne University Press, 1959.

¹⁴ Letter: Joris Ivens to Tom Brandon, 'Haslemere', Blackheath, New South Wales, 15 September, 1946.



Robert Hamilton teaches Modern History and Sociology at Georges River College in Sydney. Awards include the Grey Prize for History 1993, Australian Postgraduate Award 1995, University of Western Sydney Travel Scholarship 1997, and Westfield NSW Premier's History Scholarship in 2003. He was an academic visitor at the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden and Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in London in 1998 and has taught at the Universities of Western Sydney and University of New England. He has an interest in Australasian history with a focus on colonial and postcolonial Indonesia and Islam. Publications include: *Psychopaths, communists and criminals: Brigadier Simpson and the Tanah Merah Internees*, (1994) *Shari'a Law in Southeast Asia*, (1995, reprinted 2004) *The Netherlands East Indies in the Early Twentieth Century*, (2004) and *On the Wallaby in Southeast Asia: Reassessing Australian Regional Affairs, 1901-1945* (in press 2006).

The Archives

Collection of posters restored and pre-served.

Since June 1997 the collection of film posters at the Foundation have been deposited in the vaults of the Regional Archive Nijmegen. Over the years this collection has been carefully preserved and, if necessary, restored – finishing in June 2005. After arrival, all posters were checked and an inventory was made of all damage. In some cases the damage was quite serious, and varied from tears and stains through to substantial damage caused by crepe tape. About 70 posters plastered with this crepe tape were treated first. During the seventies, museums were recommending to archives around the world the



Willemien Jansen, head restoration Regional Archives Nijmegen, restoring the Ivens poster collection.

use of this crepe tape as it was considered a safe method to protect posters against tears on the edges and folders. But in the long run, the chemical effects of this tape turned out to be disastrous. Crepe tape, also known as painters tape, is based on synthetic rubber glue. This glue degrades very quickly and during this process the paper is significantly damaged. The adhesive oxidizes, followed by various stages of decline. Initially there is a period of little change, but when oxidation starts the adhesive rapidly changes in both composition and color – it becomes sticky, oily and discolored. Various elements get into the paper and can even come through to become visible as dark lines on the back of the posters. It's important that all crepe tape is removed before reaching the final stage of the degrading process. If not, it's very difficult or even impossible to remove the tape. The adhesive hardens and gets brittle and the paper will become very vulnerable.

At first the tape was removed by immersing the whole poster in kerosene, but later it was decided to remove the tape manually. The solvent used was odorless white spirit. In cases where the paper or ink didn't permit the use of solvents, the tape had to be removed mechanically.

As well as removing tape, tears were restored and when necessary the paper strengthened by doubling it with Japanese paper, that has very thin, long fibres. Acidic paper, which is very vulnerable, was rinsed to bring it back to an agreeable degree of acidity, which extends the life of the posters.

During and after restoration, care is taken to store the posters in acid free files. Posters which are too big to be stored in files are rolled up in acid free cardboard cylinders with a diameter of 10cm and stored in an acid free box.

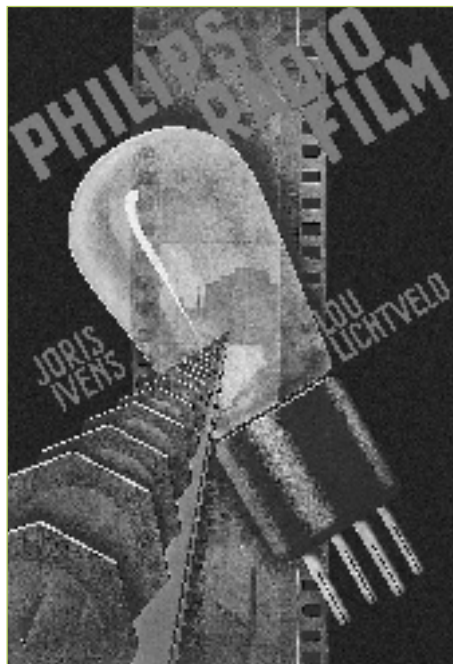
This valuable collection is now preserved for the future in the best possible way.

Willemien Jansen, Head restoration department Regional Archive Nijmegen.

After restoration, BREED Documentconversie digitized all of the posters so that this collection will also be available in digital format.

Film poster PHILIPS RADIO for sale

In 2001, the film poster for PHILIPS RADIO was chosen as the best Dutch film poster of all time in a contest run by the film magazine Skrien. It was designed by Anneke van der Feer in 1930, and shows the aesthetics of functional modernism, based on new ways of design as represented by Piet Zwart and Paul Schuitema. The poster, which is part of the collection of the Joris Ivens Archives, has been reproduced and published by the Foundation. The poster can be ordered for



This Philips Radio poster can be ordered for 7,50 euro at www.iven.nl. The poster was designed by Anneke van der Feer in 1931 and chosen all time best Dutch film poster.

7,50 euro, plus postage and packaging – 4 euro for addresses in The Netherlands and 7 euro for outside.

Check it out on the shop page at our new website: www.iven.nl

Digitisation Joris Ivens Archives

After the digitisation of the Hans Wegner Collection (22,000 documents) was finished last year, the project was continued with the digitization of the Joris Ivens Archive (100,000 documents). The company BREED Documentconversie from Nijmegen are spe-

BREED working on the scanning of the Joris Ivens Archives



cialists in digitizing extensive archival collections, using a reliable security system and highly qualified personnel. The huge archive of documents was converted from analogue text files into digital images. To improve the word search facility these images were converted into text files with OCR (Optical Character Recognizing) meaning that searching for certain names or titles is no longer like looking for a needle in a haystack. A lot of the documents in the Joris Ivens Archives were made with a typewriter and for this the OCR functions quite well. However, the OCR isn't 100% guaranteed, for example with hand written texts the OCR struggles to recognize requested words. The digital text files are being scanned in 100 and 300 dpi, meaning the Archives cover several hard disks of PDF files. For security reasons, a large number of back-up DVD's are also being made. These files can be searched on demand from the Ivens website.

Personnel

On 1st October 2005, Huub Jansen finished his work at the Ivens Archives by completing the inventory of the Marceline Loridan-Ivens Collection. The collection is contained in 120 boxes and covers almost all of Ivens' films and interests, but with a particular focus on the films made in Vietnam and China. Since 2000, Jansen has worked as the archive coordinator for listing the Hans Wegner Collection (2001), the Ewa Fiszer Collection (2004) and the Collection of the World Union of Documentary and the International Association of Documentarists. During the past few years he has also managed several assistants who worked on the photo collections.

The Foundation

Subvention 2006-2008

After the positive notices in 2004, and again in April 2005 from the Council of Culture, in September 2005 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science approved the 2006-2008 policy plan and decided to continue the financial support. They gave their opinion of the Foundation: 'In many ways an exemplary institution, dynamic, active and with a clear vision.'

The next few years will see a broad change in the film field in the Netherlands because the ministry wants to create one, integral Netherlands Film Institute on the bank of the river IJ, opposite the Central Station in Amsterdam. This national institute will include the Film Museum, Holland Film, the Netherlands Institute for Film Education, and other film institutes related to non-commercial distribution, film archiving and presentation, promotion and marketing. Also the grant system – currently reviewed every four years – will change. Smaller institutions in particular will have to apply to the Netherlands Film Fund for funding on more regular intervals.

The Ministry advised the Foundation to formally co-operate with the Film Museum. This co-operation in fact already exists on many levels, as the Foundation collaborates with several different departments within the Film Museum on projects like the DVD box set, restoration, distribution etc.

The starting point the plan of the European Foundation Joris Ivens is the independent position of the Foundation and the surplus value it created through the years by its active policy, organizing retrospectives, exhibitions, publications and research. By working at a local level (collaborating with other cultural organizations in Nijmegen), on a national level (collaborating with the Film Museum and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision), and internationally (being a member of FIAF), the Foundation has proved the necessity of its existence. In the next three years the Foundation will continue to improve and enlarge its core business - the archive - by digitizing its collections for on-line consultation on request and continuing with acquisition, listing and preservation.



Tineke de Vaal, Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Guusje ter Horst in Nijmegen, May 2005 © Henk de Smidt, photo Coll. EFJI

Guusje ter Horst

After being a member of the Foundation for three years, Guusje ter Horst decided to leave the board. It was not a shock decision, as it had been agreed from the start that on any occasion when a conflict could occur between her role as Mayor of Nijmegen and position as a board member she would withdraw. For the next few years the municipality of Nijmegen will support the Foundation with additional funding to cover the extra costs of

renting the office in Het Arsenaal. This strong support for the Foundation actually forced the Mayor to leave the board, but she will continue supporting the Foundation.



New website www.ivals.nl, design Walter van Rooij.



New website

The Foundation's bilingual website will be redesigned and modernized, to provide more topical information, more news, and more background material (like essays). Because of the digitization of both the paper collection and Ivens' films, it will be possible in the near future to make the resources of the Foundation available on-line and on demand for research. Already THE BRIDGE and ZUIDERZEEWERKEN can be seen online. The Hans Wegner Collection and Joris Ivens Archive will also be made available online.

DVD

30 films have now been digitized for the Joris Ivens DVD-box. Along with 15 Ivens classics, from RAIN up to UNE HISTOIRE DE VENT, there is bonus material including interviews, photos and several versions of the same film. The Foundation, who initiated the project, is collaborating with the Film Museum, A-film (Amsterdam), Digital Film Center (DFC, Arnhem), ARTE (Paris) and Facets (Chicago). The production is very complicated because of the search for best versions, the conservation of titles to get the best source material, copyright issues, digital formats and financial consequences. The box set will be ready in spring 2006.

Dossier Ivens

Il Cinema Ritrovato, the film festival in Bologna, will dedicate a Dossier Ivens to the Dutchman's rediscovered films. The Dossier is a special program of films focusing on great directors like Buñuel, Chaplin and others. Peter von Bagh, the program director, had already organized a Joris Ivens retrospective twenty years ago at the Helsinki Film archive, for which occasion he wrote an essay in Finnish. The reason for this celebra-

tion, to be held in June 2006, was the discovery of five films in the last few years that have allowed film scholars to gain a greater understanding of Ivens' oeuvre.

Film Museum 1946 - 2006

In 1946, after the liberation, two film buffs, Piet Meerdink and Paul Kijzer, started a film archive. In March 1946, with only one film in stock and screenings being held in student art house cinemas, Paul Kijzer was able to convince Henri Langlois to include this Dutch branch as a member of FIAF. As they were actually far too occupied with their own businesses, they asked Kijzer's nephew Jan de Vaal to become the director. This pioneering institution had to conquer many obstacles. When De Vaal retired 40 years later, he left an enormous and marvelous collection behind. Highlights that received worldwide attention included the Desmet collection, the Joris Ivens Collections, old film posters, and colonial films from the East Indies. To celebrate both the 60th anniversary of the Film Museum and the achievements of Jan de Vaal, the Foundation proposes to show a number of de Vaal's favorite films and publish his innovative film programs.

Joris Ivens and China

Sun Hongyun

'Mummy, I'm going to fly away! To China!' shouted a young Joris Ivens, sitting inside his homemade airplane. This was the beginning scene of Ivens' last film, A TALE OF THE WIND (1988). Ivens' airplane was only flying in his dreams, but China was Ivens' dream-land.

In China, a lot of people know Joris Ivens – the great master of documentary film. Indeed, Ivens had an amazing relationship with China for half a century. Ivens was there during the four major changes to China during the 20th Century, documenting the changes with his camera as well as his personal opinions and observation. He paid close attention to China all the time, and he contributed a lot of his expertise and energy to the country. He had amazing influence on the birth and later development of Chinese documentary films. In addition, Ivens was obsessed with Chinese philosophy and art.

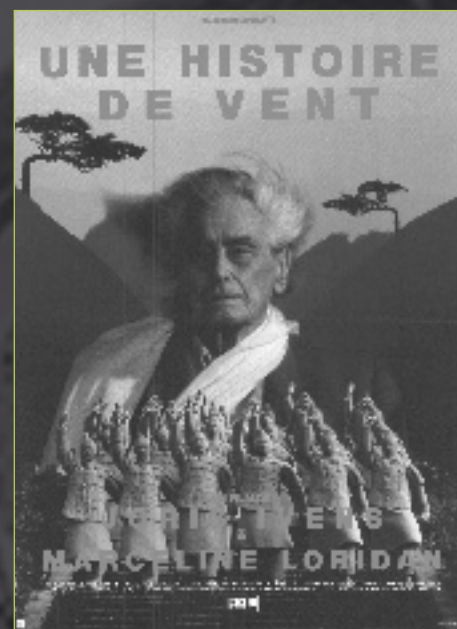
Because of China, Ivens received many awards and earned a great reputation in his field, but also suffered a long period of unemployment and misery.

Ivens' Chinese Connection

The tremendous political and artistic success of *THE SPANISH EARTH* was a factor in spurring Ivens to undertake a Chinese project around June 1937. It was at this time that Ivens read in American newspapers about the Japanese invasion of China. He decided to set off to China again, and after three months of travel, Ivens finally arrived. However, this brave filmmaker of Spanish Civil War action soon faced greater obstacles than he could ever have imagined. Because of Kuomintang's complex political

and philosophical considerations, Ivens could not reach the frontline at Yan'an, the base camp of the Chinese communists. He felt that he was only poking a small hole into the curtain covering the country at that time, and he hadn't seen the real China. This aroused Ivens' strong desire to venture further into China.

Between 1957 and 1959, during the Cold World War era, Ivens saw ideology, victory parades, party bureaucracy and false political propaganda spread across socialist countries in Russia and Eastern Europe. Ivens felt uneasy about socialism, even

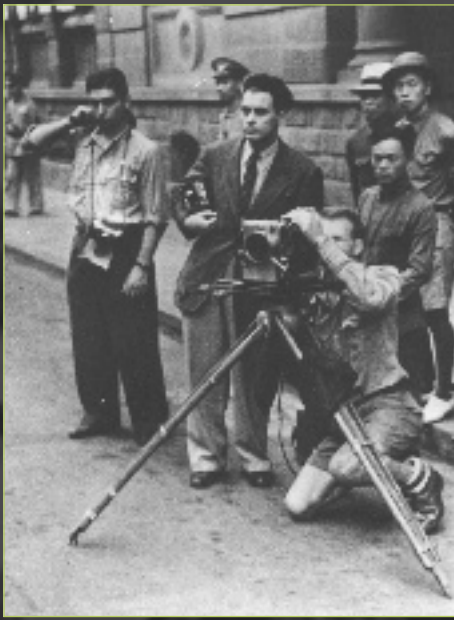


Film poster *A TALE OF THE WIND*, 1988. Coll. JIA/EFJI

though he was a believer in it. Although he could use any technology, work to various budgets, film what he wanted to film, he still didn't feel free in socialist countries. He felt he had already contributed his best efforts, and believed that he should go somewhere else. At that moment, he was disillusioned with socialism and communism. Ivens returned to the capitalist west' from Eastern Europe and made *THE SEINE MEETS PARIS* in 1957. He even enjoyed sunbathing near the Seine River.

Just when Ivens was not sure about his belief in socialism and not sure about himself, the Great Leap Forward in China





Robert Capa, Joris Ivens and John Ferno filming in China, 1938. Coll. JIA/EFJI

brought a bright spot to his socialist beliefs. He considered working in the young socialist China equally as important as visiting Russia in 1930 after the October Revolution.² At that time, Ivens believed China was making some substantial changes. Besides making great



Joris Ivens meeting Guo Moruo, vice president of NPC, together with Situ Huimin, vice-president of the Film Bureau, 1957.

advances in industry, agriculture and sciences, China was creating new kinds of human beings. These human beings had a real understanding of socialism in their work, day to day living and human connection.³ As a documentary filmmaker, Ivens felt he was living in a lively universe with these people with their long history and abundance of culture. Their history was one of continuous struggle. The whole population took up the responsibility of revolution.⁴

In 1958, Ivens made *BEFORE SPRING* to reflect the spirit of this new China.



Film poster *BEFORE SPRING*, 1958 © Coll. JIA/EFJI



Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens meeting premier Zhou En-lai, 1977

Throughout the film there were scenes representing Ivens' hope and confidence in China's future. At the beginning of the film, Ivens said, 'I have a strong feeling a great era of Chinese history has begun.' At that moment, Ivens was impressed by Chinese passion and their revolution.

Soon after the creation of the new China, their government adopted the policy of isolation. In the 1960s, the Chinese Cultural Revolution burst forth. It created a variety of different opinions in Western countries, but Ivens himself was not aware of the situation in China. At the beginning of 1971, Ivens received an invitation from the Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou En-lai, to visit China. The Prime Minister asked Ivens to make a film about the Cultural Revolution. Zhou wanted Ivens to show the real story of the Cultural Revolution. He said that it was fine to film this under-developed country as it was. There was no need to sugar coat it, but to present the truth.⁵

Soon after, in 1972, Michelangelo Antonioni traveled to China by government invitation to film *CHINA*. During his five-week stay, Antonioni said that he just wanted to get a picture of China and he can't offer more. In the eyes of Antonioni, Chinese were pessimistic and not perfect. He expressed his feelings about China and experiences in China in that film. The Chinese government, as the host, was very disappointed with the film. Therefore, his film was withdrawn soon after its release. On the other hand, Ivens' film, *HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS* reflected the spiritual changes brought by the Cultural Revolution. It became a portrait of Chinese daily life with its many aspects, and the benefits of the Cultural Revolution.⁶ *YUKONG* focused on industry, agriculture, school, business and military. The characters in the film included old craftsmen, professors, factory workers, soldiers,



LuSong-he, interpreter during the shooting of *YUKONG* © Sun Hongyun

women and high school students. It encompassed every aspect of the campaign and spirit of the Cultural Revolution. Each part of the film did not just study the particular occupations. He tried to represent the central theme of Cultural Revolution by connecting daily work and living with the overarching philosophical changes. It took five years for Ivens and Marceline Loridan to complete twelve series of *HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS*. The title of this film came from Chairman Mao's philosophy of 'Willing can move mountains.' With the swift change of the political climate in China in 1976, *YUKONG* was never screened publicly in China (even to this day) and almost completely withdrawn from all movie theaters and TV propaganda after only a year and half of shows, even though it took five years to make. Soon after the *YUKONG* series actually aroused a lot of criticism. Ivens, previously a world famous name in documentary filmmaking, was even linked with that of another filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, who was regarded as a Nazi for a time after World War II. A lot of nasty words were said about him. Some called him a liar, propagandist, Chinese lunatic, blind follower of communism and even cold-hearted campaign pusher. This hurt Ivens and affected him emotionally, and this film brought him unfair criticism, unemployment and poverty.

In the following ten years, Ivens lived in silence and misery. He hardly made any film during this time. Although, time to time, the Chinese government told Ivens he was: 'welcome to come back to China, China is your home, you can come back anytime.'⁷ However, Ivens decided to stay in Paris and remain unemployed and poor. This was his way of proving that he was independent and free from the Chinese government, and that *YUKONG* was not a government film. It was his own doing and incorporated his independent opinion.⁸ But the direct result of the releasing of *YUKONG* to theaters was ten years unemployment for Ivens and Loridan-Ivens in Europe. The turning point of his crisis was making another film, called *A TALE OF THE WIND*.⁹

A TALE OF THE WIND was also about China. Ivens still viewed the Chinese land with cynicism and foreboding. But this time, he focused more on Chinese traditional arts and philosophy than the political scene and social organizational changes. He tried to use dreamland and metaphysics to represent his inner feelings. As a documentary filmmaker, he was always questioning, thinking, pulsated and confused. Throughout the



Announcement of the screening of *YUKONG* in the Beijing Daily (1977). Coll. China Film Archive

film, the now old Ivens had striven hard to pursue and enjoy the wind. In the end of *A TALE OF THE WIND*, Ivens gave a pose of farewell to his beloved China and departed after a lifelong commitment to filmmaking.



The monkey king, still from A TALE OF THE WIND, 1988 © Capi-films

Ivens' Chinese films and 20th Century Chinese history

The 20th Century was an era full of change in China, giving birth to a new nation and enduring many struggles. Only Ivens' films cover the history of this period. THE 400 MILLION, BEFORE SPRING, HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS and A TALE OF THE WIND reflected key moments of Chinese history. Every part of his films was a small piece of the 20th Century. China, during World War II was an interesting place and country for western filmmakers. They came to China to film action and heroics. There was American Harry Dunham's CHINA STRIKES BACK (1937), Russian Roman Karmen's CHINA DEFENDS HERSELF (1938) and IN CHINA (1941), and Japanese Kamei Fumio's SHANGHAI (1938). However, the most influential film was Ivens' THE 400 MILLION. It not only documented the misery brought about by the Japanese invasion, it also showed the Chinese fighting back, such as the bombing of Guangdong and the Battle of Tai-er. At that time, most of the Western countries were not holding high hopes for the Chinese to liberate themselves. Ivens had a very acute observation of the Chinese communist party and the common people. He felt the enormous energy when they were working together. His film reported many activities from North to South. It included a war planning meeting of Chinese communist leaders in Wu'han, guerrilla war in the South, a training session for Xi'an militia, and a rally for all sections of the population. Whatever Ivens filmed, from Guangdong to Xi'an, from Shandong province to Gansu province, it presented a more complete representation of the period of the Chinese - Japan War than any other film. Therefore the historical images from THE 400 MILLION have become very important in China. Although Ivens was not satisfied with the film, it showed to Americans the truth behind the Chinese fighting against the Japanese invasion.

EARLY SPRING was a film about a political movement after the establishment of the new China under the Communist Party. However, Ivens did not give too much attention to people's communes and the Great Leap Forward. He filmed everyday lives and their changes from Inner Mongolia's Hailar to Wu'xi, a city in Zhejiang Province after the

creation of the new China. It was a poem written by Ivens' Camera. Ivens used this film to describe the happiness of people when they could control their own lives. He reflected the eagerness of people contributing to the socialist society. However, at that time Ivens could not know of the complexity of the political climate as a foreign filmmaker. He was just obsessed in the utopia of Chinese propagandizing. This is particularly evident in the commentary for this film, which was composed by a Chinese film worker, as it reflected some of the character of The Great Leap Forward, with its exaggeration and craziness.

YUKONG is a great example to use when discussing the relationship between the truthfulness of history and documentary films. It's not easy for historians to describe the Chinese Cultural Revolution, how can people understand and criticize objectively? The 'objective' observation of the film process has



Qin Liren, second lead during the shooting of the YUKONG-series © Sun Hongyun

different definitions between Ivens' YUKONG and Antonioni's CHINA. Ivens tried to describe China in YUKONG with a professional spirit of reality. However, perhaps his strong passion for the movement towards a utopian society in China blinded his view. Maybe Ivens did not show the real condition of China in that era. We cannot find out about Chinese history from his YUKONG. How many people actually believed that China was achieving its great dreams, many! Ivens was not an historian. We cannot say Ivens' YUKONG tells all the truth of that revolutionary era. Unfortunately, we can only say that Ivens and Marceline tried to use the most advanced filming techniques to describe the history. They believed that they were doing their best to describe the history of that period with great reality. A Chinese filmmaker Wu



YUKONG was screened at the Working People's Palace of Culture in Beijing, 1977

Wenguang, who actually experienced the Cultural Revolution, talked about the truth of YUKONG. He noticed that many scenes were artificially arranged; but he is sure that was Chinese society and folks experienced truth---willingly took rearrange all things for granted in that period.¹⁰ It was the historic value that YUKONG is.

A TALE OF THE WIND seems to have nothing to do with Chinese history. There are some scenes of the farmer bargaining and counting money, the modern style marriage of a young couple, the farm woman singing a popular song, opera singers, a gymnastics show and the speech of a small town government official. It showed contrasts between traditional and modern, positive and negative, and openness and conservativeness. Sarcastically, Ivens presented the revolution of China in the 1980s using his own interpretation. It is here, that you can notice how Ivens was deeply hurt from the criticism of his previous film, YUKONG.

Ivens and Chinese Ancient Culture

Ivens adored Chinese culture and philosophy before his arrival in the country. He read some Chinese poetry before his China trip in 1938. In the film, THE 400 MILLION, Ivens revealed his interest in ancient Chinese culture, where he described Chinese history and it included four sculpture figures in front of the Confucius temple. In BEFORE SPRING, he presented the special characteristics of Chinese paintings, folk toys, dragon dance, flying kites, origami, etc. This film was just like a Chinese poetry. It was the observation of happiness before spring arrived. Also the contents of three of the twelve films from YUKONG - REHEARSAL AT THE PEKING OPERA, TRAINING AT THE PEKING CIRCUS, and TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS - obviously reflected his deep appreciation of ancient Chinese culture.

Let us look at the other aspect of his film career in China. It seems he faced obstacles at every filming opportunity. In 1938, the Kuomintang Party forced him to leave China before he finished his film. In 1958, Ivens turned down the suggestion from the government to film a people's commune, choosing instead to film BEFORE SPRING. Although he had great empathy with China, Marceline and he had to fight to gain the opportunity to film real working people during the filming of YUKONG. The un-openness of ancient Chinese culture and the intricacies of

Chinese personal relationships frustrated Ivens' filming at every turn. On the other hand, the profound Chinese culture and fantasy of Chinese philosophy inspired Ivens change from focusing on revolutions and social changes to Chinese culture and philosophy. He started to pursue the meaning of life through Chinese tales and arts into the inner workings of Chinese philosophy.

Hence, in *A TALE OF THE WIND*, it was a meeting between Ivens and China. In it, the hero wanders through the history and culture of China. Ivens ascended the philosophy of Chinese arts from the pure appreciation of Chinese culture in the film. Ivens found the similarity between Chinese wind and his personal spirit. Within Chinese philosophy, the wind represented Ivens' pursuit of freedom and dignity. The bravery, smartness, defiantness of the mystical monkey king (Sung wu-kong) became the symbol of his pursuit for justice and ideals. In this film, he sadly said, "Folks called me cloud and rain, but I was just a breath of air in China."



Joris Ivens and Marceline Lorian-Ivens visiting vice-premier Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Coll. China Film Archive.

In *A TALE OF THE WIND*, Ivens portrayed himself. The old man rushed across the Chinese desert, mountains, and rivers in efforts to chase the wind. He wandered in the dreamland of fairy tales, walking hand in hand with his younger self in the supernatural film. He dreamed about flying and dreamed about China at that time. In the 1920s, he concentrated on the Frontier movements and glorified industrial progress. In the 1930s, he was crazy about communist movement. He used the camera to participate in the struggle against oppression and



Mao Zedong being filmed in Yan'an by the camera Joris Ivens left behind, 1938. Coll. JIA/EFJL

inequality. In the 1940s, his name was on the black list of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and then he had to leave his homeland. During the 1950s, when socialism was smashed, Ivens left the Western world with mystification and gloom. In the 1960s and 1970s, he carried his camera to pursue justice and the ideals he now thought again. However, he was badly hurt soon after the release of *YUKONG*. All the sorrow was dissipated by the desert wind in the film – *A TALE OF THE WIND*. In this film, Ivens waited for wind in the desert, meditated in front of Buddha even though he spent his childhood in a catholic family. He chased the wind on top of the Yellow Mountain and laughed at the sky during a strong wind.

Ivens' influence on Chinese documentary films

Ivens was one of the most important founders and developers of Chinese documentary films. Throughout the 20th century, almost every step of Chinese documentary development had some connection with Ivens. He sent a small movie camera to the Yan'an Film Group with the help of Prime Minister Zhou En-Lai, at Wu'han City in 1938. This was because he could not reach Yan'an to make the film himself. The Yan'an Film Group soon made their first film, *YAN'AN AND BA-LU-JUN*, which was the greatest film about fighting against the Japanese invasion of China at the time. Most of the sections of this film were shot with Ivens' camera. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, *BEFORE SPRING* was filmed while Ivens was teaching Chinese documentary filmmakers to film color documentary film. In the 1970s, Ivens and Lorian introduced new documentary film aesthetics to China - cinema-verite and direct cinema. Old style Chinese documentary filmmakers were trained for several months, and it led a change in their documentary film making method. They started synchronous recording, to study objects carefully, catch the best shots while the activities were happening, to participate in the events, pursuing the nature and variety of the visual. The whole of the film crew was Chinese except Ivens and Lorian. They called this filming period a movable Cinema-verite school. Documentary scholar Thomas Waugh said, "A whole new era in Chinese film making has expanded by the appearance of *YUKONG*."¹²

Ten years later, in the 1980s, Ivens filmed *A TALE OF THE WIND*. This film broke



Deng Yingchao (the wife of Zhou'en Lai), vice president of the National People's Congress, meeting Joris Ivens and Marceline Lorian-Ivens. Mr. Situ Huimin at the left. Coll. China Film Archive

down the barrier between both fiction and documentary film, and dream and truth. Ivens tried to look for truth between dreamland and metaphysical land. Once again, Ivens brought a new film making idea to China.

Besides filming, Ivens was invited to lecture Chinese filmmakers and to be an advisor to the Central News & Documentary Film Studio and Beijing Film Academy. His teaching had a lasting influence on Chinese filmmaking communities and they also learnt a lot from his vast experience. He helped with the filming of *THE INDIGNATION OF 600 MILLION PEOPLE*. And his devotion to the development of Chinese documentaries was also very important and meaningful. Those educated by Ivens turned out to be the lead-

ers of the Chinese film industry for the next two decades. Even today, some of the most well known television programs, such as *Worldwide Watch*, *Culture Express* and *Tell the Truth* clearly show the influence of Ivens' cinema-verite.

Notes

¹ Joris Ivens, in the Camera and I (Chinese Film Publisher), p. 294.

² Joris Ivens, in the Camera and I (Chinese Film Publisher), p. 297.

³ Joris Ivens, in the Camera and I (Chinese Film Publisher), p. 297.

⁴ Joris Ivens, in the Camera and I (Chinese Film Publisher), p. 297.

⁵ Joris Ivens, in The Memory of A Vision (Beijing Film Academy in 1989-6, p. 106)

⁶ The interviewee Lu Song-he, who was Chinese interpreter of Ivens during filming *Yukong*.

⁷ The interviewee Situ Zhao-dun, who was Ivens' good friend in China.

⁸ The interviewee Qian Li-ren, who was the second lead of the *Yukong* film group.

⁹ Marceline Lorian's speech at Ivens' 100th birthday celebrations in China.

¹⁰ 'Make camera lens like your eyes', Shanghai Literary Express, p. 83

¹¹ Filming the Cultural Revolution, New Challenges for Documentary, edited by Alan Rosenthal P149



Joris Ivens and Marceline Lorian surrounded by their Chinese audience at the premiere of the *YUKONG*-series in Beijing, 1977



Film scholar Sun Hongyun, a lecturer at Beijing Union University, studied at the College of Arts and Media at Beijing Normal University in documentary aesthetics, and published *Aesthetical Characteristics of How Yukong Moved the Mountains*, on Joris Ivens, *Documentary films' function in the World War*, *New documentary and Fahrenheit 9/11*. She also co-directed *CHINA IN THE EYES OF IVENS* and *JORIS IVENS* for CCTV.

The Importance of YUKONG to us

Tani Barlow



Chinese film poster HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS, 1979. Coll. JIA/EFJI



American film poster HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS, 1979. Coll. JIA/EFJI



French film poster HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS, 1979. Coll. JIA/EFJI

I am Tani Barlow. I teach *Chinese history and thought* at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA. With Donald Lowe (San Francisco State University, retired), Wang Hui (Qinghua University), Alessandro Russo and Claudia Pozzana (both University of Bologna), I am hosting Alain Badiou at a February 2006 conference called 'Is a History of the Cultural Revolution Possible?' in Seattle. Within the context of this conference the Ivens/Loridan masterpiece HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS (1976) is important to us.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution was a large-scale, tragic, history-altering event. It was also a central political moment of the lives of a generation of people, mostly in China but also in Europe, the United States and Latin America. It transformed the way that the generations of the 1960's – across the world – would think about cultural politics, as well as the role of the political party in government, the relationship between cultural expression and political power, righting the inequitable relation of men and women and a host of other Mao Zedong thought-inspired positions that have since become social and theoretical questions. Our conference focuses on three related problems. One, why is it so difficult to think about the Cultural Revolution and what would be a better way of writing the history of that event? Two, did the Cultural Revolution leave behind anything politically useful or culturally significant to salvage? Three, how did late 1960s Mao Zedong fever, particularly in France, change the course of European philosophy?

There are several reasons why screening YUKONG is so important. First, seeing the documentary film will help disrupt a well established tendency to see the Maoist Cultural Revolution in black and white terms, because YUKONG documents mundane political drama. It presents us with a complexity that has been lost in the bitter polemics of the post-Mao era. Viewing HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS now will return politics to a day to day issue, where it can be seen more clearly and reconsidered. Second, some of the Chinese people who participated in making the film are still alive. Re-examining their lives since Ivens made the film may be possible. In any case, viewers today can indirectly consider the mixture of truth and theater that the actors in the mid-seventies, brought to their film performances. Third, the fate of politically engaged art and philosophy hangs in the balance. The great tradition of engaged cinematic art has been reborn in China. Documentary style *cinema verité* is a leading sector in the arts scene. The socio-economic 'Great Transformation' of the Chinese polity has brought into being a thriving art movement that is seeking to document the lives of the poor, migrant, minoritized or dislocated, as well as the everyday experiences of ordinary rural or urban people. In this way, although obviously not directly in a cause and effect relation, HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS is a progenitor of filmmakers in China today. And what happens in the People's Republic engages moviegoers everywhere. Fourth, the drama of present day Chinese 'development' and its neo-liberal high tide is anything but benign: HOW

YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS is agit-prop art, and as art, it carries a political heritage that should not be forgotten in these times.

One of the unanticipated results of organizing 'Is a History of the Cultural Revolution Possible?' has been the tremendous interest that younger scholars, particularly in the United States, have already shown for rethinking the failed 'cultural revolution.' In his poignant essay, 'Love what you will never believe twice,' Alain Badiou argued that from political catastrophes we inherit problems, not solutions. It is important to remember what impels us to act, even catastrophically. Some of the questions that Badiou has set for the Chinese Cultural Revolution are relatively esoteric. They involve rethinking categories of 'the event,' fidelity to truth, the problem of the so-called 'historical sequence' and so on. But for the less philosophically inclined, the question of whether a history of the Cultural Revolution is possible is also important. If it is possible to document what led millions and millions of people all over the globe to take a radical road toward desired social equality and anti-capitalism in the late 1960s, then perhaps two previously obscured promissory notes can appear as redeemable. We can ask why revolution became repression. We can think again about a future post-capitalist world at least in part because we have inherited the failures and successes of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The problems of China are everyone's problems. Massive urban poverty, a rotting rural world, college graduates driving taxis, acute problems of governance and the world's most inequitable division of national wealth. HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS documents a failed attempt to address crises that have not gone away. Its value to our today and tomorrow is vast.

"Is a History of the Cultural Revolution Possible? A Workshop in Concert with Alain Badiou," will be held at the University of Washington, Seattle, on February 23-25, 2006. Prof. Tani Barlow, Department of History, Box 353560, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, email to barlow@u.washington.edu

Tani Barlow



Today on our timetable: Ivens

A seminar at the Leipzig University introduced Joris Ivens to a new generation of students

Frederike Haupt

This would have pleased the filmmaker: his work was being presented to future media scholars who studied it intensively, in the city where he co-founded the documentary film festival, but also fell out of favour. This seminar on the documentary films of Joris Ivens lasted for four months during the winter semester of 2004/2005. Film scholar Judith Kretzschmar conducted the lectures, which took place within the framework of the research project 'Joris Ivens and Germany', funded by the DEFA Foundation.

Joris Ivens - who is he?

It was one year ago that I got acquainted with Joris Ivens. I was browsing the university homepage looking for a seminar on 'media science' that would be relevant to my studies in journalism when my eyes fell upon this title: 'The documentary works of Joris Ivens and his influence on German film art.' I thought: Who the hell is Joris Ivens? One mouse click later and I was registered, a little curious, but above all happy to have finally found a course of suitable lectures.

Entry into the unknown

Every Wednesday of the winter semester became my 'Joris Ivens day.' Once a week, between 11am and 1pm, 15 students met with our teacher Judith Kretzschmar. The first session on October 13th brought reassuring recognition - I wasn't alone in my ignorance. Hardly any of my fellow students had ever heard of Ivens, nobody had seen his films. Only a few had done some research on the internet. Today I'm amazed that Ivens' name or achievements are not known around Leipzig, despite his important status, or for the documentary film festival if nothing else, but at the start of the course I wasn't aware of these things. That first Wednesday we received a schedule for the seminar, covering his complete oeuvre by February, from *THE BRIDGE* till *A TALE OF THE WIND*, and we selected topics for reports. At almost every meeting one or two students would report on a preferred theme or film. Personally I was curious about the theme 'Joris Ivens and the GDR' focussing on the events which took place during the Leipzig Documentary Film festival 1968 and the film *HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS: THE PHARMACY*, which was banned in 1983. Thanks to the teachings of and discussions with our lecturer, I had the feeling that this could be exciting and educational. I hadn't seen the film yet, but I applied for this assignment with a fellow student. I wasn't disappointed.

The borders of a filmmaker

Our curriculum had a chronological order, so we started with Ivens' biography. From the very beginning, a vivid discussion broke out about the issue of what a documentary filmmaker should do. 'I think, one can say, that documentary film is an emotional representation of facts. An audience can try to be objective, but a documentary filmmaker shouldn't' - this quotation from a lecture given by Ivens in 1939, made us reflect in what way authenticity, manipulation and propaganda could have played a role in

Ivens' films. Ivens' subjective approach, at a time when people attended film theatres to be both entertained and informed, seemed doubtful to some students. Other students argued that documentary film, despite all this, is an art form, and should be free. This issue haunted us during many meetings, for instance when discussing *KOMSOMOL*, *FRIENDSHIP WINS* and *BORSZY*. *PHILIPS-RADIO*, *CREOSOTE*, *SONG OF RIVERS*, *MY CHILD*, *THE WIND ROSE* and a film made by GDR television in 1964 (*MENSCHEN AM PULSSCHLAG DER ZEIT: JORIS IVENS*), were also shown and instigated many exciting discussions.

The first films, which we saw in full length, were *THE BRIDGE* and *RAIN*. After a short introduction to avant-garde and experimental films it was all systems go! While outside the first November snow was falling, our eyes were fixed to the screen and the aesthetics of Ivens' rain shots. With the help of a sequence protocol we'd been analysing separate film sequences, starting with playful sunlights on water surfaces of the canals of Amsterdam through to dripping rain drops and impressions of flowing water in the final sequence. To this day these images still strike me when cycling through large puddles on the uneven streets of the old Leipzig inner city.

As we were dealing with so many films, we focussed on some specific aspects - a female student thoroughly researched the score of *KOMSOMOL*, composed by Hanns Eisler, who was born in Leipzig in 1898. That score could paint Farmers in a positive light - and the labouring classes played an essential role in Ivens' turn to political filmmaking. 'Ivens as a documentary filmmaker in the service of the Soviet Union' was the main theme of three sessions, followed by a series of six lectures on 'Ivens in the service of DEFA.' The DEFA production *PEACE CYCLE TOUR WARSAW-BERLIN-PRAGUE* attracted different reactions. While some laughed about the really pathetic and rhetorical commentary of the voiceover, others were very disappointed that Ivens could have made such an 'unartistic' film. We had many discussions on this matter as well.

Scandal in Leipzig

In December we started preparing for our report to be handed in on January 26th. Our teacher Judith Kretzschmar provided us - just like all the other students - with a lot of information, documents, papers and references concerning our subject. These included clippings from German and international newspapers in which the Documentary Film Festival in Leipzig 1968 was described and reviewed; a copy of the Festival concept from the State archives; letters and declarations about screenings of disapproved films; informative papers about the problems with the Academy of Science in 1983; various books; and the tape of *HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS: THE PHARMACY*. We set up the presentation in two parts with the title 'From Icon to Persona non grata: Joris Ivens and the GDR.' In the first part we explained about the events in Leipzig 1968; we printed a handout with the case history and the consequences of the scandal. In the second part we switched to the Eighties, and showed significant parts from *THE PHARMACY* and discussed the screening during the retrospective of 1983 in the ever changing relationship between Ivens and

the GDR. During the holidays, many students continued working at home to strengthen essential aspects of their reports.

After 16 weeks....

The final film, which was presented under the theme 'From politics towards poetry' was *A TALE OF THE WIND*. Ivens said about working on this film: 'I felt as if I were in the avant-garde again, like when I was a young man and making *RAIN*.' With this, the cycle of films, which we had started in autumn 2004, came full circle. We analysed this film together and speakers explained about symbols and metaphors like the wind and the monkey king Sun Wugang. All agreed that *A TALE OF THE WIND* is one of the most poetic and beautiful films Ivens made. Ivens' changing political views played a large role in our closing lectures. When at the end Judith Kretzschmar asked us what we had liked or disliked about this course, many people stated that studying Ivens had given much joy. This was because it was rare on a university course to get an opportunity to become acquainted with such a broad field of thought and topics related to the oeuvre of one single person. Also we noted that much still needs to be discovered - especially for us, who hadn't known too much about Ivens only one year earlier - but we had made a start. This seminar was the first, but certainly not the last, time that we will study Ivens - and it is hoped that this filmmaker will regain popularity not only in Leipzig, but also in the rest of Germany.



Judith Kretzschmar at the Leipzig University



Joris Ivens received an honorary doctorate from the Leipzig University (at that time Karl-Marx-University) on 18 November 1968. In the same year he became persona non grata in East-Germany. © Reinhard Podszuweit



Joris Ivens celebrating his 70th anniversary during the Leipzig documentary film festival, 1968. © Reinhard Podszuweit

Crazy on Nijmegen, 2000 years the oldest city in the Netherlands

Nijmegen, Joris Ivens' birthplace, celebrated its second millennium anniversary in 2005. This celebration created enormous enthusiasm to organize cultural events and festivities. The history of Nijmegen goes all the way back to the Romans who founded their Limes - the northern border of the empire - along the river Waal. It was here that Constantine the Great put his footmarks in the ground, Charlemagne built a castle, Louis the Pious divided Europe and the Byzantine empress Theophano gave birth to two children. On the same spot emperor Frederick Barbarossa built an even bigger castle. Only two hundred meters away from this castle the three Limbourg brothers were born, the miniaturists of world famous books like the Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry (1412-1416). These brothers stand at the cradle of the famous Dutch tradition of painters, just like Nijmegen-born Ivens stands at the cradle of Dutch film art. The Foundation initiated a number of activities, like the City film contest, lectures, screenings and publications.



Film maker Jos Stelling presented the Joris Ivens Award Nijmegen 2005 on November 19th

1 City film contest

On 19th November the winners of the Cityfilm contest received the Joris Ivens Award Nijmegen 2005, one for the best amateur film (2,000 euro) and best professional film (5,000 euro). In February 2005, 100 film projects applied for this contest. Nominees got financial support and workshops to make their films. At the end 42 films were submitted to fight for the first prize, made up of feature films as well as serious, historical or hilarious documentaries. All films are related to the city of Nijmegen, inspired by Joris Ivens, who started his film career by creating vanguard city films like *THE BRIDGE* (1928) and *RAIN* (1929). Director Jos Stelling, who debuted with a film on the famous Nijmegen mediaeval story *MARIKEN VAN NIEUMEGHEN* (1974) and made *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN* (1995), a project Ivens would have liked to make himself but never succeeded, presented the prize. This contest was initiated by the Foundation and well organized by Bram Relouw in co-operation with other cultural organizations in Het Arsenaal, like DZIGA. This event proves that local film culture is alive and kicking.

Supported by: Foundation Nijmegen 2000, Municipality of Nijmegen, Province of Gelderland and the Prince Bernhard Fund.

2 A travel along the tides

When the queen visited Nijmegen on 3rd June a 'Travel along the tides' was created to present the impressive history of the town. All kind of tableaux vivants and living statues showed historical moments and people. Together with volunteers from the local film archive 'Nijmegen Blijft in Beeld', the Foundation created a set with a replica of the subjective camera (made by Henk de Smidt) Joris Ivens used in 1928. They also shot some film with old cameras and a tableaux vivant about RAIN attracted the interest of the audience.

3 Living statues

When 45,000 walkers ended their four days march on July 22nd, they were welcomed by hundred thousands of fans. A special tribune was decorated with living statues to present important people from the history of Nijmegen, like Joris Ivens (third from the right side). A local contest to elect the 'Greatest citizen in Nijmegen's history' resulted in a top ten place for Joris Ivens.



Photo Richard van Megen / Nijmegen Blijft in Beeld



© De Gelderlander / Flip Fransserl



The premiere of LA PETITE PRAIRIE AUX BOULEAUX in Nijmegen © Bram Relouw / EFJI

4 Premiere of LA PETITE PRAIRIE AUX BOULEAUX

On the occasion of the national commemoration of the victims of the Second World War (May 4th) the Foundation organized the first screening in Holland of the feature film Marceline Loridan-Ivens made about Auschwitz. The director herself introduced this autobiographical film and answered questions afterwards. The screening was attended by the Mayor of Nijmegen, Guusje ter Horst and the German and French consuls. This event was organized in collaboration with Studio Canal and A-Film.

5 Publications

The art history department of the Radboud University of Nijmegen, published a special issue of their magazine Desipientia on the most important moments and artists in local art history in which an article about Ivens traced the influence of his birthplace on his film career. The local historical society Numaga published in its annual book a special article about the Ivens family and the festivity culture in Nijmegen, the most northern Burgundian city of Holland. Various lectures on Ivens and Nijmegen were also presented.

6 Television

The regional broadcasting TV channel Gelderland made a special documentary on Ivens in June. The popular series 'History Bus' on historical subjects, seen by 400,000 viewers, showed interviews with Marceline Loridan-Ivens in Paris, and Tineke de Vaal and André Stufkens in the archives. After intensive research, striking footage of Ivens, interviews and film sequences were included. The film will be put online on the Ivens website.

Marlies Claasen in the Joris Ivens Archives, film still from 'The History bus'



André Stufkens, Jacques Thielen and queen Beatrix. With courtesy of Gerard Verschooten.

7 'Limbourg Brothers, Nijmegen masters at the French court, 1400-1416'

The Limbourg Brothers are considered to be among the top ten artists of all time, along with such luminaries as Rembrandt and Michelangelo. Six hundred years after their departure from Nijmegen to the courts of various Dukes in France, four of the six known books of hours they worked on, returned to the Nijmegen Museum Het Valkhof. With masterpieces from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the collection of Queen Elisabeth II, the J. Paul Getty Museum and Berlin Gemälde Galerie, the exhibition provided a once-in-a-lifetime-event. These catholic brothers left for France like Joris Ivens did, giving special attention to workers and farmers, with amazingly realistic detail. Despite innovative realism their art doesn't represent historical truth, it is an idealized representation of 'good governance' by a brutal and violent ruler - Maecenas, the Duke of Berry. Like Ivens' films these miniatures show a utopian realism, with respect for daily life and trivial aspects. André Stufkens initiated the Foundation Limbourg Brothers in 2002, which started the events to forever link these prodigal sons to Holland and Nijmegen. In fact, just like Joris Ivens became part of its cultural history after decades of negligence. Queen Beatrix opened the exhibition on 26th August. From left to right: André Stufkens, chairman of the Foundation Limbourg Brothers, Jacques Thielen, president of the Foundation Nijmegen 2000 and queen Beatrix. For further information (also in English, French and German): www.gebroedersvanlimburg.nl

The Joris Ivens Place with the Joris Ivens monument during the festivities July 2005 © De Gelderlander / Gerard Verschooten



Mali, birth of a nation, birth of a cinema

Ian Mundell

Joris Ivens made only one film in Africa, but *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* caught the spirit of independence so well that it inspired a nation to take control of its own screens. *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* is little known among Joris Ivens' films and has rarely been screened in Europe. However in Mali, where it was made in 1960, it is seen as the first film in the nation's cinematic history. It was shown in mobile cinemas across the country during the 1960s, and its success inspired the government to set up a national film production service. Rediscovered in the 1990s, the film continues to be celebrated by the government and critics alike.

In a post-colonial world it is hard to credit the claim that a Dutchman, working with a European crew, could make the first film of an African nation's film culture. It is even stranger when the country is Mali, which despite being among the poorest African nations has such a rich film culture. For Moussa Sidibé, who was closely involved in making *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, it could not have been anything other than an African film. 'It was the first time we had thought of the cinema,' he explained. 'It was the Soudan, it was internal autonomy [within French West Africa], we weren't even independent yet. So, it was the first time that Africans had made films, that Africans were in the film milieu.'

It is not entirely clear where the proposal for making the film originated. It was commissioned by the government established to take the Federation of Mali to inde-

was also itching to make progress with his longstanding project to film the Mistral. However, the independence movement that was sweeping Africa was very attractive to his sense of history. 'It was absolutely necessary that I go down there,' he told the magazine *Afrique Action*.³ 'I sensed that very important things for the future of humanity were happening there.' That said, he had no experience in filming in Africa. There is a substantial sequence from the Sudan in *SONG OF THE RIVERS* (1954), dealing with efforts to unionise the workers, but as with much of that project the filming was done by other hands.

He arrived in Bamako, capital of what is now the Republic of Mali, at the beginning of May 1960. His camera operator for the project was Louis Mialle, who had connections with the production company and had recently worked with Jean Rouch on



Girl from Nanguila acting in *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI



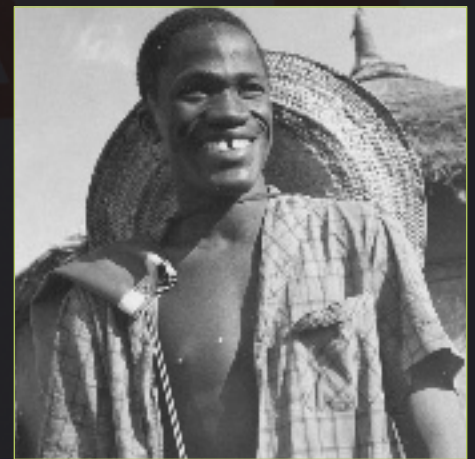
Girl of Nanguila © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI



Detail of the Mali-map used by Ivens, the village of Nanguila marked with a circle.

LA PYRAMIDE HUMAINE (1959), an improvised fiction set in Abidjan. Also on the team were Pierre Gueguen, Marc Champion, Louis Gueguen and Paul Seban (standing in for Tinto Brass, Ivens' assistant director from *ITALY IS NOT A POOR COUNTRY* and assistant-editor from *MARC CHAGALL*, who had fallen ill at the last minute).⁴

Moussa Sidibé became involved early on in the project. He had been conducting demographic and sociological surveys for the government in the Upper Niger Valley, where the filming was to take place. He was asked by his project director to accompany Ivens and the others as they looked for loca-



Sidibé Moussa acting in *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

pendence during 1960, working through a production company, the Société Franco-Africain de Cinéma. However, it seems that this company was established in order to produce the film, and it is likely that the idea originated with the writer, Catherine Varlin, in discussion with government officials. In any case, it was the Société Franco-Africain de Cinéma that approached Joris Ivens in April 1960, with a proposal for a film on modern agricultural methods in the Sudan.²

Ivens had finished his Italian documentary in 1959, edited the Marc Chagall film, recently returned from teaching in China, and was planning his first trip to Cuba. He

tions, and to liaise with community leaders, since French was not widely spoken and none of the Europeans spoke Bambara. From there he went with Ivens to Bamako, having become a sort of adviser to the production. The more Sidibé got involved in preparations, the more impressed Ivens became. 'During a test, I saw that the children involved didn't know what to do,' Sidibé explained, 'so I tried to show them what they had to do for the camera. It was while I was doing that that Joris Ivens decided on me. "Monsieur Sidibé, I'm going to take you on as an actor." It began like that.'

He took the leading role in the film, playing under his own name a much less re-

Mali blues

Most of Mali, in West Africa, lies in the Sahara. The only fertile area is in the south, where the Niger and Senegal rivers provide irrigation. Caravan routes have passed through Mali since A.D. 300. Djenné and Timbuktu were competing as the western Sudan's preeminent center of trans-Saharan trade and Islamic scholarship. Their mud-brick homes and mosques are world famous. Subjugated by France by the end of the 19th century, the land became a colony in 1904, named French Sudan in 1920. French Sudan was awarded internal autonomy under French rule in 1958. The following year its leader, Modibo Keita, began discussing independence in an alliance with Senegal, led by Leopold Senghor. In December 1959 Charles De Gaulle accepted proposals for an independent Federation of Mali within the French community. The country Ivens toured in May 1960 was in a limbo between colony and independence. A formal transfer of power had taken place on 4 April 1960, but legislative assemblies of Sudan and Senegal did not adopt

putable character. The Sidibé in the film is living a fast life in Bamako, when an accident puts him in hospital and into the hands of the law. He is sent to a re-education centre where he resentfully learns to plough, build huts and grow fruit, before being released into the care of his brother. The only way to beat government authority is to submit to family authority, and he must return to live in his village, Nanguila, far from the bright lights of Bamako. The attractions of village life are few and far between for Sidibé, particularly when the girl he has his eye on marries an older, richer man. But he slowly gets caught up in the mobilization that is bringing new farming methods to the region, eventually rebelling against family authority to join in building a new irrigation project. In the end he leaves Nanguila, returning – to everyone's surprise – to the re-education centre he was so keen to escape a few months before.

The extent of Catherine Varlin's contribution is, again, unclear, since her initial scenario has not been preserved in Ivens' archive. He described it as dealing with 'the adventures of a young African newly graduated from a centre for agricultural training'. But, characteristically, Ivens made changes once he started to get to know the place and the people he would be filming. 'I had very enriching and instructive contacts with the Africans, and I had to take their suggestions



Children from Nanguila acting in *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*.
© Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

into account,' he said.⁵ 'Sidibé, our lead actor, was a marvelous collaborator through the whole filming. He organized and directed all of the scenes that we filmed in Bambara.'

For Moussa Sidibé, it was this collaboration and the detail included that make the film African rather than European, from the purely local events that are shown taking place in Nanguila to development projects that are brought to the village. Ivens also emphasized that the events he showed were all based on reality, with, for instance, the village elders playing themselves and a wedding filmed by chance being worked into the story.⁶ He defended the singing and dancing



Modibo Keita, first president of the republic of Mali.

in the film, particularly the women singing to encourage the men as they dig the irrigation works, as an accurate reflection of the way Africans express themselves rather than an external desire for the exotic.

'I'm ashamed,' he joked,⁷ 'I saw not one lion, not one snake, not one elephant, nothing exciting. Not one crocodile, even though I swam in the Niger. One night, very far off, I glimpsed a hippopotamus. In my film, you only see men, women and children. They alone interest me.' This is not the whole story, however, as Ivens indicated in another interview recorded while he was editing the film.⁸ 'I would like to show how the face of a village can change at the moment when a new republic comes into being and how a great event can be reflected in a modest location.'

While both of these ambitions can be seen reflected in the final film, a further aim was not followed through. Early versions of its commentary include comments on the influence of white colonial rule, and end with a reflection on the country's post-colonial future.⁹ However, this is toned down in the final version of the film to a more neutral hope for the future: 'Africa will begin to exist for itself and in the world, it is a new story. Does Sidibé know it? Maybe not, but he will learn all about it.'

This toning down of the commentary is seen by one of Ivens' biographers as censorship by the French government,¹⁰ but from the archives it seems that the process was pre-emptive rather than a response to official intervention. Ivens would have been well aware of how sensitive the French government was to cinematic criticism of colonialism.

Post-production on *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* took place through June and July

the constitution until early June. Ivens was no longer in the country when independence was declared at midnight on 20 June. Despite the celebrations, disagreements over relations with France remained. Senghor supported France, but Keita, the president of the Federation, opposed it. Senghor was the first to move, withdrawing Senegal from the Federation on 20 August. Keita proclaimed the Republic of Mali on 22 September, he pursued Marxist socialist policies in what quickly became a one-party state, and built alliances with the West, the Soviet Bloc and China. National independence created cultural impulses: a national cinema of which Ivens' *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* was the first, and a new national music, a mixture of blues and original roots music, based on ancient rhythms. This music can be heard in the opening sequence of *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, in a striking traveling shot, introducing Sidibé Moussa when running through Bamako, the capital city.



Djenné, the world famous mud house architecture.

1960, with Moussa Sidibé visiting Paris to dub his dialogue and causing a flurry of articles in the popular press about 'Mali's first film star'.¹¹ Malian students resident in Paris helped provide some of the other voices, and translations were made of the Bambara dialogue. The film was presented to the press during the editing, and a clutch of interviews appeared towards the end of July. For the communist press, Ivens presented some of his views on post-colonial Mali that did not appear in the final film.¹²

Ivens left for Cuba before the film's release had been finalized, but clearly expected things to progress in his absence. However, on 20 August the Federation of Mali collapsed, leaving the republics of Mali and Senegal to go their own ways. This presented no problems regarding the content of the film: the agricultural policy was not controversial and the Federation's flag, much in evidence during the wedding and irrigation project scenes, was adopted by the Republic of Mali, at least in the short term. However, the Société Franco-Africain de Cinéma appears to have waited for the approval of the new head of state¹³, and his mind was on other things.

The filmography approved by Ivens says that *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* had a Paris premiere in 1960, but, if this was the case, it was a low key affair, failing to register with the main film critics or cinema journals. It was

Cover of the Michelin map of West-Africa used by Ivens for his trip in Mali.



Why not Rouch?

Joris Ivens was not the first European to make films in the part of West Africa that was to become Mali. In particular, he was following in the footsteps of Jean Rouch, who had been carrying out ethnographic studies and making films in the region since the mid-1940s. But in contrast to *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, Rouch's films are not seen as part of Malian film history. The documentaries Rouch made within Mali's current borders concentrated on one distinct (and unusual) tribe, the Dogon, and its masked ceremonies. The aim of films such as *CIMETIÈRE DANS LA FALAISE* (1950) was to record something ancient, both from a western ethnographic point of view and for African history, since these rites were being eroded by factors such as migration and the spread of religions such as Christianity and Islam. The same can be said of the films Rouch made among the Songhay people in what is now Niger. He was salvaging something that was disappearing rather than recording something current. For the government, these films had little to do with the modern, socialist state that they were trying to create.

Films such as *JAGUAR* (1955) and *MOI UN NOIR* (1957), that Rouch made in Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, are a slightly different matter. Here his African collaborators act out their own stories, and the films show an African

view of modern life and the complexities of society at the time. But again these films sit uneasily with the aspirations of the African independence movement, in particular because of their irreverence and taste for the low life.

In contrast to Rouch's films, *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* is current in its themes and shows people dealing with the issues of everyday life, in their own way and own language. In Ivens' film the Malians are characters, not subjects as they are in Rouch's documentaries. It is also significant that the film was commissioned by the Malian state, made with the collaboration of Malians such as Moussa Sidibé, and also that it was filmed at the moment of independence. As in so much of Ivens' cinema, he shows the aspirations of the political culture rather than its weaknesses. Rouch and Ivens were friends at the time Ivens was making *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, and it is likely that they discussed the project and that Ivens had seen Rouch's films. They shared a cameraman in Louis Miaille, and Ivens' diary notes suggest that Rouch introduced Ivens to the musicologist Gilbert Rouget, a colleague at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris[1].

[1] [JIA 357] the diary notes also record meetings with Rouch in June 1960.



Joris Ivens, still from *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* (1960) © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

screened at the 1961 Moscow Film Festival, but received little attention¹⁴, and seems not to have been released commercially in Europe. It occasionally appeared at specialist conferences, but otherwise vanished without trace. With Ivens caught up in his new enthusiasm for Cuba, he too abandoned the film, later listing it among his least successful works, although without explaining why.¹⁵ He did not film in Africa again, although he did discuss plans for a cinema service with the government of Congo-Brazzaville in the early 1970s.¹⁶

One positive view of *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* came from the director and ethnographer Jean Rouch, in a survey of ethnographic film for he undertook for UNESCO in 1961, although his full appreciation was not published until some years later.¹⁷ He concluded that *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* would not have the slightest influence on role of agricultural cooperatives, but that it (and films on similar subjects) had an essential cultural role to play. 'They are irreplaceable (if awkward) means of communication about a continent where information is precisely what is lacking,' he wrote. 'In the capital of an African state, more is known about what is going on everywhere else in the world than about the surrounding country.'

DEMAIN À NANGUILA had its Malian première in Bamako in 1961, in the Vox cinema – the same open-air screen where Moussa Sidibé has his accident in the film, falling from a tree while trying to get a free view of an American gangster movie. The première was attended by the president of Mali, Modibo Keita and members of the government, and according to Sidibé it turned into a national occasion. The film then toured the country with the mobile cinemas that went from village to village showing newsreels. Again this mirrors a sequence in the film where one of these ciné-buses comes to Nanguila.

According to Sidibé, *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* was so successful that the government decided to set up a national cinema service to make both feature films and newsreels. 'That says it all,' he explained. 'The cinematographic structure of the country starts from there.' This view is shared by historians of Malian cinema.¹⁸ 'Through the public success that the film experienced, the authorities realized what an important role the cinema could play, not only in raising awareness among the population but also in affirming our national identity outside our borders,' writes Youssouf Dombia in an overview of Malian cinema.



Joris Ivens directing a girl in the village of Nanguila, Mali. © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

Sidibé himself went on to train in Morocco, after which he directed films and was, for a time, the president's personal cameraman. Other would-be directors were sent to study film in the Soviet Union and in Canada, while a collaboration with Yugoslavia trained technicians in Mali. When this first generation of Malian directors began making films in the late 1960s, it is striking that they chose themes similar to those in *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*.

For example, Souleymane Cissé's *CINQ JOURS D'UNE VIE* (1970) tells the story of a young man from the country who is trying to make his fortune and return to his village after a spell in prison. Meanwhile, Djibril Kouyate's *RETOUR DE TIÉMAN* (1970) concerns a young agriculturalist who brings new methods to a village but experiences resistance from traditionalists. This does not mean that *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* was necessarily the inspiration for these films, but it does help explain how Ivens' film can be seen as part of this early phase of Malian cinema. Through collaboration and his innate sympathy for people, Ivens was able to produce a film that reflected the ten-

sions in Malian society – troubled youth, tradition at odds with modernity, the town versus the country – along with the aspirations of the young nation.

Notwithstanding the success of *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, it gradually disappeared from circulation in Mali as the prints wore out. In the mid-1990s Sidibé approached the producer – now known as Sofracima – and was given carte blanche to distribute the film in Mali. This led to the film being rediscovered by the public and feted by the government. When the Ministry of Culture launched a new cinema club programme in June 2000, it did so by screening *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* and *CINQ JOURS D'UNE VIE*, 'the two films which symbolize Malian cinematographie'.¹⁹

Whatever he may have thought of *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* in later life, Ivens could not have denied that it has been an unqualified success in terms of the ambitions he set out for it.

'It is absolutely essential that a purely African cinematic art should be born,' he told *Afrique Action*.²⁰ 'The freshness of Africa, the humanism of its culture, all the things that I have seen and sensed, can be expressed very well through the art of cinema. With *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* we have attempted with Mali an experiment that must be taken further. Now it is down to Africans themselves to bring their own contribution to world cinema.'



An interview with Joris Ivens after the shooting was finished. *L'Humanité*, 27 July 1960

¹ This and subsequent information from telephone interview with Moussa Sidibé, 26/7/05.

² Ariane Misraki 'Joris Ivens: le Hollandais filmant' Afrique Action 29/5/61, Tunis, p28. Draft letters from Ivens to the Société Franco-Africain de Cinéma, 15/4/60 and 24/4/60 [JIA 357]. Abraham Zalzman, Joris Ivens (1963) Éditions Seghers, Paris, p94, notes Varlin's experience in Mali and says she established the company to produce the film.

³ Misraki, *ibid.*

⁴ Telegram, 11 May, from Catherine Winter to Ivens, Grand Hotel Bamako. [JIA 357]

⁵ Misraki, *ibid.*

⁶ Yvonne Baby, 'Avec "Demain à Nanguila" Joris Ivens réalise le premier film sur le Mali' Le Monde (27/7/60), Paris, p9.

⁷ Nicole Zand, 'Avec "Demain à Nanguila" Joris Ivens [sic], le "Hollandais volant" a réalisé le premier film du

¹³ Hans Schoots, *Living dangerously: a biography of Joris Ivens* (2000) Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, p263, citing letters between Ivens and Ewa Fiszer, and Ivens and Marion Michelle.

¹⁴ Georges Sadoul, 'L'Afrique vous parle' Les Lettres Françaises no 885 (20-26/7/61), Paris, p6, gave it a favourable review, but appears to be the only French critic to take note of it.

¹⁵ Carlos Böker, Joris Ivens, film-maker: facing reality (1981) UMI Research Press, Michigan, p141. Interview with Ivens (22/3/78).

¹⁶ Schoots, *ibid.*, p308

¹⁷ Jean Rouch, 'Le Cinéma Africain' Les Lettres Françaises no 893 (21-27/9/61), Paris, p1, p7. Full version translated as 'The Situation and tendencies of the cinema in Africa' in Steven Feld (ed) *Ciné-ethnography* University of Minnesota Press (2003), Minnesota, p75-76.

¹⁸ Victor Bachy, *Le Cinéma au Mali* (1983) Éditions OCIC/L'Harmattan, Paris, p26. Youssouf Doumbia, 'Du talent, des lauriers et de la precarité' L'Essor (20/0/01),



Cameraman Louis Mialle visiting the market of Bamako, during the shooting of *DEMAIN A NANGUILA*. © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

Justified self-censorship

When he took the decision to tone down the militant, post-colonial message in parts of *DEMAIN À NANGUILA*, Ivens would have had known how sensitive the French government of the time was to any criticism of its role in Africa. For instance, in 1960 it was still refusing to permit the release of *LES STATUES MEURENT AUSSI*, a film on African art made in the early 1950s by Ivens' close friend Chris Marker and Alain Resnais. The film - made without the two directors ever setting foot in Africa - explores the various forms of African art and the different ways such objects are treated in comparison to European art. However, the final reel of the film explores the political aspects of this argument, with the hardly radical suggestion that colonial rule may have played a part in degrading African culture.

For reasons that were never fully explained to the directors, the film was not

given the censor's permission to be released. In contrast, the film's commentary was published as early as 1957[1]. The first two thirds of the film were given official permission to be released 1961, but the final reel was still banned, and the directors refused to let it be shown. The whole film was not approved until 1965, when a conflict with the producers prevented its public appearance. It was not until 1968 that *LES STATUES MEURENT AUSSI* was given a complete, public screening.

[1] Anon [Chris Marker] 'Les Statues meurent aussi' Cinéma 57 no 16, mars 1957, Paris, p13-19. The commentary also appeared in Marker's book *Commentaires*, 1961, Éditions du Seuil, Paris.



Joris Ivens, still from *DEMAIN À NANGUILA* (1960) © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

Mali' Libération (27/7/60), Paris, p2.

⁸ Baby, *ibid.*

⁹ The longer versions of the commentary, in French, are in the Hans Wegner Collection [HWC 351]. The intention may have been to preserve this more militant tone for release in East Germany, as was the case for several of Ivens' Eastern Bloc films of the 1950s. Shorter versions also appear here, and in [JIA 358].

¹⁰ Robert Grelier, Joris Ivens (1965) Les Éditions français réunis, Paris, p103-105.

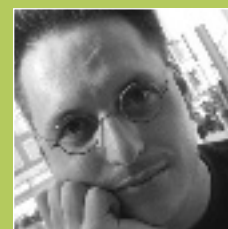
¹¹ Anon, 'Joris Ivens termine à Paris "Demain à Nanguila" film sur la vie actuelle au Mali' France Soir (23/7/60), Paris, p8. Anon, 'Voici le premier (et unique) acteur de cinéma du Mali' L'Aurore (23-24/7/60), Paris, p4. Anon, 'Moussa - premier vedette du Mali - aime Charrier' Paris Presse-L'Intransigeant (28/7/60), Paris, p8.

¹² Samuel Lachize, 'Au coeur de l'Afrique nouvelle Joris Ivens (le "Hollandais volant" a trouvé son cinquième continent)' L'Humanité (27/7/60), Paris, p2. Jacqueline Autrusseau 'Pas de continent perdu pour Joris Ivens' Les Lettres Françaises no 838 (25-31/8/60), Paris, p6.

Bamako. Accessed <http://www.essor.gov.ml>, 1/9/05.

¹⁹ Ministry of Culture website, <http://w3.culture.gov.ml/arts/cinema/films/nanguila.htm>, accessed 1/9/05.

²⁰ Misraki, *ibid.*



Ian Mundell is a journalist and film writer based in Brussels. His recent work has dealt with Joris Ivens and his Vietnamese films, especially *LOIN DE VIETNAM*, Henri Storck's newsreel films, Ivor Montagu, and current trends in militant cinema. He is also neglecting research for a book on Chris Marker. Mundell wrote an introduction text on Ivens' oeuvre for *Senses of Cinema*, the cinephile website in the series *Great Directors*.

Scoring RAIN a contemporary British composer's perspective

Ed Hughes

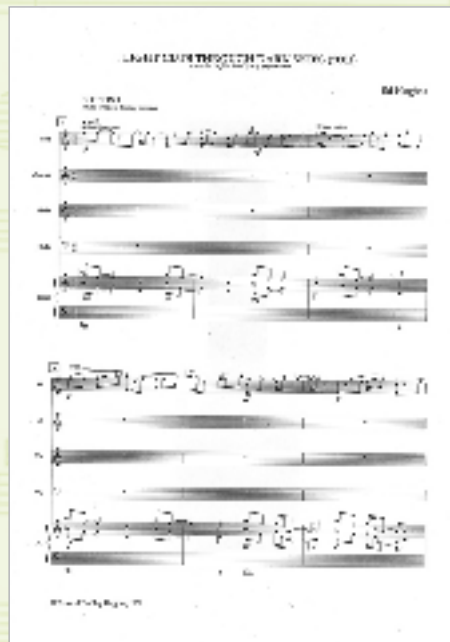
Edward Hughes

My interest in scoring films is a typical composer's perspective: i.e. I am not so interested in the craft of synchronicity and direct mimesis between music and picture, rather I'm interested in the effect of counterpoint and simultaneous unfolding of events in the two media - creating a new poetic form in their combination. I think what I do is indeed 'scoring' a film as opposed to making a soundtrack. Perhaps that sounds old-fashioned, but I think in the modern interest in creating live music to both archive and contemporary silent films there is a really profound interrogation of the value and function (both in social and artistic terms) of the music to picture relationship.

Thus I was excited and moved to discover Hanns Eisler's discussion of Joris Ivens's film RAIN and his own score Fourteen Ways of Describing Rain in his famous book 'Composing for the Films' (New York: OUP, 1947). He proposes a number of reforms to film music, which retain freshness even sixty years on. He says that movie scores should use 'small instrumental forces' more suited to 'technification' and that the modern movie score should 'sparkle and glisten' in keeping with the rapid and transient movement of images across the screen. How very true that is - even today's 'cheap' synthesised scores for TV and low budget movies often seem to ape the slow moving monolithic orchestral sounds of the ubiquitous Hollywood blockbuster.

When I finally viewed the London 16mm copy of RAIN (at the British Film Institute) I was immediately struck by the bewitching musicality of these images. The film seems to imply in its structure a variety of 'musical' speeds, but moving continuously without break - which finds an analogy in the modernist musician's desire to connect up different movements into one symphonic structure. For example, near the beginning, as the images move from scenes of waterways and rain to the first highly rhythmic images of the city, the images seem to fly past, creating an almost breathless sense of flow and momentum. Later on, just before a single fade to black before very intense, slow, panoramas of foggy cityscape and storm cloud, the images are constructed in threes - a kind of geometry of cutting is built around the iconic form of the umbrella.

As others have commented, the 'musicality' of the film is so remarkable that in many ways it resists musical scoring. However, my attraction to the film's beautiful images was such that I could not resist a commission from the Bath International Music Festival in 2001 to create a score for live performance to RAIN. I think my purpose was to create a score that had something of the modernity of awareness and perception enshrined in the film; and my justification was that a score that allowed for more aural



The score Light Cuts through Dark Skies.

space and a greater variety of pacing could have a valid role to play in interpreting the film. Eisler's score is wonderful - intense, brilliant and nuanced with melancholy (in his invocation of his great teacher Schoenberg, also an emigre from war-time Europe) - but in one sense is so unrelenting that it sometimes seems to threaten to overwhelm the images. I chose to adopt the same scoring as Eisler (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano) but to create a score with fewer sections, and more deliberate space and silence in it, so that the two domains of music and picture both breathe and 'dance' according to their own laws.

One area of significant textural difference between the two scores is in the use of piano solo. Both scores have piano solos, but where the solo in Fourteen Ways is relentless and virtuosic, that in my own score Light Cuts Through Dark Skies is spare. The piano solos are also located at different points in the film. In Light Cuts, the piano solo begins after a moment of silence accompanying a shot of a water surface (throughout my score the water surface image is matched

by a moment of unaccompanied stillness as a result of a break in the music track which itself anticipates a textural transition or tempo change). This piano solo consists of rests punctuated by broken chords, and accompanies views on board a tram as it moves along. Where Fourteen Ways is restless, the music of Light Cuts is here tranquil, causing the spectator to listen through the actual sound to the music of the picture. In contemporary cinema perhaps the nearest equivalent to this technique of punctuating silence with sound is in Kubrick's use of a very sparse Ligeti Etude in his last film, EYES WIDE SHUT.

RAIN is a magical film sustained by sensuous visual flow and the absence of periodic cutting. While I respect the view that says the film should be watched without any accompanying music (having watched it countless times myself and always discovering new details on each occasion) I do think that music can play a key role in heightening the film's poetry, its modern sense of time and its flow and rhythmic fluctuations. The combination of music and film, especially in live performance, often makes a very special experience.

Further info: www.edwarddudleyhughes.com, www.uymp.co.uk, www.bmic.co.uk



Ed Hughes (1968) studied music at the Universities of Cambridge and Southampton. Works recorded and broadcasted by BBC Radio 3 include an orchestral work, chambre music, vocal works and song cycles. Works in recent years reflect his developing interest in musical responses to film and visual art. He created new scores for films like RAIN (Ivens, 1929), I WAS BORN, BUT (1932, Yasujiro Ozu) and BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN (1925, Eisenstein), commissioned by the Bath International Music Festival and Arts Council of England. Ed Hughes is artistic director of the British ensemble the New Music Players and currently lectures in the music department at the University of Sussex.

Survey of film programmes

January 2005

06.01 **Delft**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Lumen, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

12.01 **Alphen a/d Rijn**, The Netherlands, Parkfilmhuis, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

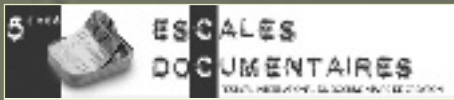
14.01 **Gouda**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Gouda, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

18.01 **Lisse**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Lisse, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

21.01 **Vlaardingen**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Het Zeepaard, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

22.01 **Schiedam**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Schiedam, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam

25.01 **Barendrecht**, The Netherlands, Filmhuis Barendrecht, RAIN in the travelling programme Sound&Vision, co-organised by the International Film Festival Rotterdam



February 2005

14.02 **Utrecht**, The Netherlands, Muziek Centrum Vredenburg, The ASKO-ensemble will be playing compositions by Hanns Eisler during the screenings of NEW EARTH (Joris Ivens) and OPUS II (Walther Rutmann). The program will start at 20.15 h.

15.02 **Amsterdam**, The Netherlands, Muziek Centrum Vredenburg, The ASKO-ensemble will be playing compositions by Hanns Eisler during the screenings of NEW EARTH (Joris Ivens) and OPUS II (Walther Rutmann).

March 2005

09.03 **Brussels**, Belgium, Filmmuseum Brussels, PHILIPS-RADIO and NEW EARTH
12.03 **Brussels**, Belgium, Filmmuseum Brussels, THE WIGWAM, BREAKERS and ZUIDERZEE

13.03 **Brussels**, Belgium, Filmmuseum Brussels, MISERE AU BORINAGE, with AUTOIR DU BORINAGE (Jean Fonteyne), JOURNEE TAYENNE (Jean Fonteyne) and LES MAISONS DE LA MISERE (Henri Storck)

04-13.03 **Paris**, France, Centre Pompidou, Cinéma du Réel, 'Prix Joris Ivens à la première œuvre': TROPICO DE CANCER (TROPIQUE DU CANCER) by Eugenio Polgovsky (Mexico)

20.03 **Lyon**, France, MUSICADES music festival, various versions of RAIN will be screened, including the new synchronisation

of Hanns Eislers' score. Introduction: Claude Brunel.

April 2005

08.04 **Amsterdam**, The Netherlands, Filmmuseum, premiere of RAIN with the new synchronisation of Hanns Eislers'score Fourteen Ways to describe rain. Johannes C. Gall and Mark Paul Meyer who made the authentic reconstruction will present an introduction and debate.

11.04 **Nijmegen**, The Netherlands, Vlaams Cultureel Kwartier, 'Joris Ivens en Nijmegen', lecture by André Stufkens in a series of 'Nijmeegse Coryfeeën'



Panoramic view on the Piazza Maggiore, where RAIN was projected on a huge screen. © Il Cinema Ritrovato 2005 (Cineteca di Bologna)

16.04 **Eindhoven**, The Netherlands, Evoluon, Philips 100 years anniversary: screening of PHILIPS RADIO by Joris Ivens and other Philips-films by Hans Richter, George Pal and others

28.04 **Nijmegen**, The Netherlands, Radboud University Cultuur op de Campus, screening of A TALE OF THE WIND with an introduction by Bram Relouw

May 2005

04.05 **Nijmegen**, The Netherlands, LUX Artplex, Dutch premiere of La Petite Prairie aux Bouleaux, with an introduction and debate by Marceline Loridan-Ivens

15.05 **London**, England, Riverside Theatre, screening of PEACE TOUR WARSAW-BERLIN-PRAGUE (1952), in the presence of Ian Steel, the Scottish winner of this bicycle tour.

26-26.05 **Seoul**, South Korea, Seoul Human Rights Film festival, PHILIPS RADIO and SONG OF THE RIVERS will be screened.
June 2004

14-19.06 **Serpa**, Portugal, Doc's Kingdom, documentary seminar in cooperation with the EFJI

04.06 **Gelderland**, The Netherlands, broadcasting of a documentary on Joris Ivens
July 2005

02-09.07 **Bologna**, Italy, Il Cinema Ritrovato film festival, screening of RAIN with the new

synchronisation of Eislers'score on the large market Piazza Maggiore.

August 2005

14-20.08 **Lussas**, France, Etats Généraux du Film documentaire, RAIN will be screened in the original silent version and in the new synchronisation of the film and Eisler's music Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain.
September 2005

14.09 **New York**, USA, PBS (Public broadcasting), premiere Rivers to the sea, a documentary on Ernest Hemingway with footage of Ivens' THE SPANISH EARTH

October 2005

05.10 **Apeldoorn**, The Netherlands, De Gigant, Lecture 'Joris Ivens, fact and fiction' by André Stufkens (Vereniging Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen)

November 2005

08-13.11 **La Rochelle**, France, Escales Documentaires 2005, Joris Ivens retrospective with the films: THE BRIDGE, RAIN, THE 400 MILLION, BORINAGE, THE SPANISH EARTH, LA SEINE A RENCONTRÉ PARIS, ...A VALPARAISO, LA PHARMACIE AND HISTOIRE DE BALLON (FROM THE YUKONG SERIES), THE 17TH PARALLEL AND A TALE OF THE WIND. Also ALGERIE ANNEE ZERO and the recent film LE PETIT PRAIRIE AU BOULEAUX by Marceline Loridan-Ivens

19.11 **Nijmegen**, The Netherlands, LUX (Cinemarienburg), presentation of the Joris Ivens Prize Nijmegen 2005 for the best city film, during the city film festival to celebrate the 2000 years anniversary of Nijmegen.

27.11 **Amsterdam**, The Netherlands, IDFA (International Documentary Festival), screenings of the rediscovered parts of the BUILDING WORKERS UNION FILM-II with live-music (the Netherlands InstituteVision and Sound)

27.11 **Frankfurt an Main**, Germany, Asta Nielsen Kinothek / French Institute, opening film of a special program entitled 'the four elements' will be A TALE OF THE WIND, attended by Marceline Loridan-Ivens.

December 2005

02.12 **Amsterdam**, The Netherlands, IDFA (International Documentary Festival), screenings of the rediscovered parts of the BUILDING WORKERS UNION FILM-II

06.12 **Malden**, The Netherlands, Culturele Kring, Lecture 'Joris Ivens and Nijmegen' by André Stufkens



Panoramic view on the Piazza Maggiore, where RAIN was projected on a huge screen
© Il Cinema Ritrovato 2005 (Cineteca di Bologna)

Power for the Parkinsons: documentary and website

Ephraim Smith

In November 2003, this newsmagazine published an article on my forthcoming documentary POWER FOR THE PARKINSONS -the story of the making of Joris Ivens' POWER AND THE LAND in 1939-1940. In April, 2004, the New York Community Trust provided a \$300,000 grant to the California State University, Fresno Foundation for a hour-long PBS-quality documentary to be offered by Detroit Public Television (DPTV). This grant also required the creation of an extensive and very informative interactive web site. The finished documentary will be released in the beginning of 2006 and offered to all PBS stations in the United States.

Documentary

The grant permitted the completion of additional research as well as interviews with Parkinson family members, scholars, and archives/museum officials in New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, and the Netherlands. Indeed, several of these interviews, particularly those with Mr. André Stufkens, Dr. Robert L. Snyder (the biographer of Pare Lorentz), and Dr. Cynthia Koch (Executive Director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum), changed the direction of the documentary. I realized that it was not enough just to tell the story of the Parkinson family and their filming in 1940. Upon the recommendation of Mr. Jeff Forster, Vice President of Programming for DPTV, I expanded his coverage of the interaction between Lorentz, the Director of the United States Film Service, and Joris Ivens, the pioneering Dutch filmmaker who had been hired to direct the shooting of the proposed REA film. The story of the Parkinson family after the premiere of POWER AND THE LAND in August, 1940 has now to be a separate half-hour sequel offered to PBS stations and/or offered as a bonus item on a DVD.



Jeff Forster, Rick Adams, Donna and Ephraim Smith shooting in Nijmegen in the Joris Ivens Archive, July 2004. Photo André Stufkens

By January, 2005, I had completed the editing of a sixty-minute rough cut. Detroit Public Television assigned this project to Mr. Donald Thompson, their most senior editor and recipient of seven regional Emmys. I regard this collaboration as one of the high points of this project. Thomas C. Benet, the son of Stephen Vincent Benet (who wrote the narration for the 1940 film), provided film and photographs of his father. He also furnished several photographs of the composer Douglas Moore, a Benet family friend. In June, 1940, Benet and Moore, under the direction of Ivens, had collaborated in creating a masterful blending of words, music, and film that added a distinctive rural flavor to POWER AND THE LAND.

Website

But there is also an accompanying web site. Smith retained a number of consultants to complete essays for this web site. Mrs. Hilda Wane Ornitz (the wife of Arthur Ornitz, the first cameraman on POWER AND THE LAND, prepared a unique biographical essay on her husband. Dr. Clayton Brown, the author of the standard scholarly study on the REA, prepared an historical essay on rural electrification. Two other scholars, Dr. Robert L. Snyder and Dr. Robert J. Snyder, prepared essays on the life and contributions of Pare Lorentz. Mr. William J. Sloan, a librarian at the Museum of Modern Arts, submitted an interview with Ms. Lora Hays, now an adjunct professor at the New York University. Ms. Hays had been the assistant editor on POWER AND THE LAND in 1940 and had subsequently edited the two additional short films, BIP GOES TO TOWN and WORST OF FARM DISASTERS, which were found by Smith during the process.



Jeff Forster, Ephraim Smith and Rick Adams shooting inside the Joris Ivens Archive. Photo André Stufkens

Dr. Ruth Cowan Schwartz, a Professor of the History of Science and Technology at the University of Pennsylvania (and the author of *More Work for Women*), submitted an essay on how POWER AND THE LAND fits into contemporary scholarship. "POWER AND THE LAND is very beautiful," she writes, "so beautiful that it is sometimes hard to remember that it is also propaganda, political advertising: beauty in the service of a political agenda." Mr. André Stufkens, contributed an essay on the complex relationship between Lorentz and Ivens in 1939-1940. Stufkens argues that Lorentz attempted to maintain, more so than is generally recognized, control over the film. Stufkens also translated the diary kept by Ivens while shooting POWER AND THE LAND.

I also contributed three essays to the web site. The first was on the early life and contributions of Joris Ivens. The second essay was on Douglas Moore, then (in 1940)



Screenshot web site Power for the Parkinsons

the Chairman of the Department of Music at Columbia University (and later a Pulitzer prize winning composer). Moore had prepared the score for POWER AND THE LAND. I wish to thank Mrs. Bradford Kelleher, his daughter, for her critique of this essay. The third was a scholarly essay on Stephen Vincent Benet, the great American poet and author. Benet had written the commentary for POWER AND THE LAND. At my request, Thomas C. Benet, reviewed this essay.

In addition, the web site also contains 68 separate videos running a total of 82 minutes. Mostly "out takes" and "bonus" items not found in the documentary itself. The emphasis here is on (1) life in Rural America before rural electrification; (2) the contributions of the REA; (3) the making of POWER AND THE LAND; (4) the life and contributions of Joris Ivens; (4) the life and contributions of Pare Lorentz; (5) the contributions of other members of the production crew: Stephen Vincent Benet, Douglas Moore, and Lora Hays; and (6) the history of documentary film during the New Deal period. I would like to express my appreciation to our very talented web-master Mr. Chris Hoskins for his hard work and thoughtfulness in the creation of such a massive and innovative web site.

We now have a PBS quality documentary and web site that will be a learner-friendly educational resource. We believe it will be an important educational resource for students, teachers, and scholars.



Dr. Ephraim K. Smith has been a Professor of History at California State University, Fresno since 1966. In addition to teaching courses on the history of documentary film and documentary film-making, Dr. Smith, through his independent film company Heritage Productions, produced *The Historic J. E. Crosby Mint Still* (2000) and the four-part *American Mint: A Documentary* (2001-2002). Part Two of this series received a 2002 Bronze Telly Award in the category "Education (for academic use)"

Joris Ivens and Pare Lorentz

Artistic rivalry during the making of **POWER AND THE LAND**

André Stufkens

POWER AND THE LAND 'was perhaps the most effective film made to promote President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New deal policies.' Effective because millions and millions of farmers saw this film on rural electrification and supported the creation of co-operatives which had an enormous impact on the revolutionary change of rural areas, the welfare of the farmers and the expanding economy of the US after World War II. That **POWER AND THE LAND** could become both beautiful and effective was due to the collaboration between Joris Ivens, the director, and Pare Lorentz, the 'George Washington of American documentary,' who produced the film. The lively personalities of these two masters of documentary, their different visions and working methods resulted in a kind of artistic rivalry from which the film greatly benefited. Lorentz got another 'Film of Merit' he wanted for his commissioners, in the impressive series of **THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS**, **THE RIVER**, **THE FIGHT FOR LIFE**, **THE LAND** and the never made **ECCE HOMO**. And Ivens got his 'ideal documentary,' proving his vision with a dramatic and personalized approach. Both men never wrote about their conflicts, probably because they had too much respect for each others achievements. The film's production was well documented by Ivens and preserved in the Joris Ivens Archives, but on the issue of their relationship, only a few bits and pieces are left. Ivens avoided unveiling any thoughts on this subject in the type-script / manuscript of his autobiography before publication. This article is trying to reconstruct their relationship.

The start

Their collaboration started in June 1939 and would last for one year. Lorentz first discussed the commission for production number 5 for the United States Film Services with Ivens in the 'Garden of Allah,' a hostelry in Beverly Hills. Before this meeting Lorentz had guided Ivens through the United Artists studios to the set where **THE FIGHT FOR LIFE** was shot.² **THE FIGHT FOR LIFE** is a motion picture dramatization, and both Lorentz and Ivens were very much interested in creating documentary film with the same dramatic impact as a feature film. **THE FIGHT FOR LIFE** was based on the book by Paul de Kruif, a bacteriologist and a successful writer of million selling pop science books. Ivens was a friend of De Kruif as well. He was the son of Dutch immigrants and lived in Holland, Michigan. In the Autumn of 1936 he already had asked Ivens to film his book *Why Keep Them Alive?* about the deprived health care situation of the poor in Detroit. With his books, De Kruif was capable of engaging a large number of people in real social subjects by dramatizing the story, 'the facts don't matter quite as much as the overall sense of the story.'³ Although the script wasn't filmed by Ivens it shows that both Ivens and Lorentz were attracted to the same social subjects and narrative approach of De Kruif and his attempts to reach millions of people.

Critique

In the same month - June 1939 - as he had asked Ivens, Lorentz published a 'critique' on Ivens' **THE 400 MILLION**. Ivens' film on the Japanese army invading China was premiered in March and Ivens himself was far



Pare Lorentz, head of the United States Film Services, on the roof of the Department of Agriculture, 1936. Photo Dorothea Lange

from satisfied with the result. Lorentz wrote in McCall's: 'Yet here was a great cameraman, a fine scenario writer (donating his services, I imagine), and a first-class composer, all failing to create a moving and original piece of work for the obvious reason that no one man sat down and sweated to weave all the threads into a simple, clear, well-designed movie...the scenes were long and not too well edited, the narration did not have a concise and straight design.'⁴ Lorentz's blunt review must have sharpened Ivens' will to get his 'artistic revenge' and give his next film a more convincing, direct flow. For his part, Lorentz, being fully aware of Ivens' failings and traps, must have thought that he himself could be capable of becoming 'the one man sitting down and sweating to weave all threads' and indeed at several essential moments during the production Lorentz interfered directly and strongly, and without it the film would have become quite different.



Pare Lorentz, film still *The Fight for Life*.



Joris Ivens, film still WORST OF FARM DISASTERS, the barn fire sequence with bucket line © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

'It's your picture'

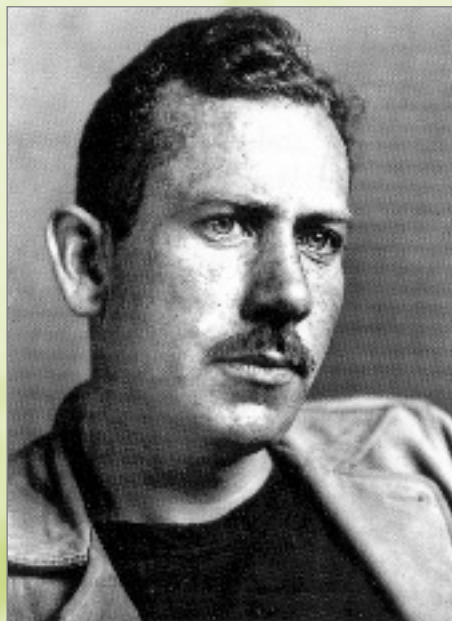
'Script: freedom change in reality...'

Ivens hopefully noted in his diary after his first talks with Lorentz who answered with: 'it's your picture.' Even later on – after quite a number of conflicts Lorentz stated: 'As I told you in California, it is my desire as Director of the U.S.F.S. to have as little to do with the direction of the work of the people of well-established reputation who are working for us as it is humanly possible.'⁵ However Ivens experienced less freedom than hoped for and Lorentz forced Ivens to change the film against his will. On six key moments, at least, Lorentz influenced the film significantly.

It was Lorentz who, in the beginning, transformed the script outline into a simple 'From Dawn to Dusk outline.' Ivens benefited a lot from this simple concept, giving the structure, balance and rhythm of the film a more 'concise and straight design' as his previous films on China and Spain. Paul Rotha concluded that Ivens 'recognized that a dialectical and controversial onslaught could not possibly convince the audience for which it was intended...'⁶ This simple structure fitted the rural context of the film perfectly and proved to have a lasting impact on audiences.

It also was Lorentz who recommended that the film be shot in Ohio, where his maternal grandmother had lived, although Ivens suggests in his autobiography that he didn't get any hint where to film. It didn't take arduous research either to find the average model farm, Ivens found the Parkinson family in St. Clairsville after only one week, and shipped out all his equipment to start the shooting by the end of August.

Lorentz, being an advocate of non-political documentary, also forced Ivens to leave the political conflict out. This was the drama with the private utility companies who refused to put up electricity lines to farms and fought against any attempt by the farmers to put up their own. On the 6th October, in the middle of filming, Lorentz decided to replace cameraman Arthur Ornitz, who 'wasn't competent enough for the job,' even though Ivens was quite satisfied with the footage shot up to that point. This move by Lorentz, to replace Ornitz with Floyd Crosby, was also meant to avoid any alterations to the script by Ivens and to get more control over his direction. In



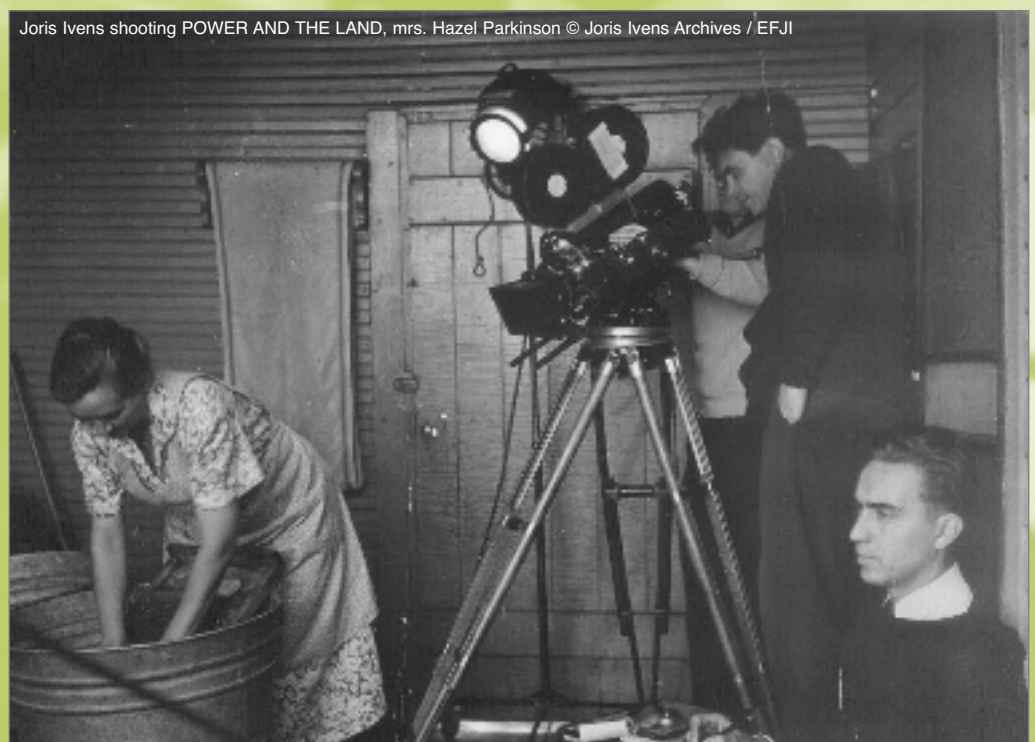
Novelist John Steinbeck offered his help to write the commentary of POWER AND THE LAND.

November, after all the rushes were done, a conflict between Ivens and Lorentz arose, because Ivens had shot much more than originally agreed. During a meeting on 21st November, Lorentz strongly suggested that Ivens should stick to a short film as agreed from the start.⁷ 'A producer has to have respect for accomplished work' Ivens reacted, but Lorentz had to also consider the financial interests. Consequently, Ivens had to leave out sequences like the barn fire scene and Bip visiting a modern milking dairy. Lorentz argued that these dramatic scenes could harm the rhythm and peaceful setting of the film.⁸ According to notations of his talk with Lorentz on the 21st November, there was also a difference of opinion about the personalization of the film. Lorentz wanted this to be dealt with in the second half only, when electricity had been connected, but Ivens wanted it throughout the complete film. In this case, Ivens won out.

Who was in charge?

From the beginning the division of tasks and responsibilities between Lorentz and Ivens was not clear. 'I accepted two possibilities: 1 - director outdoor shooting, 2 - director of whole picture. To be decided in process of work,' Ivens wrote in June. After the shooting process was over it didn't become any clearer either. In December, Ivens concluded: 'The assignment was still kind of vague.' This confusion had nothing to do with Snyder's understanding that the sponsors of the film, the Rural Electrification Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, had the impression that Lorentz himself would make the film and they were not aware of the fact that he commissioned Ivens to replace him.⁹ In fact Ivens was in direct contact with quite a number of REA officials, who knew that Ivens was making the film. Ivens was quite annoyed about Lorentz trying to keep him away from the sponsors. 'Bad thing for an experienced director to be separated from the sponsor by the producer.'¹⁰ During the shooting Ivens had encountered many problems with the sponsor. 'I wasn't protected,' Ivens complained.¹¹ When visiting the REA staff in Washington, Ivens felt tensions between the sponsor and the producer which made the situation even more complicated: 'They were against Lorentz.'¹²

The continuing confusion about responsibilities had to do mainly with Lorentz's wish to



Joris Ivens shooting POWER AND THE LAND, Mrs. Hazel Parkinson © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

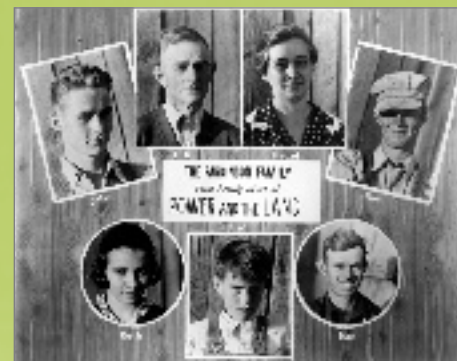
write the commentary himself, taking over supervision again after shooting and getting his ideas for the documentary realized. For this he used some strange arguments: 'Lorentz wrote Ivens that he tried without success to interest John Steinbeck in writing the narration. Lorentz then decided to write the narration himself,' concluded Snyder after reading Lorentz's letter to Ivens on 20th November, four days after the last shoot in St. Clairvilles. Ivens already knew that Steinbeck couldn't be involved because he had met the author on the 1st, 2nd and 5th August and asked him to do the script. Steinbeck agreed to do the dialogues, but Lorentz had already rejected the idea in August because of a lack of money.¹³

The delay of almost half a year between the last day of shooting, 16th November 1939, and the postproduction, running from May to August 1940, was mainly caused by Lorentz's attempts to write the commentary himself. When he failed, for obvious reasons given that he was far too busy with finishing *THE FIGHT OF LIFE*, *ECCE HOMO* and defending the USFS against political attacks, it led to several complaints from his sponsors. They wanted the film ready as soon as possible to impress Senators and members of Congress, as at that time the support for funding the USFS was diminishing rapidly. Harry Slattery, REA administrator, wrote to Lorentz in April 1940: 'I can say with utmost sincerity that I believe that your interests have suffered somewhat for lack of the rural electrification film.'¹⁴ Two days later a new writer and composer were commissioned by Lorentz to finalize the commentary and music.

The ideal of a documentary organization

In June 1939, when the relationship between Lorentz and Ivens was just starting, Joris Ivens had been elected as the first president of the Association of Documentary Film Producers, probably the first non-profit international organization of documentary filmmakers. Its aim was to improve the artistic and technical standards of independent, creative films and to promote wider production and distribution. Ivens' concern for the relationship between filmmaker, producer and sponsor was not only personal and limited to his own film projects, but also had to do with his broader vision for the development of the documentary film field. 'The day of the one-

man documentary film is over. The problems are too manifold and the processes too complex to be handled satisfactory by a single man,' Ivens stated in a university lecture, delivered immediately after the filming of *POWER AND THE LAND* was finished. He predicted that in the future, larger units and teams of specialists were needed. 'Understanding of the relationships within such a group is of vital importance to the profundity and quality of our documentary film.' When mentioning examples of existing teams, Ivens also makes a judgment about Lorentz, which was removed in the draft of 'Ideas in Documentary Films.'¹⁶ 'Lorentz has a team but he is a very dominating factor. A completely dominating man. He doesn't give the members of his unit much freedom of expression - Or he didn't then. He didn't rely so much on the teamwork.' This critique was shared by other members of the ADFP like Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz, who also had conflicts with Lorentz during the making of *THE RIVER* and left the scene. In contrast, according to Ivens, documentary film teams in the UK, like the British G.P.O. set up by John Grierson, showed striking examples of real team work. In the USA opportunities grew to organize similar structures: 'The United States Film Service could have had this kind of a focusing point, you could say in the sense of the British outfit but as a general buffer between sponsor and director and giving experience to all units so that Lorentz would have been the first documentary film producer, you could say. Lorentz, or somebody else in the U.S. Film Service. The kind of function that Grierson had in England. Lorentz's personal character doesn't work that way. His mind doesn't work that way. He missed there. He had not at all the urge to develop somebody else. He never took documentary films seriously in any way. He never even wanted the word documentary put on his films. He thought he was doing something special. I think we missed there. We had to consolidate a real movement that was just starting. That could have been a central organization there. Another thing, the attacks that came later on the United States Film Services, we would have been much stronger in the whole argument. Now they could attack it and say they have only done three films in three years but there the overhead costs would have been divided among ten films.'



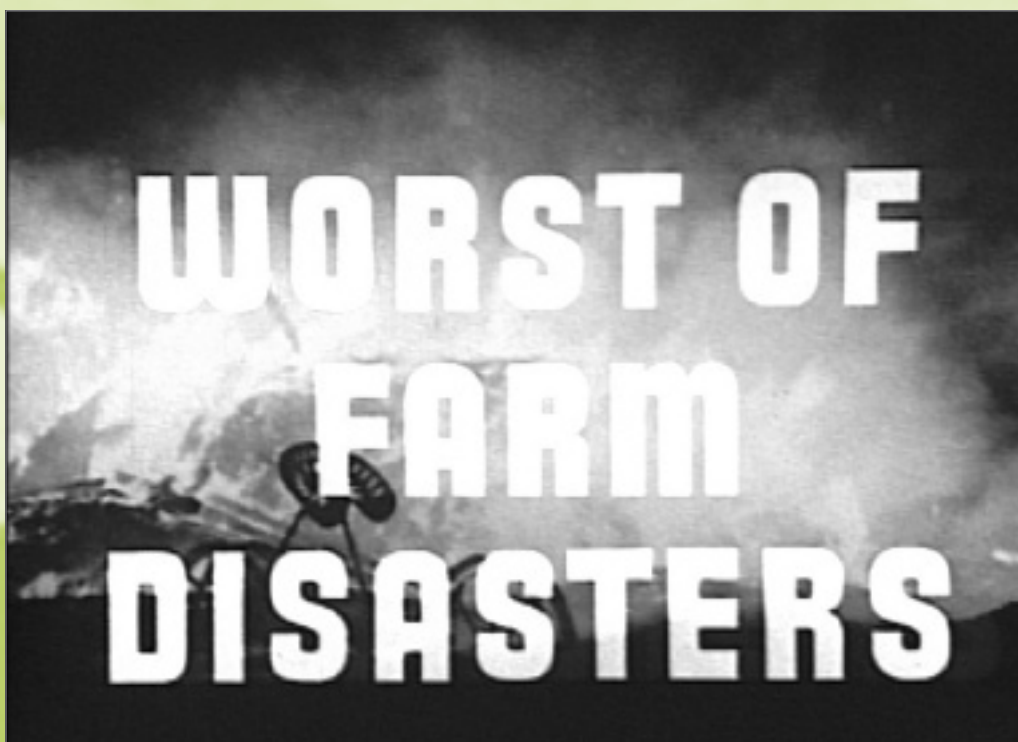
Joris Ivens, film still *POWER AND THE LAND*, the Parkinson family © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJl

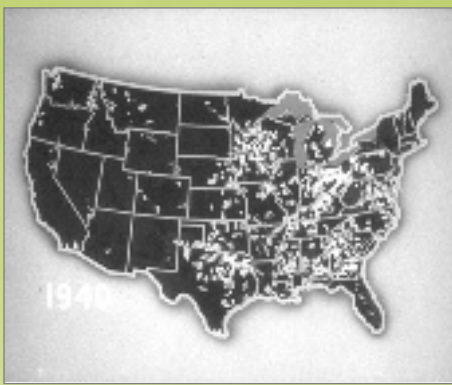
Is there such thing as a documentary movement?

At first sight, Ivens' opinion on Lorentz's vision sounds rather awkward, but two articles on documentary film written by Lorentz at the beginning and end of *POWER AND THE LAND* support Ivens' strong arguments. Lorentz judgment on documentary film, as expressed in two articles in *McCall's* 'The Documentary Film' (August 1939) and 'Good Art, Good Propaganda' (July 1940) were indeed not very encouraging. Lorentz: 'Just the words 'documentary' and 'factual' gives me a headache, because for the past four years I myself have been working with what have unfortunately come to be known generally as 'documentary' films.' According to Lorentz's harsh opinion most documentaries are boring, with aimless direction, a meaningless score and third-rate photography. Unless the documentary filmmaker is striving to have as good photography, editing and music as Hollywood, he doesn't think that this genre will be of any importance for the public. Underneath this critique lies a deeper conviction opposing political documentary, or even Ivens personally, when describing: '...the extreme left-wingers in movies have taken the attitude because a movie is liberal it is therefore 'good'... while I am personally in favor of the Chinese winning their own country away from the Japanese... I do not feel that just because a man has made a picture dealing with these subjects he had made a 'good' movie... they argue that their cause justifies their work - their work must be considered important because their faith is the true faith.' Ivens didn't have this opinion at all and stressed over and over again that only the best artistic quality, as good as a Hollywood film, was good enough for documentary film. In fact he shared Lorentz's statement 'Good art, good propaganda.'

According to Lorentz, there wasn't a documentary movement, only some talents. 'Personally, I feel that if there ever was a movement, a school, a development, it is practically stopped dead in its tracks'. More peculiar, Lorentz denied the potency of his own position, when stating: '...with the proven audience interest in factual films, it seems nothing short of stupid that no producer yet has entered this field in a full and intelligent manner.' And what of Lorentz himself? - Ivens could have asked, obviously 'his mind didn't work that way.' In a letter to his parents written on 22nd April 1940, Ivens wrote quite directly about Lorentz: 'A good film director but no organizer.'¹⁷

Within this context it's easier to understand why Lorentz didn't become a member of the ADFP. Virtually every documentary maker in the USA was a member of the ADFP except Lorentz. Along with Ivens as chair, Lionel Berman, Joseph and Mary Losey, Paul Strand, Willard Van Dyke, William Osgood Field, Shirley Burden and Irving A. Jacoby





Joris Ivens, film still POWER AND THE LAND, map of US with cooperatives electrification © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

formed the Board of Directors. Many well known documentary filmmakers, publishers, composers, editors and cameramen joined the ADFP like: James Beveridge, Luis Buñuel, Floyd Crosby, Robert Flaherty, Richard Griffith, John Grierson, Alexander Hackenschmied, Lora Hays, Leo Hurwitz, Jay Leyda, Helen van Dongen, Douglas Moore, Herbert Klein, Leo Seltzer and Ralph Steiner.

POWER AND THE LAND was the last production by the USFS, which didn't even exist by the time that Ivens' film was premiered in 31st August 1940 in St. Clairsville. 'If POWER AND THE LAND could have been released in the spring of 1940, some congressmen might have seen more value in movie making,' argued Snyder.¹⁸ The original time schedule, agreed upon in June 1939 aimed for three months of shooting and two months of editing, through which the film could have been ready in January 1940. Snyder suggests that Ivens was more or less to blame for this delay – although he only surpassed the deadline of shooting by two days – but it was also due to the fact that the REA needed twenty three days, instead of five, to install the equipment. In reality, it was the deliberate and fatal miscalculation by Lorentz himself to postpone the finishing of the film so that he could try to do the commentary that significantly delayed the film. At the end of the process, on 27th June 1940, Lorentz decided that he didn't want any personal credit at all on the titles of POWER AND THE LAND. The USFS isn't mentioned either, because it had been closed down.¹⁹ In spite of all the problems during the production and the differences in character and vision between both filmmakers, Ivens regarded the process as a mental rest after the strenuous film projects made in war time in Spain and China. According to Snyder, Lorentz retained his respect for Ivens and recommended him for a new film project to be made for the Federal Theatre Project in April 1940. For his part, Ivens made clear his admiration for Lorentz and the pleasure he had working for him.²⁰ Most importantly, both men stimulated each other to give their best shot, and made a lasting documentary of beauty, a key film in Ivens' oeuvre.

This article is a summary of the full article on the website Power for the Parkinsons. It includes parts of Ivens' diary, in which his day to day comments on the making of POWER AND THE LAND can be followed. Also from the ivens.nl Dossier.

Notes

¹ Robert Sklar *Film, an international history the medium*, 1993 New York: Harry N. Abrams, p. 251

² Catherine Duncan, *Joris Ivens*, unfinished typescript with several chapters for a biography on Joris Ivens, Paris n.d. [1956-1958]. [Marion Michelle Collection / Joris Ivens Archives, Nijmegen].

³ Robin Marantz Henig, *The Life and Legacy of Paul de Kruif*, 2002 www.aliciapatterson.org/APF2003/Henig/Henig.rtf

⁴ Pare Lorentz, *Lorentz on Film, Movies 1927 to 1941*, 1986 Norman, London: University of Oklahoma Press, p. 164-165

⁵ Pare Lorentz in a letter to Joris Ivens, dated 20th November, with Ivens' comments during his talk the day after [Joris Ivens Archive, 2.3.02.41.01, file 253].

⁶ Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film*, [1935], 1963 London, Hastings House, p. 318

⁷ Joris Ivens, handwritten notations 'Nov. 21 - Talk with L.' on the original letter of Pare Lorentz, dated 20th November, with Ivens' comments during his talk the day after [Joris Ivens Archive, 2.3.02.41.01, file 253].

⁸ The 'left overs' were edited into two separate documentaries in 1941: THE WORST OF FARM DISASTERS and BIP GOES TO TOWN.

⁹ Robert L. Snyder, *Pare Lorentz and the documentary film*, 1993, Reno: University of Nevada Press, p.129

¹⁰ Joris Ivens, manuscript and typescript 'Collaboration in Documentary Film', w. d. [January 1940], written with the support of Jay Leyda, lectured at the New York University [Jan de Vaal Collection, Files Jay Leyda, EFJI].

¹¹ ad ibim, p. 9

¹² ad ibim, p. 29. 'You mentioned Wallace, where did he come in? He saw the film when it was finished. They were against Lorentz.'

¹³ Joris Ivens, see note 10, file 252 B

¹⁴ Robert L. Snyder, see note 11, p. 129

¹⁵ 'Ideas in Documentary Films' was a proposed title for a publication to be published by Harcourt, Brace & Company (alternative options: 'Film Ideas and Film Methods') in 1943, based on the lectures in December 1939 and January 1940 text and edited by Jay Leyda.

The publisher rejected. It is with much reservation that Ivens' lines are being made public here, because Ivens must have had his rightful reasons not to publish. Anyway it sheds an interesting light on their relationship [Jan de Vaal Collection, Jay Leyda papers, EFJI, Nijmegen]. The papers, draft versions, interviews etc. were given to Jan de Vaal, director of the Netherlands Filmmuseum (1947-1988) and co-founder of the Joris Ivens Archives (1964), by Jay Leyda, after he did research in the Amsterdam collections to finalize the script of the definitive publication of 'The Camera and I' in 1969. Jay Leyda's name isn't mentioned in the book, probably because he already suffered from political accusations and job prohibition.

¹⁶ Joris Ivens, see note 16, p. 1 (chapter 'Ohio').

¹⁷ Joris Ivens in a letter to his parents, April 22 1940, Annebeth Ivens Collection.

¹⁸ Robert L. Snyder, see note 11, p. 169.

¹⁹ Summary of the Calendar for finishing the REA-film [Joris Ivens Archives, 2.3.02.41.01, file 256].

²⁰ Robert L. Snyder, see note 11, p. 127

Acquisition

Anna Maria Papi

The friendship between Anna Maria Papi and Joris Ivens started when Papi organized a screening of Vietnamese films in Florence, Italy. LE 17E PARALLÈLE was censored, it was not allowed to enter Italy because Nixon visited the country, but after Papi set up a Committee against censorship the illegal screening at the Palazzo dei Congressi was a big success. 5,000 visitors, half of them left waiting outside, attended the rally. Afterwards Ivens visited Anna Maria Papi and her husband, the photographer and painter Giorgio Cipriani, many times in the several lodgings where they lived. When Ivens wanted to relax and take a holiday near the beach in Italy, he left for Forte di Marmi, where Papi received artists from around the world at her home, such as Pablo Neruda and José Venturelli, from around the world at her home. In this big house, with 25 bedrooms, Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens met the family of sculptor Henry Moore, sculptor Marino Marini and the 1975 Nobel Prize winning novelist and poet Eugenio Montale. They appear to be easy going people, not at all arrogant, living simple lives. The relationship with Papi was



At the backside : Irina, Mary and Henry Moore, Marceline Loridan-Ivens ; in front sitting: Eugenio Montale, Joris Ivens and Anna Maria Papi © Giorgio Cipriani



Eugenio Montale, Joris Ivens and Henry Moore in San Gemignano © Giorgio Cipriani

based on shared experiences. As a young child Papi and her mother (who was Spanish) went by train from Pisa to Barcelona, looking for her father who was a partisan who died during the Spanish Civil War. After the war, she met Hemingway in Venice, with whom she discussed her Spanish experiences. A chain of connections with Ivens life story started to develop.

According to Papi's memories everybody loved Ivens, because he kept his youthful enthusiasm, was both sweet and tough, but without looking tough. He adored the ancient village of San Gemignano, and wanted to make a film about the isolated location near Siena, a place without time, hills like the sea, long horizons, houses with the colors of the earth.

Anna Maria Papi gave documents, letters, clippings and photos about her relationship with Ivens and Loridan-Ivens to the Foundation along with a long and vivid interview of her memories on tape.

Henk de Smidt

Former curator of the Netherlands Filmmuseum, Henk de Smidt is an enthusiastic photographer. Mr de Smidt took photographs at a large number of events involving Ivens or the Foundation, including festivals, meetings, symposia, exhibitions and receptions. Many hundreds of these photos were given to the Foundation.



Joris Ivens, Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Thea Nooteboom-Ivens in Paris, June 1976 © JIA/EFJI

screening of a Lumière film in Holland etc. It was in this liberal milieu that Joris was raised. All kinds of aspects of his fathers' achievements were kept by collecting documents, clippings, flyers, books, articles, diaries, photos and objects. After the death of Thea Nooteboom-Ivens, her children took over the collection. Several parts that had been divided among the children were recollected. Josien Nooteboom and Bob Haan took care of the 110 boxes and 27 albums and Bob Haan created the inventory. To protect this important collection and preserve it in the best



Thea, Joris (George), Hans and Wim Ivens with his brothers and sister in May 1909, celebrating the princess Juliana festivities. Coll. Familyarchive Nooteboom-Ivens

Family Nooteboom-Ivens

The eldest sister of Joris Ivens, Mrs. Thea Nooteboom-Ivens (1906-1997), took care of the family archive after her father (1941) and mother (1948) died. She kept a number of marvelous photo albums (1880-1980), which give a unique insight into the daily life of this special family. Joris' father Kees Ivens played an important role in Nijmegen in the first half of the 20th century because of his efforts to promote industrial progress. For example, he initiated the building of a large traffic bridge, a canal, the electrification of a railroad. This family, with their Rhinelandish background, also loved to party, to dress up, to sing and play. Lovely photos remind us of many funny festivities. Ivens' father was also very interested in technology, especially camera technology. He founded the first chain of photo shops (CAPI) in Holland, introduced color photography, X-rays, attended the first

circumstances, the Ivens family and relatives decided to deposit the collection in the Nijmegen archives.

Edward Hughes

In 2001, British composer Edward Hughes made a score for Ivens' RAIN, commissioned by the Bath Music Festival. He gave the score and recording of Light Cuts Through Dark Skies to the Foundation for permanent reference. Last year a tour was arranged along Brittany where the score was performed live several times to the screening of Ivens' silent movie.

Sculptures



1. Situ Zhaoguang, *Joris Ivens* (wood), 1982, 58 cm. The son of Joris Ivens' good friend Situ Huimin made two portraits in wood. His father first got acquainted with Ivens in 1957 when he was vice-director of the Film Bureau. Through the years Ivens became a good friend of the family. After the Cultural Revolution Situ Huimin was minister of Culture. Situ Zhaoguang (1940) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, where since 1966 he was professor in sculpture. His sculptures were exhibited in Hungary, Taiwan, Paris and all over China. On the photo: Mr. Situ Zhaoguang with his wife Mrs. Situ Shuang and their daughter, 2003. © Miroslav Sebestik



2. Bas Maters, *Joris Ivens monument* (steel), 1990, 10 meters. When Joris Ivens returned to his birthplace Nijmegen to celebrate his 90th anniversary the city council decided to name a place after him and raise a sculpture. Bas Maters (1949) professor at the Academy of Art in Arnhem (environmental art) created a long bended strip of steel with an open square door at the bottom, presenting the harsh edges of daily life, and an open circle door at the top, presenting an open lense of a camera or a view on the sky, spiritual ideas and imagination. The nickname of this hallmark on the Joris Ivens Place is shoospoon. This huge sculpture was constructed on a Dutch shipyard. Photo André Stufkens



3. Emilio López-Menchero, *Pasionaria- porte voix* (steel), 2005. Belgian artist López-Menchero was inspired by a film still from Ivens' *THE SPANISH EARTH* provided by the Foundation, presenting a giant loud-speaker used by the Republicans to convince Spanish soldiers on the other side of the front line to surrender and join the democratic forces. López-Menchero's public sculpture in the city centre of Brussels shows a similar megaphone to promote communication: it can be used for shouting as well as for listening.

Projects of López-Menchero are being exhibited around Western-Europe.

© E.López-Menchero en Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI



4. Bob Lejeune, *Joris Ivens* (ceramic), 2005, 50 cm. In the framework of 'Nijmegen 2000' Lejeune (1958, Academy of Art, Den Bosch) was commissioned to create four portraits of remarkable personalities in Nijmegen, like Ivens. His baroque-like colourful ceramic sculptures tell stories with all kinds of symbols, based on photos and research in the Joris Ivens Archives. © Bob Lejeune / Intermedi-art Theo van Stiphout

Short Cuts



Ernest Hemingway, Joris Ivens and Helen van Dongen in Havana, Cuba, 1939 © Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI

Rivers to the Sea Hemingway and Ivens

On 14th September 2005 the documentary *RIVERS TO THE SEA* about American journalist and novelist Ernest Hemingway (1898-1971) premiered on American television (PBS) as part of a series called 'American Masters'. The series contains traditional, award winning documentaries with an American audience in mind. Because Ivens and Hemingway were friends, especially during and after the shooting of *THE SPANISH EARTH* in 1937, the foundation provided photos and footage to the producers. The Foundation also did this for a documentary on Robert Capa, which received worldwide attention.

Rivers to the sea © EBC / American Masters



Senses of Cinema

Ian Mundell was invited to write an introductory article on Joris Ivens for the cinephile website Senses of Cinema for a series on Great Directors. Senses of Cinema is an online journal devoted to the serious and eclectic discussion of cinema. Mundell surveys Ivens' oeuvre and states that the current documentary movement has gone back to the point at which Ivens started in the late 1920's - working alone with a handheld camera, writing the script (if necessary), doing the shooting, editing and distribution by himself. 'But the idea of what a documentary should be has changed radically, and much of Ivens' work sits uneasily with present ideas.', is a general opinion nowadays. The rhetorical mode, with re-enactment and a voice over, seems outdated. However in many ways -and Mundell proves his case with several examples - 'they are all faithful to the underlying idea that there is a human reality that can be captured on film and shared.'

The films made after WWII that were commissioned by Eastern Bloc institutions are not very acceptable to most western critics. Surprisingly Mundell proclaims that perhaps this work comes closest to the modern observational

documentary; the events are staged, certainly, but not for the camera. All of the speeches and crowd scenes would be happening even if Ivens wasn't there. In this sense, the films are 'straightforward accounts of a rigidly controlled political culture.'

The complete text can be read on: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/05/ivens.html#film>

Docupolis: 'Man with the Camera'-Award to Joris Ivens

The International Film Festival in Barcelona intends to award the 'Man with the Camera'-Prize to Joris Ivens in April 2006. Since 2004 the festival dedicates a retrospective and this new award to the complete opus of an outstanding engaged director who has left a legacy and marked the way for future generations. The award valorizes the historical, ethical, aesthetic character, as well as the contribution to the development of the 'Zeitgeist', the spirit of an era. In previous years the Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez and Brazilian filmmaker Eduardo Coutinho were awarded.

Talents from the East

AGITPROP, the Bulgarian production company, won the Silver Wolf Award during IDFA 2004 for their documentary *GEORGI ANFD THE BUTTERFLIES*. They are continuing with their project *US4REVISITED*, about the background to Ivens' documentary *THE FIRST YEARS* (see news magazine number 10). The director Valentin Valchev pitched his ideas at the IDFA Forum and the 'Docu Talents from the East' panel during the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in July 2005. After visiting the set locations of Ivens' film in Bulgaria, Bosnia, Poland and the Czech Republic, he researched the documents at the Joris Ivens Archive. The film is scheduled to be ready at the end of 2006.

Indonesia 60th anniversary of independence

On 17th August 2005, the Indonesian Republic celebrated its independence. In August 1945 president Sukarno was surprised by the sudden capitulation of the Japanese occupying forces. Radical students forced Sukarno to make his Proclamation, after which an Indonesian flag Red & White was hoisted, which was in fact a Dutch flag without the blue banner. The violent period of the first years of Merdeka, the Bersiap, cost thousands of lives. Ivens, who was appointed film commissioner of the Dutch Indies, was also surprised. From the window of his hotel in Sydney, he saw dockworkers preventing Dutch ships from sailing off to the young republic with Dutch tanks and ammunition. Ivens soon resigned from his governmental job and shot *INDONESIA CALLING!* During the ceremonies in Jakarta in August 2005, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bot, stated that Holland deeply regretted its attitude after the Proclamation of Freedom and officially recognized August 17th 1945 as the date of independence. This declaration also rehabilitated Ivens' position, as his point of view caused much condemnation and criticism by Dutch authorities at the time. Ivens became a suspect, a man to be watched, and his passport was withdrawn. Many documents from the National Security Service show how Ivens was followed. In the case of Indonesia, however, history has shown that Ivens' position was the right one.

Wilhelm Ivens

The Valkhof Museum will be organizing an exhibition of the photos of Wilhelm Ivens

(1849-1904) in February 2007. The Joris Ivens' grandfather emigrated from Germany to Holland and was one of the first people in the country to start a photographic studio. He was later elected the first chairperson of the Netherlands Photo Society. His studio became well known and the quality of his photos was quite high. At the end of his career he was earning almost as much as the head of police and the municipal secretary. Portraits, city scenes and landscapes were his main targets. One can see parallels between Joris Ivens' vision and the way his grandfather made photos. It is hoped that a lot more will be discovered during research for the exhibition.

Arja Grandia

On July 1st 2005 Arja Grandia, Head Archival Loans of the Filmmuseum in Amsterdam retired after 37 years of service. At the time Jan de Vaal headed the Netherlands Filmmuseum Arja Grandia started as a youngster and took care of the distribution of archival film prints, for instance for the FIAF Film Pool. Because of the special relationship of Joris Ivens with Jan de Vaal / Filmmuseum also a long term relationship between Grandia and Ivens developed. With her solid and strict approach Grandia managed to provide many Ivens films for screenings around the world. The Foundation paid special attention to her departure to thank her for all her efforts.

Vivo films

Italian distributor Vivo Films, who are dedicated to documentaries, intends to produce a DVD of Ivens' Italian documentary *L'ITALIA NON È UN PAESE POVERO*. Along with three television series, Vivo would like to include bonus material like Stefano Missio's documentary *QUANDO ITALIA NON ERA UN PAESE POVERO*.

Composition for Film

The famous book of Hanns Eisler and Theodor W. Adorno on film music will be reprinted in Germany including the DVD with the Film Music Project for the Rockefeller Foundation. Johannes C. Garl made a new authentic synchronisation of Eisler's score to *RAIN* which will be included on DVD inside the book. (see article newsmagazine 10)

Komposition für den Film / Date of release: 19.4.2006 / ISBN: 3 - 518 - 58461 - 8 / Editor: Suhrkamp

Theodor W. Adorno Hanns Eisler Kompositionen für den Film Suhrkamp



Mit einer DVD
„Hanns Eisler Rockefeller
Filmmusikprojekt 1940-1942“,
ausgewählten Filmklassikern
und weiteren Dokumenten

Front cover Composition for Film © Suhrkamp

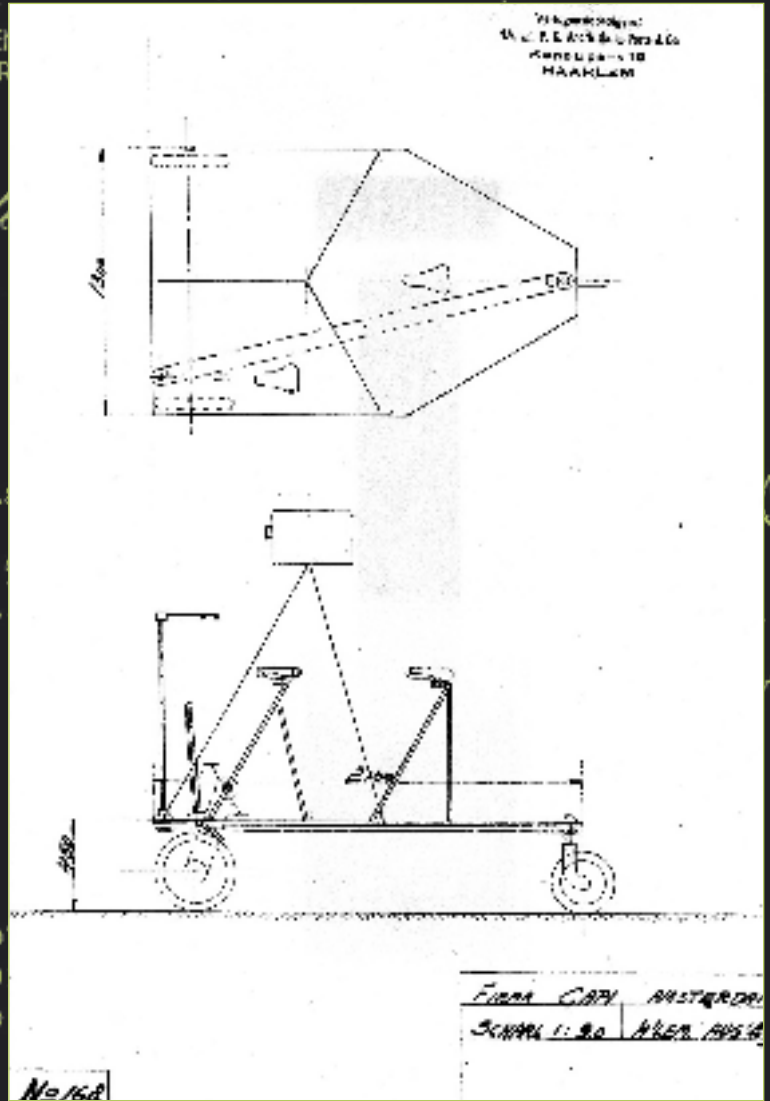
Curiosities from the archives

Joris Ivens started film in 1927 without any film education. Of course he was used to handling cameras in his father's photography shop, but this was mostly selling rather than making photos. He also had a photochemical and technical background after his studies at the Technical University in Charlottenburg. This technical knowledge further improved after practical training at the Ica and Ernemann factories in Dresden. Thus when he made his first films, he didn't feel any fear for the technical aspects of filmmaking. He felt free to invent creative new camera movements and camera technologies, and to experiment with it with only one purpose: to create a new film language. Here are four examples:



Joris Ivens and Cheng Fai shooting RAIN with the periscope camera. © Germaine Krull / Photographische Sammlung Folkwang Museum Essen / Coll. JIA/EFJL

1 A periscope camera. During the shooting of RAIN (1929) Ivens needed close-ups of wet surfaces of streets and pavement. He didn't want to lie down flat on the rainy streets and so designed a periscope camera, with the camera at the bottom and a viewfinder at the top. The viewfinder and the camera were linked with small mirrors. The camera proved to be successful.



2 A waterproof camera with rubber hood. During the shooting of BREAKERS (1928) Ivens wanted to film as close as possible to the crashing waves. To achieve this, the close-ups of breakers were filmed with his handheld camera covered with a rubber hood. The final sequence of Jef Last, the protagonist, walking into the North Sea in despair, was shot with this waterproof camera. The close-ups of breaking waves are some of the most powerful images in the film.



4 A camera wagon for traveling shots. After Ivens was commissioned by the Dutch construction workers union to make WE'RE BUILDING (1929), his first solid payment, he ordered the construction of a special camera wagon for two people. One person sat in front to steer and pedal the cycle chain, the second at the back sitting behind the camera, which was fixed on a tripod. We don't know whether the German company made the wagon at all, in fact there isn't proof that wagon was ever ordered. Presumably the expenses for buying this bespoke and unique wagon were far too high and Ivens found many alternative ways to shoot traveling shots.

3 A subjective camera wagon. For his I-FILM (1928) Ivens wanted to imitate the movement of the human eyes during walking, so designed a subjective camera trolley. The camera was mounted on a moving stand which was connected to the axle of the wheels with a rod, and made similar up and down movements as the human eyes do during walking. The effect was different than expected, as it looks like a drunken walk down the Kalverstraat, and the Kalverstraat looks flooded. Former curator Henk de Smidt has made a replica of this remarkable camera in 1999.



The replica of the subjective camera in Museum Het Valkhof, made by Henk de Smidt with the De Smidt-family



Joris Ivens sketching the subjective camera (1962)



Sketch replica subjective camera