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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Film Studies

Elizaveta Svilova and Soviet Documentary Film

by

Christopher Penfold

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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ELIZAVETA SVILOVA AND SOVIET DOCUMENTARY FILM

By Christopher Penfold

The focus of my research is Soviet documentary filmmaker, Elizaveta Svilova (1900-75), most commonly remembered, if at all, as the wife and collaborator of acclaimed Soviet film pioneer, Dziga Vertov (1896-1954). Having worked with her husband for many years, Svilova continued her career as an independent director-editor after Vertov fell out of favour with the Central Committee. Employed at the Central Studio for Documentary Film, a state-initiated studio, Svilova's films were vehicles of rhetoric, mobilised to inform, educate and persuade the masses. She draws on visual symbols familiar to audiences and organises them according to the semiotic theories – namely techniques of dialecticism and linkage – attributed to the Soviet montage school of the 1920s.

On-screen credits indicate that, during the period 1939 to 1956, Svilova was the director-editor of over 100 documentaries and newsreel episodes, yet this corpus of films has received very little critical attention. As my thesis aims to demonstrate, the reasons for the lack of attention to Svilova's films are partly due to her husband's eminent status – the rules whereby we construct film history have resulted in Svilova's contribution being absorbed into Vertov's – and this is related to the long-standing tendency within film criticism to marginalise the female artist. My thesis also touches on issues regarding curatorial and archival policies, and provides an opportunity to rethink early film history and the modes through which historiographic and filmographic knowledge are transmitted.



## List of Contents

Declaration of Authorship	1
Acknowledgements	3
Notes on Transliteration and Sources	5
Introduction	7
Chapter 1 The Context of Svilova's Career	13
Chapter 2 Evidence of Aggression: <i>Oświęcim</i> (1945) and <i>Cinema Documents of the Atrocities of the German Fascist Invaders</i> (1945)	81
Chapter 3 Female Spectators and the Feminine Ideal	135
Chapter 4 Foreign Lands and Depictions of Otherness	181
Chapter 5 Conclusion	241
Notes	253
Appendix 1 Elizaveta Svilova and Foreign Stories	281
Appendix 2 Filmography of Elizaveta Svilova	287
Bibliography	321
Web Sources and Archive Sources	335
Filmography	337



# Declaration of Authorship

I, Christopher Penfold, declare that this thesis, Elizaveta Svilova and Soviet Documentary Film, and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as:  
Testimony of an Absent Witness, *Holocaust Studies* 18.3 (2012)

Signed:

Date: 10 May, 2013





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## Notes on Transliteration and Sources

Transliteration of Russian is according to the Library of Congress system. Titles in the text are given in English and Russian at first mention (unless no transliteration is necessary), and thereafter in English only. Titles in the notes section and in the filmography are given in English, and titles in Appendix 2 are given in English and Russian.

Beyond Svilova's films and archival documents, I refer mainly to English-language sources. I am aware that there might exist additional non-English language sources, particularly in Russian, that would provide further scope to this thesis, and I encourage future researchers with access to these materials to supplement or challenge my analysis.



# Introduction

The focus of my research is Soviet documentary filmmaker, Elizaveta Svilova (1900-75), most commonly remembered, if at all, as the wife and collaborator of acclaimed Soviet film pioneer, Dziga Vertov (1896-1954). Having worked with her husband for many years, Svilova continued her career as an independent director-editor after Vertov fell out of favour with the Soviet authorities. According to on-screen credits, between 1939 and 1956 Svilova was the director-editor of over 100 documentaries and newsreel episodes, yet this corpus of films has received hardly any critical attention. As my thesis aims to demonstrate, the reasons for the lack of attention to Svilova and her films are partly due to her husband's eminent status – the rules whereby we construct film history have resulted in Svilova's contribution to Soviet documentary being absorbed into Vertov's – and this is related to the long-standing tendency within film criticism to marginalise the female director. Julia Wright has argued that Svilova's contributions to Vertov's canon have not been fully acknowledged because she was a woman.<sup>1</sup> The third factor that has led to a misunderstanding of Svilova's contribution is the ambiguity surrounding the role of the director in the Soviet film industry during the period of her career. Directors of documentaries, particularly newsreels, are understood to have made a limited impact on the shaping of their films as they were often absent from the shooting locations

and instead ‘directed’ the film at the editing table. I will argue that, for Svilova at least, having control of the editing process compensated for her absence from the shooting location and provided her with opportunities to make a substantial artistic contribution to her films. The last potential cause of Svilova’s marginalisation is of a logistical nature. Archived in the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive in Krasnogorsk (approximately twelve miles west of central Moscow), Svilova’s independent films are not easily accessible in the public domain and require a concerted effort to view. In this respect, my thesis also touches on issues regarding curatorial and archival policies, and how the latter shape our conception of a filmmaker’s contribution to the industry.

Beyond issues of access, engaging with Svilova’s body of work is by no means a straightforward task. Throughout the process of identifying her contribution – researching filmographies, archive catalogues and biographical accounts of her life – it is evident that sources do not always correspond with on-screen credits, the latter of which I consider to be the most reliable system of allocating film roles. Often films Svilova co-directed with Vertov, or filmmakers such as Yuli Raizman or Roman Karmen, are listed exclusively as the work of her collaborator. On other occasions, films for which she is credited as director-editor are either attributed to the name of a studio executive or attributed to no name at all. Also, sources that do attempt to acknowledge Svilova’s contribution, particularly to her collaborative films with Vertov, frequently contradict one another. These inconsistencies have resulted in a disjointed and ambiguous picture of Svilova. Characterised by numerous collaborations, various production roles (most notably alongside a film pioneer) and, importantly, by her gender, her contribution to Soviet documentary film has not been fully appreciated.

## The project of the thesis

Chapter One outlines my methodology for identifying Svilova's contribution to Soviet documentary film through her role as an editor, first as Vertov's collaborator and then as an independent director-editor. I also outline the context in which Svilova produced her films and the framework in which I am analysing them. By highlighting the contradiction between Marxist ideology and the reality inherited by the Central Committee, and in turn illustrating the policies of defence and legitimisation that emerged as a result of the deficit, I make clear the purpose of Svilova's films – what she as a state documentary filmmaker was employed to do. Cinema was mobilised to persuade the masses of the righteousness of the regime and their duty to participate in the realisation of Marx's communist utopia. I describe thematic planning and the structure of ideological control that provided Svilova with the subjects for documentation and the underlying rhetoric that was to drive each story. The subject matters of Svilova's films are not overtly political. For this reason, Svilova put to use her artistic prowess to prompt the viewer to make the cognitive leap between the images on-screen – of sporting events, cultural ceremonies and distant lands – and Central Committee policy. The analysis in the next three chapters substantiates my claim that Svilova's use of editing to create meaning and shape the emotions of the audience is reminiscent of theories associated with the Soviet montage school of the 1920s.

The following chapters analyse Svilova's independent films under a number of specific thematic headings. Chapter Two is centred on two of Svilova's films, *Oświecim* (*Osventsime*) and *Cinema Documents of the Atrocities of the German-Fascist Invaders* (*Kino-dokumenty o zverstvakh nemetsko-fashistskikh zakhvatchikov*, from here abbreviated



to *Atrocities*), both produced in 1945. These films provide the opportunity to explore in detail the techniques of montage that constitute Svilova's approach as a director-editor. I deconstruct *Oświecim* according to its dialectical and continuity-based editing structure and carry out a synchronic analysis to compare Svilova's atrocity sequences to other Allied film footage of Nazi concentration camps that emerged in the immediate post-war period. Beyond offering an analysis of Svilova's editorial decision-making, I interrogate the reasons for the films' omission of Jewish suffering. The rationale behind the absence is complex, particularly in the case of *Atrocities*, which was used as visual evidence at the main Nuremberg Trial. The effectiveness of *Atrocities* as evidence in a courtroom lies in the visceral power of the images. Here, I move away from analysing the structure of the film and consider instead Svilova's selection of shots. I introduce ontological questions, drawing on a range of theorists including Judith Butler, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes and André Bazin to measure the 'grievability' (to adopt Butler's term) of the images.

The third chapter, *Female Spectators and the Feminine Ideal*, focuses on the recurring use of the honourable female subject in Svilova's work and, more generally, her role in representing and promoting particular notions of gender. My analysis explores how Svilova establishes a relationship between her female audiences and the women featured in her documentaries and newsreels, with the latter intended as 'celluloid role models on whom the audience could pattern their lives'.<sup>2</sup> The chapter also places Svilova within the context of the Soviet Union's gender ideology, discussing in more detail notions pertaining to the social and political role of women in Soviet society in the Stalin era.

Chapter Four, *Foreign Lands and Depictions of Otherness*, focuses on Svilova's career between 1953 and her semi-retirement in 1956, exploring the role she played in educating the Soviet masses on the reimagining of the Soviet Union in the post-war era. This period witnessed an increase in documentaries and newsreel stories about foreign affairs. I study films with stories from, for example, China, Cambodia, the Eastern Bloc, the United States and Great Britain to read a shift toward cosmopolitanism as part of a campaign to refresh the global image of the country. As Tom Gunning has noted, 'Foreign news portrays not only a distant land but a particular point of view.'<sup>3</sup> I aim to explore how Svilova, first, took what was unfamiliar to audiences and made it familiar, representing it in a way that reflected the Soviet Union's evolving foreign policy, and, second, took the already familiar and made it more familiar, a process that challenges our understanding of 'foreignness' and encourages a thorough investigation of its semantic scope.

Chapter Five readdresses my main findings in the previous three chapters. It provides an opportunity to collate the observations I have made concerning Svilova's techniques and suggests how, and to what extent, she contributed to her artistic field. I also re-engage with the limitations placed on Svilova's status and the reasons why her career has been misunderstood. I conclude with some comments on what I believe a study of Svilova can teach us about the relationship between cinema and history, and the means of identifying a creative voice within broader socio-political processes. This line of enquiry opens up a discussion on the potential for further research within the field of documentary film.



## Chapter 1:

# The Context of Svilova's Career

### Svilova's life and career – an overview

The Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow holds a number of documents pertaining to Svilova's life and films. Some of the material was written by Svilova herself, comprising shot lists, scenarios and what she titles 'Autobiographies' in which she maps her professional life.<sup>1</sup> Svilova drafted a number of these autobiographies throughout her career, with each version adding recent projects and expanding on earlier ones. The intended purpose of these texts is unclear, though they might have been written to secure employment, similar to a CV. Svilova's last and most complete autobiography was written at a time very close to her death in 1975, which suggests that her intention for this one at least was to serve as an obituary. In addition to her autobiographies, there are a number of other sources that provide additional information about her life. Annette Michelson includes a footnote in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*,<sup>2</sup> Masha Enzenberger wrote an entry on Svilova in *The Women's Companion to International Film*,<sup>3</sup> Gwendolyn Foster contributed a piece on her in *Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary*,<sup>4</sup> and Peter

Rollberg has written a sketch in *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*.<sup>5</sup> The following biography is drawn mainly from these sources.

Very little is known about Svilova's ancestry and early life. Existing accounts agree that she was born on 5 September, 1900, into what she describes as the family of a railwayman who later died in the Russian Civil War. The obscurity of Svilova's background is not helped by the confusion that surrounds her first steps into the industry. In her final autobiography, Svilova states that she started working in a film laboratory in 1912, cleaning the film and aiding the selection of positives and negatives. However, the exact date fluctuates between 1911 and 1913 in previous drafts. Also, in her 1923 letter to *LEF* (abbreviated from Left Front of the Arts, a journal for the Soviet avant-garde community) Svilova claims that her career began in 1910.<sup>6</sup> Enzensberger proposes 1914, asserting that Svilova starts work for the Pathé brothers in Moscow.<sup>7</sup> Rollberg concurs, though he is able to elaborate and defines her role as a cutter and photo printer.<sup>8</sup> In this context, it is useful to remember that Svilova was born in 1900 so, whether she commenced her role in 1910 or 1914, she is extraordinarily young to begin a career in the film industry. The information does not confirm if Svilova carried out these early roles on a full-time or part-time basis, but it is logical to assume that her school education suffered to some extent.

Nevertheless, she states that she graduated from an all-girls secondary, and her letter to *LEF* indicates that she was literate, perhaps unexpectedly, considering her work commitments and that in the 1910s less than half of all female pupils who completed full-time education at aged sixteen were able to read and write.<sup>9</sup> Svilova claims that, by 1914, she was already an established editor, working regularly with Vladimir Gardin (1877-1965), a pioneering pre-revolutionary director and actor, and once with Vsevolod Meyerhold on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (*Portret Doryana Greya*, 1915).

In 1918 Svilova moved to Narkompros, in her words to ‘nationalise the film industry’. She remained there until 1922, managing a film warehouse where the negatives, positives and reels were stored. During Svilova’s employment at Narkompros, the Soviet film industry entered a formative phase, its rapid growth attracting the attention of studio authorities to the potential of the moving image as a powerful ideological tool. VFKO (the All-Russian Photo-Cine Department) took control of the newly-nationalised film industry in 1919.<sup>10</sup> As a result of its recommendations, Sovnarkom, the Council of People’s Commissars, established the first centralised state cinema organisation, Goskino.<sup>11</sup> Although Goskino was a state initiative, it was still expected to be self-financing – Vladimir Lenin had ‘an inner conviction of the great profitability of cinema if only it could be put on the right footing’.<sup>12</sup> The profitability to which Lenin referred was not limited to finance but encompassed the potential winning of minds. By 1922 Svilova was managing the editing workshop at Goskino. It is during this period that she began to collate all existing film material of Lenin in preparation for a filmic tribute.<sup>13</sup> Under the instruction of Grigori Boltyanský, a Lenin film enthusiast, Svilova not only collected the footage but in the presence of Lenin selected the negatives for inclusion.<sup>14</sup> The film reached audiences in 1923 in the guise of a special edition of the newsreel, *Goskino Calendar* (*Goskinokalendar*), directed by Vertov.<sup>15</sup>

This film was not the first on which Svilova and Vertov collaborate. They had first met in 1919 when Svilova agreed to edit *The Battle for Tsaritsyn* (*Boi pod Tsaritsynom*, 1919), a film Vertov had shot on the frontline of the Civil War. Svilova describes this experience in *Dziga Vertov in the Memories of his Contemporaries*, in which she implies that none of the other editors would work with Vertov due to his eccentricity and revolutionary ideas.<sup>16</sup> In her 1923 letter to *LEF*, Svilova notes that she wrote to

Vertov with a request to involve her in his work. Her letter, titled 'To the Council of Three: An Application', was a formal appeal to be acknowledged as a permanent member of Vertov's filmmaking crew, then made up of Vertov, Mikhail Kaufman and Ivan Beliakov, otherwise known as the Council of Three. It is difficult to believe that a public request was necessary, given Svilova's acquaintance with Vertov; in fact, they had married sometime in 1923 and thus were very well acquainted when the letter was published. Therefore, the letter was likely a publicity stunt orchestrated by Svilova and Vertov to provide exposure of their work and to raise awareness of their commitment to documentary cinema. The letter first outlines the general lack of concern studio filmmakers were showing to the potential of editing. Svilova implies that creativity played such a minor role during the post-production stage that she could edit direct from the script, aware that no artistic decisions would be made once the film was shot.<sup>17</sup> She continues the letter by criticising the industry's preference for fiction production, demanding that more attention be paid to newsreels and 'aspects of realism'. The final section of her article lauds the Council of Three for its *Cine-Pravda* (*Kinopravda*) series, celebrating its comprehension and editing structures. Svilova's interest in this particular series of newsreels is not surprising, considering her passion for documentary realism and the commitment to authenticity the films symbolise. They represent the embryonic stage of Vertov's Kino-eye aesthetic, one that he believed captured on celluloid the true essence of art and life.

In 1924, shortly after Lenin's death, Svilova recommenced gathering all documentary footage of his life. She assembled the footage with Vertov and together they made *Cine-Pravda no.21* (1925) and *Cine-Pravda no.22* (1925). Her autobiography states that these films served to 'chronicle the current and historical production of film', which was perhaps a way for her to articulate or acknowledge the ability of cinema to

preserve history. It is important to note that in the same year, 1924, Goskino was reborn as Sovkino.<sup>18</sup> The change came with the incentive to strengthen ideological control by introducing censorship of screenplays and instituting rules for film reviews in central media. Sovkino was also given a monopoly on importing foreign films to the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> Despite the Central Committee's efforts to force filmmakers into a Bolshevik, proletarian mould, it was unwilling to finance all film production and distribution.<sup>20</sup> State film organisations were forced to manoeuvre between ideology and the market. It is appropriate, then, that Svilova's film assignments during this time of oscillation were inherently pro-party. She assisted Vertov in the production of *Kino-Eye* (*Kinoglaz*, 1924), *The First October without Il'ich* (*Pervyi Oktiabr' bez Il'icha*, 1925) and *A Sixth Part of the World* (*Shestaia chast' mira*, 1926), which all emphasise industrial and social progress, and *Forward, Soviet!* (*Shagai, Sovet*, 1926), a film that simultaneously alludes to the misery of the pre-revolutionary era while casting an eye of optimism on the country's socialist future.

In 1928 the Soviet Union moved away from the liberalism of the New Economic Policy toward a system of social relations that radically changed the film industry; consequently, a number of directives were passed to reduce altogether the making of entertainment films and instead expand the production of propaganda.<sup>21</sup> In 1929 Soyuzkino took responsibility from Sovkino, overseeing all state studios, distribution centres and the cinema circuit.<sup>22</sup> Cinema, therefore, became the most controlled of all the arts. By this time, Vertov and Svilova are working in Kiev. Vertov's repeated attacks on conventional Soviet newsreels and other non-fiction films for their lack of realism provoked controversies with his colleagues, which eventually led to his dismissal from Sovkino in 1927 and to his acceptance of an invitation to work for the All-Ukrainian Photo-Cinema Administration (VUFKU).<sup>23</sup> Svilova, as his partner and



collaborator, went with him. It was there, with relative freedom to express themselves creatively, that Vertov and Svilova produced a number of significant films. *The Eleventh Year* (*Odinnadtsatyi*, 1928) and *Man with a Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kinoapparatom*, 1929) exemplify the level to which Vertov, as director, and Svilova, as assistant director and editor, had developed their artistry. From the exploration of montage to the design of live-recorded soundscapes, Vertov and Svilova's years at the VUFKU were arguably the most critically acclaimed of their collaboration. Svilova states that, from 1930, she began teaching editing techniques, particularly the editing of sound, at the Lenin Institute and assisted Vertov in the production of *Enthusiasm: Symphony of the Donbas* (*Entuziazm: Simfoniia Donbassa*, 1930), the first Soviet documentary sound film. In 1932 she started preparations for their next film, *Three Songs of Lenin* (*Tri pesni o Lenine*, 1934), carrying out research by night while teaching during the day.

*Three Songs of Lenin* was produced by Mezhrabpom.<sup>24</sup> Mezhrabpom was a successful studio, consistently making profits that were wisely reinvested in the company's expanding production schedule; particular emphasis was given to lavish entertainment films in genres such as comedy and science fiction.<sup>25</sup> To advance the commercial performance of its films, Mezhrabpom became the first Soviet film organisation to establish a publicity department that vigorously promoted its productions. The envy of the other studios, by 1929 Mezhrabpom had raised its annual production levels from four features and eight documentaries to sixteen features and twenty-three documentaries.<sup>26</sup> Its rise in documentary production led to the studio's employment of Vertov and Svilova at some point between 1930 and 1931, by which time it was in a far healthier condition than the state-initiated studios; in fact, as early as 1926, Soviet film journalist, Alexander Dubrovsky, observed that

the state studios were suffering immensely due to their frivolous spending and failure to understand the preferences of their audiences. Dubrovsky stated that ‘the greatest attention needs to be given to themes that reflect our everyday life, the reality that surrounds us, and that give us the opportunity to make broad use of exteriors.’<sup>27</sup> He cited Vertov and Svilova’s *A Sixth of the World* as a benchmark for future productions. Excerpts from Vertov’s diary indicate that the shooting, editing and promotion of *Three Songs of Lenin* lasts all of 1933 and 1934.<sup>28</sup> Vertov spent 1935 struggling against illness before the couple commenced the production of *Lullaby* (*Kolybel’naia*, 1937), their first film for Soiuzkinokhronika.<sup>29</sup>

Soiuzkinokhronika marked an important transition for Svilova. Here, her role developed from Vertov’s assistant director to his co-director, jointly producing *Glory to the Soviet Heroines* (*Slava sovetskim geroiniam*, 1938) and *Three Heroines* (*Tri geroinia*, 1938), and from 1939 she began to direct independently. It is not known whether Svilova actively sought autonomy from Vertov to follow her ambitions of becoming a director in her own right or whether it was a mutual decision to help distance her from the prejudice aimed at Vertov and save her career. Entries in Vertov’s diary, which signpost his gradual alienation from the industry, suggest the latter. While references such as ‘a creative project remains a project if we’re denied the conditions for its realisation ... I’m making every effort to begin work but so far I’ve been met with extreme caution ... The most terrible enemy of progress is prejudice – it impedes and blocks the path of development’<sup>30</sup> all point to his frustration, he also notes as early as 1934 that Svilova was at the time being denied recognition for her work because of the Central Committee’s vendetta against him.<sup>31</sup> It is clear that Vertov believed his notoriety was damaging Svilova’s reputation and hindering her future prospects.

The vendetta was related to the stringent policies of the Central Committee that aimed to reduce all tendencies in art to a single one and mobilise its entire bureaucratic apparatus to institutionalise its own truth; documentary filmmakers were encouraged to replace avant-garde aestheticism with commemorations to Stalin, serving to cement his personality cult in the minds of the audience members. While not the only factor in the demise of the avant-garde, the cinematic forms of dynamism that challenged audiences increasingly elicited close attention from the authorities. *Man with a Movie Camera* was subject to particularly harsh criticism, condemned for ‘propagandising opinions that had nothing in common with the views of the Soviet people’.<sup>32</sup> It can be argued that the Central Committee’s mounting suspicion of the avant-garde, repudiating the formalism and futurist aesthetic that underscored the 1920s montage era, was encapsulated in its wariness of Vertov. Behind its criticism lay a strengthening conviction that he represented a dangerous and unacceptable challenge to the Central Committee’s imperatives for cinema. The official criticism of his work and suppression of his numerous creative plans led to the alienation that most likely prompted Svilova’s departure. Offers of work diminished and he faced depression and physical illness. The prohibition on avant-garde film confirmed that socialist realism was accepted as the only ‘correct’ way of disseminating art and culture.

As an independent director-editor, Svilova’s output rapidly increased; between 1939 and 1940 she directed films including *In Transport* (*O transporte*), for an American trade exhibition, *Greater Force* (*Bol’shaia sila*), *Roof of the World* (*Krysha mira*), *River Chusovaya* (*Reka Chusovaia*) and *Learn about Collective Farms* (*V kolxoze vse uchatsia*). These films focus on the growth of domestic industries such as agriculture and trade, what Svilova describes in one of her autobiographies as ‘the good and excellent aspects of

Soviet life'. In 1941 she relocates to Kazakhstan. At the Alma-Ata studio she directs *Soviet Kazakhstan* (*Sovetskie Kazakhstan*, 1942) and *Banner of Victory* (*Znamia pobedy*, 1943); the latter, co-directed with Vertov, indicates that their professional separation is not clear-cut – they take this opportunity to direct together one last time. In 1944 Soiuzkinoekhranika became the Central Studio for Documentary Film.<sup>33</sup> By then it had more than twenty divisions collecting newsreel material from across the Soviet Union and its output amounted to seventeen per cent of all film production.<sup>34</sup> At the Central Studio for Documentary Film, Svilova cemented her status as a director-editor. She began directing episodes of *News of the Day* (*Novosti dnia*) in 1944, directing sixty-nine episodes until 1956 on an intermittent basis to coincide with her other projects for the studio, such as *Oświecim*, *Atrocities* and *Born by a Storm* (*Rozhdennye burei*), all produced in 1945. That year, Svilova also directed *Berlin* with Yuli Raizman, for which they received the highest award, a State Prize of the first degree. In 1946 Svilova directed *Parade of Youth* (*Parad molodosti*) and *Judgement of the Nations* (*Sud narodov*), the latter in collaboration with Roman Karmen. Svilova continued to focus on *News of the Day* in the post-war years, directing only a handful of documentaries such as *International Democratic Federation of Women* (*Mezhdunarodnaia demokraticheskaia federatsia zhenshchin*, 1947), *International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris* (*Mezhdunarodnaia demokraticheskaia federatsia zhenshchin v Parizhe*, 1948), *Yangtze River* (*Po reke Iantszy*, 1950) and two *Pioneer* (*Pioneriia*) newsreel episodes in 1952. In 1954 Vertov died of stomach cancer and Svilova's output drastically diminished after his death. She directed three episodes of *Foreign Newsreel* (*Inostrannaia kinoxronika*) in 1956 before retiring from full-time work later that year.

While in Alma-Ata, Svilova met filmmaker, Serafima Pumpyanskaya. In 2002 Pumpyanskaya shared some memories of Svilova in an interview with Yevgeni

Tsymbol.<sup>35</sup> She recalls that Svilova would often assist uncredited with the editing of Vertov's films as a past-time, even though she was always in demand from other directors. She also reveals that Svilova and Vertov lived without money, despite their relative prominence, and in the later years stretched Svilova's humble income to buy what they needed on a day-to-day basis. Regarding their relationship, Pumpyanskaya claims that, in Svilova, Vertov had a partner who fully understood him, relieved his anxieties in times of stress, and displayed genuine love and respect for his work. It comes as little surprise, then, that Svilova reacted poorly to the public denunciation of Vertov in March 1949 at an open party meeting held at the Central Studio for Documentary Film. Orchestrated by the Central Committee, and led by the Deputy Minister of Cinema, Visili Shcherbina – who incidentally had just published an attack on 'aestheticising cosmopolitans' in the official film journal, *Art of Cinema* – the meeting aimed to ostracise Vertov once and for all by collating the various accusations and suspicions directed at him since the mid-1930s.<sup>36</sup> Filmmakers including Roman Karmen; director and cameraman, Vladimir Eshurin; director and screenwriter, Nicholas Sadkovich; cameraman, Solomon Cohen; and director, Leonid Kristi, were prompted to pass judgement on his formalist methods. Fearing the curtailment of their own careers, they largely spoke negatively of him. Vertov was left with no choice but to apologise and, until his death in February 1954, accept gratefully any film assignment he was offered.

After Svilova had cared for Vertov during the three-month fight with cancer that led to his death, she dedicated the rest of her life to building his legacy, taking his and their films on exhibitions to countries such as the German Democratic Republic and France. In the final years of her life, she toured Europe with the re-edited version of *Three Songs of Lenin* (1969), which by then included the ten original negatives of Lenin

that she found in 1932, and published the book, *Three Songs of Lenin* (1970), on the centenary of Lenin's birth. Pumpyanskaya reiterates the efforts that Svilova made after her husband's death to preserve his legacy. She claims that Svilova took the fate of Vertov's status in her hands and worked tirelessly to ensure that his impact on Soviet cinema would not be forgotten. Svilova died on 11 November, 1975, and was buried alongside Vertov at the Novodevichy cemetery in Moscow.

## **Cinema as a tool of state legitimisation**

My biographical sketch of Svilova's life and career alludes to the ideological forces that shaped the Soviet cinema industry between the 1920s and 1950s, and Svilova's place within it. However, given that after Svilova's collaboration with Vertov she worked until her retirement at the Central Studio for Documentary Film, a state-initiated studio, it is necessary to construct a more detailed picture of the relationship between the Soviet state and its cinema industry. The Central Studio for Documentary Film produced films on behalf of the Central Committee, the highest body of the Soviet Union's Communist Party. The Central Committee was set up initially by Lenin in 1912 and comprised an elite group of Bolsheviks.<sup>37</sup> The revolution of 1917 represented the accumulation of many years of unrest under the Tsarist regime. Oppressed and disillusioned, the population needed change. However, while social conditions set in motion the first step of Lenin's Marxist vision – Russia was a country still in the early stages of capitalism, dominated by a peasantry workforce – they severely hindered all further steps. As soon as Lenin promised the masses 'peace, land and bread', which signified ceasing Russia's involvement in World War I, the abolition of private property and an end to widespread food shortages, difficulties emerged, grounded largely in the incompatibility of Marxism

with the Tsarist structure. Lenin was aware of the deficit, declaring that, 'Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched, that we must think very carefully how to combat its defects.'<sup>38</sup> Thus, as soon as he seized power, Lenin was faced with a problem of political legitimacy; he needed to reconcile the gap between the absence of material production and his claim that the new state had entered a transitional phase – euphemistically described as 'social construction'. Jamie Miller observes that, 'In truth, the Soviet Union became a dictatorship of elite communists that would have to endure years of gradual industrialisation before it could claim to have reached the transition described by Marx.'<sup>39</sup>

In response to the irreconcilable gap between Lenin's vision and the reality in which he hoped to reify it, by the early 1920s, he and the other members of the Central Committee had developed a defensive mentality. The Committee was unable to explain to the educated masses why its regime did not correspond with Marxism, and the working class was arguably indifferent to such discrepancies – all that mattered to people was their quality of life. As Miller implies, the very existence of the Committee, comprising elite individuals, challenged the democracy Lenin had outlined prior to seizing power.<sup>40</sup> There is evidence to suggest that Lenin wanted to provide a democracy, such as the points raised in his doctrine, 'State and Revolution' (1917); however, when he was defeated in the constituent assembly elections he closed the assembly, banned rival parties and implemented police control. Rather than provide the masses with the opportunity to contribute ideologically to the future direction of the country, the Central Committee worked to legitimise itself and what it perceived as its indispensable role. Internal structural constraints were compounded by the uneasy relationship between the Central Committee and the rest

of the world. Marx's vision of a revolution was universal but the Soviet Union soon became isolated.

The Bolsheviks chose cinema as their principal weapon in the campaign to win the minds of the masses,<sup>41</sup> a key constituent in the Central Committee's quest for validity: what could be described as the frontline of political legitimacy, to train society into new patterns of political, economic and social thought. Art was not to offer an objective depiction of reality, but instead articulate the revolutionary ideal and serve as a didactic tool of revolutionary rhetoric. The truthfulness of the artistic portrayal was to be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of the labouring classes in the spirit of socialism, designed to disseminate policies, settle unrest and educate the masses on political issues, all while circumventing illiteracy. Lenin needed a medium that was primarily visual in its appeal, one that could overcome differences of language and cultural development. The fact that it was also mechanical symbolised progress, and it was in turn augmented as the art form of the revolution. It conquered time and space (unlike the theatre) and offered unprecedented realism, as one critic at the time described: 'The actor Polonsky or the actress Kholdnaya have died but their living smiles, every wrinkle and every breath can be seen with your own eyes.'<sup>42</sup> Cinema also offered the power of real movement, an allusion encapsulated by montage that, Boris Eichenbaum argued, made more of an impression, with 'each frame attaining its full significance only in the context of its surrounding frames'.<sup>43</sup>

Cinema allowed audiences to develop a conscious and visual understanding of the revolution, the socialist dream and the traits of the new Soviet man and woman. It promoted communist ideology and the reality to which it had given rise, reconciling



the rhetoric of emancipation with the grim reality of Soviet life in the post-revolutionary era, serving to justify breakneck industrialisation, the hardships of low living standards and unrelenting poverty. The justification was the communist utopia that lay ahead, reassuring the masses that their feats and sacrifices were in their own best interests. Ultimately, then, it paid a type of ‘lip service’ while the Central Committee worked on – or pretended to work on – closing the gap between social reality and the utopia outlined by Marx, what Jamie Miller aptly describes as a type of ‘interim legitimacy’.<sup>44</sup> In this respect, we can argue that Soviet cinema at the time when Svilova began her career sought to protect the communist ideal from being exposed as, at best, unviable and, at worse, fraudulent.

## Stalin and thematic planning

While Lenin respected the value of cinema in his need to legitimise the regime and mobilise the new Soviet society – he famously remarked that ‘cinema is for us the most important of all the arts’<sup>45</sup> – it was Stalin who fully exploited its didactic function. After he was elected the Chairman of the Central Committee in 1922, Stalin immediately surrounded himself with personnel he could trust. In 1924, after Lenin’s death, Stalin ruthlessly continued his rise to power, eliminating his opponents by any means necessary. Yet, he too recognised the inability of the Central Committee to reconcile a grandiose ideological outlook with structural constraints and solved the problem, like Lenin, by promoting a policy of defence. The deliberate propagation of Stalin’s personality linked all the successes of the country with his name and all the failures with ‘enemy intrigues’, and this shaped the cult’s stereotypes in public consciousness. The figure of Lenin was slowly marginalised into a secondary position in the cinema mythology of the late 1920s, so much so that *Three Songs of Lenin*

‘sounded almost non-conformist’.<sup>46</sup> The late 1920s also witnessed the collapse of the New Economic Policy, and the change to orthodox Stalinism came in two stages: the first, called the Cultural Revolution, was a time when society saw a brief return of the utopian spirit of early Bolshevism, and the second was a vast change to the country’s social and economic structure, cruel repression and the establishment of a conservative artistic order. Filmmakers were coerced to work with principles and methods that were best suited to Stalin’s regime. Socialist realism was imposed on all artists, a genre that aimed to replace genuine realism with an appearance of realism, preventing free thought and social criticism. Stalin intended to convince audiences that he alone could depict the world as it truly was. He argued that cinema was the greatest means of mass agitation, stating: ‘If I can control the medium of motion pictures, I would need nothing else in order to convert the entire world to communism.’<sup>47</sup>

The Central Committee held the First All-Union Party Conference in Moscow in March 1928 to discuss the building of a film industry that made commercially successful and politically correct films. Aleksandr Krinitsky, head of the Agitprop Department, demanded expansion of the cinema network and an increase on the number of copies of each film, arguing that a healthy economic and ideological industry was dependent upon films ‘comprehensible to millions’.<sup>48</sup> His closing speech outlined what needed to change: a more distinguished talent base, greater comprehension among the film-going public and closer supervision of the studios.<sup>49</sup> Other reports, by Party members such as Konstantin Shvedchikov, Ivan Smirnov and Vladimir Meshcheryakov followed suit; for example, proposing initiatives to reach audiences in the countryside. Rural populations were forced to join collective farms and buy projectors. Consequently, from 1928 to 1940 the number of

installations quadrupled and the number of sold tickets tripled.<sup>50</sup> R. Pikel wrote in April 1928 that the conference had not only been a turning point in outlining logistical policies, which had led to a degree of self-sufficiency by producing its own film stock and other screening equipment, but had cemented the importance of tightening ideological control, as Krinitsky's had hoped: 'It [the conference] gave clear directives to cinema organisations on the strengthening of the political and ideological heights ... cinema will become a powerful weapon of education and organisation of the masses.'<sup>51</sup>

As a result of the conference, in 1928 the industry became subject to thematic planning. The plans were a vital process by which Stalin sought to mobilise cinema through the integration of Central Committee directives and harness it toward the goals of the regime.<sup>52</sup> To a great extent, they coincided with government campaigns and concerns at a given time, allowing the Central Committee to determine fully the thematic coverage of every Soviet film. The two main priorities were to produce films that would deal with the long-term origins and existence of the regime and films that would legitimise current government policies or campaigns in a given area.<sup>53</sup>

By engaging with the films, each viewer would not only be able to keep up-to-date with the ongoing fluctuations to the Soviet Union's domestic policies and international relations; more importantly, each viewer understood how he or she was expected to respond emotionally to the developments. The Central Committee believed that planning production, distribution and exchange would ensure a fair distribution of resources. However, the application of planning was not only confined to economic matters but applied also to controlling the content of cultural

production. For cinema to follow the path outlined at the party conference in 1928, it too would be subject to planning. Planning methodology was based on the so-called 'direct order' system, whereby a combination of political figures and cinema administration bureaucrats would compile a list of priority thematic areas relating to the pertinent and topical political issues and distribute them to media agencies.<sup>54</sup> In the case of cinema, the thematic plan was drawn up by the Central Committee and sent to the cinema administration. Acting as the first measure of quality control in the production process, the plan designated a particular quantity of films that needed to be produced each year and the themes that were to be covered in each one. The precise detail of the plan would usually be discussed by the cinema administration's artistic council, which consisted of artistic and bureaucratic members of cinema organisations and studios, as well as representatives of the film industry and the press. These themes would be elaborated upon, before the studios received an order to make a certain quantity of films on, for example, developments in the transport industry, international relations or the new Soviet woman. The studio would then be given the responsibility of assigning the most reliable scriptwriter and director to fulfil each project. After 1931, thematic planning became subject to increasing control from the Central Committee and the cinema administration,<sup>55</sup> indicating that opportunities for filmmakers to reify their own visions were largely non-existent. Instead, the plans intended to narrow down thematic possibilities, preventing filmmakers from skirting less popular themes.

The process was developed in 1932 when scriptwriters and directors were introduced to the formulation of planning. As it was recognised that artists were not necessarily familiar with the intricate demands of state policy, filmmakers received rigorous training, though the ideological aspects of the plans were still determined by the

Central Committee.<sup>56</sup> This means that, throughout the 1930s and beyond, filmmakers were aware that they had to submit proposals and ideas which would at least appear to legitimise the regime and meet its political demands, and any attempts to work beyond the narrow confines of the thematic plan were severely punished. Jamie Miller outlines the eventual planning process as follows: first, the draft plan was sent for discussion to union meetings and literary organisations; second, studio personnel made any required changes and considered whether the plan could be implemented; third, the cinema administration would give its confirmation of the plan; and fourth, the official censorship body of cinema, the GRK,<sup>57</sup> approved each plan.<sup>58</sup> The agitprop department of the Central Committee offered recommendations at any given time during this process. From 1933 the Central Committee's Department of Organisation (Orgburo) began to get more involved in the debates and criticisms of the plans. It established a new centralised cinema commission that controlled all film projects from the script stage through to distribution. On 7 July, 1933, the Orgburo issued its own decree that stated: 'Not one theme can be put into production without being viewed by this commission.'<sup>59</sup> In December 1934 the commission was dissolved and its responsibilities were handed to the Central Committee's Department of Cultural Enlightenment.<sup>60</sup>

The ideological and organisational influence of the plans was discussed at annual thematic planning conferences, which began in 1931 and were attended by senior Central Committee members. Every year the conference would examine issues such as genre, the effectiveness of the script work and the efficiency of the production process. It was crucial that studios did not attempt to take scripts into production before a complete version had been authorised by the Central Committee. This was

achieved by the strict control of film stock, which would only be issued once a complete and final draft of the script had been approved.

From the late 1930s the Central Committee started to issue decrees authorising the final version of each annual plan.<sup>61</sup> These steps ensured that the Committee could supervise the thematic coverage of every film produced in the Soviet Union. They coincided in 1937 with the placing of special commissions within scenario department to oversee the writing process.<sup>62</sup> Thematic planning, then, represented the principal means by which Stalin engaged cinema in the building of the Soviet socialist empire; it safeguarded the creation of films that would defend and legitimise current government policies. Several films were included in thematic plans that sought to show ordinary people they had become empowered through the revolution; that the Soviet system was based on mass participation, the sharing of power and resources, and the establishment of a fair human existence.<sup>63</sup> The films were evidence that the members of the Central Committee had the same concerns, ambitions and fears as any Soviet citizen. As Jamie Miller describes, ‘The rulers and the ruled supposedly merged into a mythical and glorious single entity.’<sup>64</sup> By the 1940s, stricter procedures were in place as a means of making the plans more effective. It was suggested that the plans should include precise characteristics of ideological thematic material. A clear correlation of genres was established, as were ‘indicators of an artistic-ideological quality’ such as ‘class steadfastness’.<sup>65</sup> The price paid for such ideological investment was a slowing down of production during the last years of Stalin’s life, almost to the point of standstill and paralysis in the cinema profession. Ivan Bolshakov, who had served as the head of Soviet cinema since 1939, wrote in 1951 that ‘the advancement of young directors has been at a standstill for the past ten to fifteen years.’<sup>66</sup>

As a result of the plans and the increasingly stringent requirements on filmmakers, the industry stopped growing throughout the 1930s and 1940s; only a handful of foreign films were exhibited and the number of domestically produced films declined.<sup>67</sup> The plans effectively censored certain subjects, and filmmakers – with the Central Committee as co-author – were expected to produce films that were essential for maintaining Stalin's regime in its given form. As socialist realism became the only approved aesthetic, more and more precise stipulations as to what constituted an acceptable story were put in place, resulting in a severe shortage of usable scripts and scenarios. If directors were given a measure of freedom, the Committee feared that they would experiment and regress back to the formalist montage of the 1920s. Instead, the director was supervised to ensure that he or she followed the script. On the occasions when the director was found to have digressed from the script, the film was shelved. With film stock and other production costs wasted, Soviet filmmaking during the Stalin era was largely an economically unviable practice.

The decline of film production was also a result of the purging of cinema officials, which led to the constant reorganisation of the industry. Although Stalin had no understanding of the filmmaking process, he treated cinema as a significant facet of his regime, certain that it possessed great power, and was swift in ousting any members of staff who he perceived to have failed in their role. He was also the chief censor: 'From the mid-1930s ... he personally viewed and approved every film exhibited in the Soviet Union.'<sup>68</sup> Yet, it was not only the writing and production stages under strict supervision; film distribution was also subject to stringent policy. Every year the GUKF published a catalogue of all the films and newsreels that were allowed to be screened and those that were banned. The ownership of projectors was also controlled – each one had to be registered with the film distributions service,

Soyuzkinoprokat.<sup>69</sup> The plans, together with their expensive and time-consuming processes, suggest that the Central Committee spared no effort to prevent the production, distribution and exhibition of works that it considered ideologically questionable.

In the early 1950s, as Stalin withdrew from the real world, his view of the Soviet Union and beyond became influenced by the films he viewed and censored. Peter Kenez argues that, in doing so, he was deceived by his own lies.<sup>70</sup> Stalin did not feature in many films himself, preferring instead to be depicted ‘by a tall and handsome actor’,<sup>71</sup> and his presence was instead felt in tributes to the themes of his regime. However, Stalin’s shaping of Soviet cinema toward the overarching theme of legitimacy and totemic power meant that films which could not plausibly accommodate him in their subjects were made to echo his chosen motifs. *News of the Day no.53* (Svilova, 1953), for example, features a story that exhibits the State Museum of Oriental Culture in Moscow, which was documented as part of the Sino-Soviet rhetoric. The museum was seized after the revolution and was used to encourage the spread of socialist power in the Far East.<sup>72</sup> Instead of legitimising the need for constant surveillance, the story reinforces to the audience that such methods of control were a fabric of its society. Svilova’s coverage of the museum focuses on the images of Stalin and Mao that pervade the walls and architecture. Portraits and tapestries of the leaders hang in between the display cabinets of exotic vases and urns. Their collective cult of personality enjoys a new level of intensity in which the leaders, Stalin in particular, are hailed as artwork themselves; extreme close-up shots of their facial features suggest that they are worthy of the same reverence and critical examination as the ornaments surrounding them. Yet, the nature of these shots does not only evoke adoration in the viewer – the film’s



audience is invited alongside the museum goers to perceive Stalin's image as art – but also fear. One shot holds on an extreme close-up of Stalin's unblinking eyes, reminiscent of George Orwell's Big Brother scrutinising the population of Oceania through its telescreens. Svilova has carefully chosen which artworks to feature, selecting those that most lucidly refer to the Sino-Soviet pact; the narratives contained within each painting prompts in the viewer's mind a vision of unity. Eliminating the need to declare outright the countries' budding comradeship, Svilova assembles a montage of portraits depicting scenes of Sino-Soviet fraternity. The final portrait illustrates a factory production line on which both Chinese and Soviet workers toil. Behind the production line portraits of Stalin and Mao hang on pillars. The portrait implies that industrialisation is dependent on socialist harmony but, more importantly, it reminds audiences that they are under permanent supervision, an autocratic scare tactic designed to preserve absolute control.

The presence of Stalin in the story is so formidable one might find it difficult to believe that he had died approximately six months prior to the newsreel's release. From the Central Committee's perspective, the story served two functions: to inform Soviet audiences of burgeoning relations in the Far East and to safeguard social stability by drawing on the fear incited by Stalin's image while members of the Central Committee jostled to become his replacement. The ramifications of Stalin's death are evident in Svilova's newsreels throughout the remainder of 1953 and those produced in 1954. *News of the Day no.60* (1954), for example, contains a story about the Soviet youth ice hockey team, reporting that the team had beaten Poland by seven goals to one. The victory itself was not necessarily deemed a newsworthy event. The Soviet Union's senior team had won the World Championships earlier that year, which was a huge achievement considering it was the country's debut in the

tournament; yet, this story was not to my knowledge documented in any newsreel. The youth match becomes significant once it is placed in the appropriate political context. Kathleen Cioffi, in her analysis of the effect of socialism on Polish theatre in the 1950s, explains that the aftermath of Stalin's death witnessed Polish independent movements repudiating plans for the systematic Sovietisation of their state and instead called for de-Stalinisation.<sup>73</sup> In response, it was crucial for the reorganised Central Committee to reassure the masses that the Soviet Union's dominance over subordinate communist countries was to continue despite resistance. It was not until 1957, a year after Svilova's retirement, when steps were taken by Khrushchev to approve a filmmakers' union, advised in part by Mikhail Romm, a director and proponent of artistic freedom.<sup>74</sup>

In the past section I have provided one of the major contexts for Svilova's career, namely the Central Committee's ideological objective to bestow legitimacy to the state and disseminate its policies through the medium of cinema. During the time of her career, cinema was understood as a tool to mobilise and persuade the masses of the righteousness of the regime and to instruct them of their duty to participate in the realisation of Marx's communist utopia. In other words, by the time Svilova commenced her independent career in 1939, there was an established structure of ideological control in place that provided her with the subjects for documentation and the themes she was to emphasise in each story. The following section on film aesthetics and semiotics explains how Svilova adhered to this format of production. First, however, it is necessary to engage in more detail with Svilova's role as a director-editor.

## Identifying Svilova's artistic contribution

As the role of a director-editor is complex, it is important to outline the methodology behind identifying Svilova's contribution to her films. Alison McMahan saw the predicament of attribution as the major challenge to her research into the films of Alice Guy Blaché, a filmmaker who was widely considered the first female director of the Hollywood studio system: 'Given the length and breadth of Guy's career and the variety of roles she played within the industry, how is one to approach the body of films labelled as "hers"? Indeed, which films do we say are hers – the films she wrote, the films she directed, the films she produced, or all of the above?'<sup>75</sup> McMahan raises an interesting point: the vocabulary we employ to assign work is not always sufficiently explicit.

Although capitalist forces require film studios to place certain restraints or demands on a director, it is still universally understood that the director has controlled the functions of expression and communication of a film, and, in Paisley Livingston's words, exercised control over any collaborators.<sup>76</sup> This account of film authorship, however, cannot be readily applied to a director-editor such as Svilova. While she too was employed by a film studio, and answerable to its hierarchy of management, what separates Svilova from traditional notions of authorship is in the collection of the footage: even the films for which she is credited as the director-editor, as far as we know, Svilova did not travel to shooting locations, allowing her no control over what was shot or how it was shot. Instead, camera operators documented events unsupervised and sent the material to the studio. It was at this point, when the material arrived at the studio, that Svilova became involved in the process. She would have viewed the rushes and then, having chosen the shots that were to be included in

the film, cut them together to narrate a story that legitimised the regime. It can be argued that this process of film production was not exclusive to the Soviet Union. Studios outside the country would have operated using similar methods, particularly during the war years, but these methods are now archaic. A contemporary documentary filmmaker will have far more control over his or her film, by personally shooting the material or by supervising camera operators on location.

Although Svilova did not direct camera operators, she used her experience and prowess to select the appropriate shots and create meaning through their arrangement. Therefore, my identification of Svilova's contribution is dependent on the principle of editorial power – the belief that an editor can guide an audience and its emotions. Editors perform with different hues of expression, meaning, camera angle, shading, camera movement, emphasis and perspective. Eventually all are blended into the final impression. Joe Hutshing argues that, 'Editing is like painting but there is a limited palette ... Editors work with the shots they have, yet there is an infinite variety within that palette.'<sup>77</sup> Carol Littleton concurs, theorising that the success of editing depends upon finding the right combination within the palette: 'An editor must understand all the tools that they have at their disposal – image size; quickness of the cut; using camera moves; juggling the sequence of events; staying with the linear sequence without interrupting the action; and cross cutting.'<sup>78</sup> Svilova performs a unifying function of sorts; responsible for the overall aesthetic, pace and form of her films. My analysis of Svilova's contribution, to her films and to Soviet documentary cinema, takes place within these parameters.

While Soviet documentary cinema was not unique in its processes, it can be argued that the tendency of Soviet filmmakers to theorise editing in the formative years of

the genre – ideas that are still today very much at the root of film form – sets apart the Soviet experience from other national cinemas. An understanding of this history is vital in order to appreciate the role Svilova played and identify her contribution. I have already outlined how Vertov and Svilova's collaboration began and ended, but it is necessary here to analyse Svilova's contribution as the editor of their films. This contribution is in some respects relatively simple to understand: many of Vertov's films are hailed as masterpieces for the ingenuity of their montage sequences, and this does not refer only to their ideological intelligence (for which Vertov should largely be credited) but the physical skill involved in their construction. Graham Roberts describes *Man with a Movie Camera* as 'an essential example of montage'<sup>79</sup> and Birgit Beumers regards it as 'probably the best documentary of the 1920s', owing to how it 'joins images of the life in a Soviet city in a fast-paced montage, whilst also cutting to other sites that offer an extension of time and space'.<sup>80</sup> *Man with a Movie Camera* utilises every resource of editorial and cinematographic manipulation available to create a portrait of 'life caught unawares' on a typical day across four cities of the Soviet Union. For Vertov and Svilova, it represented a departure from being documentarians to becoming cine-poets, creating a type of self-reflexive or meta-cinema where the very analysis of movement becoming an act of montage, as did the entire filmmaking process.

The basis of Beumers's passion for the film appears as much to do with its technical qualities as it does Vertov's development of film as an art form. She suggests that 'the sequence where he splices frames to collapse the Bolshoi Theatre, the fortress of tradition, demonstrates powerfully the potential of the cinematic image.'<sup>81</sup> This statement is an example of how Svilova's contribution to the partnership is, albeit I expect inadvertently, undermined. While Vertov may have instructed Svilova of his

aim for this particular sequence, it was undoubtedly Svilova's skills as an editor that made it the success it became, likewise countless other sequences in *Man with a Movie Camera* and elsewhere. Yuri Tsivian argues that 'Svilova made Vertov's montage madness a reality,' a clear indication of her role in reifying Vertov's abstract theorisations.<sup>82</sup>

Editing was a key component of Vertov's Kino-eye manifesto. He stated that: 'We attribute a completely different significance to editing and regard it as the organisation of the visible world.'<sup>83</sup> He later stated that 'Kino-eye uses every possible means in montage, comparing and linking all points of the universe in any temporal order, breaking, when necessary, all the laws and conventions of film construction. It means organising film fragments into a film object, writing something cinematic with the recorded shots,'<sup>84</sup> what he later summarised in one word, *Kinochestvo*: the art of organising the necessary movements of objects in space as a rhythmical artistic whole, in harmony with the properties of the material and the internal rhythm of each object.<sup>85</sup> Vertov separates editing into distinctive categories: during observation; after observation; during filming; after filming; by sight; and final editing.<sup>86</sup> At the very least Svilova was responsible for the final edit. At this stage, she reveals minor themes and reconciles them with the major ones; reorganises the footage into the best sequence to bring out the core of the film-object; coordinates similar elements and calculates the montage groupings.<sup>87</sup> According to Vertov:

The continuous shifting of the pieces until all are placed in a rhythmical order such that all links of meaning coincide with visual linkage. As the final result of these mixings, shifts, cancellations, we obtain a visual equation, a visual formula, as it were. This formula, this equation, obtained as a result of the general montage of the recorded film documents is a 100 per cent film-object.<sup>88</sup>

*Man with a Movie Camera* was the culmination of a decade's experimentation. By the time Svilova began her collaboration with Vertov in 1921, he was already established as a prolific documentary filmmaker, producing agitational films ('agitki') to exhibit across the Soviet Union on agit-trains, a means of exporting the news of the revolution to the Eastern regions. His film experiments were actively encouraged by the Central Committee and he began to gather around him a group of filmmakers who came to call themselves 'kinocs' (cine-eyes), of which we know Svilova became an integral member. Vertov believed in the absolute ability of the cinema apparatus to reproduce the facts of life and in the necessity of editing to arrange this reality into an expressive whole. Between 1922 and 1925 the kinocs produced twenty-three issues of *Cine-Pravda* to experiment with Kino-eye. The newsreels comprise a number of progressive montage techniques, such as trick photography, multiple exposure, candid camera and animation.

In 1926 Svilova edited two feature-length documentaries for Vertov, *Forward, Soviet!* and *A Sixth Part of the World*, for which she was also credited as the assistant director. While this credit is fairly unhelpful in terms of specifying Svilova's contribution to the directorial responsibilities, it represents at the very least a concrete symbol of her progression in the partnership. *Forward, Soviet!* was constructed from newsreel footages and aimed to show how the Soviet Union had been transformed by Bolshevism. Svilova constructs 'a highly coherent narrative that uses a number of flashbacks from the normality of the present to the chaos of the civil war',<sup>89</sup> organising the 'seemingly random footage into a strict system'.<sup>90</sup> Aleksandr Fevralsky wrote at the time of the film's release that 'the film shows high technical expertise ... the intertitles increase its emotional effect, which is due in the main to the remarkably rhythmical quality of the montage.'<sup>91</sup> In addition to her perception of

time in the film, she finds inventive ways of introducing and structuring factual material through rhetoric. She uses what Jeremy Hicks describes as a 'from ... to' structure, in which ruined houses or factories are contrasted with newly built homes and full-tilt production.<sup>92</sup> Images become not solely an illustration but evidence in an argument. Svilova allows Vertov to assert rather than illustrate, to demonstrate the incredible power of documentary film to persuade and exhort. The capacity of the film's montage sequences to influence audience emotion was noted in a contemporary review,<sup>93</sup> as was the seamlessness with which Svilova moves from one event to another: 'the most amazing montage, magnificently linking all the sequences into a single monolithic film in which you have absolutely no sense of interruption.'<sup>94</sup>

We know that Svilova was closely supervised by Vertov in her assembling of this film. Vladimir Korolevich, who interviewed Svilova about her contribution to *Forward, Soviet!*, recalls that she started to laugh and said, 'We all work ... the cameramen shoot what they see, life ... I connect it up according to instructions ... we are all together, united by a single thought.'<sup>95</sup> Using rhetoric to create lists, for example, is evident in films Svilova did not edit – an allusion to Vertov's influence – as is the combination of archive and new footage, but it can be argued that Svilova's talent enables her to develop these techniques. The final sequence of the film, in which an orator in a working man's club celebrates the installation of light bulbs, Svilova cuts to the word 'Lenin' in electric lights, followed by a shot of the dead leader as the orator encourages people not to forget him. Vertov used this technique in *The History of the Civil War* (*Istoriia grazhdanskoi voiny*, 1921), in which he juxtaposes a speech by Trotsky with action sequences. Svilova's development of the technique in *Forward, Soviet!* augments both words and images with much greater force. While she was a proficient editor by the mid-1920s, she was evidently still learning her craft. A further,



and again considerably more polished, use of this technique in her independent film, *International Democratic Federation of Women*, made in 1947 and analysed in Chapter Four, suggests that Svilova took inspiration from Vertov and aspired to perfect what he taught her. Vertov himself described her career as progressing ‘from splicing to editing’, acknowledging a key distinction between two words that are often used interchangeably.<sup>96</sup> This can be understood to mean that, in Vertov’s opinion, Svilova went from simply following instructions to engaging fully with the craft, a decision-maker who became ‘so familiar with the footage, with all of its nuances and possibilities’.<sup>97</sup>

*A Sixth Part of the World* encompasses the vast expanse of Soviet Russia, revisiting for Vertov a sub-genre he developed in issues 18 and 19 of *Cine-Pravda*. The film takes a first-person narrative, suggesting influences in modernist poetry, particularly Walt Whitman for whom ‘A Song of Myself’ was a reflection not of himself but of America. For Vertov, *A Sixth Part of the World* is ‘a symbolic creation of nation through film enunciation’.<sup>98</sup> The claim that the film is poetic is made primarily on account of its structure, the way in which the shots are linked, and the effect that this has upon the audience. The film ‘owes its enormous power to affect the viewer to the exceptional skill with which it has been constructed’. Svilova’s dominant organisational principle is that of the list or catalogue, a re-emergence from *Forward, Soviet!*. Sequences are broken down into the various elements they seek to contrast. The second part of the film, for example, evokes a sense of the geographical contrasts of the USSR. It starts by comparing shepherds in different places, before listing distant locations and different people. Svilova then juxtaposes the various ways in which they eat before moving onto a comparison of young and old.

Svilova's listing of the nationalities creates a sense of the diversity of the Soviet Union. The end result is not a dry listing or cataloguing but, rather, 'the evocation of a seething panoply of ethnic difference united in common ideological aim'.<sup>99</sup> The argument is strengthened by the sheer scope of the material. Cataloguing structures the film through dynamic tension, yet from the middle of the catalogue it may seem that we are being asked to see only analogical rather than logical connections. In fact, we must focus on the rhetorical purpose of the film. Svilova's ability to edit predominantly ethnographic images contributes greatly to the film's visual beauty, and for this Vertov and his expeditionary method of shooting must be credited. Nikolai Assev saw the film as an indication of the potential for a collaborative mode of filmmaking:

The work of Vertov, his cameramen, his scouts, his editors, in a word the work of the entire collective of the kinocs, without any equivocation of course deserves approval of every kind, not only for the technical side but, in the main, for the very fact that it has been realised.<sup>100</sup>

Then, despite Svilova's modesty in her calculation of her contribution to Vertov's oeuvre, it was acknowledged at the time, though perhaps not by many, that there were other creative voices shaping the aesthetic of his films.

Fired from Sovkino after *A Sixth Part of the World*, Vertov, Svilova and Boris Kaufman (who was still working as the kinoc's primary cameraman), were hired by the All-Ukrainian Photo-Cinema Administration to produce a visual celebration of the October Revolution. *The Eleventh Year* represents further degrees of experimentation in post-production. Careful to use fewer intertitles than their previous films, it 'demonstrates silent cinema's incredible versatility in the articulation of ideas'.<sup>101</sup> In what could be described as more of a lab experiment than a film for

broad use, Svilova constructs sequences that are designed to be perceived visually; for example, themes of construction at the Dniepr hydroelectric dam are rendered by dynamic lines of marching workers, together with trucks and tractors moving in the same direction and then in juxtaposition. Despite Svilova's desire to make the sequence dynamic, she nevertheless sets the scene as a clearly defined space. Yet, any initial geographical logic is soon replaced by thematic sweeps that incorporate material from Kharkov, Sipov and the Volkhov hydroelectric dam, articulating a narrative of social transformation from traditional to modern. In doing so, the film portrays the First Five Year Plan as 'an epochal moment setting the country free from the misery of the Tsarist regime'.<sup>102</sup>

It is through Vertov's desire to map his narrative with sharply discontinuous temporal associations that Svilova becomes more reliant on metaphor.

Superimpositions within shots 'create rich palimpsestic imbrications of images of rippling water upon shots of traditional village life, in the double exposure of the dam itself combined with a detail of its construction, or the multiple exposure of six images of pumping pistons'.<sup>103</sup> Svilova's techniques are not only aesthetic but highly politicised. I will elaborate on the rhetoric of montage shortly, but for now it can be argued that the movement, dynamism and associations in *The Eleventh Year* point most of all to the glory of the socialist future, asserting that electricity and industrialisation are both key building blocks in the building of a utopian society. Contemporary reviews of the film are largely negative, owing to, for example, its over-complication,<sup>104</sup> fractured structure,<sup>105</sup> and omission of workers,<sup>106</sup> but Svilova staunchly defended it, to the point of writing to *Kino* and chastising the marginalisation of non-fiction film. She also used the article to remind readers of the film's box-office success in Ukraine, despite the attempts of exhibitors to exclude the

film from their programmes.<sup>107</sup> It is important to note that Vertov and only occasionally Kaufman are named in the negative reviews; Svilova's skills or motives are never called into question. This suggests that, while Vertov continues to be praised for the films that were and are deemed successes – often in such a way that his assistants and collaborators are overlooked – he was held accountable for the films that were not. Svilova was protected from criticism by Vertov's name and reputation. We could argue that this protection has now contributed to her marginalisation, but in the late 1930s, when Vertov fell under further scrutiny, it enabled her to continue her career relatively unscathed.

To return now to *Man with a Movie Camera*, there is little that has not been said about its self-reflexive structure and the complexity of its form.<sup>108</sup> However, it has not to my knowledge been discussed purely from the view of Svilova's exceptional editorial talent, and for that reason it is worth to celebrate once again what it offers as an innovative spectacle of documentary cinema. *Man with a Movie Camera* contains the most explicit form of disruptive-associative montage in Vertov and Svilova's collaboration, always encouraging the spectator to search for metaphoric meaning within the context of the respective sequence. Despite its name, Svilova employs disruptive-associative montage in such a way that the film flows seamlessly, devoid of any sense of interruption. It is 'thematically organised and coordinated with the help of montage devices, and the transitions between them so unnoticeable that they are taken in easily and harmoniously, without a sensation of jolts and disruption'.<sup>109</sup> The selected 'life-facts' are related to each other not through narrative continuity but through an ideological juxtaposition of presented events. For example, shots of machines and gears are inserted in sequences completely unrelated to industrial production; in this associative context, they symbolise the movement and progress of

a new society. Svilova inserts disruptive images among sporting events to disturb the montage flow of the games; for example, the shot of a somersaulting athlete is inserted at the beginning of a motorcycle and carousel sequence, between a shot of a ball in flight and the shot of cyclists on the motorcycle track.

Due to the metaphorical function of disruptive-associative montage, the full ideological meaning of the inter-cut images emerges only reactively; for example, a shot of a bottle dominating the park landscape preceding a shot of a derelict asleep on a park bench surrounded by rubbish. By virtues of instant association, the shot of the bottle implies that it contains alcohol. Simultaneously, the composition of the shot with the decorative bottle in the centre of a park connotes abundance and pleasure; as such, it is in ideological conflict with the derelict's living conditions. The audience is expected to ask questions pertinent to the social circumstances that represent these two environments: As Vlada Petrić observes, 'different social strata – the working class and the bourgeoisie, the poor and the well-to-do – are juxtaposed, alluding to the contradictions in their coexistence within the new socialist regime.'<sup>110</sup> A similar ideological implication is conveyed by juxtaposing images of a display of various consumer products in city store windows with images of working-class women undertaking physically debilitating labour. In the film's traffic shots, the camera, often with reduced cranking speed, catches glimpses of life. Machines are shown mostly in close-ups, interrelated with workers' enthusiastic expressions and fervent movements. The images of citizens enjoying sports are photographed in close-ups or medium shots and are rhythmically linked to shots depicting the sports competitions. Svilova's integration of these images creates an overarching metaphor about a society free of any capitalist exploitation of workers. At the same time,

however, this cinematic trope ‘discloses all the contradictions of an undeveloped and badly managed socialist state’.<sup>111</sup>

The power of the film, then, lies in its montage; as Kazimir Malevich writes in his review of the film, ‘the man who edited it has marvellously grasped the idea or task of the new montage, which gives expression to a new, unprecedented shift.’<sup>112</sup> As we know, it was not a man who edited the film but a woman, and we know this just by watching it: Svilova appears intermittently throughout the film cutting it together. Judith Mayne’s analysis of the shots of Svilova at work, where the act of editing is set up in direct relationship to the act of filming, argues that Svilova’s presence subverts the theory of the male gaze.<sup>113</sup> During a sequence in which Kaufman films train carriages in motion, the movement of the carriages is suspended in a series of frozen shots, later resuming after other frozen images, drawn from different points of reference in the film, become illustrations for the stages of film editing. The editing sequence itself comprises five segments, each of which demonstrates a specific function of montage. The first segment consists of nine stills, the first four of which are repetitions from the preceding carriage sequence. Shot five is a frozen long shot of a city full of people, previously unseen in the film. The four following images repeat the familiar pattern of alternating montage: two shots of peasant women, their heads in scarves and facing right, alternate with two shots of young girls facing left. Beyond being simply frozen, the images of the girls are filmstrips, with sprocket holes running vertically along the edges of each frame. Mayne interprets this to mean that ‘cinematic time is the function of cinematic space, itself broken down into two separate components, the space of the screen and the space of the filmstrip.’<sup>114</sup> The second segment of the sequence comprises two images of rolls of film on shelves. From images in motion, to images on a filmstrip, to rolls of film, the

ordering of these shots alludes to ‘the kind of voyeuristic fascination that has been central to the cinema since its earliest years of development’.<sup>115</sup> That the cameraman is male and the images on screen are of females is not a coincidence: technology and the female body function as subject and object respectively. However, distanced and demystified, the structure presented does not maintain the traditional contours of the man who controls the image and the woman who is the image. Instead, Svilova controls the image, even bringing it to life, and the next sequence demonstrates how this process happens. A series of shots depicts the basic materials with which Svilova works: a motionless take-up reel, photograms of a peasant woman and the filmstrip being wound onto a reel. Svilova operates the take-up reel and begins to cut the film. She juxtaposes shots of her own eyes with the eyes of the peasant woman on the filmstrip, before the strip suddenly comes to life. The illustration of Svilova’s materials allows us to understand the tools of her art, and the illustration of cutting, through the eye-line match, is an indication of the final product. Svilova’s presence in *Man with a Movie Camera* does not only clarify her contribution as the film’s editor but provides scope for a more nuanced reading of its gender discourse.

The film’s ultimate aim, however, is to coalesce the dialectic worlds of the organic and the synthetic – a means of hybridising the human eye with the ‘I’ of machine – and it is largely through Svilova’s employment of the full repertoire of Kino-eye techniques that allows these elements to appear harmonious rather than oppositional. Strategies of visual analogy and rhyme, rhythmic patterning and superimposition serve to rearrange Vertov’s ‘reality’. This is most evident in the ‘Cameraman and Machines’ sequence that appears forty-two minutes into the film and lasts approximately thirty seconds. Vlada Petrić acknowledges the necessary physical skill to edit the sequence, reminding us that ‘the technology of editing at the time was

undeveloped ... however, Svilova managed to splice numerous one- or two-frame shots in order to achieve a subliminal propulsion on the screen.’<sup>116</sup> Svilova first juxtaposes the movement of a horizontal machine with a vertical one. As the components move in their respective directions, the pace builds to an electrifying speed. A bellow of smoke emitting from a factory violently cuts into the montage. The cameraman, equipped with his tripod on shoulder, emerges from the smoke and omnisciently observes his world. While images of machinery, still rotating at incredible speed, are cut equally rapidly into his image, the cameraman removes the tripod from his shoulder and ‘floats’ out of the sequence. A close examination of the pictorial composition and rhythmic progression of the shots in the sequence reveals the particular attention Svilova pays to the formal elements of the shots. The photographic execution is equally sophisticated: the vertical position of Kaufman’s body within the frame consistently matches the diagonal position of his camera, so that the tripod appears as an extension of the cameraman’s body – a mechanical tool inseparable from the worker who uses it.

Unlike the shots of the machines, wheels, and gears photographed in an abstract fashion, the spliced shots of the cameraman never lose their representational features. The accelerated movement of gears and wheels produces yet another blurring effect that enhances the graphic pattern of white lines within circular and diagonal movements. The graphic design created by the forms and movements in individual shots is extremely compact, although it consists of numerous elements:

The fact that the ‘floating’ human being is identifiable as the cameraman – a worker armed with his own set of tools – supplies this sequence with poetic reverberations. Integrating all basic graphic patterns, the sequence becomes a metaphor



for communication, industry, and creativity; its constructivist elements functioning on both formal and thematic levels.<sup>117</sup>

The kinaesthetic choreography of the sequence builds a metaphor of the cameraman as a worker and an indispensable part of the industrial world. Overtaken by the prodigious power of machines, the cameraman appears free from the pressures of gravity as he floats in the factory milieu, dancing and hovering with his camera as a balancing pole. The dreamlike setting within which Kaufman is presented in the sequence can be interpreted as a futuristic poetic vision of the ultimate unification of the workers and their productive means. Therefore, one can deduce from the sequence a sense of celebration, in that the hybridisation of man and machine is not to eradicate him but to improve him, to free him of his unwieldiness and the ‘psychology’ that skews his interpretation of reality, and ultimately to make him the gratifying subject of cinema. Svilova’s contribution to the film, then, enabled Vertov to document a period of transition in the history of the Soviet Union, of modernism and Constructivism, and of cinema itself.

After *Enthusiasm*, in which Svilova experimented with editing live sound recordings in the Donbas region, allowing Vertov’s films ‘to be heard as well as seen’,<sup>118</sup> Vertov and Svilova left the Ukrainian film industry to work at Mezhrabpomfilm. Aiming to build on the national acclaim of *Enthusiasm*, Vertov designed a scenario linking Lenin to internationalism, documenting his legacy in the Soviet Far East. *Three Songs of Lenin* is a crucial text in understanding Svilova’s contribution to the collaboration. Not only does the film contain examples of progressive editorial talent and research skills – she dedicated herself to sourcing fresh archive footage of Lenin for the film – it continues the themes of womanhood evident in *Man with a Movie Camera*, hailing the revolution for liberating women from traditional Asiatic society. The film traces their

emancipation through a series of songs, beginning with a slow rhythm of editing to represent the oppression of the veil and concluding with an editing pace reminiscent of *Man with a Movie Camera* as Svilova brings the freed women to life. Vertov states that, 'The achievement of sincerity noted by critics in *Three Songs of Lenin* required exceptionally complex editing. In this respect, the experience of *Man with a Movie Camera* ... was of great help to our production group. These were, so to speak, films that beget films.'<sup>119</sup> By this I understand that, in Vertov's opinion, Svilova's editing potential paved the way for his burgeoning aesthetical preferences, themes and motifs, and could be described as a common denominator in connecting one film to the next. An enduring strength and key component, her talent allowed for, and was a fundamental part of, what we regard as the Vertov oeuvre.

The unveiling of a Muslim woman in *Three Songs of Lenin* can be interpreted as a gesture of Orientalism, 'whereby the exotic beauty of the East is uncovered to the Western male gaze and opened to sexual or economic agency'.<sup>120</sup> While, for Vertov, the act was not only a means of loosening the shackles of religion but represented the spectator's filmic awakening, for Svilova, the emancipation of the Eastern woman resonated deeply owing to her penchant for female solidarity across the varying regions and ethnicities of the Soviet Union. This theme continues throughout Svilova's career as a director-editor, most prevalent in the films she made shortly after Stalin's death. Editing remains central to the communication of this theme and the audience's interpretation of it. The sequence in which Svilova intercuts shots of Far Eastern women with scenes of Lenin's funeral – in that she suggests the women are looking over his body – aims successfully to collapse the distance between Moscow and the East, signifying that the pain of her loss was shared by women thousands of miles away. *Three Songs of Lenin* is the first film in the Vertov and Svilova

collaboration that strongly indicates Svilova's input was growing. It is important to remember that she was again credited as the assistant director, continuing to develop as an artist and widening the scope of her contribution beyond editing. Female subjects were also the cornerstones of their following two films, *Lullaby* and *Three Heroines* (the later for which Svilova received a co-director credit), where themes of motherhood and heroism respectively can be traced back as the roots of ideas and motivations that were to feature continually in Svilova's independent career.

Vertov described Svilova as 'the best editor in the Soviet Union',<sup>121</sup> and from my analysis of her major contributions to their films it is not difficult to understand why he held her in such high regard, nor was he the only one who shared this opinion. I have already mentioned that Serafima Pumpyanskaya, for example, indicates in her memories of the couple that Svilova was always in demand from other directors. Referring back to the way in which she helped Vertov complete *The Battle of Tsaritsyn*, we can assume that Svilova had a reputation in the industry as an editor who was available in times of need, regarded as a reliable and trustworthy professional. Her most noteworthy editorial assignment outside of her collaboration with Vertov was alongside Roman Karmen on *Judgement of the Nations* (1946), a documentary capturing the proceedings of the Nuremberg Trial. Karmen had spent much time filming the Red Army during World War II and Svilova, while we assume from her filmography that she was unfamiliar with editing events in a courtroom, had spent most of 1945 collating footage of Nazi atrocities that was screened at the trial as part of the Soviet prosecution's evidence of war crimes (discussed in Chapter Two). As soon as we see the defendants enter the courtroom in *Judgement of the Nations*, Svilova begins to use their behaviour, as well as the people and objects surrounding them, to bring implicit meaning to the scenes; not just observing but attempting to educate and inform. For

example, after Rudolf Hess enters the courtroom, Svilova inserts a close-up image of a guard's baton held tightly in his fist behind his back. This alludes to the violence of the Nazis' transgressions, the force with which they will be retained in the courtroom, and the fierce and just nature of the impending punishments. Likewise, she juxtaposes the nervous mannerisms of the defendants with images of crimes committed under their supervision. As Jeremy Hicks notes, the motivation behind this structure recalls Lev Kuleshov's building block analogy: rather than focus on the shot as a montage cell, Svilova places special emphasis on the construction of meaning out of montage fragments.<sup>122</sup> Her contribution, which achieved the necessary depiction of the defendants, as did, for example, the fast and persuasive editing of shots detailing Soviet Prosecutor Roman Rudenko's indictment, resulted in Svilova receiving a worthy co-director credit for the film.

By the time Svilova came to co-direct *Judgement of the Nations*, she had already been working for seven years independently of Vertov. Her main method of communicating the policies of the Central Committee relied on a specific rhetoric, itself dependent upon a repertoire of techniques centred on the processes of shot selection and juxtaposition. To examine film as rhetoric is to examine the effect it had on its intended audience and the way in which it achieved that effect – Svilova's artistic decisions are guided by how images affect emotionally those who view them. Therefore, my analysis of Svilova's films foregrounds the relationship between the filmic text and the audience. Her films respected the audience, at least to the extent of understanding the need for a two-way interactive process. Audiences were expected to react, not to receive the images inertly but to make changes to their lives and outlook. As Judith Mayne argues, passivity was the enemy.<sup>123</sup>

## Meaning and montage

The acknowledgement of Kuleshovian techniques in *Judgement of the Nations* alludes not only to the rhetorical function of cinema but also to theoretical models of editing. The methods by which Svilova generates meaning for audiences were foregrounded in the ideas of the Soviet montage school of the 1920s, namely those attributed to Vertov, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Sergei Eisenstein and Lev Kuleshov. Svilova's incorporation and development of these theories to guide the emotions of her audience allows for a clearer understanding of her contribution to Soviet cinema. The school did not encompass a collective, harmonious aesthetic but comprised a diverse group of unique theorists who were often in polemical dispute with one another. They were, however, united in their Marxist interpretation of reality and in their determination to create a consciously political and agitational cinema. David Bordwell states that 'a historically complete account of Soviet film montage must include both strands of development: that of Kuleshov and Pudovkin and that of Vertov and Eisenstein.'<sup>124</sup> This division might be a rather simplistic way of separating the four theorists, in that Vertov and Eisenstein constitute two very different strands, and Kuleshov and Pudovkin also hold between them a number of important distinctions. Nevertheless, Bordwell is right in that a study of editorial practices must on some level give room to each of these filmmakers. I do not wish to incorporate them merely due to their prestige, but because Svilova was associated with the school, both in her professional life as a Soviet editor in the 1920s and through her marriage to Vertov.<sup>125</sup> As such, the filmmakers provide an appropriate framework for a discussion on Svilova and film semiotics.

More often than not, the subject matters of Svilova's films are not overtly political. For this reason, we must question how Svilova prompts audiences to make the cognitive leap between the images on-screen – of sporting events, cultural ceremonies and distant lands – and Central Committee policy. The notion of stimulating a reaction, or bestowing art with the power to organise emotional responses, draws immediate comparisons with Eisenstein and his 'montage of attractions'. After returning from the Russian Civil War, Eisenstein worked at the Proletkult Theatre alongside acclaimed stage director and theorist, Vsevolod Meyerhold, where they experimented with agitational drama. Eisenstein grasped fully the link between the Central Committee's policy of legitimisation and the role of art in justifying the revolution to the masses, conceiving the form of the artwork as the crucial tool in constituting a total engagement of the spectator: not only thought but also perception and affect. Drawing from the field of physiology, particularly the research of Ivan Pavlov, Eisenstein constructed the montage of attractions as a method of agitation, a means of assaulting the viewer's senses by assembling independent and arbitrary units of stimulation. Conditioning the response by training pre-existing reflexes through a consciously designed combination of stimuli could, he believed, produce an overall emotional response different to, and more powerful than, the sum of its parts. It is on this note that Eisenstein's approach to agitational art dovetailed with his introduction of a dialectic system; in the early to mid-1920s he moved away from theatre and began to frame questions of film form in conflictual terms, while developing his concept of attractions to comprise semiology and the analysis of shots as signs. Shocking the emotional senses of the viewer was not the end but merely the beginning, a 'trick' to hold the audience's attention and increase its receptivity to political rhetoric.

Turning to the discourse of pictorial language for his methodology, Eisenstein famously compared the film image to a character in Japanese writing, the ideogram. This character refers to an abstract idea by means of combining and modifying pictographic characters that depict, in a stylised way, non-abstract objects associated with the idea. The combination of two hieroglyphs of the simplest series is to be regarded not as their sum but as their product, i.e. as a value of another dimension, another degree; each separately corresponds to an object, to a fact, but their combination corresponds to a concept. A concrete word (a denotation) set beside a second concrete word yields an abstract, transcendental result; for example, 'heart' combined with 'knife' alludes to the concept of sorrow. It is crucial that both words are read not chronologically but simultaneously in order for them to collide in the reader's/viewer's conscience. Thus, in every case the combination of two distinct signs for concrete objects produces a single sign for abstraction. The process is figurative because the meaning is not denoted in either sign: it emerges through juxtaposition. For Eisenstein, this proved that film, whose signs are moving photographic images and therefore entirely tangible, can communicate conceptual abstraction on a par with other language forms.

Eisenstein's highly sophisticated cinematic metaphors were constructed on the Marxist dialectical model that understands human experience as perpetual conflict between two forces – the thesis and the antithesis – to produce the synthesis, a wholly new and abstract phenomenon. Building on Lenin's perception of the biological cell as the model of dialectical change (since its splitting produces a new unity), Eisenstein described the shot as a montage cell. David Bordwell explains the resemblance between these two cells as follows:

The shot accumulates quantitative tension, such as that of figure and background or light and dark, it cannot resolve them internally and thus divides into another shot. The juxtaposition of conflicting shots is a leap into a new quality: an impression or concept not present in the individual images.<sup>126</sup>

Eisenstein held the constructivist belief that factors composing the individual image can be considered as dynamic elements flung together in juxtaposition. He forced the conflict of visual opposition through the linear direction, plane, volume and lighting of shots, and these oppositions were not always extended to the dramatic content of the shot: conflict within the shot is only potential montage, dialectical montage operates fully when one image is put into interaction with another. While Kuleshov and Pudovkin conceived editing as a linkage of shots, a brick by brick process driven by narrative demands, Eisenstein asserted that linkage is only a weak version of the more basic process of conflict. It is clear, though, that these two elements are not mutually exclusive. As Bordwell argues, a dialectic structure is only theoretical, some shots – or even most – will be positioned in a sequence according to their temporal or spatial qualities.<sup>127</sup>

In Svilova's case, linkage and conflict do not give way to one another but act simultaneously. Certain sequences in her films reveal her tendency to absorb techniques into an ever-grander synthesis, bringing to light an affinity for Hegelian conceptions of artistic and philosophical progress. For Svilova, the conceptual result of conflict is metaphorical and relates to the purpose of her films as vehicles of rhetoric and legitimisation. She constructs her newsreel stories and documentaries in such a way that the rhetoric becomes, as in Eisenstein's films, embedded within the sequences, the images collectively expressing the political message behind the story. Lenin argued that the Soviet system would enable workers to use the techniques of



Taylorism to free themselves from exploitation; likewise, Svilova extracts formal methods from classic works and uses them for progressive purposes. As an example, *Foreign Newsreel no.4* (1956) documents boar hunting in Bulgaria. Employing techniques reminiscent of both the Hollywood chase genre and film noir, the male hunters are captured in a montage of shots as they track and kill their prey. Svilova focuses on the methods the hunters use to locate the beast, such as identifying its footprints in the snow and hiding amongst the foliage; the hunters' intelligence and prowess are juxtaposed with the boar's ignorance and naivety. In the context of the Cold War, this story could be seen to have had wider resonances beyond the subject of boar hunting. As a result of the editing, an abstract concept is created in the mind of the spectator that, at the time, formed part of the Central Committee's rhetoric reinforcing man's superiority over nature. In 1937, Otto Schmidt, a Soviet scientist and explorer who came to prominence in the Stalin era, proclaimed: 'Nature subordinates herself to man when he knows how to arm himself for the fight and when he does not come out alone but in a large group supported by the warm love of millions of citizens.'<sup>128</sup> According to the party line, Soviet men had the power to tame nature and bring it under state control. Svilova uses the footage of the hunt to communicate to the audience the Central Committee's expectation that members of Soviet society must be willing and able to demonstrate courage, spirit and vigour.

The boar-hunting sequence is exciting and suspenseful, owing to Svilova's employment of narrative techniques reminiscent of Classical Hollywood cinema. The story opens with a close-up shot of a footprint in the snow. A shadow enters the shot from below, casting the print in darkness. A man dressed in traditional hunting attire kneels down to inspect the print. The other hunters are tracked in a wide-angle pan walking through the trees of a forest, leaving their own footprints in the snow. A

high-angle mid-shot shows a boar – captured from a camera in a tree – roaming the forest. The hunter depicted examining the footprint stands with his back against a tree in medium close-up, peering around the trunk at his target. Orchestral music fades into the scene, creating an air of suspense. A close-up shot captures the hunter pointing his shotgun at the screen. He waits. The music intensifies. The moment he pulls the trigger Svilova cuts to a mid-shot of the boar rolling down a steep hill through the forest, initiating a montage: various shots of the boar's descent from an array of angles are assembled. This montage succeeds in dramatising the boar's death and, more importantly, underscoring the victory of man over beast. The purpose of the montage is somewhat nullified by its opening mid-shot which, upon repeat viewing, subtly depicts the boar's stopping against a tree only a few feet from where it was killed. The boar did not roll the distance Svilova's montage implies; yet, her attempt to give that impression with limited footage reflects the work of a confident and able director-editor. A mid-shot of the hunters walking in single file along a path, leaving the canopy of the forest in the distance, closes the story. They carry the boar between them on a spit over their shoulders.

Building on the ideological context of my thesis, the boar-hunting story fitted into a major theme of the socialist realist era – the documenting of heroic feats. Yet, the danger that helped to make citizens into heroes presented an element of uncertainty.<sup>129</sup> Adventures were predicated on risk but, as I have described, the utopian nature of Soviet socialist realist discourses, which conflated the future and the present, made it difficult for the stories to accommodate failure. Any failure was troublesome because it revealed to the masses that the perfect future did not yet exist. Instead, the stories emphasised man's achievements, one of the most important of which was the superiority over, and conquest of, nature's less-evolved beasts.

According to Stalinist rhetoric, with the support of the Soviet community, male citizens gained the power to tame the female aspects of nature and bring them under Soviet control.<sup>130</sup> Given the widespread indifference to the value of human life in the Stalin era, the apparent concern the Central Committee displayed toward heroes was paradoxical. As Karen Petrone argues, assertions that upheld the conquest of nature and thought for human life conflicted with reality and with each other.<sup>131</sup>

If some aspects of Svilova's aesthetics betray the influence of Eisenstein's conceptions of montage, other elements demonstrate her indebtedness to the ideas of Kuleshov and Pudovkin. As I have already described, Kuleshov's understanding of the function of montage adopted a building block analogy: rather than focus on the shot as a montage cell, he placed special emphasis on the construction of meaning out of montage fragments. Pudovkin initially shared this premise, working alongside Kuleshov at the Workshop between 1922 and 1924.<sup>132</sup> According to Pudovkin, film is not shot but built, constructed from the separate strips of raw material. Thus, his model could be described as an architectural counterpart to Eisenstein's dialectical system. The ultimate goal of Kuleshov and Pudovkin's experiments was to discover the general laws by which film communicates meaning to an audience – to discover the rules of signification. Kuleshov's most famous experiment, what has come to be known as the 'Kuleshov effect',<sup>133</sup> concluded that the shot, or cinematic sign, has two distinct values: first, that which it possesses in itself as a photographic image of reality and, second, that which it acquires when placed in relationship to other shots. The second value is infinitely more important than the first because it demonstrates that cinematic meaning is a function of the film strip, not of the photographic reality, arising from the sequential arrangement of its parts.

The subordination of real time and space to the process of editing is evidenced throughout *Man with a Movie Camera* – the selection and interaction of ‘life-facts’ results in complex association and ideological implications – but also in the structure of Svilova’s *Metro* (1940), a film that documents the predominantly female workforce of Moscow’s subway system. Toward the end of the film, Svilova portrays a series of women working through the night to clean the inside and outside of stationary carriages, each shot depicting a separate woman undertaking her role. A camera positioned on the platform captures one of the women polishing the inside of a carriage window; she smiles through the glass, seemingly at the camera and her audience. The shot appears to uphold a popular convention of social-realist Soviet documentary in which men and women were observed enjoying their work, uplifted by the feelings of purpose and belonging it provided. The following side-angle shot endorses the sense of belonging but not in the way the audience expects. It captures a second woman stood on the platform polishing the exterior surface of the same window and smiling into it. We now realise that the first woman was not smiling to the audience but to her colleague stood next to the camera. The juxtaposition augments the meaning of the initial shot with a new value, corroborating Kuleshov’s thesis. Svilova simultaneously plays on and contravenes established documentary conventions to depict a female workforce defined primarily by the solidarity between its members.

By studying a film such as *Metro*, one can argue that Svilova internalises and continues to confirm Kuleshov’s contention that meaning is not inherent in the film strip but is the result of the viewer’s perception of the edited film strip, which makes the montage process an act of consciousness for both filmmaker and viewer. For Kuleshov, and this also applies to Svilova, montage was a means of revealing truth,

of presenting a particular ideological position openly and without concealment, thereby illuminating the situation as it is in reality. The revealing of truth alludes to the visual qualities of Svilova's films, the continued reconstruction of reality from fragments of life-facts. While she evidently embraced the industry's move to sound in the late 1920s, what will become clear in my textual analyses of Svilova's films is that sound made a relatively inconsequential contribution to their meaning. The voiceovers, particularly in the *News of the Day* episodes, rarely add a new layer of connotation to the images, instead merely being used descriptively. Instead, Svilova creates meaning through the visual. Referring to *Three Songs of Lenin*, she wrote: 'The film was constructed with no voiceover ... the images were set out so that the author's ideas could be discerned clearly and distinctly. We experienced incredible delight when this or that episode could be understood without voiceover.'<sup>134</sup> Meaning is generated through the visual and the juxtaposition of the visual, a system adopted by Svilova throughout her independent career. Her two atrocity films, *Oświecim* and *Atrocities*, are the only two whose voiceovers consistently reinforce their film's rhetoric. I discuss the reasons for this in Chapter Two.

Prioritising the visual was not unusual in the sound cinema of the Stalin era. As the expressive montage movement of the 1920s was substituted for socialist realism, more credence was given to the deployment of explicit signs, the careful ordering of which – in Svilova's case, a combination of linkage and conflictual editing systems – triggered a cognitive process whereby the viewer could connect the signs to the policies of the Central Committee and react accordingly to the message being communicated. The most explicit visual indicator we can detect in Svilova's films is the establishment in the minds of the audience a clearly defined tension between the opposing poles of 'us' and 'them'. Audiences are encouraged to identify with certain

forces against the forces to which they are opposed. Sarah Davies refers to Polish sociologist, Stanislaw Ossowski, to argue that this narrative strategy was in fact not only a part of pre-revolutionary Russian culture but that the spatial metaphor of vertical stratification of people into two main groups – those above and those below – has an ancient lineage stretching back to biblical times.<sup>135</sup> In Russia, this image of social polarisation was acute in the pre-revolutionary period, partly because of the sharp division between state and society. The sense of polarisation did not vanish in 1917; it continued in modified form throughout Lenin's leadership and Stalin's, the latter once the social divide became pronounced and egalitarianism was officially denounced.

The fundamental dichotomy between the elite and the people, us and them, was represented and explained in different ways, and these rarely involved Marxist criteria. One common interpretation of the conflict was that it lay in an unequal distribution of political power. This was articulated through the use of analogies or ethical criteria, such as 'good versus evil'. It seems likely that this overarching dichotomy did much to legitimise certain aspects of Stalin's terror – the regime promoted the 'us versus them' mentality in such a way as to imply that his measures were necessary as a means of national protection against international threat. This mentality became a defining feature of Svilova's films in the 1950s when, even after Stalin's death, the Cold War resulted in the prioritisation of defence strategies. Official Stalinist discourse portrayed a battle between the people and the enemies of the people, and this opposition shared many similarities with the 'us versus them' dichotomy. For example, *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni etap*, Jakubowska, 1948) takes place in Auschwitz and features three characters: a Polish Jew, a German communist and a Russian, each representing an enemy of fascism. Svilova's *Oświęcim* (1945), discussed in the

following chapter, epitomises this approach: Soviet soldiers, doctors and nurses are presented as heroes through their defeat of the Nazi hierarchy responsible for the horror at the camp, which is in turn vilified and denigrated. In the post-war years the 'us versus them' dichotomy extended beyond fascism to encompass positions of responsibility, emphasising the political, economic and moral corruption of those in power. *Pioneer 11* (1952), one of Svilova's two *Pioneer* episodes, documents the activities at a camp for teenage Communists and uses a scene depicting a group of Pioneers carving wooden aeroplanes to reiterate the Soviet response to what was perceived as the invasion of 'them'. The boys customise their aeroplanes with anti-American slogans, such as 'U.S. Go Home'. This particular slogan could have referenced any number of occupations the Central Committee was vocal in denouncing, such as the presence of American soldiers in West Germany, Taiwan and South Korea. 'U.S. Go Home' served as a motto for socialist countries in the post-war period and there are numerous other examples of Soviet labourers and capitalist icons who fulfilled the roles of hero and villain respectively.

The establishment of simple, if not simplistic, stereotypes had already been dictated, on the one hand, by the technical limitations of the silent cinema as a medium and, on the other, by the particular agitational needs of the Civil War and early Soviet period.<sup>136</sup> Until the late 1940s, asserts Richard Taylor, 'Soviet sound film was still indulging in the same technique of propaganda through stereotype that had characterised its silent predecessor.'<sup>137</sup> As the governing ideology was class-based rather than nationalist or racist, many of the enemies of the people depicted in Soviet film propaganda were internal to the country (excluding the war films of 1941-45), and it was necessary to alienate them from their usual surroundings. The conflict

between good and evil, or hero and villain, was often highlighted by a contrast between the community and the individual:

The most important single hero figure in Soviet propaganda cinema is the worker, for it was after all the worker who was proclaimed as being in the vanguard of the successful revolutionary movement. The worker is portrayed in what has come to be known as the traditional heroic mould: upright, even when downtrodden, calm and courageous in adversity, compassionate and self-sacrificing.<sup>138</sup>

This principle is emphasised in a number of Svilova's films, though no more unequivocally than during the interrogation of Nazi perpetrator, General Friedrich Franek, in the opening scene of *News of the Day no. 10* (1944). Franek sits at a wooden desk in the clearing of a forest; a number of Soviet army personnel stand over him demanding answers to their questions. Timed for maximum impact – long enough to establish Franek as the lone enemy but not long enough for one to begin to sympathise with his desperate situation – Svilova cuts to a shot of the soldiers responsible for his capture. They stand proudly and upright as the medals are placed around their necks. Communal responsibility is underscored; there is little room for individual acts of heroism.

Svilova's visualisation of the social divide between 'the people' and 'enemies of the people' often resorted to moral metaphors. The importance of the moral and religious dimension as a source of legitimacy in popular struggles against authority has been widely observed. Svilova's use of a moral vocabulary was not new but well-established, having always been a part of the idealist populist language. It appealed both to the literate and to the non-literate, and to those with only an elementary understanding of good and evil. Sarah Davies pinpoints the language's emergence in Soviet discourse 'in the practice of attributing positive moral characteristics to the



people and negative ones to their oppressors'.<sup>139</sup> Underlying many of these representations of a moral dichotomy were often questions of political and economic difference, particularly when 'them' referred to those of a higher class; nevertheless, moral difference between us and them, between good and evil, was for Soviet audiences as valid as the more explicit references to political and material inequality.

Svilova's independent career served Stalin's regime and the bureaucratic intricacies of the Cold War. Her films were mobilised to inform, educate and above all persuade the masses, celebrating the victory of the proletariat while disparaging the enemies of communism. If they were to fulfil their purpose, they could not be coldly didactic; they had to arouse emotion, inspiring audiences to dedicate themselves to, and put their trust in, the regime. This section has aimed to outline how this was achieved by Svilova. She draws on established yet relatively simple visual symbols familiar to the Soviet masses and organises them according to the cerebral modes of shot juxtaposition – namely techniques of dialecticism, linkage and realism – attributed to the Soviet montage school of the 1920s. Svilova's letter to *LEF* tells us that she had strong opinions about the value of editorial practices; however, beyond this letter, there is no evidence to suggest that she sought actively to disseminate her thoughts. Instead, she remained attentive and – regardless of their apparent incompatibility – absorbed the dominant theories and techniques of the montage school into her repertoire. In the 1930s, when montage was gradually ostracised in favour of socialist realism, Svilova develops her directorial practice to accommodate the shift, an ability to adapt that many established filmmakers, including her own husband, appeared to lack. The shift ensured that the agitational dynamism, which had defined the 1920s, gave way to a slower pace of editing congruent with Stalin's vision for documentary film.

This section has also aimed to begin building Svilova's status as an important figure in Soviet documentary film – her career lays claim to a number of significant collaborative projects and individual assignments. Despite being an integral part of the Soviet Union's formative cinema industry, Svilova is not a well-known filmmaker. This might be due to the fact that she found prominence as an independent director-editor after the montage era, and this is a viable point; yet, however one chooses to view Svilova's marginalisation from film history, the issue of gender (her identity as a woman filmmaker) cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the following section explores the male-centricism that has contributed to the relocation of female artists such as Svilova to the fringes of film history.

## **Svilova and female filmmaking**

As with a multitude of other women directors who have been ignored and forgotten in film historical accounts, feminist observers will look to Svilova's gender as the main factor in her marginalisation. While I agree that her gender is an important factor to consider, it is, however, not the only factor. In the first instance, it is essential to grasp the complexities of collaborative authorship. Awareness as to how and why women working in the film industry are excluded is imperative to an analysis of Svilova's contribution to her field because the first half of her career comprises roles in which she operates as a co-director, assistant director and editor. It is important, then, to take a step back from thinking about Svilova as an independent director-editor and revisit the early stages of her career as a collaborator, particularly the time she spent working alongside Vertov. Julia Wright suggests that, although film scholars are now bringing to our attention the careers of women in early cinema, the study of editors has received little investigation.<sup>140</sup> According to

Wright, cinema history does not acknowledge editors but instead celebrates directors who have advanced editing, namely D. W. Griffith, Eisenstein and, importantly, Vertov.<sup>141</sup> Wright argues that crediting an editor with a discernible style restricts our understanding of their abilities rather than emphasises their versatility, and also risks undermining the creative importance of the director.<sup>142</sup> Researchers are cautious not to challenge – or emasculate – the legacies of filmmakers such as Vertov by approaching their films as collaborative projects and analysing them in such a way as to include the contributions of other workers in the system. Wright views this reluctance as a political issue, suggesting that, even though editors are finally receiving recognition as the director's main collaborator, only male editors are benefiting from the exposure.<sup>143</sup> Patricia Zimmerman concurs, claiming in her analysis of pioneer Robert Flaherty that women collaborators in documentary cinema suffer similar marginalisation:

Conventional documentary history's overemphasis on the film text and its director as opposed to the institutional structures that sustain and nurture documentary erases the contributions women have made to documentary film culture: as cinematographers, editors, sound persons, fund-raisers, organisers of festivals, and writers and lecturers. .<sup>144</sup>

Analysing the documentary, *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing* (Apple, 2004),

Wright states that:

This selective recollection of the general film history situates the editor as the director's chief collaborator, and their historical presence is then afforded by way of collaborative authorship as a theoretical approach. Yet this same approach, while giving historical credit to male editors, diminishes the work of female editors that facilitated many of these celebrated men and moments: Agnes Guillemot edited the majority of Godard's films in the 1960s ... James Smith is credited as Griffith's editor but the documentary gives only brief mention to Rose Smith ... Similarly Svilova is credited as Vertov's wife

and editor but receives none of the long-overdue star treatment given to male editors.<sup>145</sup>

It is true that, in general, the passing attention paid to Svilova, even as Vertov's editor, does not acknowledge the crucial artistic contribution she made to the films, particularly those produced in the late 1930s where, as Jeremy Hicks asserts, Svilova was not just an editor but a co-director, and their contributions were indistinguishable.<sup>146</sup> While she is nearly always credited for each contribution, either on-screen or in archive catalogues, she is not discussed as part of film discourse, and I argue that the failure to acknowledge her contributions in this venue has had repercussions. Film history's perception of Svilova as Vertov's accessory, the wife who obediently edited his films, has resulted in a misunderstanding, or undermining, of her abilities, ambitions and legacy. The devaluing of Svilova's contribution to their collaborative films might explain why her directorial films have passed under the radar: were she recognised as a competent filmmaker in her own right, rather than attached to Vertov as his accessory, it is probable that more effort would have been made to locate and analyse her directorial films.

The restrictive, tentative way in which researchers have handled Svilova's contribution to Soviet film has been instrumental in limiting her legacy. For example, the sources to which I referred in my biographical section largely neglect her substantial directorial output, while the collaboration with Vertov is duly acknowledged. Annette Michelson comes closest to acknowledging Svilova's independent achievements, stating that 'her filmography lists a great many directorial assignments', but there are no references to specific films.<sup>147</sup> Masha Enzensberger briefly references Svilova's independent career, writing that, 'With her skills in demand, Svilova managed to earn a living for the two of them, directing her own

films and editing other people's films,'<sup>148</sup> but this does not provide a true account of the extent to which Svilova out-produced Vertov in the years following their collaboration. The reason as to why no biographical account of her life has yet fully acknowledged the scope of Svilova's independent career is difficult to pinpoint, though one important factor is the paucity of information at the time of their writing. Annette Michelson's assessment, published in 1984, was written, first, prior to the fall of communism, before Soviet archives were fully open to international researchers, and, second, before the rise of the internet. Locating Svilova's films was a far more complicated process before archive catalogues became available online. Thus, Michelson, and Enzensberger for that matter (who initially published her account as early as 1972), would have had little credible data to build an accurate picture of Svilova's authorship. However, more recent accounts, such as Peter Rollberg's and the passing references made by Kay Armatage,<sup>149</sup> were not restricted by the same conditions and one cannot easily explain the reasons behind their vague descriptions of Svilova's career. It might be that they relied on earlier biographies and did not consider the possibility that more information is now available.

Julia Wright suggests that Svilova's erasure from cinema history is the result of 'professional ambiguity' – her role as devoted partner is somehow inseparable from her professional partnership with Vertov.<sup>150</sup> Vertov's legacy, that Svilova helped to build incidentally, has encompassed Svilova. The fact that Esfir Shub, a director-editor I discuss shortly, has enjoyed wider exposure, even though they worked at the same studio and had similar career trajectories, is further evidence that Svilova's legacy has been restricted owing to her connection to Vertov. However, it is vital to understand how Svilova's actions played a part in the assimilation of their legacies. She has not necessarily been absorbed into Vertov's authorship because researchers

have been unwilling to provide her a platform; Svilova's failure to emphasise her own contribution to many of the defining films in Vertov's canon has proven equally decisive. Her autobiography indicates that she had the opportunity after Vertov's death to publicise her contribution to their films but, instead, she chose to cement his artistry by exhibiting his films and publishing his theoretical writings. The writings have provided the framework that researchers use to engage with the films pigeonholed under his name. The history of cinema is signposted by the [male] directors who boldly aggrandised their own authority, most famously by trumpeting themselves to be, in D.W. Griffith's words, 'revolutionising the Motion Picture Drama and founding the modern technique of the art'.<sup>151</sup> John Ford and Alfred Hitchcock consciously augmented their own status in cinema by offering anecdotal timepieces of their career or encouraging critical acknowledgement. They are still hailed as great auteurs, defined by their directing techniques, thought processes and, perhaps most importantly, their ability to maintain artistic control in large collaborative productions. These qualities have been widely discussed, with the sources of information often the personal recollections of the auteurs or their collaborators.<sup>152</sup>

Vertov's Kino-eye writings have allowed for a sustained discussion on his editing techniques; though, as Vertov himself admitted, Svilova was the one with the talent at the cutting table. Kay Armatage reminds us that the gradual inclusion of early women filmmakers into cinema history has too been driven by the filmmakers who left a tangible legacy of their work, largely in the form of written documentation or an engagement with critical practices of the time. Armatage has carried out research on Nell Shipman, one of Hollywood's earliest and most prolific filmmakers, who left behind a catalogue of written anecdotes but only four surviving films.<sup>153</sup> Written

documentation cannot guarantee a permanent status in film history for its subject but it does provide the necessary footprint to make omission less likely. Svilova's case is testament to this trend: not even an archive containing, to my knowledge, her complete body of films can compensate for a lack of reliable, insightful supporting evidence. Svilova's autobiographies and production notes are incomplete, random and often illegible, far short of the substance Armatage identifies as the requisite foundations for a legacy. While we do not know Svilova's motivation behind downplaying her own contribution – though Vertov did describe her modesty as her only imperfection<sup>154</sup> – we do know of her admiration for Vertov and of her response to the injustice of his blacklisting. That said, it can be argued that, though she genuinely felt he was the innovative, driving force of their collaboration, beyond that sentiment, attributing the films to Vertov's name and proclaiming his genius was a grieving mechanism for Svilova, a way of keeping him close and allowing her to overcome the pain of his absence.

A number of other early Soviet women filmmakers offer useful contextualisation for Svilova and provide a venue to review current research on early Soviet women filmmakers.<sup>155</sup> Olga Preobrazhenskaya (1881-1971) is widely considered the first Soviet female director.<sup>156</sup> She co-directed her debut film, *The Peasant Woman* (*Baryshnuya-krestyanka*), in 1916 with Vladimir Gardin, before taking a sabbatical from film production to teach in a film school.<sup>157</sup> In 1926 she returned to filmmaking with an adaptation of the Chekhov play, *Kashtanka*. The remainder of her directorial assignments between 1926 and her last film in 1941 were as a collaborative partnership with her husband, Ivan Pravov.<sup>158</sup> More often than not, she made films for and about children; for example, *Fedka's Truth* (*Fed'kina pravda*, 1925) and *Anyu* (1927). In 1927 Preobrazhenskaya also made a film for adults, *Peasant Women of*

*Ryazan* (*Baby ryazanskie*). As well as being her first notable success, it can be considered the first Soviet 'women's film' in that it was directed by a woman and it addresses women's issues; in this instance, through an allusion to 'dolya'. This word has no direct translation in English but its definition is similar to fate with a shade of sadness or sorrow. The fate of Soviet women was at all times harder than that of men, especially in village life. There are two distinct female types portrayed in the film: one is the poor bride, Anna, and Vasilisa, the 'new woman', who indulges in love outside marriage and has set up an orphanage for homeless children. Despite her depiction of the new woman, Preobrazhenskaya still belonged to the old cinema, incorporating the traditional melodramatic narrative devices employed in the early 1910s by Russian film pioneer, Yevgeni Bauer.

Yulia Solntseva (1901-89) began in the film industry as an actress, making her debut as the eponymous heroine in *Aelita* (Protaznov, 1924), then starring in *The Cigarette Girl* (*Papirosnitsa ot Mosselproma*, Zheliabuzhsky, 1924) later the same year. She made the transition to film production after marrying established director, Aleksandr Dovzhenko, in 1929.<sup>159</sup> Solntseva was his assistant on *Earth* (*Zemlya*, 1930) and later progressed to his co-director. Coinciding with her collaborative projects, Solntseva directed independent assignments, beginning in the early 1940s with films such as *Bukovina* (1940) and *Liberation* (*Osvobozhdeniye*, 1940). In 1956, after Dovzhenko's sudden death, Solntseva vowed to continue his legacy and, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, adapted a collection of Dovzhenko's unused scripts, such as *Poem of the Sea* (*Poema o more*, 1958). In this respect, Solntseva's career mirrors Svilova's, which also concluded with the promotion of her late husband's work. Both women were adamant that their husbands should be the ones acknowledged for their collaborative films, in the process renouncing their own contributions. Solntseva went as far as to



refuse the Lenin Prize for *Poem of the Sea*, suggesting instead that it should be posthumously awarded to Dovzhenko. She said of the film, 'I completed it in accordance with Dovzhenko's artistic conception, putting aside every trace of my own individual vision.'<sup>160</sup> Efim Levin suggests that Solntseva continued Dovzhenko's romantic tradition, in that her films 'eschew naturalistic causality and create epic panoramas, poetic metaphors and larger-than-life characters'.<sup>161</sup>

Yet, 'while clearly influenced by her husband, Solntseva became an accomplished director in her own right.'<sup>162</sup> Once again, one cannot help but draw comparisons between Solntseva and Svilova, and it can be argued that, in the building of Vertov's legacy, Svilova too marginalised her contribution because she felt that she had merely helped to realise his vision rather than her own. In her mind, those films are Vertov's, constructed according to specific theories that, while she helped put them into practice, are the results of his ingenuity. I sense from Svilova's autobiographies that she was more protective of her independent films, the ones that are designed according to her own direction and principles of editing, over which she could claim sole ownership. For example, she writes in her final autobiography that, for the films made in the post-war period (the atrocity films and those produced in Alma-Ata) she received recognition for her contributions to the industry. This juncture is where comparisons between Solntseva and Svilova draw to a close. Although they both collaborated with their husbands and then dedicated their lives to the building of their late husbands' legacies, Solntseva retained and developed key characteristics of her collaboration – 'imaginatively transposing Dovzhenko's style'<sup>163</sup> – whereas Svilova largely moved away from the virtuoso editing of Kino-eye, a cutting rate that was incongruent with the social-realist aesthetic she later adopted. Some sequences are reminiscent, such as the phantom ride in *Yangtze River* (1950, discussed in Chapter

Four), but the dynamism that symbolises Vertov and Svilova's collaborative films is on the most part left behind.

Aleksandra Khokhlova (1897-1985) also began her career as an actress. She first worked with montage theorist, Lev Kuleshov, the man who later became her husband and collaborator, at his Workshop for Failed Actors and he cast her in *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (*Neobychnyye priklucheniya mistera Vesta v strane bolshevikov*, 1924). She plays a countess, a woman in control of her sexuality and, like Svilova, taking advantage of a childfree life. As Lynne Attwood observes, 'In an ideological climate that stressed women's maternal duties as well as their equal rights, the countess was a rare occurrence.'<sup>164</sup> Khokhlova was unpopular with critics and audiences, owing to her unusual looks: 'Cinema was', according to Kuleshov, 'still in pursuit of beauties'.<sup>165</sup> He provided a means for her to continue in the industry, teaching her the fundamentals of directing. Khokhlova made *Sasha* (1930) before working as a drama teacher throughout the 1930s.<sup>166</sup> She resumed her production role in the early 1940s with two films, *Descent into a Volcano* (*Sluchay v vulkane*, 1941) and *We, the Urals* (*My s Urala*, 1943), both co-directed with Kuleshov.<sup>167</sup> Svilova spoke very highly of Khokhlova, describing her as 'such an original and interesting woman, and a remarkable actress'.<sup>168</sup> Beyond this isolated remark, I have not been able to locate any other references to women filmmakers of the period.

Esfir Shub (1894-1959) was a graduate of the Higher Women's Institute in Moscow. In 1918 she undertook her first job, employed in the theatre department of the People's Commissariat for Education. Having worked as the secretary to Vsevolod Meyerhold, the inspiration behind Eisenstein's agitational theatre, Shub opted for a

career in cinema and was hired to re-edit foreign films for Soviet audiences. Re-editing was both a means of compensating for the extreme lack of film stock in the early 1920s and a way of adapting the original material to align with the policies of legitimisation. Shub moved to Goskino and began what is now referred to as the compilation genre: the creative recycling of archive material to represent topical news.<sup>169</sup> She used old film material to create new films; for example, she cut from archive footage of the Russian Royal Family her first and most famous film, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (*Padenie dinastii Romanovykh*, 1927). Incidentally, 1927 was a decisive year for Soviet cinema. It was the year that filmmakers had to come to terms with the challenge of celebrating two anniversaries: of the revolution and of the collapse of the tsarist regime. While Preobrazhenskaya's *Peasant Women of Ryazan* fitted well with the pre-revolutionary melodramatic structure, *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* became 'a manifesto for the new, revolutionary cinema'.<sup>170</sup> This film was the first of a trilogy, followed by *The Great Way* (*Velikiy put*, 1927) and concluding with *Lev Tolstoy and the Russia of Nicolai II* (*Rossiia Nikolaya II i Lev Tolstoy*, 1928). Vertov and Svilova's experiences re-editing Civil War footage to meet the needs of the regime were said to have had a profound effect on Shub's experimentation with the footage for *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*; the way in which she created coherent, creative and ideological sequences from the available material reflected Svilova's editing in films such as *The Trial of the Right Socialist Revolutionaries* (*Protess oranykh eseron*, 1922) and the later *Cine-Pravda* episodes (1922-25).<sup>171</sup> Throughout the 1940s and until her death in 1959, Shub was a director-editor at the Central Studio for Documentary Film, producing episodes of *News of the Day* in the same capacity as Svilova.

There are three notable patterns in this study of Svilova's contemporaries: first, the transition from actress to a film production role of some sort was a common route

into the industry. It could be suggested that directors such as Gardin and Kuleshov offered their partners opportunities to direct as a result of their personal relationships. Second, it was not unusual for the women to work in collaboration and, perhaps due to the influences that had introduced them to the production side of the industry, they tended to work with a male director. Also, it is worth noting that all the women had successful independent careers in between or after the collaborative element(s); not one was reliant on a male collaborator for the full duration of her working life. Third, from the four case studies it can be deduced that the role of the female director in a male-dominated industry was relatively unstable. Judith Mayne suggests that women's reliance on a male associate to break into the filmmaking industry typified the Soviet stance toward the female population as a whole during the interwar period.<sup>172</sup> Although the Bolshevik government was committed on paper to equality for women, in practice, policies were decided pragmatically. The steps deemed necessary to build socialism – the protection of the family as an economic unit, particularly in rural areas, and the free market established by the New Economic Policy – conflicted with measures that immediately would have improved the status of women.

Consequently, while Svilova and her contemporaries were granted the freedom to work in the industry, there was a discernible tension between the emancipation of women and the subsequent marginalisation they suffered. As Lynne Attwood describes, the post-revolutionary transformation in sexual relations encouraged a status quo of gender disillusionment.<sup>173</sup> Within a year of the revolution, the Constitution of 1918 affirmed equal rights for men and women. The problem, though, according to Renee and Matthew Baigell in the introduction to their analysis of post-Soviet women artists, was that Russian men appeared not to be aware of this

affirmation.<sup>174</sup> While both men and women worked full time, men were entitled to rest but women were expected to carry on working and fulfil their domestic duties. The situation was compounded after Stalin's gaining of power: economic priorities resulted in the underdevelopment of the service sector and consumer industries, as well as the failure to socialise fully childcare and household functions.<sup>175</sup> The marriage laws of 1917, for example, which allowed women to instigate divorce, were revised in 1925 with the aim of providing more protection for women. This was partly successful, but it was precisely women's legal status as 'victim' that, in retrospect, highlights the extreme ambivalence Soviet culture had toward female equality.<sup>176</sup> It is important to observe that, as a woman without children, Svilova would not have suffered from the 'double burden'. To my knowledge, she cared for Vertov during his bouts of illness but she was not responsible for any other dependents. The social position of Soviet women is important to consider, though, as gender rhetoric was frequently weaved into Svilova's newsreels and documentaries, to the extent that her representation of the new Soviet woman can be considered a defining trait of her films.

The most telling observation one can make about my study of early Soviet women filmmakers is the scant number of sources from which the information is located.<sup>177</sup> Very little attention has been paid to their lives and work because, as Angela Martin argues, 'the theory that informs the discipline is still largely only concerned with male filmmakers.'<sup>178</sup> This explains why Svilova and other early Soviet women filmmakers are not the subject of consistent academic research while early male Soviet filmmakers, particularly those from the 1920s who shared a collective desire to engage with the field and publicise their theories, are habitually revisited. Yet, although discussions about early Soviet women filmmakers are rare, the steady

increase in publications dealing with early Hollywood filmmakers and women filmmakers from other national cinemas suggests that paradigms are now being constructed which can accommodate films made by women, and my interest in Svilova's contribution to Soviet film hopefully indicates that it is only a matter of time before early Soviet women filmmakers begin to receive wider attention.<sup>179</sup>



## Chapter 2:

# Evidence of Aggression: *Oświęcim* (1945) and *Atrocities* (1945)

## Introduction

This chapter explores *Oświęcim* (1945) and *Atrocities* (1945), two films Svilova edited at the end of World War II. *Oświęcim* is a twenty minute documentary shot at the liberation of Auschwitz by Red Army cameramen. What transgressions the film is deemed to have witnessed is uncertain, for the most immediate and striking aspect of the footage, aside from its macabre imagery, is that it appears to misinterpret the events it recounts: it does not recognise itself as observing the aftermath of Jewish genocide. Instead, for the victims of the Holocaust, ethnic specificity is disregarded in the interests of universality. I commence my analysis of *Oświęcim* with an insight into the film's history, before exploring Svilova's editing strategies.<sup>1</sup> This section focuses on the generation of meaning through conflictual montage and employs the theories of André Bazin, Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag to probe Svilova's juxtaposition of still and moving imagery. I introduce *Oświęcim*'s outtake reel and *The Liberation of Auschwitz* (von zur Mühlen, 1985) to begin acknowledging the questions of representation the film raises. Although Svilova's attempt to universalise the



victims of the Nazis was not a strictly Soviet initiative, as I discuss below, *Oświęcim* nevertheless upheld Stalin's defensive mentality and emphasis on legitimisation. In detailing the horror committed by the enemies of communism, the film served to reinforce to the masses the virtuousness and integrity of socialism, while also more generally justifying Stalin's suspicion of foreign countries and the extreme measures he took to protect – or control – the Soviet population. Rather than a sign of anti-Semitism, Genadii Kostyrchenko argues that the marginalisation of Jewish victimhood reflected the Stalin regime's abandonment of internationalism in favour of a growing Russian nationalism.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish victims were omitted throughout Allied accounts of the Holocaust. I support this point with a synchronic analysis of atrocity films from Great Britain, France and the United States, which affords a platform for my study of *Atrocities*, a sixty minute montage of footage previously included in wartime newsreels and liberation films – including *Oświęcim* – that provided testimony for the Soviet prosecution at the main Nuremberg trial, thus acting as one thread of an established line of allegation adopted by all four Allied prosecutions. Against which specific crimes *Atrocities* testified was determined by a complex legal rhetoric that once again resulted in Jews remaining unmentioned. However, beyond arguing that its venue of exhibition, the courtroom at Nuremberg, influenced the film's representation of Jewish suffering, I also hold its role as evidence, its function in the witness box, an equally crucial part of my analysis. I reintroduce the ontological theories – including Judith Butler this time – to map the relationship between the film's visceral power and its ability to validate the crimes it documents. I suggest that this relationship largely originates in the authority bestowed on the film camera to capture unequivocal truth. Moving away from an analysis of Svilova's editorial decisions, I concentrate solely on her

selection of shots, arguing that she sought to include the images with the greatest capacity to engage the viewer in pathos. She selects footage that not only testifies to the crimes discussed in the courtroom but appeals to the emotions of the audience. She frequently emphasises individual victims and presents them as connected with the viewer by showing their faces. 'The camera pays particular attention to powerful expressions of grief, rendering the pain in close-up shots and representing the dead as related to the spectator.'<sup>3</sup>

### ***Oświęcim* (1945)**

*Oświęcim* is a short but powerful film. As Hicks observes, its value as a document and act of testimony can be enhanced immensely by analysing the film in light of the technical, personal, and political decisions that influenced its making.<sup>4</sup> On 7 February, 1945, the Central Studio for Documentary Film received a telegram from camera operator Mikhail Oshurkov that stated he and his camera division were filming the camp. The first five hundred metres of film were sent the following day, eleven days after the camp's liberation. The crew requested additional lighting equipment and film stock, which was received in early March. On 19 March, Oshurkov sent more footage and requested for it to be edited with the previous footage.

The film commences with mid-shots of ex-inmates walking in single file through the snow. Each person looks into the camera as they pass it. Other inmates remain behind a barbed wire fence; the camera tracks across their lifeless eyes. The fact that they remain imprisoned after the liberation suggests that this shot was dramatised by the cameramen, a fact confirmed by the anecdotes of Alexander Vorontsov, a Red Army cinematographer who acknowledged that many shots were staged for the benefit of the camera.<sup>5</sup> Svilova takes a step back from this intimate portrayal and cuts

together shots of the camp captured from a low-flying aeroplane. The snow-covered barracks provide an indication of the camp's scale and symmetry. These shots are juxtaposed with close-up shots of an elderly woman leaning out of a barrack window gasping for air. Svilova interrupts the high-angle montage with further close-up shots, this time of the camp's drawing plans. The final close-up of the sequence depicts plans of the camp's crematoria. Back inside the barrack, the camera tracks an elderly woman hobbling along the rows of wooden bunks. Women sit and talk to each other; their relaxed demeanour implies that the scene was again dramatised after the liberation. Svilova attempts to draw the audience away from the possibility of staging by intercutting the scene with a shot of an electric fence. A sign next to the fence indicates that it is powered by 6000 volts. The juxtaposition intimates that, despite the liberation, the fence continues to imprison the women. The women in the barracks are captured in detail, standing in medium close-up facing the camera and introduced by the voiceover as Elena Iablunkskaia, seventy three; Stanislava Kshechkol'skaia, fifty-four; and Olimpia Prusinov'skaia, sixty-five. They were sent to the camp after the Warsaw uprising in September 1944. It is important to note that their names are Russified and distorted to downplay their ethnic difference from Russian-speaking viewers.<sup>6</sup> I will return to this point shortly.

After the barrack scene, a photo album is opened and the pages turned by a hand that enters the shot from the right. Leaving behind the images of smiling people in the photographs, Svilova reselects a section from the tracking shot of the inmates standing behind the barbed wire. The camera focuses on their physical ailments: close-ups reveal damaged legs and bloody eyes. In similar fashion to the women in the barrack, a young girl and infant are introduced in a medium close-up shot – heaps of naked bodies surround the ground where they stand.

The next sequence captures inmates continuing their exit from the camp. Some of the inmates are able to walk freely but most are assisted on crutches. Many lie dead on stretchers, their faces covered by rags and stained sheets. Children also make their exit from the camp; escorted by nuns and nurses, they walk in single file along a path between rows of barbed wire. Framed in mid-shot, a number of the children roll their sleeves and reveal their tattooed numbers to the camera. The montage is concluded with a shot of the vacant path, the absence of children suggesting that the liberation is complete. The shot's extreme emptiness is also used to provide one half of a conflictual juxtaposition. Svilova cuts from the uninhabited shot of the path to a shot containing a number of items scattered on the muddy ground – a doll's head lies among other unidentifiable objects. Svilova introduces the gas chambers gradually, first selecting a shot captured through a chamber's peep hole before selecting shots from a camera positioned inside the chamber, the latter capturing four Zyklon B canisters standing against the back wall. A Soviet soldier opens up a small wooden box to reveal syringes and a bottle of poison. Outside, the destruction caused by the chambers is depicted in explicit detail: a wide-angle shot captures scores of naked bodies in a ditch; some of the bodies have deteriorated, others belong to lives only recently passed. At the brow of the ditch, a female inmate gives her testimony to a group of Soviet soldiers, while four male inmates explain to the camera how the gallows operated. When each man is introduced (it transpires that they are all esteemed scientists), he displays his tattooed number to the audience.

The fourth to last sequence depicts a Soviet delegation's tour of the camp's storerooms. Shot handheld, the camera follows the delegation as it inspects piles of hair, spectacles, clothes, shoes, toothbrushes, hairbrushes and suitcases. A tracking shot along a table of dentures suspends on the pair of pliers that lie ominously at the

end. Svilova returns the viewer to the ditch, where the number of bodies lying within it has increased. Two women stand at the brow crying into their handkerchiefs at the horrific sight below them. A marching band approaches the ditch, followed first by nuns and altar boys and then by an enormous crowd of mourners. Hundreds of white coffins are placed around the brow of the ditch. Close-up shots of the mourners' distraught faces provide time in the film's narration for the coffins to be lowered into the ditch. Men shovel earth over the coffins, burying them alongside the exposed bodies. The film's penultimate sequence depicts scenes of medical examinations. A montage of medium close-ups capture Soviet doctors assessing the health of an undernourished man and two children whose feet are severely frostbitten. Svilova interrupts the scene with shots of photographs from a family album before returning to a mid-shot of a crying baby. The final examinations depict three men who have been sterilised, an undernourished woman, a man who has a piece of plastic protruding from under the skin of his calf and a young boy, Wenkel, who was shot in the head 'as a warning for sharing his bread'.<sup>7</sup> The final shot of the film is a medium close-up of eleven photographs of the faces of Nazi guards who worked at Auschwitz, presumably found during the camp's liberation.

*Oświecim* has been the subject of only minimal discussion in film studies. Academic interest in filmic depictions of the Holocaust tends to be more focused on fictional presentations than the analysis of documentary material. The reason for this tendency is most likely due to the wealth of fiction material available for analysis – the presence of Holocaust films has been perpetual in Western cinema since the 1960s.<sup>8</sup> Such a presence has led to the establishment of the Holocaust genre as filmmakers continually excavate new stories of survival and pain from documents and anecdotes of World War II. Not only is there an abundance of Holocaust films

but they tend to be popular with critics and audiences,<sup>9</sup> which itself is perhaps owed to the relative ease with which fictional accounts of events at concentration camps such as Auschwitz introduce mainstream audiences to the unimaginable horror they aim to portray. Although certain scenes in films such as *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993) and *The Pianist* (Polanski, 2002) are unnerving, they pale in comparison to the explicit grief and suffering evident in the grainy, black and white liberation footage. The earliest recorded exhibition of *Oświęcim* was in the Soviet Union at the end of May 1945, shown in Moscow in three cinemas for three weeks. The film's release was likely delayed until the war had officially ended and the Soviet war commission had released its report on Auschwitz.<sup>10</sup> A. Krol's review of the film for *Pravda Ukrainy* was extremely positive, suggesting that 'everyone must see this film: not even the most powerful description can take the place of that which the camera has registered dispassionately.'<sup>11</sup> Although the film was intended for an international audience, it was most widely exhibited in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany: sixty-nine German-language prints were produced between June and October 1945.<sup>12</sup> *Oświęcim* was exhibited in Austria in the autumn of 1945. A notice in the *New Austrian* newspaper on 4 November, 1945, indicates that the film was screened in the Kärtner Theatre on Kärtner Street, a main shopping precinct in Vienna, as part of the bill for a re-release of Harry Piel's *Men, Animals and Sensations* (1938), a German circus drama.<sup>13</sup> The next recorded exhibition in Austria was approximately two weeks later. *Oświęcim* was screened as part of *Camps of Terror* on 16 November, described below:

A movie poster advertises a presentation of stylized barbed wire: 'The authentic concentration camp films – the camps of terror that everyone must see!' Haydn VI was the cinema in question. The programme consisted of three films: *The Death Camps* (France, 1945) by Les Actualités Françaises, *Majdanek: Burial Sites in Europe* (Soviet Union/Poland, 1944) by Aleksander Ford and Irina Setkina, and *Auschwitz* (Soviet Union, 1945) by Elizaveta Svilova.<sup>14</sup>

Current discussions on *Oświęcim* are mostly limited to festival screenings of the film. Febiofest 2005, a Czech film festival, included the film in its programme,<sup>15</sup> as did a one-day Austrian festival the same year titled Kinokis Presents, which coincided with the publication of the book, *Learn to Discuss! Re-Education Through Film: Strategies of Western Allies after 1945*.<sup>16</sup> *Oświęcim* was screened alongside five other films at Febiofest: *Concentration Camp Ebensee Austria* (US Army Signal Corps, 1945), *Death Mills* (Burger, 1945), *The Death Camps* (Les Actualités Françaises, 1945), *A Defeated People* (Jennings, 1945) and *Fresh Wind in All Lanes* (Buch, 1951).<sup>17</sup> Outside the festival domain, John MacKay mentions Svilova and the film in his 2009 biography of Dziga Vertov,<sup>18</sup> and Jeremy Hicks briefly references the film in his article, ‘Confronting the Holocaust: Mark Donskoi’s *The Unvanquished*’, cited below:

Soviet films recorded the aftermath of Nazi racial violence throughout the war, culminating in a two-reel film, *Majdanek*, edited by Irina Setkina and released in January 1945; and in June the same year, a two-reel film of Auschwitz, which uses the town’s Polish name, *Oświęcim*, edited by Elizaveta Svilova, Dziga Vertov’s wife.<sup>19</sup>

Hicks provides a more thorough analysis of the film in his latest book, *First Films of the Holocaust* (2012).

*Oświęcim* is readily accessible in archives. For example, the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive in Krasnogorsk holds a 35mm print with a Russian voiceover and a number of rolls of film containing outtakes; the Bundesarchiv in Berlin holds a print on 35mm with a German voiceover; the Open Society Archive in Budapest holds the same film on DVD with an English voiceover (the voiceover is translated into English from Russian as faithfully as the differences between the two languages will allow); the Imperial War Museum in London has a

print on 35mm but without sound; the Yad Vashem archive in Jerusalem has a print on 35mm with a Russian voiceover; and the National Center for Jewish Film, based at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, loans out its English-speaking 16mm print for educational purposes. My analysis is based on the print and outtakes archived in Krasnogorsk.

## ***Oświecim* and editorial strategies**

In order to locate Svilova's directorial approach in *Oświecim*, it is useful to recontextualise it among classical theories of Soviet montage. The creation of montage is a result of the juxtaposition of differences within one frame or within sequences, in choreography or arranged chaos, and in linear or circular movements. Conflict within the shot is merely potential montage; dialectical montage operates fully when one image is put into interaction with another. If one accepts the premise of conflict then montage is not a process that can be restricted to a film's post-production stage; on the contrary, it must be considered from the very beginning, long before any shooting has taken place. David Bordwell reminds us that, although it was an established practice in Soviet cinema during this period to use found footage – that is, using images shot for other films to cut costs – the pre-production stage was vital in determining which images would be required to narrate the story.<sup>20</sup> From Bordwell's description it can be argued that Svilova does not use montage in the typical way. Her role was to elicit conflict from material over which she had no control until it was available for editing. Svilova's application of conflictual montage, therefore, is both unique and symptomatic of her association with the 1920s school of Soviet filmmakers.



Within the opening two minutes of the film, high-angle aerial shots sweep over Auschwitz – the snow-covered landscape is dotted with the black roofs of the barracks. From this viewpoint, the camera captures the symmetry of the camp's architecture. As the aeroplane slows down, and the shot develops from a tracking shot into a high-angle stationary shot, Svilova cuts to drawing plans of Auschwitz spread out on a desk. White snow turns into the white paper on which the plans are drawn. Juxtaposing the plans with the sweeping high-angle shots of the camp itself allows for the introduction of a new, abstract meaning: the camp, as a representation of the Nazis' vision of a totalitarian fascist state, was realised and executed with an exceptional level of efficiency. Conflictual editing resurfaces in the medical examination scene toward the end of the film. Three men sit on a bed shirtless, framed in the centre of the shot. Although the men appear well-nourished and healthy, the voiceover informs the audience that the men have been subjected to sterilisation experiments. Svilova juxtaposes this shot with one featuring a woman who, also centrally framed, is suffering from malnutrition. The conflict between the 'unified mass' and 'lonely individual', as Eisenstein described it,<sup>21</sup> is palpable in both its literacy (preceding the woman with the three well-nourished men makes her appear even more skeletal) and also in its ideological detachment from the real world – the image of the seemingly healthy men is more unsettling for the audience which, up to this point in the film, has become accustomed to the protruding bones, shaved heads and overall dishevelled appearance of the inmates. The malnourished woman, then, within the boundaries of *Oświęcim*'s idiosyncratic narrative ironically provides the viewer with a familiar image, one it can understand. Furthermore, the conflict of mass and individual in this transition is neutralised by our knowledge of the inmates' illnesses. Once the voiceover divulges this information, it becomes clear that both the men and the woman have suffered unimaginable pain.

In addition to the conflict between mass and individual, Svilova implements a conflict of movement. Eight minutes into the film, injured and dead inmates are shepherded out the camp on stretchers and horse carts. They enter the frame from the right and exit to the left through the camp's main gate, which becomes a well-established pattern of movement. The voiceover identifies one of the bodies as a young woman who was murdered two hours before the liberation for trying to escape. As the body is removed from the camp, Svilova cuts to a shot from a camera setup on the opposite side of the pathway. The movement in the frame switches to left to right, in immediate conflict with the previously established pattern. The second camera setup does not provide a clearer view of the subject; there is no explicit reason for Svilova to induce conflict here other than the requirement for direct shot interaction. Although the body is being removed from the camp, the result of the conflict implies that it is now being carried back into the camp. The abstract result of the juxtaposition implies, at least in my reading, that Auschwitz has claimed the life and soul of the woman, who is destined to remain there indefinitely. Svilova interrupts a second established pattern of movement later in the film, again to encourage an emotional response from the viewer. After the Soviet generals have examined the piles of hair, dentures and spectacles hoarded in the storerooms, Svilova cuts to a different storeroom containing the clothes of the inmates. Up to this point, the editing pattern has consisted of an external shot to establish the location, followed by an internal shot of the action. Svilova deliberately disrupts this pattern; instead, the internal shot comes first in the form of a tight, low-angle medium close-up of the pile of clothes inside the storeroom. In comparison to the size of the previous piles, this one appears relatively smaller and, therefore, comes as something of a relief for the viewer who likely assumes that the size reflects the number of inmates who perished. Once the size of the pile is established in the

minds of the audience members, Svilova cuts to a wide-angle exterior shot of the same storeroom. This shot depicts a huge pile of clothes bursting out the storeroom door, almost the size of the storeroom itself. As the audience now realises, the small and rather insignificant pile of clothing inside the storeroom was merely the start of the pile. The initial withholding of visual evidence thus fuels and heightens a response of anger and incredulity.

Svilova's use of montage, then, pivots on a concept of manipulation: she elicits the audience's emotional response by contravening her own established patterns of editing. A scene five minutes into *Oświęcim* depicts a young woman and infant holding hands outside a barrack; dead bodies lie all around them. Once the voiceover has introduced the pair, they walk toward the camera and past it, carefully stepping over the bodies as they go. As the woman and infant leave the frame, Svilova cuts to a shot depicting a number of wounded inmates walking toward the camera. Although the wounded inmates do not step over dead bodies as the infant and the young woman have done – instead, they step over bricks and other debris – the second shot's exact replication of the movement in the first shot encourages an intellectual reading. Svilova uses continuity in movement to draw a comparison between the bodies and the bricks, in doing so articulating a myriad of interpretations, though the premise of desensitisation is perhaps the most immediate response. Stepping over the bodies, the infant appears indifferent to a scene that in any other real-world scenario would be met with horror by adult and child alike. The infant steps over the bodies as if they are pieces of rubble.

## The development of motifs

The establishment of motifs are central to Svilova's montage strategy and it is crucial to explore the development of certain structures and literary devices within the film's narrative. As I have discussed, the theme of desensitisation – in particular, the seemingly detached attitude of the inmates toward death – reoccurs throughout *Oświęcim*, implying a loss of innocence. A montage of the camp's debris features a shot of a doll's head, and this shot is held for a number of seconds longer than the shots that come before and after it. Furthermore, during the storeroom sequence in which the Soviet generals inspect the hair, dentures and other personal possessions of the inmates, Svilova suspends the sequence on a shot of a blonde, plaited ponytail, presumably cut from a young girl's head. Both of these shots underpin the point that children were treated in Auschwitz without compassion. A young girl's ponytail removed from the scalp not only symbolises a loss of innocence but also a loss of femininity, reflecting the androgynous appearance assumed reluctantly by the camp's inmates. There are reoccurring images of women who have no feminine qualities; their skeletal faces and malnourished bodies render them genderless. Even the dead bodies, framed in close-up and naked, are not easily distinguishable as a male or female. The pain inflicted on the female inmates of Auschwitz might be read as a personal affliction for Svilova who recycles shots of women crying, particularly during the burial sequence, and also emphasises the pain and disillusionment of the elderly woman in the barrack by revisiting her through various close-up shots. The motivation for the placing of this image – juxtaposed with the aerial shots in the opening sequence of the film – is not clear but its ambiguity encourages a visceral response.

Humiliation and dehumanisation are sustained in Svilova's third motif. On three occasions inmates expose the tattooed numbers with which they were branded upon admission to Auschwitz: first, a number of children roll their sleeves on their exit from the camp;<sup>22</sup> second, the four scientists in the courtyard each reveal their number in turn; and last, the malnourished woman who is juxtaposed with the three sterilised men during the medical experimentation sequence exhibits her number upon request. The focus on the tattoos suggests that, while physical pain eventually fades, the numbers will remain as tangible manifestations of the psychological scars the inmates bear. Some survivors reveal their numbers proudly, in the knowledge they overcame the torment it represents, but others expose them half-heartedly, as if ashamed. This motif, working in conjunction with the loss of femininity and innocence, is a calculated attempt to support the central message of Svilova's narrative: the inmates of Auschwitz suffered heinous torture, humiliation and death at the hands of a barbaric fascist ideology.

The last motif introduces ontological theories to my discussion. On three occasions family photographs are incorporated to develop and inform the film's dominant themes. The first use of photographs occurs within the opening five minutes of the film, during the barrack scene. Women sit on the benches and lie in their beds, all staring into the camera. Svilova interrupts this scene with a close-up shot of a photo album; the pages are turned by a hand that enters the shot from the right. Inside the album, a series of photographs depicts people in various states of happiness and enjoyment: children laughing, families picnicking and playing games. Then Svilova returns to Auschwitz with a panning shot of inmates standing behind an electric fence. The pan pauses for a moment on a number of inmates who are displaying symptoms of physical abuse. The second use of photographs occurs eighteen

minutes into the film during the medical examinations sequence. Two children, a boy and a girl, are having their feet inspected by a doctor. A close-up shot of the girl's feet reveals that they are severely frostbitten, with the toes compacted together. Again, Svilova interrupts this shot with a pan across a photo album – each photograph portrays a joyful child. The shot suspends on the photograph of a smiling baby before Svilova cuts back to the examination room with unremitting candidness: a distressed baby cries in a cot and a malnourished infant stands naked on the bed. The doctor turns the infant around in order for the camera to record the full extent of his injuries.

Pre-war family photographs, previously considered private mementos without documentary value, have become central to the Holocaust narrative.<sup>23</sup> Besides being intensely personal, family photos are universal; they are unique and at the same time relatively mundane. Anyone can read a family photo, projecting onto the image their own memories, longings or desires. Svilova's juxtaposition of the photographs, alongside images of the inmates after their incarceration at Auschwitz, serves to increase the poignancy of both the before and after snapshot of these people's lives; the ordinariness of the photographs is accentuated by the horrifying footage. Such a use of montage taps into the viewer's complex and contradictory associations of family, nostalgia and mortality. We must remember the familiar as well as the terrifying and often incomprehensible images. Although still alive, the inmates juxtaposed with the photographs are on the brink of death. Even the young men, only a few years older than the children depicted in the photographs, appear aged and fatigued. Svilova does not only create conflict between emancipation and captivity, or good health and poor health; she questions the grey area that exists as a

result of pushing one to a state of near-death, at which point the thought of death is no longer abhorred.

While the inmates are still breathing and standing upright – although in the cases of many, only just – the resonance of death that pervades the scene broaches the ontological theories of André Bazin. Bazin argues that the reproduction of the image in a realist format is no longer a question of survival after death (referring to Man's desire to overcome the finality of death using visual art) but of a larger concept, the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its own temporal destiny.<sup>24</sup> Bazin makes reference to family albums, suggesting that they offer the presence of lives halted at a set moment in their duration, freed from their destiny.<sup>25</sup> Svilova's placing of the photographs in between scenes of explicit suffering provides each photograph with what Roland Barthes describes as its 'punctum': the image's ability to wound or prick the spectator.<sup>26</sup> Svilova's granting of life to these photographs, liberating them from the interpretive agency of subjective perception, is central to this montage. What appears at first to be a collision between the life of motion picture and the death of photography remains dialectical, only the life emanates from the shadows of the photographic image. The death of the moving image is confirmed when the voiceover reveals that two of the children juxtaposed with the photographs did not survive. For these children, their recollections of a happy childhood, like the ones portrayed in the photographs, will remain as memories not to be relived.

The third use of photographs in *Oświęcim* occurs during the film's final sequence. After the medical examinations have taken place, a shot of eleven photographs scattered across a table fades into view; each photograph depicts the face of a Nazi perpetrator. Svilova cuts to a close-up shot of two of the faces, SS Officer Max Sell

and Commander Richard Baer, before returning to the shot of all eleven photographs. The voiceover informs the audience that ‘these are the men responsible for the deaths of four million people.’ The photographs in this instance constitute a narrative strategy to signify resolution by allowing the audience to identify the enemy. Furthermore, the images provide the Soviet soldiers, doctors and nurses – arguably the collective hero of the film – with an antithesis that, up until this final moment, has remained anonymous. The poor lighting with which the photographs of the Nazis are captured by the film camera, complemented by the impassive and unemotional facial expressions depicted in each one, renders it difficult for the viewer to find any life in the photographs. Contradicting Bazin, Roland Barthes argues that death cannot be evaded and, even if death has not yet occurred, a photograph reminds us that it will:

The photograph’s immobility is somehow the result of a perverse confusion between two concepts: the Real and the Live: by attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value; but by shifting this reality to the past (this-has-been), the photograph suggests that it is already dead.<sup>27</sup>

Barthes posits a valuable notion: the medium of photography, whose existence according to Bazin is justified by its ability to record and encapsulate life, is unable to fulfil its destiny; it confirms death rather than serves to avoid it. Svilova uses the photographs of the Nazis to offer visual confirmation that their reign of terror is over. Although Richard Baer, for example, lived until 1963, his photograph represents the death of his ideology. This notion could not have been achieved with moving image; any suggestion of movement or life would have merely served to undermine the very point Svilova appears to be making. Susan Sontag places atrocity



photography somewhere in between the ontological theories of Bazin and Barthes: 'Photographs of the suffering of a people are more than reminders of death, of failure, of victimisation. They invoke the miracle of survival.'<sup>28</sup> What they cannot do, though, despite the coherence of Sontag's argument, is provide unequivocal proof of the events they record: 'Photographs of atrocity illustrate as well as corroborate ... they give the indelible sample. The illustrative function of photographs leaves opinions, prejudices, fantasies, misinformation untouched.'<sup>29</sup> One of the reasons why atrocity photographs are not indisputable evidence is that, as Hannah Arendt observed shortly after Auschwitz's liberation, they depict the event at a specific moment in time.<sup>30</sup> Arendt alludes to photography's fatal flaw: what happens before and after the split second when the emulsion in the camera is exposed to light remains unaccounted for. This is not to argue that motion picture has managed to eradicate this particular inadequacy; due to its own limitations, the film camera has also been unable to answer many of the questions surrounding the liberation of concentration camps such as Auschwitz. Nevertheless, although the photographs fall short as proof they can, as Sontag rightly concludes, acknowledge.<sup>31</sup> Resolving *Oświęcim*'s narrative with photographs of eleven Nazis can neither explain why the atrocities happened nor can they represent the many who were in some way responsible for it. The photographs can, however, allow for an acknowledgement of the evil that remained as a constant factor throughout the camp's appalling history. I return to these ontological theories shortly.

## Obscuring accounts of Jewish suffering

Further analysis of *Oświęcim* reveals how – using both image and sound – the film systematically marginalises the Jewish suffering at the camp. Archive documents

reveal that, after receiving the footage, the Central Studio for Documentary sent a telegram to Mikhail Oshurkov on 3 April applauding the professional standard and clear, correct orientation of the footage. He is also praised for ‘avoiding the dangers of naturalism’,<sup>32</sup> meaning that there was no undue concentration on images that identified Jews. Despite the instructions to avoid naturalism, there was an element of indecision for the camera operators. They filmed a pile of tallits, the Jewish ritual prayer shawl, which unambiguously represented the number of Jewish victims, but these shots were not included in the final film. The fact that these images were filmed at all suggests a lack of certainty on the part of the cameramen as to what was appropriate for the film and what was not. Svilova performed a crucial ‘gatekeeping’ exercise. Even though the commission that toured the camp noted the ‘mass-produced signs in the form of six-pointed stars with the word Jude inside the star’,<sup>33</sup> any footage gathered during the liberation that explicitly or implicitly touched upon the Jewish dimension of the Holocaust remained on Svilova’s cutting room floor.

This decision-making process is not only supported by the outtakes of *Oświecim*, which includes the shots of the tallits, but also by the German documentary, *The Liberation of Auschwitz*, which claims to feature the full sixty minutes of usable footage captured by the Red Army’s cameramen. This footage is accompanied by a voiceover based on the anecdotes of Alexander Vorontsov who shot the liberation footage and who is intermittently interviewed throughout the film. As Hicks suggests, the outtake reel enables us to trace the process that Soviet attempts to represent the Holocaust had to negotiate before appearing on screen, and this process can be compared with the attempts of other media to depict the same events.<sup>34</sup> For example, Yitshak Arad argues that, on the whole, Soviet print media at worst ignored and at best diffused Jewish suffering into a policy of universality.<sup>35</sup> When contextualised in this manner,

the films' clichés become more evident and their silences more telling. They grant us insight into the difficulties faced and paths taken when filmmakers first attempted to portray the Holocaust.<sup>36</sup> Comparing the outtake reel and *The Liberation of Auschwitz* with Svilova's film confirms the latter's blind spots. For example, *The Liberation of Auschwitz* and the outtake reel inform us that, alongside the family photographs Svilova incorporates into her film, there were photographs depicting the arrival of a train full of Jews at Auschwitz. Nearly every person in each photograph displays a Star of David on their chest. In conjunction with the factual and dramatised reconstructions of the Holocaust produced since, these photographs validate the claim that Jews who arrived at Auschwitz were not just a nationality of victims but stood as a target for complete annihilation. Furthermore, a funeral held at Auschwitz on 28 February, 1945, for the 470 bodies found during the liberation is a pivotal scene in Svilova's film, yet footage of a traditional Jewish burial, included in *The Liberation of Auschwitz*, is noticeably absent.

As *Oświęcim* does not acknowledge the victims as Jews, the voiceover, which comments on the images directly, also fails to mention their overwhelming presence at Auschwitz. Amid describing the images, the voiceover recounts the Nazi legacy, sharing with the viewer statistics pertaining to the number of dead and outlining in detail Hitler's aim for world domination. This information, while unrelated to specific images, reinforces the film's rhetoric. According to the voiceover, Hitler's goal was to 'exterminate the European intelligentsia', reiterating that 'four million people died at Auschwitz' – both consciously elusive statements. In fact, the word 'Jew' is mentioned only once throughout the film's duration, as a 'nationality' of victim in a list containing Polish, Czech, Dutch, etc. The role of the voiceover, then, contradicts Svilova's preference for the visual generation of meaning, most likely

indicating that a studio executive did not deem the images sufficiently clear to tell the Auschwitz story in the way considered most beneficial to the aims of the Central Committee.

*Oświęcim*'s absence of singular Jewish suffering, recognising it – if at all – in only vague and almost abstract terms within the realm of universality, lies as much in Svilova's shot selection as it does in the act of cutting them together, and not only in the shots selected for inclusion but in the shots that were not. It is for this reason that a study of Svilova's role in the film cannot be overlooked, despite her absence from the shooting location. The result of her selection and rejection process is a film that suggests Jews suffered almost inadvertently, embroiled in Hitler's war against the Slavic people, a line that followed the Soviet authorities' rejection of the Holocaust and 'restricted the representation and discussion of the fate of Jewish victims as being separate from that of Soviet citizens more generally and other occupied peoples'.<sup>37</sup>

Sovietising the Holocaust meant editing images of Jews to appeal as widely as possible to the Soviet population, whose fears and presumed anti-Semitism might otherwise cause this call for vengeance to flounder.<sup>38</sup> To rouse Soviet soldiers to avenge the dead, filmmakers were encouraged to downplay the Jewish identity of the victims so as to avoid confirming Nazi propaganda that claimed Russian soldiers were being exploited to fight for Jews. It also involved depriving victims and eyewitnesses of language. Soviet atrocity footage frequently shows victims' suffering in a graphic manner, photographing the faces of the dead so as to enable spectator identification. The purpose of this identification was to move the spectator to act, for the dead are presented not as alien from but as similar to the spectator. *Oświęcim*

differs in this respect as Svilova does not incorporate close-up shots of faces. This was a decision made by Svilova, since the initial footage shot by A. Pavlov included close-up shots.<sup>39</sup> While, then, Soviet wartime films attempted to Sovietise the Holocaust, *Oświecim* concentrates instead on the theme of universality to meet the demands of an international audience. As the Soviet camera operators and editors did not perceive these films as depicting the fate solely of Jews, and certainly not as documenting the Holocaust, they worked under tight restrictions. Atrocities could be represented but they could not be ethnically differentiated; the films thus formed a specific representational mode and visual language, an idiom with which to articulate pain and suffering.

## **The absence of Jewish suffering in Soviet wartime film**

Despite a general overlooking of its filmic depictions of the Holocaust, the Soviet Union was the only anti-Nazi power to be occupied yet able to continue its cinema industry. Soviet wartime film had depicted Nazi persecution of Jews prior to the war, at least until the August 1939 Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact. After the invasion in June 1941, Soviet media began to make film documents of Nazi atrocities against Soviet and Eastern populations, and the depictions continued throughout the war until the liberation of the concentration camps. The first filmic reference, however, to the Nazis' genocidal acts toward Jews appeared implicitly in *Soiuzkino Journal no.84* (*Soiuzkinozhurnal*, 1941). Solomon Mikhoels, a famous Jewish actor and director at the Moscow Yiddish theatre, makes a speech about the importance of Jews to fight back against the enemy. Before it was edited and included in the newsreel, Mikhoels's original speech referred explicitly to the intention of the Nazis to annihilate Jews.<sup>40</sup> A second speech, this time by Ilya Ehrenburg, is also edited to remove much of his

discussion concerning Nazi anti-Semitism and emphasise instead the common fate of Jews and Soviet citizens.

A few months after the release of *Soiuzkino Journal no.84*, the first filmic depictions of Nazi aggression were exhibited. *Soiuzkino Journal no.114* (1941) portrays the liberation of Rostov-on-Don in November 1941. The cameramen did not simply record these sights but, as with the filming of *Oświęcim*, carefully determined which subjects would be filmed, how they would be filmed, and which individuals would be used to encapsulate wider suffering. ‘The film does not even imply, let alone state, that the dead are Jews ... The presentation of the dead as victims of a generalised Nazi violence toward the town and its population serves to obscure the racial motive for the crimes.’<sup>41</sup> One of the victims documented is Vitia Golovlev, a boy of sixteen (though the commentary claims he is thirteen) who was murdered by the Nazis for refusing to surrender his pigeon.<sup>42</sup> While Vitia lies dead, slumped up against a wall, the pigeon is still alive in his hands. Not only does this confirm that the shot was staged, the pigeon’s survival implied a Soviet spirit of resistance and innocence, and Vitia himself was immortalised as a figure of hope for the Pioneer movement. The film does not make it known that Vitia was Jewish. Rather, the newsreel represents him as an arbitrary victim of violence, which fits in with the agenda of the story to Sovietise the Holocaust. The suggestion that the Nazis chose victims irrationally – targeting anyone Soviet – also serves to highlight the barbarity of the fascist regime, depicted as an unsystematic murdering machine.

While Rostov was the first notable city to be liberated, camera operators had already witnessed the aftermath of smaller scale atrocities, but it was months before they decided to film them. ‘The tragic vistas of retreat and columns of refugees

contradicted their expectations of a triumphant Soviet advance. Moreover, they were afraid to film scenes without having required permission to do so.<sup>43</sup> As I have already illustrated, the production notes of *Oświęcim* make clear that camera operators were under strict instructions as to which images could and could not be exhibited to Soviet audiences.

Although the Soviet films almost always deliberately understate the distinct fate of Jews by placing them with other victims of the atrocities, it is not the case that they all do; some scenes explicitly identify Jewish victims. *Soiuzkino Journal no.9* (1942), for example, documents Jews and the armbands they were forced to wear in Orlov, a central Russian district, though it does not go to any extent to explain why they wore armbands – why they needed to be identified and segregated. Again, this newsreel fails to seize the opportunity to explain the wider picture of Jewish victimhood.

*Klooga Death Camp (Klooga—lager' smerti, 1944)*, a one-reel special focusing on the liberation of the camp, documents victims with the Star of David on their uniforms.

Analogous to the shots of tallits in *Oświęcim*, the fact that the cameramen capture so many images that unambiguously identifies the dead as Jewish is a testament to the lack of clear guidance warning filmmakers what they should and should not capture.

The instructions to avoid naturalism were evidently not always understood or came with flexible conditions. These films thus constitute both a visual record and an initial effort, albeit inconsistently, to grasp and reconstruct the events of the

Holocaust.<sup>44</sup> While the films did, on a few occasions, strive to depict Jews as Jews, the political climate of the wartime Soviet film industry made these exceptions rare.

Even when filmmakers attempted this, they tended to avoid making Jews the exclusive focus of their films, implying or suggesting more than they showed or stated.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the collective nature of Soviet newsreel tended to dilute any sense

of personal affliction against Jews, and the few exceptions to this pattern are also seemingly flawed, as well as in other media. Referring to articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* about the Jewish victims of Majdanek, Karel Berkhoff states that, 'Despite a transparent effort to deemphasise the Jews murdered in Poland, they were not always omitted.'<sup>46</sup>

The tendency to classify Jews alongside other victims continued in almost all other newsreels until the end of World War II. *Soiuzkino Journal no.10* (1942), for example, depicts a mass grave outside Kerch, a city in the eastern region of the Crimea, but fails to identify the victims as Jewish. The film presents Grigorii Berman crying over the bodies of his wife and children, but only a photograph taken by Jewish photographer, Evgenii Khaldei, which is captioned with Grigorii's name of the man and in turn implies his Jewish identity, offers an insight into the ethnicity of the victims.<sup>47</sup> *Soiuzkino Journal no.27* (1942) depicts frozen bodies in Barvenkovo, Ukraine. The commentary aims to dismiss any notion that their Jewish identity was a factor in the murders, stating that, 'These peaceful citizens became victims of Fascist barbarity. They were killed simply because they were Soviet people.' The outtake reel from the film shows that the victims were wearing armbands, but the newsreel is carefully edited to conceal what would have been explicit iconography of their Jewish identity.

These newsreels are not arbitrary examples to highlight the complex representation of Jewishness in Soviet wartime cinema. They have specific pertinence to Svilova, in that she incorporated the scenes I have described from Rostov, Klooga and Kerch into *Atrocities*. This is not coincidental: the footage was always intended to be used as documents of Nazi crimes. The demand for retribution began with Molotov's four notes, the first issued in November 1941, which all refer to notions of law



contravened by Nazi atrocities. Yet, as Hicks suggests, the calls for a legal resolution were part of a wartime propaganda strategy aimed partly at bolstering the image of the Soviet Union with its British and American allies, but above all at re-establishing the Soviet government's moral superiority among its own citizens, whom the war had shown to be so alienated that they were often attracted to Nazism.<sup>48</sup> We can understand this to mean that, although *Oświecim* was produced a number of months before the International Military Tribunal had finalised the plan for the trials at Nuremberg, it anticipates a legal outcome. For example, Svilova's focusing on documents rather than witnesses 'avoids any emotional excess that might be prejudicial to justice and the creation of a legal precedent', and the film ends with a quotation from Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill urging the war criminals to be tried.<sup>49</sup> Also, the film's subtitle, *Film Documents of the Monstrous Crimes of the German Government in Auschwitz* (*Kinodokumenty o chudovishchnykh prestupleniakh germanskogo pravitel'stva v Osventsime*), sets the film in a legal context by implying that the aggression of the Nazis exceeded that which can be expected during wartime. From the Soviet perspective, the laws of civilised humanity, which are to be upheld at all times, had been broken.

## ***Atrocities* (1945)**

On Day 59 of the main Nuremberg Trial (14 February 1946) Chief Counsellor of Justice L. N. Smirnov introduced documentation pertaining to crimes committed against the civilian population of Eastern Europe. While Smirnov's presentation was focused on the criminal violation of the laws and customs of war, he also alluded to Crimes against Peace: 'The planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or

participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing.<sup>50</sup> Smirnov presented evidence for three full days, concluding the case on Day Sixty-Two with *Atrocities*. A number of different versions of *Atrocities* are in circulation; thus it is important to note that all references to the film are based on my viewing of the print preserved in the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive. Reading the film as an extension of Smirnov's presentation, a controlled and calculated visual manifestation of evidence designed to corroborate the spoken and written word, sheds light on its absence of Jewishness. The indictment did not include what we refer to today as genocide, which was instead included under the term of Crimes against Humanity: namely murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against civilian populations.<sup>51</sup> *Atrocities* avoids discussing ethnicity for this reason.

Although understanding the crimes for which *Atrocities* provided evidence is beneficial to my analysis, more so when I study the visceral qualities of the images, it has not altogether resolved the matter of Jewish absence. Smirnov dedicated Days Sixty-Seven to Sixty-Nine of the trial to the presentation of Crimes against Humanity. Despite the opportunity to emphasise Jewish extermination in a way that fitted into the Allies' handling of its indictments, no film evidence was used to support the allegations. The Soviet prosecution's passing up of this opportunity suggests that the absence of Jewishness in *Atrocities* was not only a case of semantics – a second issue prevented the film's inclusion of any images that alluded to specific Jewish suffering. Lawrence Douglas's analysis of *Nazi Concentration Camps* (Stevens, 1945), a montage of atrocities exhibited as evidence by the American prosecution, proposes that the footage could not act as evidence, auxiliary or otherwise, for an offence unprecedented in law and one almost impossible for a courtroom to fathom. For this

reason, *Nazi Concentration Camps* documents a barbaric campaign of extermination but does so in a highly elliptical manner. Calling attention to the film's voiceover, Douglas notes that the word 'Jew' is mentioned only once in the film's sixty minutes, and in such a way as to eclipse any suggestion that the Holocaust was directed against them: 'The 4,000 Ohrdruf victims are said to include Poles, Czechs, Russians, Belgians, Frenchmen, German Jews and German political prisoners.'<sup>52</sup> Any further mention of terror directed specifically against Jews is suggested ambiguously by the voiceover: 'Under the guise of an insane asylum this had been the headquarters for the systematic murder of 35,000 Poles, Russians and Germans sent here mainly for political and religious considerations.'<sup>53</sup>

*Nazi Concentration Camps* was designed to coincide with the underlying judicial vision of the Allied allegations at the trial, translated into an idiom consonant with the line of prosecution adopted to impeach the defendants. As the unprecedented nature of the crimes to which the film bore witness complicated attempts at assigning blame and seemed to undermine the jurisprudential arguments upon which the Allied prosecution was based, the American prosecution argued instead that militarism remained the greatest threat to world peace and could be understood as the proximate cause of the Nazis' other crimes, most notably, the Holocaust.<sup>54</sup>

Consequently, the film understood the murder of European Jews in terms of the perverted logic of political control and military conquest, rather than as part of a genocidal project.<sup>55</sup> *Atrocities* also marginalises Jewish particularity for this specific legal reason: the prosecuting authorities' decision to focus on warfare instigated a restrictive reading of the charge that included the Holocaust: Crimes against Humanity.<sup>56</sup> Such ambiguity rendered the judges of the trial unable to charge the Nazi defendants with the attempted destruction of Jews. Instead, the Holocaust was

deemed overall instrumentalist – a means to hold the Nazi movement together, consolidate power, for robbery and intimidation.

## Synchronic analysis

Although *Nazi Concentration Camps* and *Atrocities* were the only two feature-length montages screened at Nuremberg, there were a number of other atrocity films made in the aftermath of World War II. Before I explore the visceral qualities of *Atrocities*, it is helpful to undertake a synchronic analysis of some of these films. *F3080* was the name given to an Anglo-American project to compile a documentary film on German atrocities.<sup>57</sup> The project originated in February 1945 in SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) where Sidney Bernstein, Chief of the Psychological Warfare Division's Film Section, began preparations for a film based on material shot by the service and newsreel cameramen accompanying the British, American and Soviet armies.<sup>58</sup> The main objective of the film was German re-education, with an emphasis on five distinctive themes: victims of German atrocities; the perpetrators; witness testimonies; physical conditions inside the camps; and the reactions of German civilians when confronted with the evidence of atrocities.<sup>59</sup> As *Atrocities* was not a re-education film, it does not feature scenes of compulsory public visits. The post-war Anglo-German relationship complicated the potential reception of the film: the British government wanted to encourage the German populace rather than shame it.<sup>60</sup> Thus, *F3080* was shelved until 1952 when it was transferred on five reels from the British War Office to the Imperial War Museum. Another important factor that contributed to the shelving of the film was the profusion of atrocity footage already in circulation. *Death Mills* (Burger, 1946), for example, released across Europe and America in January 1946, had already incorporated a large amount of the

material in *F3080*, as had *Welt im Film No.5*, an Anglo-American newsreel released on 15 June, 1945, also made for the purpose of German re-education.<sup>61</sup> The Imperial War Museum released *F3080* in parts to Channel Four on 20 December, 1983, with a new title, *Memory of the Camps*.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently, it was screened in its entirety by Frontline in the United States on 7 May, 1985, complemented by a re-recording of the original voiceover.<sup>63</sup>

*Memory of the Camps* marginalises the extent of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust. Even during the coverage of Belsen, which features heavily in the film having been liberated by British troops, the voiceover and images do not accommodate for the 40,000 Jews present in the camp during its liberation.<sup>64</sup> In fact, there is only one reference to Jews in Bernstein's film: speaking to the camera, a Reverend at Belsen says, 'Whether they were Catholic, Lutheran or Jews, we only know they were born, suffered and died. Now they lie, Catholics, Lutherans and Jews, indistinguishable, cheek-to-cheek, in a common grave.' The Reverend's choice of words inadvertently reflected the British Ministry of Information guidelines of 1941, which advised that propaganda must deal with 'the treatment of indisputably innocent people, not with violent political opponents'.<sup>65</sup> Bernstein's objective for *Memory of the Camps* – similar to Svilova's for *Atrocities* – was to universalise the victims of Nazi aggression; to define them by their humanity and innocence as men, women and children from every European nationality.

While the British government was anxious for the Britishness of the liberations to be emphasised, such particularism was not extended to the victims. Tony Kushner maintains that the reluctance of the government to identify the specific Jewish plight and the inability of people to grasp the nature of Nazi anti-Semitism helped ensure

that the majority of the British population could not fully comprehend the truth of an extermination policy.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Joanna Reilly argues that psychological factors were important in forming the attitudes of the British public to the news of organised extermination but they did not work in isolation, instead operating in a specific ideological and cultural framework centred on the existence of a commanding monocultural liberal ideology.<sup>67</sup> To stress the Jewishness of those who had suffered in Belsen was seen to be against liberal principles.<sup>68</sup> Emphasising minority particularity, even in mass death, was viewed as dangerous in that it might lead to the risk of further anti-Semitism. The strength of liberal opposition to any form of Jewish separatism, even when the reality of Nazi extermination became clear, was thus maintained. Also, the fear of giving credence to Zionism prohibited any particular mention of Jews: references were seen as inappropriate at a time when Zionists were claiming the nationbodedness of all Jews in opposition to British policy in Palestine.<sup>69</sup> At its worst, to highlight Jewish difference was, in the words of the British state, 'to perpetuate the very Nazi doctrine which we are determined to stamp out'.<sup>70</sup> Although this was the official British line, no direct pressure was placed on the media to carry out this policy and the downplaying of the Jewish aspect of Belsen, which was presented to the British public in April 1945, was essentially voluntary.<sup>71</sup>

*Memory of the Camps* adhered to certain political guidelines in its absence of Jewishness, but the failure of the film to question Nazi Germany's Jewish policy also centres on an inability on the part of the government to prepare the public for any truths it did choose to impart. Other newsreels that contained footage from several of the camps were screened across Great Britain in the week beginning 30 April, 1945.<sup>72</sup> Audiences were spared the most horrific scenes from the camps on the basis they were

emotionally unprepared.<sup>73</sup> The cinemas often showed only a shortened version of the film and insisted on presenting it, rather distastefully, as part of a programme including cartoons and blatant propaganda, the latter then casting doubt over the authenticity of the images and, in turn, further hindering the truth of the Final Solution from becoming an established fact.<sup>74</sup> Similar tendencies were palpable in the equivalent American media liberation reports. Animosity against Jewishness and opposition to Jewish particularity continued to dominate American thinking for the first few months after the end of World War II.<sup>75</sup> There were, however, subtle differences between the reactions of the United States and Great Britain. The much larger number of survivors present in the United States and the greater influence of American Jewry helped to create and maintain awareness of the Jewish tragedy. In December 1945, under pressure from Jewish and non-Jewish lobbyists, President Truman announced a scheme of preferential treatment for displaced persons within the immigration quota of the United States while, in Great Britain, the Home Office attempted to hamper Jewish immigration with convoluted bureaucratic processes.<sup>76</sup>

At the time of its release, *Death Mills* (*Die Todesmühlen*, 1945) was considered the official atrocity film, particularly in Germany and Austria.<sup>77</sup> *Death Mills* is most often credited as the work of Hanus Burger, a Jewish emigrant from Czechoslovakia, though the film is occasionally credited to Hollywood director, Billy Wilder, particularly for versions with an English voiceover. In her article, 'Compulsory Viewing: Concentration Camp Film and German Re-education', Susan Carruthers refers to Wilder being engaged with the project but without a clearly defined role.<sup>78</sup> Although *Death Mills* is most often credited to Burger, Carruthers alludes to the notion that the film was in fact a collaborative effort: 'Burger's desire to furnish the audience with information about the inmates' lives before their incarceration was

overruled by Wilder; consequently, survivor testimony is strikingly absent from the film.<sup>79</sup> Burger's proposal to embed the atrocity footage in a fictional frame barely survived the film's final cut. Instead, the historical *mise en scène* is sacrificed for confrontation sequences that re-enact for German audiences Eisenhower's enforced encounters – most notably at Buchenwald – between civilians drafted from local towns and inmates of the camp. During such scenes, cameramen had been instructed to capture 'the attitudes of the civilians before being brought face-to-face with the atrocities', together with close-up shots of their expressions immediately after seeing them.<sup>80</sup>

The Soviet Union provided ready-made sequences for *Death Mills*; material from Auschwitz was particularly valuable as it had not yet been viewed by American audiences.<sup>81</sup> This footage aside, it contains much of the same material as *Memory of the Camps* and is presented in a similar fashion. Despite their general resemblance, however, the British media responded negatively to *Death Mills*, describing it as badly constructed and inferior to its own newsreels.<sup>82</sup> British audiences questioned the compulsory civilian visit to Buchenwald, unaware that, had *Memory of the Camps* been released for public viewing, they would have observed an identical scene. *Death Mills* was also considered a failure by its American producer. Surveys carried out after the film's circulation reported that German audiences were not instilled with the sense of personal guilt *Death Mills* was designed to evoke.<sup>83</sup> Rather than stimulate a much-needed wave of introspection, it drew their scorn.<sup>84</sup> Susan Carruthers takes issue with this, questioning what crimes German civilians had committed: 'How could [atrocities] films hope to distinguish a planned programme of extermination from the chaos, disease and starvation engendered by the war's chaotic denouement?'<sup>85</sup> By asking this question, Carruthers suggests that it was not a realistic or morally correct aim of the



film to make German audiences feel guilt for crimes they scarcely understood, let alone committed.

*Camps of the Dead* (*Camps de la Mort*, Les Actualitiés Françaises, 1945) was filmed by French and other Allied war correspondents in the liberated camps of Langenstein, Ohrdruf, Dachau and Mittelgladbach.<sup>86</sup> Pierre-Henri Teitgen, the Minister of Information, handed the responsibility of the project to newsreel producer, Les Actualitiés Françaises, on 18 May, 1945.<sup>87</sup> The film was primarily intended for French audiences but, as with *Memory of the Camps* and *Death Mills*, it was also dubbed into German and presented in the context of re-education in the French occupied zones. Teitgen had expressly requested that the film incorporate a montage of the British material from Belsen and Gardelegen and American footage from Buchenwald and Colditz.<sup>88</sup> Post-war French discourse bears a similar track record of anti-Semitism to the Soviet Union. As André Pierre Colombat notes, the specificity of the extermination of Jews was largely neglected by French historians until the trial of Adolf Eichmann.<sup>89</sup> This is not to argue that the general public was ignorant of Vichy's persecution of Jews or of the Final Solution; indeed, an estimated 90,000 French Jews were exported and killed in concentration camps during Germany's occupation, which places France in a position of personal affliction, much more so than the relatively unaffected countries of Great Britain and the United States.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps for this reason, *Camps of the Dead* is less circumspect of Jews, though the mention of crimes specific to them is limited to one incident: during scenes shot at Buchenwald, the voiceover speaks of 50,000 Jews who received lethal injections as soon as they arrived at the camp. The film does not provide further details of this widespread persecution; in similar fashion to British, Soviet and American

concentration camp films, they are presented as arbitrary victims of Nazi aggression.<sup>91</sup>

A comparison between these different documentary responses to the Holocaust implies that the absence of Jewish suffering in atrocity footage cannot be attributed solely to simplistic notions of anti-Semitism, and there existed a variety of motivations for the absence, dependent upon each country's political agenda. 'Soviet cinema's willingness to use film as propaganda, as a tool of persuasion, and its assertion of the right to represent atrocities for the purpose of propaganda influenced similar decisions by other nations.'<sup>92</sup> *Oświęcim* and *Atrocities* are two pieces of a broad and complex puzzle, bringing to attention the almost inevitable post-traumatic power struggle that occurs to obtain the rights to what will become the prevailing historical memorialisation. Tony Kushner argues that British and American treatments of the Jewish crisis might be explained by the failure of state and society to solve the contradictions of liberalism.<sup>93</sup> In these democracies, liberalism determined that responses and attitudes were fundamentally ambivalent: the nature of Nazi anti-Semitism was rarely understood and Jewish victims were frequently blamed for their own misfortune.<sup>94</sup> In the context of post-war America, as Peter Novick points out, Jews accounted for only a fifth of the inmates liberated by American troops.<sup>95</sup> As a result, *Death Mills* and *Nazi Concentration Camps* witness the horror from a point of detachment, which originates as much from confronting the results of the Holocaust as it does from confronting the Holocaust itself. The audience is persuaded to lay its sympathies with innocent Allied soldiers now responsible for the cleaning up of the aftermath; the bodies are the Other – foreign and unfamiliar – represented as anonymous and almost insignificant. The following analysis contends that *Atrocities* constitutes a far more intimate portrayal of its events.

Svilova substitutes the clinical mode of observation in the British and American responses with melancholic sentimentality that, beyond a desire to elicit pathos, perhaps reflects a desire to use the footage as an opportunity for genuine recollection.

## The death of the moving image

The following analysis argues that *Atrocities* reinforces two threads of political rhetoric. Through the omission of visual indicators and a carefully scripted voiceover, *Atrocities* does not mention that Jews were targeted for complete annihilation. As this subject has already been discussed at length in my analysis of *Oświęcim*, for the remainder of the chapter I will focus on the second thread, which supports the notion that the Nazis committed heinous, unimaginable acts of torture in its campaign for world domination. Svilova communicates this thread of ideology by selecting shots with the strongest visceral impact. 'These shots intended to 'wound' the audience in the courtroom and secure death penalties for all the Nazi defendants. Eliciting sympathy from the audience was a widespread technique in Soviet wartime film. The basic cinematographic goal of the camera operators was to create visually striking, memorable and persuasive shots and sequences. Mikhail Glider describes this as 'filming with feeling ... to let the camera see what your eyes see ... to share your indignation and distress'.<sup>96</sup> Camera crews concentrated on filming people who were crying profusely.<sup>97</sup> These imperatives coexisted with the need to fit the evidence into a politically pre-established picture of Soviet and not Jewish victimhood.

As Svilova selected the footage from other films, ones that were intended to appeal to spectators' emotions, *Atrocities* frequently emphasises individual victims and presents them as connected with the viewer; it individuates the victims to elicit

greater sympathy, 'sometimes by showing faces and adding biographical details of the victims'.<sup>98</sup> The first half of the film, set entirely within the Soviet Union's pre-1939 borders, is dominated by images of family members coming to terms with their losses. Beginning in the Soviet Union and moving to crimes committed elsewhere suggested that the atrocities began in the Soviet Union and the Soviet civilians were the primary target for annihilation. Cataloguing the crimes of the Nazis in this order coincided with Stalin's deployment of cinema as a tool of legitimisation, a means of examining and condemning the actions of anti-communists, and in turn rationalising his excessive control methods. Incidentally, *Atrocities* is not always credited to Svilova. Although Svilova states in her autobiographies that she directed it, and Gwendolyn Foster, Peter Rollberg and Masha Enzenberger credit the film to her in their biographies of her work, referring to the film as *Fascist Atrocities*,<sup>99</sup> the film archive in the Library of Congress, for example, credits it to Manuel Bolshintov, owing to the fact that his name appears on the signed affidavit in the opening shot.<sup>100</sup> The voiceover reads the affidavit in which Bolshintov vouches for the testimonies of the cameramen and confirms their accompanying of the Red Army divisions responsible for liberating regions previously occupied by Nazi troops. Bolshintov states that the footage was shot immediately after the Nazis departed and that, crucially, the footage was not altered or emended. This affidavit is important to a study of Svilova: not only has it led to the film being credited to another filmmaker, thus undermining the strength and depth of Svilova's contribution to Soviet film, it also alludes to the authenticity of the images. One can detect the claim in the affidavit that capturing the atrocities on celluloid provided preeminent verification they happened, and happened exactly as the film describes.

Michael Marrus argues that ‘the evidence of Nazi atrocities, including visual evidence on film, was so shattering that the image of transgression presented during the trial long outlasted and had a far greater impact than the restrictive legal arguments made by the prosecutors.’<sup>101</sup> Marrus’s statement suggests that images have a capacity to wound an audience deeper than spoken or written language. The notion of wounding is again reminiscent of Roland Barthes’s punctum: functioning unconsciously on the part of the photographer, a photograph can unexpectedly prick, sting or cut the intelligibility of the culturally connoted meaning of the image. Present in photographs that imply irretrievable loss, the punctum is not apparent to all viewers; it defies reduction to the generalised code of the stadium, the more widely available meaning whose connotatively charged subject matter is determined by cultural context. The punctum is not often employed in the analysis of cinematic texts. This might be due to Barthes himself who identified disparities in tense between the still and the moving image. He asserts that ‘film can no longer be seen as animated photographs: the having-been-there gives way to a being-there.’<sup>102</sup> By this he suggests that movement within the frame invalidates the having-been-there and substitutes it with the verve and vitality of life. Christian Metz also construed the moving image as the life-giver: ‘Film gives back to the dead a semblance of life, a fragile semblance, but one immediately strengthened by the wishful thinking of the viewer. Photography, on the contrary, by virtue of the objective suggestion of its signifier (stillness) maintains the memory of the dead as being dead.’<sup>103</sup> *Atrocities*, however, renders such clear-cut distinctions appear almost irrational. The morbid nature of Svilova’s film – the overwhelming presence of suffering that permeates every shot – is so overwhelming that it distorts the discernment between the still and the moving image. The pictures are animated yet simultaneously frozen. Oscillating between the vibrant and the motionless, the mourning process of photography that haunts

*Atrocities* is assimilated here into the vigour of cinema. Despite any activity, death remains the eidos of the film.

Judith Butler locates the quality of an image's grievability (essentially its ability to engage the audience in pathos) in the absolute pastness that is conferred on a living being, one whose life is not past.<sup>104</sup> Yet, Svilova principally documents people whose lives have passed, and the film's absence of synch sound for witness testimony further silences the images, allowing the dead to eclipse all life. In terms of its grievability, then, one might argue that the audience grieves, first, because collectively it has outlived the lives that Svilova documents and in turn recognises there is loss and hence there was life, and, second, more crucially, because the victims remain, misleadingly, in the tense of the being-there. Their lives have passed but the movement within the frame acknowledges this truth in present terms. Although the having-been-there becomes the being-there, as Barthes suggests, the being-there is still irrevocably lost. This is the tragedy of *Atrocities* and also the measure of its grievability, and these attributes work alongside cinema's unrivalled claims for truth. There was, and perhaps still is, an assumption that the capturing of events on celluloid is unequivocal proof they happened. Susan Sontag argues that the notion of atrocity requires photographic evidence: if there is no photographic evidence then there is no atrocity.<sup>105</sup> In turn, photographic evidence establishes the truth of the claim of atrocity and, consequently, there can be no truth without photography. In 1922 Walter Lippman suggested that 'photographs have the kind of authority over imagination today which the printed word had yesterday and the spoken word before that. They seem utterly real.'<sup>106</sup> By 1945 the moving image had supplanted photography in the social consciousness as the realist medium – objective and

sacrosanct – which paved the way for *Atrocities* to anchor Smirnov's presentation at Nuremberg and use its visceral power to secure the most stringent punishments.

Colonel Pokrovsky, a colleague of Smirnov in the Soviet prosecution, specifically addressed the power of filmic footage in the courtroom. On Day Fifty-Nine, moments before Smirnov commenced his presentation for Crimes against Peace, he stated that, 'Most of the film [*Atrocities*] pertains to crimes against prisoners-of-war ... The silent testimony of the helpless prisoners burned alive in hospitals, of prisoners mutilated beyond all recognition, of prisoners tortured and starved to death will, I am certain, be far more eloquent than any word of mine.'<sup>107</sup> Not only did Pokrovsky confirm that the film evidence was presented with the knowledge it had the potential to wound the viewer, he prompted the courtroom audience to read the film from a specific vantage point: as the collective testimony of all the victims depicted within its frame. He bestowed on Svilova the authority to represent those who were unable to give evidence. Thus, the film is not an arbitrary appendage to the accusations presented by Smirnov – a means of tying the evidence together in a concise package to conclude his presentation. It is verification of the evidence, designed to incite in the courtroom a level of pathos unachievable through other media. Pokrovsky's reading of *Atrocities* as the collective statement of all the murdered victims it portrays can be linked to the measure of the film's grievability. Like the testimony of an absent witness, the being-there evokes only the presence of death.

## Testimony of an absent witness

Sontag suggests that, for an image to affect a viewer, it must contain relevant political consciousness, without which it might be perceived as fanciful.<sup>108</sup> The horrific nature

of an image can prevent rational or critical thought – it can be easier to recoil than to confront. The way in which the Soviet prosecution structured its presentation indicates that it was attentive to the need for certain evidence to be contextualised; Smirnov dealt with some massacres in a cursory manner while others were examined in detail. The extent to which each was recollected depended not on its magnitude, i.e. the number of deaths, but much more on the visceral qualities of the evidence that could support the allegations. For example, Svilova re-edits the footage filmed at Rostov. Survivors who had either returned to the city or emerged from hiding search among the bodies for anyone they might recognise. She includes the shots of Vitia Golovlev propped up against a wall, framed in wide-angle and then mid-shot. Citing from one of Molotov's notes, dated 6 January, 1942, Smirnov stated on Day Fifty-Nine of the trial:

In Rostov-on-Don a pupil of the commercial school, 15 year old Vitia Cherevichny, was playing in the yard with his pigeons. Some passing German soldiers began to steal the birds. The boy protested. The Germans took him away and shot him, at the corner of 27th Line and 2d Maisky Street for refusing to surrender his pigeons. With the heels of their boots the Hitlerites trampled his face out of all recognition.<sup>109</sup>

*Atrocities* does not contain much spoken detail about Vitia's death; the voiceover, which names him as Vitia Golovlev, merely states that he was murdered for refusing to relinquish his pigeon. Yet, the two shots of Vitia's lifeless body offer a far more detailed account of his fate than any number of written or spoken words combined. As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, the moving image can instantly describe a scene with a facility and scope that would otherwise defy words or description. Vitia's defeated posture, the deep laceration along the length of his left cheek and the damage to both of his eyes, narrates a story of tragedy and irreversible loss. At times, certain details escape the scope of the visual and the voiceover



provides for the audience knowledge that does not arise directly from looking: in the words of Sontag, images may affect us but they do not provide us with an understanding of what we see.<sup>110</sup> This evaluation is borne out in the film's construction. The voiceover informs the audience that the victims of Rostov were 'housewives, peasants, intellectuals, workers, even passersby'. Separating the victims into these categories suggests arbitrariness, and serves to absorb subtly the theme of universality into the film's narrative. Although the film emphasises the notion of genocide, albeit without using that term, it deliberately understates the particular nature of Jewish suffering. The Rostov sequence again fails to mention the Jews who had died there.

As Colonel Pokrovsky stated in the courtroom, prisoners-of-war met gruesome fates, particularly in Rostov. At the town's train station the bodies of prisoners lie neatly in rows; the torture they endured is evident in their facial disfigurements. A panning shot depicts one prisoner whose nose and mouth lie almost side by side, another who no longer has a nose, and another who no longer has ears. Such torture methods may not have been the cause of death, but Svilova makes clear through the inclusion of these shots that many victims endured unimaginable pain before they died.

Death by asphyxiation was one of the Soviet prosecution's most damning accusations of Crimes against Peace, a charge Svilova supports with a variety of visual evidence and spoken testimony. Mass murder in Kerch, for example, was discussed at length by Smirnov. Svilova re-edits the shots detailing the aftermath of this violence: townspeople carrying out the task of exhuming bodies from the mass graves. The responsibility their collective conscience compels them to bear is beyond

imagination, for the first time Svilova portrays the mass murder of children.

Incidentally, Smirnov prepared the audience for this scene two days before *Atrocities* was screened, declaring: '[In Kerch] the Germans initiated their monstrous atrocities by poisoning 245 children of school age. Later on you will see the small bodies of these children in our documentary film.'<sup>111</sup> In these shots the horror of aggressive war is wholly realised. Moreover, the viewer can fully comprehend the haunting of survivor guilt when Svilova holds on the mid-shot of Grigorii Berman crying over the bodies of his wife and young children. His facial expression reveals the story of a man who is devoid of spirit or willingness to continue living. The pan from his face to his murdered family depicts a depth of emotion untranslatable to other media. The moving image allows for an awareness of proximity, sentiment and temporality, all within a matter of seconds.

Another incident of asphyxiation in Kharkov, Ukraine, was raised by Smirnov and integrated by Svilova into the film. In contrast to the bleak landscapes that characterise *Atrocities* up to this point, Kharkov is flooded in sunlight, illuminating the civilian bodies scattered along the town's pavements and roads. Svilova initially focuses on the victims who have been tortured and burned alive before examining the use of murder vans in the town. The voiceover informs the audience that a ditch on the outskirts was found to contain 14,000 bodies of people murdered in the vans. Although the cameraman is positioned on the ditch's edge, it is difficult to identify the bodies as human beings – the remains have begun to dissolve into the soil. Kiev was discussed in detail by Smirnov throughout the three days of his presentation, though footage shot in the city plays a minor role in *Atrocities*. Captured in a ten-shot montage of wide-angles and mid-shots, survivors embrace their murdered fellow citizens. The seventh shot in Svilova's sequence is anchored by a punctum, a

meaning detached from any cultural code. A man lies horizontally behind what appears to be a length of barbed wire. In the foreground, the wire, faintly out of focus, intersects vertically across his forehead. Framed in this way, probably accidentally, the image is shot with Christian symbolism: the man is martyred, lying dead in his crown of thorns. On Day Fifty-Nine the massacre at Babi Yar was raised as evidence, and Smirnov took the opportunity to correct what the Soviet prosecution believed were inaccurate statistics:

After the liberation of Kiev it was established that the extent of the atrocities perpetrated by the German fascist invaders far exceeds the German crimes as stated in the first instance. From further information submitted to the Extraordinary State Commission of the Soviet Union, in connection with the city of Kiev, it is evident that during the monstrous so-called German mass 'action' in Babi Yar not 52,000 but 100,000 were shot.<sup>112</sup>

The voiceover of the film reiterates Smirnov's correction, stating that 'Babi Yar in Kiev was the site of the worst massacres. The victims included over 100,000 men, women, children and elderly.' Wolfram Wette, a scholar of Nazi crimes, estimates the number of victims at a figure closer to 30,000.<sup>113</sup> Notwithstanding Smirnov's overestimation, Babi Yar represents the largest single mass killing against the population of the Soviet Union. Svilova depicts the tragedy in three shots: a tracking shot along the ravine, a pan across one of the ditches and a close-up of a body. The body, lying face down with arms outstretched, is in the later stages of decomposition.

While Crimes against Peace did not directly address the Holocaust, mass murder in concentration camps was included within the terms of its indictment. Thus, on Day Sixty-Two Smirnov described at length the mass shootings of prisoners at Majdanek, an accusation the film supports not only through wide-angle shots of excavation but

also with close-up shots of skulls containing the unmistakable sight of bullet holes. Despite over 70,000 deaths at the camp, Smirnov explained to the courtroom why relatively few bodies needed reburial by outlining the use of crematoria. The voiceover draws attention to the efficient and unrelenting use of gas chambers and incinerators in almost identical formulations to those used in the courtroom. Svilova takes Smirnov's evidence and augments it, providing a visual tour of a prisoner's journey to death. Shots of the gas control system and the observation window are followed by shots of the shower room, the chimney and the ovens. In addition to clothes, spectacles and documents, *Atrocities* contains shots of children's toys found during the Red Army's tour of the warehouses. The image of a naked doll, similar to the one seen in *Oświecim*, is sadly reminiscent of the many infant corpses witnessed in the film up to this point. The documentation itself plays a vital role in anchoring the theme of universality. Passports are held up to the camera and the voiceover provides the details of their previous owners – an Italian schoolteacher, a Dutch electrician and a French farmer. Smirnov had established the theme of universality a short time before the film's screening, declaring that the 'Hitlerite hangmen' of Majdanek had exterminated 'Soviet prisoners-of-war, prisoners-of-war of the former Polish Army, and nationals of various countries: Poles, Frenchmen, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, Czechs, Serbs, Greeks, Croats and Jews'.<sup>114</sup>

Universality was a prevalent theme throughout Smirnov's discussion of Auschwitz, and this was reflected by Svilova in *Atrocities*. The footage of the victims' possessions presents the suitcases in the same way as the passports in Majdanek. Bearing the names of countries across Europe, close-up shots of the cases' labels testify to the transnational identity of the Nazis' victims. Smirnov presented still photographs of these possessions shortly before the screening of *Atrocities*. He stated that 'not less

than four million citizens of the USSR, Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Holland, Belgium and other countries' were murdered in the camp.<sup>115</sup> The camera pans at eye level across the faces of a number of Auschwitz's prisoners. Echoing Smirnov, the voiceover states that 'among the survivors were people from all over Europe: Poles, Russians, Czechs, Hungarians, Jews, French, Serbians, Romanians and Belgians.' This is the only example in Svilova's film where the victims are separated into ethnic categories as well as by nationality or occupation.

Auschwitz's gas chambers were discussed on Day Sixty-Two, but the evidence focused less on the victims than on the business transactions that led to the construction of the chambers. This emphasis is also maintained in *Atrocities* where Svilova touches on the subject of extermination by gas: shots of the crematoria blueprints and Zyklon B canisters are deemed sufficient to tell this part of the Auschwitz story. The day before the screening (Day Sixty-One), Smirnov presented the report, 'The Infamous Crimes of the German Government in Auschwitz', and cited several short passages from the second section, 'Murderers of Children'. Smirnov provided a number of examples of child massacres and ill-treatment, many of which were witness testimonies of incidents such as 'the poisoning of 164 young boys at Birkenau' and 'children being thrown onto bonfires near Crematoria Five'. The closing sequence of the Auschwitz montage depicts Soviet doctors treating survivors, a number of whom are children suffering frostbite. The mid-shot of a young boy's compacted toes is rendered more horrific by the look of fear on his face. The camera captures the moment when the boy appears to acknowledge that the damage is irreversible, he is permanently maimed. Svilova encourages the viewer to imagine every painful, awkward step in the boy's future life and dwell on the

knowledge that each one will serve for him a reminder of the torment he endured. Smirnov brought the courtroom's attention to these examinations, including complaints of widespread frostbite. Thus, the theme of Auschwitz as the camp for child murder and suffering was established in the courtroom through spoken and visual indicators before the moving image made tangible the allegations.

Svilova's exhumation sequence in *Atrocities* reaffirms this motif: a number of the bodies being unearthed for reburial are conspicuously smaller in size and more fragile. The voiceover informs the audience that 'children born in the camp were snatched from their mothers and eliminated.' In perhaps the most tragic shot of the film, a foetus is curled up on the dusty ground, its umbilical cord still attached. To intensify further the macabre imagery, a Soviet doctor holds in his hands the corpse of a baby born prematurely. The doctor holds the baby up to the camera, inviting the viewer to take a closer look, and speaks inaudible words, though his facial expression attests to his distress. 'The foetus emphasises the trope of child murder and restates the genocidal nature of the Nazi regime.'<sup>116</sup>

The Danzig Medical Academy is the last location Svilova features in detail. The voiceover informs the audience that, in the cellar of the building, the Germans manufactured soap from human fat. A Red Army delegation walks through the cellar and inspects containers full of decomposing bodies. The skin on the bodies does not fit tautly, suggesting that it has been stretched. In another explicit image, a number of heads are stacked in a wooden basket while, to their left, decapitated bodies lie in a row. The voiceover claims that 'skin was also processed by the Germans,' a statement that is supported by the depiction of a bathtub full of skin. On Day Sixty-Two Smirnov exhibited to the courtroom the testimony of Sigmund Mazur, a Nazi

laboratory assistant who worked at the Academy.<sup>117</sup> Mazur's testimony is used to introduce an array of damning evidence, including the process for making the soap. *Atrocities* features Mazur's interrogation by the Red Army. The shot is brief and would be described as superfluous were it not for the vital supporting role it played in giving the courtroom a concrete sign to interpret – Mazur's image augmented the power of the evidence. In this instance, Svilova does not provide the testimony of an absent witness, but she authenticates an existing testimony through the verification of its source. Current research indicates that soap from human fat was not manufactured at the Academy on the scale implied in the presentation and film, but it might have been produced for experimental purposes.<sup>118</sup>

Svilova documents a number of sites in *Atrocities* that did not feature in Smirnov's presentation. The reason for these exceptions might have been due to a process of prioritisation: the Soviet prosecution used a criterion to determine which locations would demand the court's time. For the locations absent from Smirnov's statements, there seems to have been a tacit understanding that these images were deemed to speak for themselves, requiring no introduction or contextualisation. Scenes of reunions of family members with their dead relatives in Klin, a town near Moscow, are particularly hard to bear. One shot of a mother shaking the head of her deceased daughter either documents her refusal to accept that she is dead or an attempt to bring her back to life. Footage recorded in Lokotni depicts the bodies of eleven victims who lie frozen in contorted positions, many with their hands above their heads as if trapped in a stance of surrender. By focusing on images with visceral qualities it can be agreed that Svilova consciously emphasises those atrocities the audience can comprehend; those that each viewer can picture and recreate in his or her mind. For this reason, Svilova recounts the traumatic but numerically

insignificant deaths of 120 people in the Belorussian village of Pekalino – the people were locked inside two houses that were subsequently burned to the ground – in more intimate detail than, for example, the unfathomable number of deaths at Babi Yar.

Svilova documents the remnants of a school classroom-turned-torture chamber in Kaluga, near Moscow. The camera pans along the floor to capture a number of hands, amputated at the wrist, in the corner of the room. Outside, depicted in a low angle mid-shot, nooses hang from a lamppost. In these two shots, Svilova represents Kaluga as a town whose infrastructure was manipulated by a macabre imagination. In Pyatigorsk, in the north Caucasus region, survivors exhume the bodies of their fellow townspeople. While the voiceover reminds the audience of the apparent irrationality by which the victims were targeted ('they came from all walks of life: engineers, doctors, chauffeurs, typists, accountants, waitresses, guards and housewives'), the camera pans across the tortured bodies lying face-up in an orderly row. The bodies decrease in size as the pan unfolds, so much so that the last few bodies represent the remnants of infant lives brought to tragic and premature ends. Despite this horror, the resolve of the townspeople to give the victims a deserved and proper burial is testament to the victory of good over evil.

In Rzhev, west of Moscow, Vera Jerebetskaya shares her account of the Nazi occupation. The audience is not privy to her anecdote and the voiceover does not speak her words for her. The camera, however, pans down to her hands where the use of body language provides an auxiliary means of communication. Svilova captures the aftermath of Vyanza's occupation, a city near the Belorussian border, in a six-shot montage of decaying bodies. The last scene is particularly distressing: a



close-up shot of an infant's lifeless face cuts to a mid-shot of a woman – who is most likely the infant's mother – standing over her deceased child wiping tears from her eyes. The scene wounds the audience, but not because it contains infant mortality; instead, the sympathy derives much more from the mother's apparent inability to embrace her child. The physical distance between them implies on the mother's part an acceptance of her loss: she has admitted defeat. In Slobodka, on the shore of the Black Sea, the reported deaths all belong to one family, the Shedudachenkos. Svilova depicts the bodies lying face-up on the sand, tainting what should be an idyllic landscape. The camera tracks across the bodies and the voiceover introduces each member of the family in ascending order, beginning with Paul, aged three, and concluding on the image of the grandmother, aged sixty-five. Moreover, the voiceover informs the audience that, in Klooga, near Tallinn, the retreating German soldiers razed a concentration camp; the prisoners were shot then burned. Svilova includes the footage that had already appeared in *Klooga Death Camp* of a survivor lying down on some unused logs and explaining to a Red Army delegation (and to the camera) how human flesh was used to ignite different parts of the bonfire. It is not explained, however, how he managed to escape his fate to serve as a witness. Nevertheless, his testimony represents a crucial component in the film's claim as proof for the crimes of the Nazis. Here, Svilova employs the purest form of what Ewa Mazierska describes as the 'witness strategy'.<sup>119</sup> She argues that the use of survivor testimony was the main reason behind the popularity of *The Last Stage* (Jakubowska, 1947), a fiction film set in Auschwitz, because audiences of the immediate post-war era responded more fervently to anecdotes told from a first-hand perspective.<sup>120</sup>

In the former German territory of Silesia, Svilova captures the skeletal frames of starved prisoners lying stagnant in their cells. A subtle movement is detected among the dead and it becomes evident that one person is still alive. The male victim uses all of his strength to turn his head to the camera. What appears at first to be a remarkable feat of survival promptly becomes another story of tragedy: the voiceover informs the audience that the prisoner died shortly after filming. The image's evidential force – that is, its quality as an indexical record of a subject who was, but is no longer, there – is linked to an experience of finitude and subjective dispossession. Within this shot the distinctions between life and death, the still image and the moving, the having-been-there and the being-there are deeply problematised. In a Poznań prison, Svilova portrays an execution chamber in a series of wide-angles and close-ups. Shots of the guillotine, the blood drainage system and the executioner's gloves and apron are bathed in light reflecting from the room's metallic instruments and clinically sterile surfaces. Svilova re-employs a motif from *Oświęcim* to conclude the sequence: a close-up shot of a hand flicking through pre-war photographs of people enjoying their lives is juxtaposed with a three-shot montage of bodies found after a mass hanging. The young men lie on makeshift stretchers, the dark bruises along the lengths of their necks are conspicuous against the whiteness of their skin. Framed in a close-up shot, the camera pans across the men's unresponsive faces. The having-been-there of the photographs is substituted by the being-there of the moving image, yet both denote a one-way journey of irreversible loss. The final location featured in *Atrocities* is the prison at Sonnenburg in Poland. A cameraman films inside one of the cells before directing the lens through the cell's small window where bodies can be vaguely identified in the yard outside. Any thought that Svilova intends to spare the audience from witnessing more explicit scenes of murder is brief.

The closing shot of the film is a high-angle pan of the yard where hundreds of bodies lie, killed just hours before the Red Army arrived.

## Conclusion

To examine atrocity footage is a difficult task, and my repeated viewing of *Oświecim* and *Atrocities* has not made the experience any less uncomfortable. Indeed, one could argue that there is little else captured on celluloid in the history of cinema that is harder to tolerate. The unnerving quality of the footage is not necessarily inherent to its chilling content but derives also from a sense of guilt on the part of the viewer, which intensifies over the course of examining the films. Sontag speculates that the dead are profoundly uninterested in us – they do not seek our gaze.<sup>121</sup> Studying atrocity footage over a long period of time, repeatedly and often in slow motion, can elicit a feeling of ashamed voyeurism, perusing at leisure the nakedness, humiliation, pain and vulnerability of the victims. Such emotional responses help to draw a distinction between the visual and the visceral. At Nuremberg, *Atrocities* did not intend to educate and inform (that was Smirnov's responsibility); its images aimed – and still aim – to affect audiences in a way that bypasses cognition. The process of perceiving, understanding and resolving is undermined by the force of the image. In similar vein to the aura of death that, for Barthes, pervaded photographs of his mother after her passing, *Atrocities* deals with irrevocable loss. Despite claims of its transcendental nature, the moving image in this instance ultimately fails in its role as life-giver. What might appear as a shortfall, however, was on the contrary Svilova's most important asset in the context of the courtroom. I have read *Atrocities* as the Soviet prosecution intended: a visual testimony to support the spoken and written evidence. Introducing Barthesian concepts into this discussion, as well as references

to theorists such as Butler and Sontag, has not only been necessary to provide the sensitive imagery with the required contextualisation but also to gauge its relationship to modes of affect, including questions of grievability. At Nuremberg *Atrocities* had a potential of grievability that surpassed all other modes of communication, which in turn elucidates the film's evidential power. As Hicks observes, in opening our ears and eyes, we can discern, beyond the constructed conventions of Soviet cinema, the testimonial power of sounds and images, where key ongoing issues in the representation of the Holocaust were being confronted.<sup>122</sup> While *Oświęcim* was not screened in its entirety at Nuremberg, its anticipation of the trial means that it represents with *Atrocities* a rational and harmonious line of allegation, one which resulted in a narrative that today will be viewed as inaccurate but in the immediate aftermath of World War II was one audiences could comprehend and, crucially, one that the law's relatively primitive understanding of war crimes could accommodate.

Svilova's atrocity films were not only made in proportion to the doctrine of the Allied prosecution at Nuremberg; first and foremost, they complied with the Soviet policies of defence and legitimisation. My analysis suggests that these two forces were largely compatible. Characterising the murder campaign of the Nazis as one aimed against all non-fascists indirectly approved Stalin's Marxist-Leninist philosophy and justified his distrust of the outside world. At the time of their release, *Oświęcim* and *Atrocities* vindicated the Central Committee's autocracy and drive for industrialisation, reaffirming to the masses that a stronger, far-reaching and more equipped Soviet Union would deter anti-communists from future invasion. It was the population's responsibility to ensure that the horror it witnessed would never be repeated.



## **Chapter 3:**

# **Female Spectators and the Feminine Ideal**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the techniques Svilova employs to mobilise a female audience through the depiction of Soviet women. These multifaceted representations collectively promote a ‘feminine ideal’ and display ‘celluloid role models on whom the audience could pattern their lives’.<sup>1</sup> My analysis focuses on the period between 1939, the year in which Svilova began her independent career, and 1948, when her representations of Soviet women became more intertwined with discourses of Orientalism and cosmopolitanism. Such an analysis is not only vital in view of Svilova’s gender but also in relation to wider ideological concerns. Kristen Whissel, discussing gender in early Hollywood documentary films, argues that we cannot fully understand it without considering how the director’s body of films participated in the rearticulation of gender, race, nation and empire.<sup>2</sup> Supporting Teresa de Lauretis’s view that a film’s form can be deconstructed to ascertain, at the very least, the gender of the target audience,<sup>3</sup> my analysis also argues that the visual and symbolic space in Svilova’s films is organised in a way that specifically aims to address female audiences

– expressing a collective dimension of female experience alongside ideas of female solidarity throughout her work.

My chapter begins with an overview of women's evolving social status from the post-revolutionary to the Stalin era, before outlining in detail a theoretical framework for my analysis. The analysis itself initially focuses on two documentaries produced during Stalin's drive for industrialisation – *Roof of the World* (1939) and *Metro* (1940) – after which I turn to depictions of the feminine ideal during wartime. I analyse *News of the Day no.10* (1944) and *News of the Day no.9* (1945), the latter of which contained stories about two illustrious female heroines, actress Evdokya Turchaninova and pilot Valentina Grizodubova. This analysis precedes a section on the allure of power during the post-war era. My case studies here are *International Democratic Federation of Women* (1947) and *International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris* (1948). Last, I discuss the feminisation of the countryside in *News of the Day no.43* (1948).

## **Cinema, the double burden and 'egalitarianism'**

For all the problems associated with gender bias, both implicit and explicit, the 1917 revolution offered unprecedented opportunities to women.<sup>4</sup> These were most readily accessible to 'the young and urban, particularly those free of parental responsibility',<sup>5</sup> which in many respects describes Svilova herself. If women embraced the new values of Bolshevism and could negotiate or overlook the hurdles of gender prejudice, their desired career path did not have to remain a fantasy. As Barbara Clements argues, 'nowhere else in Europe were there so many female lawyers, professors, scientists and artists, as well as judges and party secretaries, as there were in the [post-revolutionary] Soviet Union.'<sup>6</sup> A series of conferences in November 1918 led to the

establishment of the First All-Russian Congress of Working Women. This preceded the creation of Commissions for Agitation and Propaganda among Working Women, which was in turn reorganised into the Women's Department (or Zhenotdel) in 1919 by Aleksandra Kollontai, the most prominent woman in the Bolshevik Party.<sup>7</sup> Kollontai's faith in female autonomy, disseminated in an explicit, outspoken manner, led many to consider it inconceivable she lived beyond Stalin's Purges.<sup>8</sup>

During the decade of its existence, the Zhenotdel played a central role in the political mobilisation of women, extending the Central Committee's influence to the female population and drawing women into active participation in the construction of a new society.<sup>9</sup> It is not coincidental that, during this period, the film industry witnessed a growth in the employment of female workers.<sup>10</sup> With parity in mind, these women were encouraged to develop their skills and enjoy wider responsibilities. An editor such as Svilova could fulfil her role beyond its physical demands; permitted the chance to use an editing table not as a means to an end but to understand it as a tool of her occupation and use it to its full capacity. Actresses were also encouraged to realise their potential: no longer employed simply for having the right 'look', women could move from in front of the camera's lens to behind it, performing more cerebral tasks such as directing. My introductory chapter mentioned the careers of Esfir Shub, Olga Preobrazhenskaya, Aleksandra Khokhlova and Yulia Solntseva, who were all given opportunities to direct or edit high-profile assignments in the 1920s. Besides these four, a number of other women climbed the ranks of the industry in the same period, including Nadezhda Kosheverova who joined the Leningrad film studio in the late 1920s, working as an assistant director to Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg on *The Youth of Maxim* (*Yunost Maxim*, 1935), the first of the *Maxim* trilogy, and Vera Stroyeva who started her career in 1925 as a scenarist before directing her



debut film, *The Right of the Fathers* (*Pravo ottsov*) in 1930. Employment of women screenwriters also increased. The most celebrated of these were Katerina Vinogradskaya who began writing in the 1920s for established directors such as Ivan Pyriev, and Nina Agadzhanova who was a script collaborator of Sergei Eisenstein.

In the 1920s it was largely male directors who made films with feminist themes. The most famous and controversial was Abram Room's *Bed and Sofa* (*Tretya meshchanskaya*, 1929), in which a young woman, Luidmila, leaves a ménage-à-trois to live by herself. Some female directors such as Preobrazhenskaya directed children's films, which meant that as well as conducting professional work in the cinema they were also participating in the traditional female role of upbringing. As I mentioned in Chapter One, Preobrazhenskaya did direct one film that dealt with women's issues, *Peasant Women of Ryazan* (1927), a melodrama set in rural Russia. Therefore, although women's themes were at the time popular, they were not a distinguishable feature of films made by women. This might be because, as Maya Turovskaya has argued, the idea of equality presupposed that women should be the same as men: 'Accordingly they strove to master the most difficult of all professions. In such a climate, it did not seem appropriate for women to make films about distinctly women's themes.'<sup>11</sup>

Stalin's tightening grip on the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, which resulted in programmes of industrialisation and collectivisation, was accompanied by a redefinition of organisational and political needs. In 1930, as the Central Committee was gradually reorganised to reflect its increasing control over the population, the Zhenotdel was formally abolished.<sup>12</sup> Its demise confirmed that the libertarian elements of the Bolshevik transformation were incompatible with the ambitions and values of Stalin's new regime. His main tool of legitimisation, cinema reiterated to the

Soviet masses the need for sacrifice in the construction of a Marxist utopia. By 1929 the period of avant-garde experimentation, which had developed the art form in rapid time and produced a collection of valuable films in the process, was over. Filmmakers such as Svilova were pressured to concentrate their efforts on educating workers in the spirit of communism; they had to offer an unwaveringly positive image of the future socialist utopia and ensure that it reached and galvanised the masses. The willingness to forgo quality of life for future recompense was demanded most of all from the country's women. As a means of mobilisation, Svilova's films praised them for their self-sacrificing labour, symbolising the suffering and heroism experienced by the whole country. This tribute was intended to reflect back onto audiences: feeling appreciated for their efforts, women would return to their lives rejuvenated, inspired to boost their exertion and continue to bear social inadequacies without complaint. As my analysis will argue, the legitimisation of gender inequality is communicated by Svilova through both the highlighting of women's place in society and the aesthetic details of their bodies and their work.

Stalinism inculcated a strong work ethic and sense of duty upon women – work was perceived as the most important aspect of life. Yet, motherhood was also a duty and thus the speed and success of industrialisation depended upon women's compliance to balance domestic and state responsibilities. The mid-1930s, when Svilova was still working in collaboration with Vertov, was the period in which cinema was most fully geared toward mobilising the masses and reinforcing the importance of industrialisation. Stalin's campaign adopted pro-natalist lines, following the logic that a larger population would result in a more formidable workforce. The new policy was in part a response to the demographic havoc wrought by crash industrialisation, manifested in a great rise in abortion and a decline in the birth rate. The abolition of

the Zhenotdel did not help matters, since the departments within it had been active in the struggle against abortion. To tackle this issue, as well as the increase in divorce rates encouraged by 'postcard divorce', drastic changes in legislation were made to support the pro-family doctrine. A bill on abortion and divorce was published on 26 May, 1936, which, in addition to outlawing abortion in all except life threatening circumstances, envisaged allowances for mothers with more than seven children, greater maternity and nursery provision, more difficult and expensive divorce proceedings and a curbing of fathers evading alimony payments.<sup>13</sup> The number of both legal and illegal abortions declined immediately afterward but started to rise again in the late 1930s and early 1940s as the situation for women deteriorated, partly due to the shortages caused by war preparation but also because the new labour legislation of the pre-war period curtailed the rights of mothers.<sup>14</sup> The labour decree of 1938 specifically reduced maternity leave from sixteen weeks to nine, and made it contingent on a prior period of seven consecutive months of employment.<sup>15</sup> This move contradicted the pro-family doctrine and was resented by women workers. Moreover, mobilisation laws passed on 1 September, 1939, forced many women to deputise for male workers in factories, lead mines and power plants. With no extra provision made for child care, the policy caused widespread dissatisfaction.<sup>16</sup>

The Central Committee perceived motherhood as a duty to the state, but one that was at least rewarded; for example, the title of 'heroine mother' was bestowed on a woman after the birth of her tenth child. As well as legitimising the industrial revolution, cinema played a vital role in communicating views on motherhood. Vertov and Svilova produced a number of films during this period that have themes of a feminist nature. These themes not only reflected Stalin's adoption of pro-natalist policies – efforts made by the state to address every woman as a mother or potential

mother and encourage population growth<sup>17</sup> – but also represented Svilova's growing influence in the partnership. Vertov adopted a female point of view, perhaps as a reaction to the suffering, powerless role forced upon him by cinema's authorities, and Svilova expressed her view through Vertov, gaining greater control over the writing and directing.<sup>18</sup> While *Three Songs of Lenin* (1934) and *Lullaby* (1937) represented Central Asian women, *Three Heroines* (1938) documented the homecoming of three Western Soviet female pilots who had successfully broken the world record for a non-stop flight in their aeroplane, *Rodina* ('Motherland').<sup>19</sup> These three films provide a study of gender representation in their own right but, more relevant to this thesis, they anticipate a number of themes that resurface in Svilova's independent films.

With the male population largely absent, particularly during and after World War II, Soviet women were forced to become 'superwomen', heading the household as the main provider as well as the main carer and domestic worker. Their presence in the workplace was not a result of successful implementation of the communist ideal of gender equality, for it was driven by the necessity for economic and political reconstruction, and this necessity 'was presented to women as a unique opportunity for self-realisation'.<sup>20</sup> Svilova's films, according to the formula of socialist realism, highlighted not the double burden itself but the new possibilities associated with it. Although the Central Committee's gender policies emphasised opportunities for women in the Soviet Union and countries that adopted communism – particularly in education, professional work and in areas previously dominated by men – 'millions of real women often felt the new reality brought them more disadvantages than advantages'.<sup>21</sup> The Soviet woman, then, exemplified an objectifying use of the feminist ideal within the signifying practices of a culture determined by the demands

of an imposed ideology: the seemingly emancipated women in Svilova's films worked in complicity with a patriarchal system.

These notions of how women should behave and think were shaped and maintained by cinema, where forms of legislation, rules, etiquette and upbringing were communicated. Oksana Bulgakova describes cinema's 1930s stereotype of women as 'not primordial but a fully-formed heroine with clear convictions, a developed character with a mature appearance, a carefully moulded figure. She was strong, with broad bones, prominent features and a sporty figure ... She was a healthy beauty.'<sup>22</sup>

Bulgakova continues to define the heroine of the Stalin era as a woman with 'immutable clarity, a whole-hearted nature, optimism and an absence of doubt, represented visually by expansive gestures and resolute strides'.<sup>23</sup> What is also striking about the on-screen heroine is that she led a loveless life – duty and work left no room for heterosexual romance. Sexual freedom, tolerated in the 1920s, was strictly forbidden – nothing was to distract from the 'the cause'.<sup>24</sup> As I will go on to describe, intimacy and sensuality are largely absent from the Soviet cinema of the Stalin era and notably from Svilova's films. This is why, Bulgakov argues, even the most beautiful of Stalin's on-screen heroines were represented as emancipated and equal to men, appear somehow 'man-like'.<sup>25</sup>

The function of the heroine was to infect the female audience with an optimism and confidence in society. An open hatred of 'the enemy' encouraged a love of the Motherland and Central Committee, as personified by Stalin and reflected in the image of lesser party figures. 'The heroines called on spectators to model their own lives according to the stories told on-screen, following the paths that leads them upwards.'<sup>26</sup>

It is important to note that, during this period, peer groups replaced family groups as the locus of individual identity. This is significant when we consider where women watched Svilova's films. Most likely screened in workplaces, women engaged with the images alongside their colleagues, which meant that, first, they received updates on the Central Committee's policies together – potentially increasing their receptiveness – and, second, they did not have to neglect their responsibilities at home or at work to visit the cinema. The importance of Svilova's films in the battle for women's support and compliance lay most crucially in literacy levels, which were much lower among women workers. In the late 1930s, when Svilova started work at the Central Studio for Documentary Film, more than half of all female factory workers were only semi-literate;<sup>27</sup> consequently, visual media was a more effective medium than print media. Also, women generally kept their distance from political affairs. The average Soviet woman was less likely to be involved in political and technical education than her male counterpart. At one party meeting it was observed that 'many women are bourgeois; they love their comfort and are not interest in socialist life'.<sup>28</sup> Despite its condescending tone, the observation about women's indifference to social life contained some truth, in that women's attention was indeed focused on the home and family. This was not the result of a love of comfort – women were obliged to deal with domestic matters due to the enduring assumption that they should bear the responsibility for shopping, child care and housework, in addition to full-time work outside the home.

## **Female spectatorship and processes of identification**

In order to analyse the methods Svilova employs to construct a direct relationship with her audience, one anchored in progressive depictions of femininity, it is vital to

place this relationship in an appropriate theoretical context. The female spectator in film studies has predominantly been a textual one. Jackie Stacey has summarised traditional psychoanalytically based feminist definitions of female spectators as ‘devoid of sociality and historicity, she has often been seen to be a subject position produced by the visual and narrative conventions of a film text and assumed to respond to it in particular ways due to the universal workings of the female psyche.’<sup>29</sup> Women are typically ascribed the place of passivity within patriarchal culture, and this has been reinforced within the textual model of spectatorship. Calling for a rethinking of such approaches, Jennifer Bean has proposed a different methodology of envisaging female spectatorship, by ‘drawing parallels between what appears to be a more heterogeneous, embodied, socially configured viewer mobilised in early cinema and late cinema’.<sup>30</sup> Thus, we must look at the ways in which women negotiate media meanings through active processes. Rather than a passive viewer, an acknowledgement of the female spectator is made with the understanding she brings to the film her particular history and social identity. By associating Svilova’s modes of narration with the semiotic theories of the Soviet montage era, it can be argued that she expects from her female spectator a mode of reception that demanded active participation in the deciphering of meaning; the viewer was meant to link cognitively the themes of the stories to the policies of the Central Committee. In this respect, meanings do not reside in the text but instead emerge in the negotiation between text and reader.

The Soviet female spectator has not been the subject of extensive discussion. Lilya Kaganovsky’s *How the Soviet Man was Unmade* (2008) represents the most valiant attempt at explaining the complex relationship between the reader and text. As the title of her study suggests, her focus is the male body and the production of Stalinist

masculinity. By unpacking male subjectivity, Kaganovsky touches upon the on-screen representation of men and what she perceives as 'homosexual panic', in which men are feminised and reject positions of virility.<sup>31</sup> While this focus on the male differs from my analysis, the general absence of heterosexual relations Kaganovsky describes is certainly applicable and serves to connect the corresponding studies. The panic over heterosexual relations is a product of a larger undertaking: the refusal to participate in traditionally assigned gender roles. Kaganovsky's dissection of male bonding and how the utopian world of male companionship offers male protagonists a way out of heterosexual relations is in many ways the opposite side of the dichotomy I describe in this chapter, where the women in Svilova's films are documented building solidarity among themselves, largely without a male counterpart.

Svilova's emphasis on female camaraderie and its use as a tool of motivation for the female spectator also reflects Anne Eakin Moss and the 'harem' she identifies in films of the Stalin era.<sup>32</sup> Although since the late 1920s the new Soviet citizen may have been primarily represented by the male body, and even the new Soviet women's body was often represented as more masculine than feminine, in the late 1930s the new Soviet social body was repeatedly represented by feminised and eroticised groups of women, luring the spectator into a fantasy of abundance and harmony. Moss explores the manipulation of cinematic devices in films such as *Lullaby*, *A Girl with Attitude* (*Devushka s kharakterom*, Iudin, 1939) and *The Radiant Path* (*Svethyi put'*, Aleksandrov, 1940) to draw the female spectator into a vision of Soviet society figured as an obedient and productive women's community. Moss argues that these films both eroticised the groups of women on-screen and asked spectators to feel themselves a part of the community through the powerfully affective functions of the cinematic apparatus. A higher order of propaganda, the films attempted 'not just



to whitewash viewers' perceptions of reality, but also to modify their perceptions of themselves ... the focus on female heroines taught the spectator to navigate Soviet society and sacrifice the self in order to become part of the Soviet community.<sup>33</sup>

While Kaganovsky and Moss have provided an entry point to my analysis of Svilova's on-screen heroines, the relationship she fuses between her female audience and the feminist ideal is perhaps best contextualised by Jackie Stacey's discussion on female audiences of Hollywood cinema in the 1940s.<sup>34</sup> Stacey carried out extensive research to collate the opinions of filmgoers and draw comparisons between the conceptual 'spectator' constructed in film studies and the actual women who watched films. Based on empirical evidence, her notion of spectatorship offers an informed and concrete picture of spectatorial habits, attitudes and desires during and after World War II. Stacey argues that the relationship between the female spectator and the feminine ideal is based on processes of identification. In this context, identification loosely means engaging with a character, revolving around a set of cultural processes that describe heterogeneous connections between the spectator and fictionalised other. While 'identification is made through recognition',<sup>35</sup> this does not merely involve the spectator's identification of similarity but also the productive recognition of difference:

When the spectator displays sentiments of worship, devotion or adoration, the process of identification is not based on similarity – it happens from afar ... Difference between the spectator and the feminine ideal, or the possibility of closing the gap produced by the difference, elicits pleasure for the female viewer.<sup>36</sup>

Within this framework, identification involves a wanting to be. It concerns intimacy between femininities, which are not direct articulations of erotic object choice but are

more related to terms of negotiation between the self and other. On the one hand, the spectator values difference because it enables her to be taken to a world in which her desires can be fulfilled; yet, on the other, the need for similarity is not entirely eradicated because it enables her to recognise the qualities she already has and allows her to imagine herself in the position of the feminine ideal. Karen Hollinger argues that the mediation of similarity and difference is crucial to overcome the dilemma created by 'cross-sexual identification' fantasy.<sup>37</sup> Anne Eakin Moss concurs in that asking the spectator both to identify with and desire the heroine unsettles the formation of sexual identities as the spectator is an object of desire through idealisation but she is also inscribed into the community and asked to identify with it. Yet, the continual negotiation of self and ideal works across multiple registers of cinematic desire to compensate for the ambiguities inherent in the diversion of the erotic gaze.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, the process of identification is not only a relationship between the self and other but one between the self and imaginary self. Identification can centre on a denial of the self in favour of the ideal – the desire to transform into her. It is important to note that, unlike Stacey's study, this analysis does not rely on concrete statements of actual female audiences at the time, nor is there much solid evidence as to how women spectators responded to their on-screen depiction (with the exception of the appearance of actual on-screen spectators that I shall discuss below in more detail). Nevertheless, Stacey's findings can be used to speculate what Soviet women were meant to experience. The female spectator was expected to recognise herself in the fictionalised world of the films, based on the similarity between herself and the feminine ideal, which operated through a desire to maintain the difference between herself and the ideal: she wanted to be both similar to, and different from, her on-

screen counterpart. Recognising similarity and difference was meant to produce pleasure between femininities. Writing in a different context on how female friendship is often featured in novels by women authors, Gillian Frith has described this form of pleasure as ‘intimacy which is knowledge’.<sup>39</sup> Self and ideal are not collapsed into one but rather there is enough difference to create the feeling of reality so that a degree of imperfection ratifies the existence of the ideal. Difference produces a distance that becomes desirable for the spectator, both as something to overcome and as something to maintain.

The continual negotiation, then, between the spectator and ideal depends upon the mediation of similarity and difference across the multiple meanings of cinematic identification and desire. Acknowledging difference is crucial for the female spectator because it provides the space for fantasy – a shift occurs from the preference for similarity to the realisation that this connection remains at the level of desire; pleasure is thus experienced through an imagined transformation of self. Despite the emphasis on realism in Stalinist cinema, symbols and myths were a prominent feature, offering the spectator an avenue to escape her world and assume an on-screen identity. Such escapist strategies have also been documented in other socialist and post-socialist environments.<sup>40</sup> What can be observed in this case is a temporary loss of self and the adoption of another persona, especially in terms of sharing emotions with the ideal. The boundary between self and ideal is relatively stable, ‘crossed during the film viewing in terms of the spectator entering a fantasy world and becoming her fantasy self, but this temporary, one-way movement leaves the spectator’s own identity unchanged by the process’.<sup>41</sup>

While the spectator and feminine ideal are simultaneously separated and merged in a complex process of recognition, based on the spectator's acknowledgement of, and desire for, similarity and difference, in some of Svilova's films their relationship is articulated through the recognition of an immutable difference, allowing the desire to become more like the ideal to emerge. Stacey has argued that 'the distance between the spectator and ideal can produce a kind of longing that offers fantasies of transformed identities.'<sup>42</sup> These desires are often expressed through discourses of glamour – some of Svilova's screen icons provide templates of traditional feminine appearance, encouraging conventional forms of aspiration among the women whose lives were dissimilar to the ones they observed on film. The construction of Svilova's feminine ideal endows her subject with confidence, sophistication and self-assurance, traits the female spectator interprets as desirable and inspirational: their courage, confidence and independence offer the female spectator fantasies of power outside her own experience. The look of Svilova's female spectator has deeper implications than sexual objectification; it implies dynamics of admiration, reverence and other progressive resonances.

Stacey extends our understanding of cinematic identification beyond the level of fantasy to analyse the overlap between the female spectator and the feminine ideal, what she defines as 'extra-cinematic' identificatory practices.<sup>43</sup> Identification occurs within the imagination and at the level of cultural activity. Extra-cinematic identificatory practices take place outside the act of looking, manifested in the actions of the spectator. Her desire to replicate the ideal does not only evolve at the level of fantasy but involves activities in which the ideal becomes intertwined in the spectator's physical identity. Stacey regards imitation as a symbol of extra-cinematic identification, when the ideal is used as a model for behaviour.<sup>44</sup> This notion is

particularly relevant to Svilova who captures on-screen female viewers replicating the movements of the feminine ideal. Beyond offering the feminine ideal as a role model, Svilova uses on-screen audiences and their imitation of the ideal to guide the reactions of her cinema spectator. This is just one of the techniques Svilova employs to mobilise the female spectator, the rest of which are analysed throughout the course of this chapter. Taking into account the processes of spectatorial identification, my analysis foregrounds Svilova's complex interplay of similarity and difference between audiences and the feminine ideal – their need to be inspired in their real-life pursuits while simultaneously escaping from them – and how this interplay served to legitimise and serve the agenda of the Central Committee. I will aim to show how the representation of female solidarity was shaped and defined by state ideology, playing a distinctive role in the cinema through Svilova's visual signs and narrative construction. These devices mobilised the female spectator to make the on-screen heroine an object of desire.

## **Industrialisation and the re-imagined woman**

Svilova began her independent career at the height of Stalin's industrial revolution. The movement of women into what were traditionally masculine workplaces to cope with the demands of production was reflected some years later in Great Britain and the United States where a similar transition took place to stabilise each country's war economy. For example, writing on the British context, Antonia Lant argues that mass mobilisation of women worked against traditional notions of national stability, for women could no longer be counted on to be at home – in fact, they were required by law not to be.<sup>45</sup> Svilova's films produced before Soviet involvement in World War II make conspicuous the way identificatory processes were formed in cinema. The huge

enveloping apparatus mass mobilisation required meant that any film from this period was entrapped in a vast discursive web, across which multiple, possibly conflicting images of patriotism and of gender were linked.<sup>46</sup> Soviet women had to make sense of a range of representations of themselves and these representations constructed national identity.

*Roof of the World* (1939), Svilova's first independent film, documents the construction of a hydroelectric power station in the Pamir mountain range.<sup>47</sup> It was shortly followed by *Metro* (1940), which incorporates images from the very centre of the Soviet Union – the subway system in Moscow. Although the contexts of female occupation are very different in the two films, the techniques Svilova employs to mobilise the female spectator remains largely unchanged. In 1939, the possibility of a world war intensified the need to integrate women into traditional male workplaces. Similar in aesthetic to the industrial scenes in *Lullaby*, the women in *Roof of the World* are masculinised by the nature of their work; they hunch over to shovel concrete and lay bricks. Svilova's selection of shots and the order in which they are assembled accentuates this impression. The gender of the workers is unidentifiable in the establishing wide-angle shot: they move gawkily; their pace was likely to have been determined by the laboriousness and tedium of the work. Only when Svilova selects further mid-shots and close-ups are the workers identifiable as women. Female spectators working in the industrial sector were able to identify with the workers through the similarity of their workplace. Yet, any relationships built on the process of similarity are soon undone by the introduction of a dialectic mode of editing that relies on the recognition of difference: shots of female scientists enjoying the safe, clean and carefree environment of a nearby laboratory are juxtaposed with the

construction scenes, depicting for the spectator a life in which she could contribute to the revolution in ways that were not so physically debilitating.

While highlighting the importance and variety of women's work, the introduction of the laboratory sequence, and Svilova's artistic decision to juxtapose it with the construction scenes, suggest that the story intends to inspire the female spectator.

The images serve as evidence that women are not to limit themselves to the arduous nature of blue-collar employment. Juxtaposing shots of the two workplaces alluded to the socialist fantasy – women are encouraged to overlook their physical reality, the here and now, and entertain thoughts of an alternative future. The shots of the female laboratory assistants are central to the premise of aspiration: beyond easing herself of physical exertion, the female spectator is given a further incentive to consider white-collar employment, one that is designed to address her specifically as a woman. Although the laboratory assistants are dressed in the same overcoats as their male colleagues, their hair is exposed, which allows for essential gender distinction. Nancy Huston argues that the diversion of men's sexual energy into murderous energy for war was signalled through the ritual head shaving on the first day of military service.<sup>48</sup> From this we can understand hair as an outward sign of active sexuality that was removed to coincide with the physical demands of wartime. While women did not remove their hair, they had to disguise it, tying it up and hiding it under a cap. In the laboratory sequence, the women's long hair is exposed, for it is one of the key elements of femininity, part of a culturally constructed dimorphism. Svilova includes shots of the women's hair to inform the spectator that the ideal of glamorised womanhood did not need to be threatened; certain occupations would allow them to overcome the masculinity of industrialisation and retain their femininity.

Promotion from blue-collar labour was not, then, only a means to financial independence and an escape from the dangerous and arduous work of construction sites, it enabled women to be women, to preserve their feminine characteristics and refined qualities. Cinema was unwilling and unable to banish the pleasures and profits of female glamour in the name of civic-minded austerity. However, under pressure of the ethos of industrialisation, Svilova embarks on a conspicuous strategy of ranking and reclassifying femininities, endowing each scene of a woman's attention to her appearance with patriotic significance – the maintenance of a legible femininity was an integral part of being Soviet. As Antonia Lant argues, remaining womanly was a means of patriotism because the survival of femininity was a sign of strength and perseverance.<sup>49</sup> The feminine ideal on display in the laboratory sequence challenges the pervasive fear that 'the adoption of uniforms or overalls by women would actually diminish sexual difference, that women would lose their femininity.'<sup>50</sup> As long as hair is exposed, this threat is minimised considerably. One of the problems of combining femininity with uniformity originated in the powerful notion of femininity as incompatible with cohesion, rationality and public dependability.<sup>51</sup> To some extent, therefore, focusing on femininity adds prestige to women's versatility, the feminine ideal becomes synonymous with an outward feminine appearance, which, for Svilova, counteracts any suggestion that only industrious women are contributing to the socialist campaign. Aware of the need for women to undertake unglamorised work, yet anxious about the long-term price of changed sexual roles, Svilova juxtaposes the construction site with the laboratory, thus assuaging fears that femininity will be lost in the cause of industrialisation while providing the necessary difference female spectators sought to identify between themselves and the ideal.<sup>52</sup> The identification of this difference, and the challenge to



negate it in their lives, is theoretically speaking understood to motivate them and bring them pleasure.

The narrative of Svilova's following film, *Metro*, is based on the same rhetoric evident in *Roof of the World*, one that served to challenge the widespread fears among Soviet women that industrialisation was forcing them to be uniformed and uniformly unattractive. It can be argued that Svilova's selection of shots does not wholly calm these fears but rather hopes to reinforce to women their duty: while some women are in a position to retain their femininity in the workplace, those who cannot are to view it as a necessary sacrifice – what could also be described as an act of patriotism. The way in which Svilova constructs the feminine ideal in *Metro* probes the rigidity or flexibility of gender identity by detaching gender signifiers from the expected biological sex. Antonia Lant has found a corollary in her case study: 'The women, sexually disguised, are not, for patriotic reasons, obviously glamorised.'<sup>53</sup> The female spectator, already encouraged to identify with her split identity caused by the double burden, 'could also perceive the potential loss of her femininity as a symbol of her nationhood'.<sup>54</sup> In this respect, the feminine ideal is a flexible creation, a malleable concept that is adapted to suit various workplaces and physical manifestations. In turn, Svilova does not produce simple, single identities for her spectators but asks them to reform identity into the role of the ally, into a state of mobilisation, and into a state of being a national subject, permitting them to demonstrate their invincible solidarity to Stalin's united and class-free society. *Metro* itself was intended as a filmic tribute to Stalin: the document in which Svilova outlines her proposed narrative for the film is introduced with an epigraph quoting Lazar Kaganovich, People's Commissar for Transport: 'The metro is one of the glorious victories won under Stalin's leadership.'<sup>55</sup>

Svilova's use of the workplace as the background for her engagement with the female spectator is not unusual in the context of socialist realist cinema – media representations of women often placed them at work, so much so that this theme 'provided the crux of female identity in public discourse throughout Soviet propaganda of the 1930s', as Choi Chatterjee has argued.<sup>56</sup> The first half of *Metro* documents Moscow's underground train system as a distinctly feminine workplace, omitting any shots that depict the presence of a male worker, though men are seen using the metro as passengers. Svilova calls attention to the dominant presence of women in this particular space and celebrates the variety of their work: women are captured in montage sequences scrubbing walls, buffering floors, operating ticket booths, driving trains and performing conductor's duties. Remarkably, women also build the stations, as footage in the second half of the film indicates, depicting the construction of the third stage of the metro infrastructure. Despite the presence of a male worker in this sequence, the woman remains as his co-worker. The emphasis of 'co-' is relayed mostly through costume: women wear the same overalls and hardhats as the men, the latter of which disguises the workers' hair and renders gender identification an impossible task. Furthermore, the movements and body language of the male and female workers are almost indistinguishable.

In terms of filmic representation, the potential for glamour and self-confidence that is evident in *Roof of the World*, intertwined within a feminine aesthetic, lends itself more readily in *Metro* to a spectacle of masculinisation. A series of close-ups draws attention to the similarity between the women's overalls and their male co-workers', which again might indicate that Svilova hopes to challenge any fears, such as those prevalent in Great Britain, that legislating women's dress, by equipping them with practical uniforms in order to unify them, might have the power to disguise, alter, or

even reconstruct their real selves.<sup>57</sup> Svilova possibly tries to diffuse any concerns that the connotations of male strength attached to their work uniform would permanently empower female wearers. On this point, it is important to call attention to the significance of the scene's context. The parity between men and women is not only due to Svilova's focus on the overalls but, like the construction scenes in *Roof of the World*, is also indebted to the arduous nature of the work itself, which allows little opportunity for feminine behaviours or movements. Although the metro infrastructure is represented, in the most part, as one constituted by women, it is not necessarily feminine. This reading is supported by the fact that the only female worker whose gender can be categorised from a distance is one who is not undertaking such physically demanding work – she walks along the railway line fulfilling quality control responsibilities.

The concluding sequence depicts a woman wearing white overalls and a hat cleaning the seats inside a carriage; her movements are careful and precise. A second woman cleans the carriage furnishings, acknowledging the camera with a proud smile. A final wide-angle shot of the platform captures the stationary train being cleaned by women on ladders. These women's movements are subtle and delicate, far removed from the cumbersome, ungainly body gestures in the earlier construction sequence. The women smile to each other, suggesting that this workplace is one where female solidarity was strong between colleagues. Here, Svilova plays on the appeal that lies in the scope the film gives to female experience, and especially the representation of female-to-female relations.<sup>58</sup> In Great Britain, *The Gentle Sex* (Howard, 1943), a film narrating the lives of seven British women during wartime, was among the most profitable films of the war period, indicating that it must have held a certain attraction to women, given their predominance in the audience.<sup>59</sup> Janet Thumin

concurr, arguing that 'wartime films which dealt with the relationships between women proved popular with the female spectator.'<sup>60</sup> Although *Metro* was produced the year before the Soviet Union's entry into World War II, the pressure placed on women, and the related gender transformation that took place, allowed women to recognise in each other their suffering, stoicism and courage, acknowledging their vital function in maintaining the meta-structures of family and nation. The feminine ideal in *Metro*, one who celebrates the sacrifices of other women and inspires them in their work, offering support the state could not provide, crystallises the unique character of Stalin's gender transformation. As in British wartime films, Svilova emphasises female experience. There is a recognition that, with the growing female audience, further patronage – and patriotism – might be encouraged by stories about female solidarity. There was a need to present their solidarity as part of the greater national effort, and it became part of the Soviet Union's political body.

In *Roof of the World* and *Metro*, Svilova engages the spectator in two modes of opposition, that of similarity/difference and that of masculinity/femininity, though the latter is by no means clear-cut and the dimorphism of hair provided for Svilova the necessary distinction upon which to draw. As the dialectic models of masculinity and femininity, which helped to guarantee social stability in the formative years of the Soviet Union, were thrown into torsion by industrialisation, and as women donned uniforms and entered workplaces en masse, representational division is one of the ways in which Svilova refashions a semiotics of sexual difference. In the absence of traditional schema of separate, gendered spheres, her films allude to a gendered cleft in new, vertically stratified terms. The demands of industrialisation – of rationing, mobilisation and patriotism – require a new version of femininity and, while *Roof of the World* and *Metro* map out these changes, they also suggest to the female spectator,

perhaps implicitly, that the feminine ideal and the traits we associate with femininity are only compatible for a chosen few.

## Female heroines in wartime

Stalinist initiatives forced women to join men in workplaces in the 1930s, before then replacing them when men were conscripted for combat in 1941. Through the formal arrangement of her films, through imagery and narrative themes, Svilova continues to invite the female spectator to identify with on-screen heroines. Yet, women's pivotal place in her films as a specular object is modified; the female form has to be more strongly aligned with national identity. The primary meaning of the opposition 'us' and 'them' shifts from referring to the two sides of gender to the two sides of war: woman versus man is readily transposed onto Soviet versus non-Soviet. Constructing a feminine ideal who is in part to be recognised by her physical difference to man gives way to a further merging of genders. While Svilova strives to speak to women, acknowledging and encouraging their labour and sacrifice, she no longer refers to the plight of women's continued femininity: the feminine ideal is wholly masculinised to inspire women to embrace the changing demands. As *Metro* appears to indicate, the loss of femininity is dressed as a patriotic duty. The absence of conventional gender distinctions in Svilova's wartime films challenge what has in Laura Mulvey's opinion been one of cinema's primary cultural roles – the invention and reproduction of images that sustain the rift of sexual difference.<sup>61</sup> As familiar habits of the cinema, such as its patterning of narrative resolution through gendered reference, are overtaken by vast national changes, Svilova's construction of the feminine ideal becomes more complex.

In Soviet discourse, through a subtle repositioning, the war of the sexes was put on hold while a war against a different enemy was being fought. The meaning of femininity, then, was not the same along every dimension and not for every spectator; it was not defined against masculinity or against a different class of femininity. The zone of sexual difference was invaded and commandeered, in the name of establishing a more urgent difference – that of nationality. During World War II, cinema was the most powerful medium for building patriotism in that it reached a wider public than any other. The war produced a need for images of national identity, both on the screen and in the spectator's mind, yet Soviet national identity was not a natural, timeless essence but an intermittent, combinatory historical product, arising at moments of contestation of different political and geographical boundaries. In this respect, its construction paralleled that of the representation of gendered identity. Here, the mutually dependent categories of masculinity and femininity fluctuated according to historical moment, while their ideological power rested with the opposite notion that their meanings were fixed through attachment to biological sex. National identity had to be forged from traditional aesthetic and narrative forms. Never straightforwardly or permanently stated, it emerged only partially from an insistence on a specifically Soviet nature, definable only through difference from another identity, another place that was not Soviet. We can read Svilova's wartime films not only for progressive images of women, or to see how these images diverge from contemporary experience, but also to understand how, in her imagining of national identity through different versions of screen femininity, the films negotiate with, and participate in, the representations of womanhood and nationhood.

Initially the Central Committee was reluctant to enlist women in combat positions, instead recruiting them to perform traditionally female roles, such as repairing army

clothes and nursing injured soldiers.<sup>62</sup> As the need for more infantry increased, women were drafted to overcome the deficiency. They were involved in every branch of service, eventually constituting nine per cent of Soviet military personnel by the end of the war.<sup>63</sup> As well as providing vital infantry roles, 200,000 Soviet women flew in the air defence forces during World War II.<sup>64</sup> This notable statistic implies that the campaign to promote female interest in aviation, of which Vertov and Svilova's *Three Heroines* was intended to be a part, was successful. In the face of continued domestic erosions in male and female roles, Svilova develops a new way of delineating male and female spheres, placing them in a vertical orientation, attaching femininity to the land and to the skies. Paul Virilio, a French cultural theorist best known for his writings about the impact of technology on urbanisation, writes that war is a space in the geometrical sense with its own reference points and landmarks.<sup>65</sup> This insight helps us to understand how Svilova stakes out meaning through an emphasis on boundaries, borders, coastlines and maps, and through a new stratification in plot and mise en scène, of the realms of air, land and sea – themes that resurface in her peace-time depictions of foreign lands and otherness in the post-war era. Wartime cinema envisioned the space of the nation in new terms, renovating the severely tested metaphor of home as an embodiment of nationhood by aligning land and air to domestic and non-domestic spheres, spheres in which traditional gendered associations were still, intermittently, in force despite the wartime upheaval in gender roles.

In fact, Marina Raskova, the lead pilot documented in *Three Heroines*, influenced the Central Committee to accept women into male air regiments and to create three all-female ones,<sup>66</sup> suggesting that, in this instance, there was an unequivocal association between the illusion of rhetoric and the reality it served to create. Despite their

contributions to the defeat of fascism, most women were excluded from the rank of hero and framed as the Other, against which male heroes were measured.<sup>67</sup> Soviet heroic rhetoric often included women in the symbolic nation (*Three Heroines*, for example), but a masculine vision of the nation and its citizens was most often disseminated. Although heroines were honoured, and offered an alternative model of inclusion in the nation, they were never as independent, popular or heroic as the men who were inspired to greatness by their tenderness and love for a female country. Only they, as Karen Petrone concludes, were deemed the true protectors of the motherland.<sup>68</sup>

*Three Heroines* is an example of how engagement in war required a further reimagining of gender roles and how the deployment of cinema was meant to educate women on state expectations and motivate them to fulfil the new demands. Svilova's independent films produced between 1941 and 1945 strive to spark in her female spectator a sense of recognition, to make her believe that she was the one to whom the images spoke. While there is no similarly iconic equivalent in Svilova's films, the American persona of 'Rosie the Riveter', and the means by which the female spectator identified with her, provides pertinent comparisons to the relationship between Svilova's spectator and the feminine ideal. Rosie was a government initiative, a fabricated female archetype to convince American industry to do its patriotic duty to help the war effort by employing female labourers – in 1942 President Roosevelt stated that, 'In some communities employers dislike to employ women. We can no longer afford to indulge such prejudices or practices.'<sup>69</sup> Rosie, who also bore the responsibility of first encouraging women to apply for 'men's' work, came as part of a media rhetoric that had, since 1939, sought to link women to the workplace. This rhetoric resulted in, or reflected, a twenty-five per cent increase in the female



workforce since the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>70</sup> Rosie was a tireless and patriotic woman who was not just a riveter but carried out secretarial work, engineered trains, flew aeroplanes and planted trees. Symbolising the changing role of women in Rosie's industrious character was understood to have played a major factor in the dramatic increase in the female labour force, which rose fifty-seven per cent between 1942 and 1944, and in the strengthening of national identity, indicating that a carefully constructed fictionalised ideal cannot be underestimated as a tool of mobilisation.<sup>71</sup> She became idealised as a result of Norman Rockwell's May 1943 *Saturday Evening Post* cover;<sup>72</sup> dressed in greasy overalls, the image depicted Rosie sitting on an iron girder and eating her lunch. This image was reproduced in various forms in advertisements, poster campaigns and in cinema. *Rosie the Riveter* (Graham, 1943), for example, was a romantic comedy in which Rosalind 'Rosie' Warren takes a position in a wartime aeroplane factory in California.

The British government also deployed cinema to mobilise its nation's women; films such as *The Gentle Sex* and *Millions Like Us* (Gilliat and Launder, 1943) showcased wholesome figures of femininity to spark patriotism in female audiences, which in the mid-1940s made up a huge proportion of filmgoers.<sup>73</sup> British cinema also held up Soviet women as appropriate models for emulation: there are several indications that the idea of the Soviet woman as unglamorous counterbalanced American screen goddesses in the British wartime discourse of femininity.<sup>74</sup> Such notions came, at least in part, from the screening of Soviet films in Great Britain. Knowledge of Soviet women's wartime experience boosted British women's association with a despecularised femininity. In *Tanny Pipit* (Miles and Saunders, 1944), for example, the fictional Lieutenant Bocolova (played by émigré actress, Lucie Mannheim) visits a rural British village and comes to represent the Russian feminine ideal. Her

combination of strength and bravery, sustained for just a few minutes on screen, tantalises a local Land Army girl who ponders: 'I want to see what she's got that I haven't.' It was a comparison the women in the audience were also encouraged to make.

As with *Metro*, Svilova's *News of the Day no.10* (1944) highlights the necessity of unglamorous wartime work. Svilova addresses Soviet women through discourses that can speak to them as real women, despite the fact that they now existed outside the home and had been for some time. This tension underscored the Central Committee's failure to construct a coherent replacement feminine ideal during wartime, which makes visible what were clear contradictions of female subjecthood. Antonia Lant argues that a similar contradiction occurred in Great Britain:

Femininity's unstable wartime nature was most perfectly expressed in the government's lingo for the deployable female, 'the mobile woman'. She shifted from exclusion from the concept of nationhood to the acute need for her incorporation in the nation.<sup>75</sup>

War produced a laminate of multiple femininities in conflict; women faced irresolvable contradictions in the versions of femininity that surrounded them and by which they built their images of themselves. *News of the Day no.10* documents women undertaking tasks in a variety of workplaces, ranging from lead mines, construction sites, oil fields, collective farms and coal mines. Svilova also visits them on the frontline, where they are depicted driving tanks and fulfilling medical duties. Their respective triumphs in these occupations intend to instil an atmosphere of optimism for a glorious communist future. The montage provides a host of different versions of the feminine ideal, and the spectator can choose with whom she wants to identify. Svilova does not make any efforts to disguise the physical extent of the work,

particularly those tasks carried out by women in the coal mine whose weary, blackened faces Svilova captures in a series of close-ups. This attempt at realism informs us that the process of identification at work is centred on notions of similarity, for there would have been no discernible difference between the life of the spectator and that of the ideal. The following harvesting sequence, however, contains an element of fantasy: a female agricultural worker stops picking peaches, puts down her basket and begins to play games with her children who have accompanied her to work. Based on what we know of collective farm life, it is likely that the spectator would not have linked this playful scene with the reality of her workplace. Following Jackie Stacey's argument on identificatory processes, the spectator is more likely to have responded to the image of the feminine ideal with a desire to cancel out the difference between her reality and the fictionalised depiction of collective farm life. This desire brought pleasure and, consequently, can be understood as an effective tool of mobilisation.

Throughout the harvesting sequence, Svilova emphasises the valuable contribution of children, documenting them as they climb rickety ladders to pick fruit and use their nimble hands to tie rope. In this respect, the feminine ideal is not encapsulated in the archetypal female worker – the new Soviet woman who was simultaneously a perfected model of femininity and one willing to sacrifice her femininity for Stalin's wartime cause – but in her offspring. The female spectator is encouraged to raise children who would also dedicate themselves to the defeat of fascism and the construction of the Marxist utopia. This theme is continued in *News of the Day no.9* (1945) in which Svilova portrays aviation hero, Valentina Grizodubova (who featured in *Three Heroines*), accepting her Soviet Hero Star medal. Rather than document the ceremony in detail, Svilova cuts to a later scene depicting Grizodubova in an

informal setting talking with three younger women. While her words are not audible, the voiceover indicates that Grizodubova is sharing the joy of her achievements in the hope of inspiring future pilots. Considering the extent of these achievements, the female spectator is invited to view Grizodubova as a role model, spirited by her courage and freedom. The act of aviation itself is crucial to this reading, as a pilot's licence is intrinsically related to themes of independence and liberation. The fantasies of escape and power evoked by Grizodubova once more correlate with Stacey's processes of identification: in this instance, pleasure is on offer to the spectator not only through the fantasy of escape but in an encouragement to fill the gap between her own life and that of Grizodubova's.

Svilova, then, addresses the spectator in such a way as to encourage her to recognise herself as a national subject through the process of engaging with the ideal. The production of a coherent national identity was not dependent on stable and reassuring gender roles, as it had been before the industrial revolution, but was reliant on continuous change and upheaval to these roles: no longer reassured by the maintenance of traditional femininity, the Soviet Union in wartime found security in the chaos of the new social order, where women replaced or joined men in all aspects of life. Victimised by the Nazi invasion, it became a country that temporarily defined itself by the permanent turmoil it endured. Yet, while women taking on male roles led to a deglamorisation of the national heroine, a process in which the majority of Svilova's films had to participate, other depictions of the feminine ideal worked to redefine femininity and they had, by their very focus, to dramatise its concurrent disintegration. In the same newsreel episode, *News of the Day no.9*, Svilova depicts the seventy-fifth birthday celebrations of Soviet actress, Evdokya Turchaninova. The story hails Turchaninova as a heroine of the Soviet regime, a regime without which

her talents might not have been realised. The scene opens with a wide-angle shot of the stage of Moscow's Maly Theatre. Only the stage is lit; the rest of the theatre remains in darkness. Turchaninova enters the shot from the right, being guided onto the stage by a chaperone, and stands on the stage to await the start of the proceedings. Svilova cuts to a low-angle mid-shot of Turchaninova. She wears a white dress with a black shawl. Turchaninova stands upright with a posture of dignity; her facial expression emitting sentiments of humility and humbleness. A panning shot from right to left depicts a man in a tuxedo carrying a bouquet of flowers across the stage. He places them at the feet of Turchaninova who in response takes a step back in astonishment.

The sequence continues with a woman in an oriental gown giving Turchaninova a gift and a parting kiss on the cheek, before a second bouquet is delivered at Turchaninova's feet. Recorded in live sound, the audience can be heard giving a round of applause. Svilova returns to the opening establishing shot to capture child ballerinas performing for Turchaninova and then cuts to a mid-shot of the ballerinas recorded from a camera on the stage. For the first time, Svilova cuts to reaction shots of the audience, noticeably to a mid-shot of a group of young women who applaud enthusiastically. A tearful Turchaninova delivers a speech to the audience. She talks directly into the camera with strong body gestures, covering her heart with both hands to indicate that her words are truthful and sincere. In Turchaninova, Svilova documents for the spectator a feminine ideal who was endowed with a distinctive voice, one who could narrate her own story coherently. Turchaninova's speech exhibits a modern consciousness of the self, aware that she has lived before and after the revolution, the most significant event in her nation's history. The division contained in Turchaninova's story, between the oppressive pre-revolutionary past

and the glorious present, enables Svilova to perpetuate a sense of overcoming – a communist victory in the face of adversity. One constant that runs throughout Svilova's many gender discourses is the ability of the feminine ideal to grapple with rapid change and persevere, despite hindrances from inside and outside Soviet borders.

## **The feminine ideal and the allure of power**

The image of the feminine ideal as an autonomous and resourceful labourer, working to secure the future of the Soviet empire, persevered beyond World War II to coincide with the launch of the fourth Five Year Plan, which focused on reconstruction.<sup>76</sup> The stories documented in Svilova's newsreels during this period tend to correspond in form and aesthetic with the pro-natalist campaign of the pre-war era, focusing on repopulation and family values. While the industrial revolution continued where it had left off, and women were still carrying out roles typically ascribed to male workers, Svilova reminds women of their femininity, a way of re-domesticating them. The feminine ideal is now a woman who is both industrious and glamorous, a hybrid of the two ends of the spectrum witnessed thus far. A clear example of this reimagining is *News of the Day no.12* (1947), which contains a story from a motorcycle factory in Zapolyarye. The women are organised into production lines, surrounded by heavy machinery. They work at their stations, assembling different parts of the motorcycles. The theme of female solidarity gradually established since *Metro* is still very present, as the women smile at each other and to the camera, where their enjoyment appears to originate from both the work itself and the female company. What separates this story from Svilova's earlier industrial scenes is the women's attire. They are not uniformed; instead, they wear their own clothes and

without overalls to protect themselves from the grease and dust. Svilova emphasises the femininity of two women assembling the front wheels. Close-up shots capture the detail of their floral dresses, necklaces and bracelets. Referring back to my reading of *Roof of the World*, the feminine ideal in the motorcycle sequence has retained her femininity as an act of patriotism, though this act could be understood as a greater victory than that of the laboratory assistants who had to escape the industrial workplace to maintain the traits of their gender. Svilova appears to suggest that escape is no longer necessary: women can retain their femininity in the industrial workplace, in turn implying steps of grand progress in the formation of a Marxist utopia.

During the reconstruction period after World War II, the Central Committee addressed the female masses through a fantasy of power. As with the original drive for industrialisation, reconstruction was dependent upon women bearing the double burden; convincing them that they could attain influential positions in the workplace and elsewhere was a means of guaranteeing their cooperation.<sup>77</sup> Women who bought into this fantasy were deemed to work more productively than those who were dubious about the possibility of obtaining future authority. *International Democratic Federation of Women* (1947) documents the federation's conference in Prague that year. In 1947 the federation was governed by Nina Popova, the Director of the Soviet Women's Committee and Chairperson of the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Women. Popova is the film's main protagonist; she features in nearly every shot and is thus represented as central to the federation's activities (due mainly to her Sovietness). She personified a nation whose leadership qualities were being implemented to guide Eastern Europe out of the aftermath of World War II. In this

respect, Popova's leading of the federation symbolises the wider context of European reconstruction.

Popova's opening speech to the federation is the defining scene of the film's first half. Her address to the federation is significant because, as Elżbieta Ostrowska suggests, women delivering speeches to women in the Stalin era can be interpreted as 'proof of a newfound subjectivity within the state structure'.<sup>78</sup> It indicates that women have a voice in Stalin's regime and are allowed to express it, but only certain women, who are selected on their merits and achievements. Popova symbolises to the female spectator the success of egalitarianism and challenges any perceptions of Central Committee policy as genderist. The segment of Popova's speech included in the film describes the courageous fight waged by Soviet women against Nazi occupation; she shares with passion stories of valour in the battle for the defence of freedom and independence. The selection of shots in this sequence suggests an objective on Svilova's part, first, to augment Popova's physical size to give an impression of strength and authority, and, second, to emphasise the respect the federation's members had for its leader. The sequence begins with a side-angle mid-shot of the female audience facing left. Svilova cuts to a wide-angle shot of Popova walking toward the front of the conference room. The women applaud as Popova steps up to the lectern situated on a low stage. As Popova begins to speak, her head and shoulders are depicted in a low-angle mid-shot. Facing left, she sways as she builds emphasis and rhythm in her speech, to the point at which the tight-angled shot can no longer contain her within its frame. A second wide-angle position captures Popova leaning forward on the lectern, using her outstretched arms for balance. A further low-angle invites the audience to view Popova's exaggerated facial gestures: she opens her eyes wide and grits her teeth to emphasise the passion in her



words. Svilova cuts to a mid-shot of a portion of the audience applauding, followed by a medium close-up of one young woman applauding Popova in a wildly excited manner.

The second half of the film narrates the delegation's tour of Prague's politically relevant tourist sights. The federation's visit to the newly-opened Lenin Museum and the Liberation Monument, the latter of which celebrates the efforts made by the Soviet Union in 1945 to liberate Czechoslovakia from Nazi occupation, serves to downplay Popova's status as a feminine ideal and instead highlights her Soviet identity. In doing so, the film diverts from its celebration of female unity to commemorate Soviet triumph and legitimises the policies of the Central Committee. The visit to the Liberation Monument not only allows the Soviet Union to become the film's proxy protagonist, it also rationalises the selection of Prague to host the conference.<sup>79</sup> One result of the gratitude many Czechs felt toward the Soviet Union for their liberation was a rapid increase in the support of the Czech Communist Party, so much so that by 1948 it was the largest single party in Czech Parliament. Soviet refusal to participate in the Marshall Plan essentially dictated the negative stand taken by the pro-Soviet governments of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Central Committee exerted strong pressure on them in this respect and, as a result, Czechoslovakia, as well as Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia, rejected assistance under the programme. This was a major step in dividing Europe and toward creating greater international tension. The consultations of representatives of nine communist parties held in Poland in late 1947 only increased the level of confrontation in Europe, for their resolutions emphasised the division of the world into two blocs. The prevailing atmosphere of mutual suspicion and mistrust, exacerbated by the legacy of past relations and by new divisions, led to

a situation in which military force became the predominant element in the policy of containment.

Bearing in mind the political background to the federation's visit to Prague, the film can be identified as a vehicle intended to cement Czech and Soviet political relations, and Popova is used as the catalyst to bind this relationship. The delegation visits a glass-blowing factory on the journey back to the conference hall. The sequence begins with a mid-shot of a group of the factory's all-female workforce. Popova enters the factory in a wide-angle shot. She smiles and introduces herself to the workers with handshakes and kisses on the cheek. Svilova is apparently keen to capture Popova's influence beyond the federation's members, as she holds on a side-angle shot for a number of seconds to depict a production line of workers sitting behind their machines applauding Popova's arrival to their section of the factory. She walks along the line and introduces herself to the workers; in turn, each worker stands to her feet and shakes Popova's hand, providing the scene with the sentiments of a royal occasion. Popova's facial expression, consisting of lifted eyebrows and a wide smile, connotes genuine interest in the workers and the vital roles they perform. Before Popova leaves the factory she gives the workforce some words of encouragement. The sequence begins with a wide-angle shot from a camera positioned on the stage facing the seated audience. While the audience applaud, Svilova cuts to a mid-shot of two women looking straight ahead toward the stage. Both women nervously shake their legs in anticipation. A shot of Popova adjusting her posture is reflected in the actions of the two women who sit up straighter in their seats. Jackie Stacey argues that, while in the act of viewing, imitation is different from the fantasy of becoming the ideal, or even expressing the desire to become like her more generally, since it involves an actual imitation of the ideal or of her particular

characteristics.<sup>80</sup> In other words, this identificatory practice is a form of pretending or play-acting and yet it is also different from pretending, as pretending is represented as a process involving the whole ideal persona, whereas imitation is used, at least in the case of Popova, to indicate a partial taking on of some aspect of the ideal's identity. Svilova mobilises the female spectator not only by presenting her with the feminine ideal but also through documenting the effect of the ideal via the response of her on-screen audience. The spectator can recognise in her fellow Soviet sisters their desire to become Popova, and by colluding in the fantasy she too would feel pleasure.

Svilova selects numerous wide-angle shots of Popova delivering her speech, recorded from a camera behind the audience. Popova does not have the same presence as she did during her earlier speech: the substitution of low-angle mid-shots with wide-angles alters the perception of her size. The wide-angle shots capture Popova standing next to a male translator, the latter's size emphasises – along with the shot type – her less imposing figure. However, Popova's body gestures supplement any loss in the dimensions of her frame; even in wide-angle one can still observe the passion in her eyes, and her arms and head move to accentuate her words. At the end of the speech, a mid-shot depicts the audience applauding, before a wide-angle shot of the stage observes the translator repeating Popova's speech in Czech. The fact that the workers applaud Popova before her words are translated, as the order of the shots infers, would not likely have been perceived by a spectator who was fully engaged with the spectacle of Popova's speech. Nevertheless, it is in this speech that one can identify the analogy I described above. Popova's address to the Czech workforce can be read as a signifier for the Soviet Union's growing influence in post-war Eastern Europe – in this instance, anticipating Czechoslovakia's formal acceptance of Soviet rule in February 1948. The role of Popova, then, encourages the

female spectator by suggesting that Soviet women are collectively the driving force behind the reconstruction of post-war Europe. In Popova, Svilova depicts what is arguably her most definitive feminine ideal. Popova is portrayed as a committed, compassionate and powerful woman, who, perhaps like Svilova, does not only regard herself as a motivator of women – existing on the outside, communicating to the female population from a distance – but as a woman who wants to be part of the female solidarity she considers crucial if she and her Soviet sisters are to overcome state burdens.

Svilova's documentary of the following year's conference, *International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris* (1948), begins with a high-angle aeroplane shot of Paris, capturing the iconic Eiffel Tower and Champs Elysees. A series of shots of posters advertising the exhibition are assembled in montage. The posters, pinned on lampposts and boarded-up windows, depict women in powerful postures, which not only provide the details of the event for the women of Paris but also provide for Svilova's audience a clear, explicit symbol of the federation itself. In similar vein to the documentary recorded in Prague, the federation visits a monument of political relevance. Tracked in a pan, the group of women approach a wall that bears the inscription: 'The dead of the Commune, 28 March to 28 May 1871'. The Paris Commune was a working-class government that briefly ruled the city during the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. The feminist movement within the Commune, itself titled 'Women's Union for the Defence of Paris', was initiated by Nathalie Lemel and, significantly, Elisabeth Dmitrieff, a Russian exile.<sup>81</sup> As in the Prague documentary, this visit to a city monument can be read as a means of highlighting Sovietness, foregrounded further by the second destination on the tour. Once the women have laid flowers and paid their respects to the memory of Lemel and

Dmitrieff, they visit the building on Rue Marie-Rose where Lenin is believed to have lived with his wife and her mother between July 1909 and June 1912. A close-up captures a plaque dedicated to Lenin by the building's entrance.

The exhibition itself is introduced with an exterior shot. The international nature of the event is marked by the banner of flags hanging above the doorway. The foyer's walls are decorated with the portraits of female icons – Dolores Ibárruri, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, and Nina Popova are two of the women whose images are on display. A montage of mid-shots and medium close-ups depicts women of various ethnicities socialising with one another. While some women knit and converse, others walk between the stalls where each participating country displays its women's achievements. Svilova pays closest attention to the Soviet Union's stall. Adjacent to information about Popova is a written statement from Stalin in which he outlines his crusade for female emancipation. Three women, all of different ethnicities (one of whom is the Cuban delegate from the Prague conference), read the statement and nod in synchronisation. This shot reinforces the ideological template established in the Prague documentary, one that suggests the Soviet Union is guiding less able nations in the construction of a post-war communist society, and gender egalitarianism is at the forefront of the movement. Again, these themes become prominent in Svilova's depiction of otherness in her foreign newsreel stories, analysed in Chapter Four.

The closing shot of the film, which features a smaller version of Vera Mukhina's statue, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, positioned in the centre of one of the exhibition rooms, reasserts women's pivotal role in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union. The statue, the original of which was commissioned for the 1937 World Fair in Paris and

stands at seventy-eight feet tall, depicts a young man and woman holding a hammer and sickle in outstretched hands. One might interpret this closing shot as a means of promoting gender equality, and indeed that was the premise behind the statue's original conception. However, within the diegesis of the film, it is more rational to consider the female hand behind the artwork. It is important to consider that, in 1948, Mukhina was one of the Soviet Union's most illustrious female artists, and had been for over a decade since the unveiling of the original statue. *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, then, is less an icon of gender equality than a timepiece of female inspiration, creativity and vision, implicitly underpinning the central message of the federation and the Soviet influence within its ranks. Svilova uses the ideology contained within the artwork to encapsulate the overall meaning of her story. Drawing on Mukhina's artistic talent is perhaps expected, given that Svilova spent time in her personal life publicising the work of Soviet women artists. In a letter to an unknown recipient, Svilova describes organising an exhibition on 8 March, 1951, held on International Women's Day at the Central House of Journalists, to celebrate the work of women photographers and filmmakers, such as Lidya Stepanova, Irina Setkina and Liudmila Semenova.<sup>82</sup>

The focus on Mukhina suggests that, to Svilova, powerful women come in different forms. She goes above and beyond placing politically powerful women such as Popova in front of the camera, instead focusing on women who had achieved their status with a positive and charitable motive. These were not necessarily women of fame – Svilova regularly showcases 'ordinary' women who had attained a degree of influence in their chosen professions. *News of the Day no.31* (1948), for example, focuses on a female worker performing quality control on a production line. Noticeably all the workers toiling on the production line are male.<sup>83</sup> One possible

reading of this scene is that, with hard work, women could detach themselves from the monotony of the production line and carry out more respectful – but less arduous – work. This is a continuation of the themes elicited in *Roof of the World* where Svilova juxtaposes a construction site with the relative peacefulness of a laboratory. Documenting successful women in traditionally masculine professions was designed to encourage the spectator to consider entering these fields. *News of the Day no.31* implies that supervisory positions were not given to male candidates by default but were achievable by any deserving employee. In this respect, images of powerful women also act as a shield for the Central Committee: having viewed these images, the female spectator cannot hold the state responsible if such positions elude her. Instead, she is encouraged to explore inwardly for the reasons that might account for her lack of promotion or job satisfaction.

Mukhina's statue, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, was originally designed to depict symbolically the dominance of the masculinised centre over the feminised countryside while simultaneously promoting gender equality. The feminisation of rural lands was not only a metaphor: by the late 1940s, women constituted nearly half of the collective farm workforce.<sup>84</sup> Loss in battle and emigration to urban settlements in search of better pay resulted in a deficiency of male agricultural workers. Women supplemented the male workers reluctantly, on the whole bitterly opposing collectivisation.<sup>85</sup> To the Central Committee, their resistance was not a reflection of their dissatisfaction but their selfishness, and further cinema campaigns were mobilised to resolve the conflict.<sup>86</sup> During collectivisation, when the Soviet state used violence to extract produce from the countryside and gain control of rural economies, Soviet media began to depict peasants as female much more often.<sup>87</sup> The representation of the Soviet Union as a nurturing mother yielding everything to her

children suggested that the power dynamics between Stalin and his country were like those of a husband and wife in a patriarchal social order.

*News of the Day no.43* (1948) documents women working at 'New Life', a Voronezh collective farm, which allows Svilova to highlight the feminised countryside and the effective use of state-initiated facilities – even the name of the farm alludes to the broadening horizons available to the dedicated Soviet worker. The ideological treatment of women in the countryside follows a pattern similar to the women in Svilova's industrial workplaces, though here collectivisation is the catalyst to end gender inequality. Svilova captures the women of New Life carrying out domestic duties, such as making sausages and watering plants, as well as construction tasks, such as building houses for the farm's residents. Greta Bucher suggests that women's work during this time was perceived not as an act of survival but an act of ideology,<sup>88</sup> and this is evident in the way Svilova emphasises the women's dedication to work rather than the work itself. Close-up shots of the women smiling at one another under Stalin's watchful eye – his image appears throughout the story in statue and portrait form – might have been intended to remind audience members of what should be the motivation behind their work. An emphasis on intangible rewards, such as the admiration from fellow workers and gratitude from Stalin, frames the women's labour as an act of sacrifice.

The dairy sequence, in particular, emits on the women's part an unnatural obsession with their work. In between cutting blocks of cheese, one worker finds moments to look away from the job at hand to smile into the camera's lens. She allows herself only a cursory glance, aware that any longer might result in her becoming distracted or fulfilling her task to a substandard quality, but it is still a sufficiently strong gesture



to translate her joy to the spectator. A female worker operating a butter churn also makes eye contact to engage with the spectator, and the nature of her job allows for a slightly longer and, consequently, more intimate connection with the camera. These shots imply that the women workers at New Life are explicit in their commitment to the Central Committee; they are enthusiastic about socialism, eager to earn their own income and prize their independence. In this respect, they are presented as 'kolkhoznitsas' (collective farm workers) – the antithesis of the 'baba'. Kolkhoznitsas assumed heroic proportions: young and slim, they contrasted the buxom, maternal figure of the pre-Stalin era. Regardless of whether they worked in traditionally male occupations such as tractor driving, or in female ones such as dairy farming, the kolkhoznitsas were icons of the new era, visual symbols of the success of Stalinism and its dedication to egalitarianism.

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the techniques Svilova employs to mobilise female audiences through processes of identification with the Soviet feminine ideal. While, as E. Ann Kaplan argues, a filmmaker's gender does not automatically determine what kind of stories they tell,<sup>89</sup> the attention Svilova pays to women – the proliferation of women's stories and ideological concerns related to women – is considerably greater than that paid by other female directors of *News of the Day*. A comparison with Irina Setkina, for example, indicates that women filmmakers did not direct women's stories by default. Setkina's films primarily document the political elite: ceremonial meetings at the Kremlin; Soviet delegates leaving for foreign territories; and scenes of demonstrations and rallies, etc. This suggests that the frequent, positive representations on display in Svilova's films do not merely reflect

the agenda of the Central Committee but indicate that she has a personal investment in her mobilisation of the female spectator. The archive documents related to Svilova's production methods imply that the subjects of her films were chosen for her. The only document in which she suggests a story for filming came very late in her career in 1955. Svilova proposes a narrative similar to *Lullaby* that intended to document the raising of healthy children through the warmth of the Soviet mother. She wants the emphasis to remain on both the women and the children, and she considers including a scene on adoption: 'We can move away from the mother's great humanity toward life and herself to show the home where the baby is being adopted, the people involved and to the registry office where laws concerning adoption are passed.'<sup>90</sup> This document supports my view that Svilova had a preference for women's stories and, while the ones I have analysed in this chapter were most likely provided for her, given the choice, she would have directed similar ones.



## Chapter 4:

# Foreign Lands and Depictions of Otherness

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on Svilova's foreign-themed films and depictions of otherness. The process of inclusion and exclusion has been central to Russian cinema from its outset – the very first Russian film, *Stenka Razin* (*Ponizovaya volnitsa*, Romashkov, 1908), furthered existing notions about Russia as different from the Orient. Building on themes in literature and theatre, cinema was merely the newest medium through which binaries about what Russianness meant could be negotiated. Svilova, then, was a successor to a number of Russian filmmakers whose work tapped into longstanding cultural processes that defined 'us' and 'them'. After 1917, Soviet culture continued to attempt to divide the world into binary categories – the insider and the outsider – in an effort to define Sovietness and set the parameters of nationhood. Yet, Svilova's films indicate that defining Sovietness was a difficult process. Throughout the Cold War, outsiders became insiders and 'us' became 'them'; consequently, classifying Sovietness required constant re-imagining. As Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie have argued, films do not simply represent or express the stable features of a national culture but are themselves the loci of debates about a nation's governing principle,

goals, heritage and history.<sup>1</sup> Svilova's foreign-themed films offer an exceptional vantage point from which to examine Soviet understandings and anxieties about what it meant to be Soviet in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The aim of this chapter is to argue that, during the Stalin era, Svilova's depictions of otherness are largely imperialist: communities and civilisations in the East are constructed as primitive, strange and different. However, the films also document a simultaneous eroding of difference, as Central Asian and Far Eastern countries are seen abandoning primordial production methods in favour of Western industrialisation. After Stalin's death, Svilova's scope of foreign-themed films notably widen, owing to Khrushchev's policy of cultural enlightenment (commonly referred to as the Thaw). While one can detect a certain cosmopolitan attitude in Svilova's work during this period – the depiction of an abroad that is exciting and alluring – under the umbrella term of 'foreign news', she also documents stories from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Poland, in these instances portraying a foreignness that to Soviet audiences was not necessarily different. In most cases, the definition and representation of foreignness are determined primarily by developments in international relations. Svilova's films capture the attempts of Khrushchev's administration to provide the masses with cultural enlightenment; in this respect, they form a crucial part of a political agenda, a balancing act that aims simultaneously to spread communism to the East and maintain peaceful coexistence with the West. As Julian Graffy has argued, the Thaw was above all a time of ambiguity, a period in which competition with the West was fuelled by fear of its economic achievements and apprehension about its potential influence on Soviet society.<sup>2</sup>

My study commences with an outline of some key theoretical issues. This is followed by an analysis of two of Svilova's films produced during the Stalin era, *Soviet Kazakhstan* (1942) and *Yangtze River* (1950). I provide an overview of the period of transition from the Stalin era to the Khrushchev era and discuss why this change was relevant to Svilova's depiction of foreignness. Focusing on the period from 1953 to 1956, I then analyse nine of Svilova's *News of the Day* episodes and her three *Foreign Newsreel* episodes. To determine which stories would feature in this chapter, I considered the country of origin and its mode of government, the subject of the story and any noticeable trends in the assembly of the footage. This chapter structure provides a framework for a discussion on the development from the Stalin era to the Khrushchev era, and takes into account Svilova's progression from one newsreel to the other.

## **Sovietness, otherness and cosmopolitanism**

The tensions of modernism between the polar regions of the Soviet Union, specifically the West's perception of the East as primitive, have already been discussed, most notably by Martin Stollery who has read a selection of European modernist films in terms of their construction of the non-Western world.<sup>3</sup> He argues that, while films such as *One Sixth of the World* and *Three Songs of Lenin* depict the Soviet Union as the spearhead of Western industry, they also contain deep-rooted questions and anxieties about the country's identity in relation to its Central Asian republics.<sup>4</sup> I argue that similar anxieties can be detected in a number of Svilova's independent films from the 1940s, namely *Soviet Kazakhstan* (1942), which makes clear that the successful continuation of the revolution is dependent upon the eradication of Eastern backwardness: in other words, the erosion of difference. This

message was extended beyond the Central Asian Soviet republics to the Soviet allies in the Far East.

Stollery's readings of Soviet imperialism are indebted to Edward Said's engagement with the relationship between the East and West. Orientalism, as Said defined it, is both a way of coming to terms with the Orient through the Orient's special place in European Western experience and a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinctions between the Orient and the Occident.<sup>5</sup> By offering a rich panorama of the ways in which Orientalist texts constitute the East as a racial, cultural, political and geographical unity, Said's analysis demonstrates that what is at stake in the depiction of otherness is the West's desire to set boundaries for itself as a self-sustaining autonomous state. He illustrates the dialectic of Self and Other that is at play in Orientalist discourse by continually alluding to the establishment of a binary opposition between the Orient and Occident. Said's observations can be applied productively to Svilova's imperialist representations of Eastern regions during the Stalin era. During this period, Svilova depicts Central Asia and the Far East as passive and conquerable, territories whose progress and value are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, the Soviet Union. Films such as *Soviet Kazakhstan* and *Yangtze River* (1950) communicate a system of power and subordination organised around Moscow (the Soviet 'West') as the imperial centre and the East as the dominated periphery.

After the Stalin era, when the anxieties of the East are on the most part substituted in Svilova's films for a positive engagement with difference and the nuances of Central Asia and the Far East are celebrated rather than portrayed as obstacles, is best understood in a framework of cosmopolitanism. Svilova no longer constructs the

East/West paradigm according to concerns about industrialisation and the general development and prestige of the Soviet Union – anxieties that had shaped her handling of the East until Stalin’s death in 1953 – instead highlighting Asian beauty, art and cultural practices. Mica Nava has laid useful groundwork in terms of theorising Western curiosity in Eastern traditions. While Said understood this curiosity as a Western attempt to exoticise otherness, Nava argues against tendencies to condemn Western fascination with difference and offers a new approach, defining it instead as a sign of attraction toward and identification with otherness.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, Svilova’s films of the mid-1950s can be seen to articulate a general loosening of Soviet national identification to accommodate the traits of the Central Asian republics, regions that were gradually accepted into the Soviet empire not only for their dedication to socialism but also for their own idiosyncrasies. Broadening the characteristics of Soviet identity allowed audiences to appreciate the nuances of their culture, which in turn encouraged patriotism and dedication to the building of the socialist empire. Svilova presents Kazakh and Tajik women as role models in much the same way as she did their Western Soviet counterparts, though this time she focuses on the women’s aesthetic beauty rather than their industrious nature or artistic talents. Nevertheless, the relationship between the female spectator and the feminine ideal remains centred on looks of admiration, reverence and other positive resonances. These looks relate closely to what Nava defines as ‘visceral cosmopolitanism’, the audience’s identification with a subject on an emotional level.<sup>7</sup> Svilova’s openness to Asian culture is extended to China where, despite the Sovietisation of its industry, economy and infrastructure, Svilova finds moments to highlight traditional Chinese customs.



Nava's study traces the marginal status of cosmopolitanism in English cultural history, focusing on the city of London in the twentieth century. According to Nava, Gordon Selfridge's department store 'promoted social exchange' and the 'transnational and cultural importance of commerce',<sup>8</sup> taking a cosmopolitan intellectual stance of openness toward diversity.<sup>9</sup> Selfridge expressed the opinion that the cosmopolite was a citizen of the world, free from national limitations and prejudices. Incidentally, Russia was one of the nations celebrated by Selfridge for its difference; in 1911 he described the tour of the Imperial Russian Ballet as bringing 'a wealth of romance' to London.<sup>10</sup> In response to the troop's cultural impact, Selfridges marketed its tango gowns – another cultural import – as inspired by the visual spectacle of the Russian ballet. The conscious selling of otherness suggests that Selfridge's 'anti-insular transnational and utopian vision, in which cultural difference was promoted, appreciated and even desired', was partly driven by, or at least associated with, commercial considerations. His business plan was centred on attracting customers from all countries of the world, a strategy whose logic asserted that an all-inclusive customer base maximised profits.

Likewise, the cosmopolitanism detected in Svilova's films of the mid-1950s came as part of an agenda. The countries depicted were not arbitrary subjects of film journalism but held significant political value to the Central Committee. Moreover, the inclusion of countries that were not necessarily foreign to the Soviet population alludes to an imagined foreignness: audiences were encouraged to collude in the fantasy of difference by acknowledging other regions in Eastern Europe as distant lands and allowing themselves to believe that the revolution was having a greater and far-reaching global impact than it perhaps was. Yet, Svilova's perception of Eastern Europe as a distant land – what Anne Gorsuch describes as a type of 'Soviet abroad'

– is an intentional contradiction, a means of drawing attention to the region’s shared socialist identity.<sup>11</sup> As Tim Bergfelder has illustrated in his analysis of *The Edge of Heaven* (2007) – a film whose title literally translates from German as ‘On the Other Side’ – sometimes the other side is absent, which articulates ‘an ongoing contestation of competing ethical and emotional attitudes toward the Other in a wider global arena’.<sup>12</sup> Rather than document foreignness, often Svilova merely takes the already familiar and makes it more familiar, a process that challenges our understanding of foreignness and encourages further investigation of its semantic scope.

## Foreign stories in the Stalin era

In her career as an independent director, Svilova starts directing foreign stories in 1942 and the output continues steadily until Stalin’s death in 1953. Fifteen episodes of *News of the Day* and five separate documentaries contain between them twenty-nine individual foreign stories from twelve different countries, two of which are non-European.<sup>13</sup> This section focuses on two films: the first, produced in 1942, documents Kazakhstan and the second, produced in 1950, documents China. Using an array of editing strategies, Svilova communicates the Central Committee’s stance on Central Asia and the Far East, employing a visual language to link this viewpoint to developments in foreign policy. These stories represent, in Gorsuch’s words, a ‘ritual of reassurance’: they offer a means of producing socialist-minded citizens focused internally on the advantages of the Soviet system.<sup>14</sup> In the official Stalinist imagination, the East is presented as a younger and less advanced version of the Soviet self, an imagining that was used to legitimise Soviet domination over the socialist periphery.

*Soviet Kazakhstan* (1942)

Svilova directs *Soviet Kazakhstan* while the Soviet film industry is based in Alma-Ata. The film's objective is to educate and involve Kazakhstan in communist ideology and testifies to the successful incorporation of Central Asia into the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan had only become a union republic in 1936, and thus the film provides the opportunity to share with Western Soviet audiences signs of progress, most evident in changes to the lives of Kazakh women. By 1942 the Central Committee had claimed victory of 'liberating' Central Asian women.<sup>15</sup> Initiatives such as setting quotas that granted women one third of posts in government and party institutions ensured that they filled public roles.<sup>16</sup> Gender offered no protection for women from the hardships of war but it did contribute to the aim of cinema as tool of legitimisation by drawing on the gendered imagery that had evolved by the end of the 1930s and reinforcing it. Regardless of whether the Central Committee believed its policies had emancipated Muslim women, its rhetoric left no doubt as to the service of humanity it had provided: 'It required the enormous efforts of the Party ... to raise up the formerly degraded and enslaved women of the East, to help her to throw off the chador, the chachvan and the parandzha,' claimed an article in *Red Archive*.<sup>17</sup> Any success in the integration of Kazakhstan as a Soviet republic was not necessarily symptomatic of Committee efforts but, as J. Otto Pohl argues, was more likely a result of the vast number of Soviet exiles deported to Kazakhstan in the late 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>18</sup>

Svilova focuses sections of the film on the changing role of Kazakh women. The film opens with a mid-shot of a woman driving a tractor. Medium close-ups capture her facial features, shot from a handheld camera positioned on the back of the vehicle. The close-ups do not identify the woman as Other: in her headscarf and protective

eyewear, both reminiscent of traditional Western agricultural attire, there is a distinct lack of difference on display. Four slim and muscular women work behind the tractor using various agricultural tools. Close-up shots of the four women's hands are juxtaposed with shots of the tractor's mechanisms, implying the successful integration of technology into traditional workplaces. 'The struggle for white gold' appears as an intertitle to introduce a wide-angle shot of women in white headscarves entering a field and hoeing the land. As the women move gradually from the foreground to the background, each one is represented by the white dot of her headscarf. While ethnographic strategies become more apparent in the later part of Svilova's career, for now, *Soviet Kazakhstan* can be most readily interpreted as a text that reflects the changing Soviet identity. The ethnoscape – the landscape of people who constitute the shifting world at a specific moment – anticipates the continued growth of the Soviet empire, and the fact that these images were first consumed at the height of World War II in some respects serves to justify the growth: communism needed all the soldiers it could enlist to fight the fascist enemy.

The widening of Soviet borders to include Central Asia implied to audiences steps of grand progress. Female audiences would have observed with intrigue as a life they recognised was played out in a distant land. More importantly, they would have been in a position to identify with the subject of their look. As I observed in Chapter Three, Svilova uses the nature of women's work as a basis for drawing necessary comparisons and differences. Here, the physicality of the Kazakh women's occupation, which demands the body's protection, does not result in the fusion of the male worker and the female but allows for a connection between Western audiences and Eastern workers. By focusing on the disguised 'traktoristka', Svilova softens ethnic difference between the Soviet East and West. Difference is hidden

behind agricultural clothing on a literal level and Sovietness on a more abstract level, as ultimately it is the Sovietisation of agricultural methods – the protective clothing – that renders the ethnic distinction imperceptible to audiences.

Svilova's emphasis on the Kazakh woman on the tractor is central to this argument. In the early 1930s, Stalin recruited women to work in agriculture. This was less a mirror to reflect the reality of women's working lives in the countryside than a symbol of Soviet achievements and ambitions. The drive acted as a metaphor for Soviet commitment to both women's emancipation and economic progress. In the late 1930s the campaign intensified to ensure that women could replace male agricultural workers in the event of war. By this time the *traktoristka* had become an icon and was glorified in popular culture, particularly in the cinema where Ivan Pyriev's film, *Tractor Drivers* (*Traktoristy*, 1939), was a huge success.<sup>19</sup> Svilova taps into this rhetoric and the opinions of Stalin himself who lauded the work of female tractor drivers. Medal ceremonies were a recurrent feature of this period and women were inundated with rewards for their achievements on the farms. By 1942 female drivers accounted for forty-five per cent of the tractor workforce, a rise from just four per cent in 1940.<sup>20</sup>

Svilova also taps into modernist rhetoric about women and technology. Kay Armatage has drawn attention to the gendered role of the motor vehicle in her analysis of *The Trail of the Arrow* (1920). This film was directed by Nell Shipman, one of the most prolific women filmmakers in early Hollywood. Armatage argues that the car, like many of the new technologies of modernity, was coded as masculine as soon as it was invented; consequently, 'women have continually been characterised as stereotypically incompetent interlopers in this man's world.'<sup>21</sup> Yet, Shipman's

narrative – she and a friend accept a challenge to drive along a dangerous track through the Mojave Desert – is optimistic about the future for women in the modern world, as are the intertitles that comment on the suffragist movement. At the time of the film’s production, Shipman said: ‘I have proven that woman is on par with man in driving a car, as she is in every other walk of life.’<sup>22</sup> Writing on women drivers in Hollywood narratives, Virginia Scharff suggests that the automobile provided a symbolic vehicle of women’s autonomy,<sup>23</sup> embodied also by the use of the car by suffragists during their campaigns. ‘Driving, touring, serving, repairing: these activities helped to redefine the parameters of femininity and the image of ideal womanhood.’<sup>24</sup> While Essex, the car company that commissioned *The Trail of the Arrow*, and the Central Committee intended to capitalise on women’s spending power and legitimise the double burden respectively, the female driver was for Shipman and, I argue, Svilova a symbol of ‘women’s geographical, political and personal freedom’.<sup>25</sup> Hollywood and Soviet rhetoric, then, characterised robust athleticism, competence and efficiency as the traits of the new woman. Yet, despite the power afforded to the female tractor driver in Svilova’s montage – shot from low angles in open fields, she can be interpreted as an heir to the land – *Soviet Kazakhstan* is not the most explicit tribute to Soviet womanhood in Svilova’s body of work. The driver’s headscarf and protective eyewear de-feminise her facial features and shed the scene of the exoticism prevalent in Svilova’s later Eastern-based narratives.

As my analysis in Chapter Three concluded, costume and dress are for Svilova vital building blocks in the generation of visual language. In fact, the use of costume as a semiotic indicator was a crucial component in the ideological function of Soviet cinema. In her analysis of *Happiness* (*Schast’e*, Medvedkin, 1935), Emma Widdis argues that the transformation of the main character, Khmyr, from peasant to ‘Soviet

man' is reflected in his dress.<sup>26</sup> He sheds his ragged attire of felt shoes and smock and replaces them with an outfit bought in a city department store – he effectively purchases the signs of Sovietness as an act of patriotism. In this instance, as in the traktoristka in *Soviet Kazakhstan*, clothes carry meaning; Sovietness is encoded in the attire of the on-screen heroes and heroines. The focus on the Western garments of the tractor driver suggests that, for Svilova, they are a symbol of belonging. She calls on the binary distinctions of Soviet and un-Soviet dress as a means of articulating a comprehensive depiction of Soviet identity. It is important to note that the female audience members involved in agricultural labour would have been aware that the idyllic, carefree representation of tractor driving in *Soviet Kazakhstan* was inaccurate. Working in agriculture was gruelling work, particularly for female tractor drivers who not only endured long hours and poor working conditions but, as Widdis argues, had to deal with prejudice originating from gendered notions of women's social roles.<sup>27</sup> Women working in 'masculine' positions were met with hostility from both male colleagues and the female colleagues employed to undertake 'women's' work. However, this is not to suggest that *Soviet Kazakhstan* would have been dismissed by female audiences. Louis Menashe argues that peasants enjoyed seeing idealised versions of themselves.<sup>28</sup> Svilova projects a utopia incongruent with reality, a Marxist paradise the viewer was encouraged to perceive as a glimpse into the future Soviet Union. Thus, audiences would not likely have viewed the film's romanticism as an attempt to mask the detrimental influence of forced collectivisation, which in Kazakhstan alone led to the loss of millions of lives.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond the millions who died from starvation, changes to Kazakh women's roles were accompanied by destructive economic lifestyle transformations, and the imposition of Soviet hegemony and norms were perceived as alien and incompatible

with Muslim traditions.<sup>30</sup> The diegesis Svilova constructs in *Soviet Kazakhstan* shrouds these realities, instead connoting an overwhelming sense of freedom, allegorised by the vast, sprawling fields in which the tractor driver works. The expanse reflects the predominant trope of ‘rescue’ that Ella Shohat identifies in colonial discourse and that forms the crucial site of the battle over representation.<sup>31</sup> The Western Soviet empire imaginary metaphorically renders the East a feminine, colonised land saved from her environmental disorder. Svilova appears to imply that the future of Kazakhstan is determined not simply on domination but on the exercise of hegemony and the development of consent. Although the tractor driver had been successfully Westernised, the Kazakh women who emerge in later shots to work alongside her with manual tools remind audiences that the task of modernisation is not complete. As the Other, it is vital for Kazakhstan to recognise the validity of Western knowledge and continue to abide by its implementation. That hegemony, which asserts Kazakhstan’s willingness to be governed, is conducive to a relational mode of power that can respond flexibly, not just repressively, to unrest or resistance.

Five years later, Svilova directs a second story from Kazakhstan as part of *News of the Day no.12* (1947). The story documents three women working in the tapestry industry in Alma-Ata. Reflecting the veiled women in Vertov and Svilova’s *Three Songs of Lenin*, the Kazakh women, wearing traditional Kazakh clothing and jewellery, are presented by Svilova as the strangely different and elusive Other. She gives this impression not by focusing on the women’s Eastern dress but also by often only allowing the viewer to observe the women through the gaps between the threads of hanging cotton. These shots are juxtaposed with shots of finished tapestries placed around a workshop. Visitors, mostly of a Central Asian ethnicity, examine the artwork in the



foreground while, in the background, a large tapestry pinned to the wall depicts Stalin leading a Central Asian army into battle. Like the traktoristka in *Soviet Kazakhstan*, the image encapsulates the conquering of the region and its renaissance as a union republic. Owing to Stalin's sphere of influence and leadership qualities, Svilova's film implies that the complete eradication of difference between East and West was not necessary in order to find a role in the socialist revolution for the primitive and elusive Other.

#### *Yangtze River* (1950)

The second of Svilova's documentaries shot outside the Soviet Union is *Yangtze River*. The context of the budding Sino-Soviet relationship is vital in the process of decoding the film's representation of China and Chinese people. Mao Zedong and a delegation had arrived in the Soviet Union in December 1949 to negotiate a Sino-Soviet alliance treaty, which was finally signed on 14 February, 1950, and what became the stimulus for a decade-long partnership.<sup>32</sup> Fitting into the Soviet discourse of the post-war era, *Yangtze River* sets a clear hierarchy: the Soviet Union is the kindly elder brother guiding his less-developed sibling, or the caring mother cultivating her young child. As Mary Louise Pratt has argued, colonial powers sought to secure their innocence in the same moment as they asserted their hegemony.<sup>33</sup> Soviet influence in China can be interpreted in Svilova's film as a necessary consequence of the liberation and rebuilding process. The cinematic language she employs to create meaning is reliant on similar juxtapositions of conflict I observed in her atrocity films and women's stories. In the same way that Khrushchev would go on to offer simple solutions to complex foreign policy issues and express them in the language of the Bolshevik worker, Svilova constructs motifs and symbols working-class Soviet citizens could readily interpret. *Yangtze River* commences with a high-angle aeroplane

montage capturing the winding river. The wing of the aeroplane is evident in a number of the shots, which suggests that Svilova consciously chose the method of filming to be physically present on-screen. Judith Mayne understands the motivation behind this technique as a way to build a relationship between the spectator and the means by which the images are perceived.<sup>34</sup> The audience sees the landscape through the technology that is not only facilitating the extreme high-angle shot but also providing movement. This series of shots, and the river sequence to follow, are reminiscent of the 'phantom ride' prevalent in cinema at the turn of the twentieth century. Also referred to as 'panoramas', a phantom ride connotes a film that is shot by a moving camera, specifically one in motion on a vehicle.<sup>35</sup> These moving camera shots allow a broader view of the landscape and the movement seems to carry the audience into the image, realising what Charles Musser has called the 'spectator as passenger convention'.<sup>36</sup> Rather than simply reproducing the view, the sequence recreates the actual penetration of space that travel involves. The phantom ride in *Yangtze River* continues on water where, captured from the bow of a slow-moving boat, the viewer is transported along the river's surface, passing dark, imposing mountains on both banks.

The sequence is interrupted by a cut to a shot from another part of the boat's journey; the boat is moving faster and the river is teeming with rocks and foliage. The non-continuous editing reinforces *Yangtze River*'s early film aesthetic, evoking images from a number of cinema's earliest travel films; for example, *The Haverstraw Tunnel* (American Mutoscope Company, 1897), *Leeds – Views from a Moving Tram* (Mitchell and Kenyon, 1903) and *Trip Down Market Street before the Fire* (Miles Brothers, 1906), all of which are assembled non-continuously to provide added spectacle. Taking audiences unexpectedly to another part of a journey augmented for

them the thrill of Tom Gunning's 'cinema of attractions', the unpredictability of the instant stimulating their senses.<sup>37</sup> In terms of spectator positioning, Svilova's use of the phantom ride is less evocative of early film. In 1950 audiences would have no longer been pleasantly shocked by the discontinuous presentation of time, nor would the novelty of two-dimensional moving imagery encouraged any sensory reaction. However, the essence of the phantom ride – relying on codes of monstration rather than narration – was still very much relevant to Svilova's audiences. The travelling camera provides a view of the landscape unrivalled by alternative cinematographic techniques, allowing her audience to observe, perhaps for the first time, the Yangtze River and surrounding areas.

Conflict is not only elicited through non-continuous editing but also through the juxtaposition of shots captured from different camera positions on the boat. Selecting shots from a camera positioned on the stern, the movement of the water is different to the cutting motion in the previous shots. A camera positioned on the port side captures the passing bank. The terrain appears harsh, cold and uninhabitable. Returning to the shooting location on the bow, the horizon portends civilisation: the silhouettes of buildings emerge on the banks in the distance while the river itself begins to decrease in width and volume. Keeping with a non-linear structure, Svilova returns the viewer to a previous, wider section of the river. Shots captured from the bow prompt further conflict in the water's movement: not only is the water trailing rather than cutting but the pace of the current is evidently faster. Despite the tempo, there is an overwhelming calmness to the journey. A tracking shot along the right-hand bank depicts an assemblage of stone monuments, suggesting that for its inhabitants the region is sacred territory.

Once the camera is positioned on land, the monuments become a temporary focus of the narrative. A wide-angle shot captures one of the monument's interior. Columns line the background of the shot and intersect with the other sides of the building to create an open roof. Local inhabitants dressed in robes sweep the stone floor. The dedication to maintain the monuments, and the significance they hold to the local community, affirms the importance of spirituality to China and Chinese people. This is relevant because it was socialism's idealistic vision of shared burdens and brotherhood that held a deeply spiritual attraction to Mao.<sup>38</sup> The Soviet vision of solidarity in the face of capitalist adversity assumed a transcendent power compatible with Eastern traditions. Svilova leaves behind the region's historical identity to document a bustling marketplace. A mid-shot depicts a smartly dressed man at a hat stall. His Caucasian ethnicity indicates that he is a tourist or businessman. With his back to the camera, he tries on a hat and poses briefly for the female stall owner. A jump cut is employed to another mid-shot of the man trying on a second hat. The stall owner playfully laughs, perhaps suggesting that the hat does not suit him. Returning to the bow of the boat, an underexposed panning shot of the misty river lends the location a peaceful quality. Next, Svilova juxtaposes shots from two modes of transport. A high-angle aeroplane shot interrupts the pan to carry the camera and the audience along the river's meandering path. Revisiting the boat's stern, the camera tilts down to capture the contours of the water's surface, before the low-flying aeroplane facilitates close-up shots of the tributaries and streams branching out from the main river. The final shot in the sequence is captured from the bow of the boat. Drifting slowly, the boat leaves a trail of minor ripples, providing a tranquil conclusion to what was a vigorous and dynamic montage. The montage not only allows Svilova to reinforce the travel theme of the film and prolong the phantom ride, it fulfils a structural purpose: the time spent watching the montage doubles in

the mind of the viewer as time spent travelling. These sequences are essential in providing a means of ‘transporting’ the audience to the following sight on the tour.

Svilova’s next sequence invites the viewer to step ashore and observe the idiosyncrasies of local life. It begins in a crop field where workers can be vaguely identified moving among the vegetation. It is not unusual for Svilova to focus on this location, considering its pertinence to the sizeable Soviet workforce dispersed across various rural occupations. Audiences can recognise the workers’ hats as the ones seen earlier in the marketplace. The hats, then, provide a recurring motif, a symbol to emphasise the self-sufficient nature of this simple civilisation’s infrastructure. A medium close-up shot captures an elderly worker tying up wheat, a proud smile resonates from under the brim of his hat. Returning to the river – the focus of the film and the nucleus of the region’s ecosystem – wide-angle shots from the bow of the boat during a misty period of the journey provide the landscape with a soothing ambiance. The river and mountains are barely detectable through the smog. A series of small boats scattered across the horizon row away from the camera into the distance; fishing nets are thrown overboard. Close-up shots depict individual fisherman pulling their nets back into their boats and emptying the fish into buckets. A mid-shot captures a fisherman handing a large bucket of fish to a worker onshore, presumably to prepare for sale. Although one might expect fish to be the cornerstone of any river society’s economy, such a literal handing over of produce from one worker to the next connotes the image of a civilisation-wide production line. Svilova’s use of fish as an icon for economic stability reinforces the rhetoric of man’s superiority over nature: he is the strongest species, whose domination of all others is his entitlement.

This interpretation is supported by the next and final shot of the sequence. Captured from the stern of the boat in wide-angle, the bank is bustling with activity as various produce is transported to shore and collected by labourers working in the next stage of production. What is most significant in this scene is that the people work seemingly without ownership of the produce, as if gathering it to offer to a higher power: what Soviet audiences might have equated to collectivisation. Despite this reading, China's agricultural economy was yet to employ Soviet methods, owing to Stalin's insistence that China implement a gradual programme of socialism.

Consequently, Liu Shaoqi, the Secretary of China's Central Committee, and Zhang Wentian, an advisor to Mao, formulated a plan that allowed rural workers to retain their land and profit.<sup>39</sup> This plan was followed until 1952 when a full programme of collectivisation was implemented. Svilova's allusion to collectivisation, therefore, was not misleading; it merely pre-empted an adoption of Soviet methods that both Stalin and Mao agreed to be mutually beneficial. Svilova appears to act upon the audience's ability to recognise certain signs of collectivisation without indefinitely confirming or denying its presence. The final sequence of *Yangtze River* begins with the live sound of a steamboat's horn. The river is juxtaposed with wide-angle shots of the marketplace and dockyard. Any activity onshore is neutralised by the calm water. A camera placed on the surface of the river, likely held by a camera operator seated in a low-lying vessel, allows the audience to appreciate the beauty of the sun's reflection. For the last time, Svilova selects shots of a monument, on this occasion with a focus on the dragon sculpture situated at its entrance. Surrounded by foliage and bathed in sunlight, the sculpture and monument complement each other's artistic and architectural craftsmanship.

The penultimate shot of the film is a wide-angle captured from the dock of the river. A ferry arrives with a cargo of vehicles. The voiceover informs the viewer that the vehicles are a gift from the Molotov automobile factory, connoting China as a beneficiary of the Soviet Union. This reading is confirmed by the film's closing shots. From the stern of a moving boat, which is itself adorned with a Soviet flag, the camera captures a number of other boats following behind in convoy. In Marxist terms, the conflict between the thesis, the Soviet flag, and the antithesis, the following boats, bolsters *Yangtze River's* adherence to, and reinforcement of, the Soviet discourse about the Far East that made claims for China's Sovietisation, even though this transformation had not yet taken place. Nevertheless, the impression that Svilova gives, that China had at the very least attained a Soviet consciousness and become an integral part of the empire's plans, was an accurate reflection of the countries' relationship at the time of the film's production. As Xiaojia Hou argues, to maintain the pretext of the Soviet Union's guiding of less-developed countries, socialist discourse proclaimed sameness.<sup>40</sup> According to the official ideology, people of all nationalities were equal. Svilova's acknowledgement of China's Sovietisation is also consistent with Edward Said's conclusions about the nineteenth-century colonial rhetoric that sought to maintain difference between white colonisers and the non-white subjects. Although there is a hierarchy of power – the film establishes the Soviet Union as the master and documents the recruiting of China as its apprentice – the suggestion is that any unbalance in power is only temporary until China matures.

Notwithstanding suggestions that China will be a valuable ally once it matures, Soviet perceptions about the current usefulness of the Far East are clear. The myth of the 'friendship of peoples' masked repression, inequality and the development of quasi-colonial relationships between the Soviet Union and China.<sup>41</sup> *Yangtze River* is more an

example of how, despite proclaiming similarity, tensions in Soviet attitudes toward difference shapes the way China is represented. Rather than celebrate otherness, Svilova holds it as inferior. Dialecticism is not only at the heart of Svilova's editing structure but the rhetoric of *Yangtze River* itself is also binary in nature: China is seen as a weaker racial Other to the Soviet Union, legitimising European dominance by overdetermining the idea of White superiority. Svilova's aim for *Yangtze River* is likely to highlight for audiences the distance between the Soviet Union's advanced society and China's primordial civilisation, rendering Soviet willingness to guide China a philanthropic gesture, itself a means of pleading innocence while in reality reasserting its authority. Beyond legitimising Stalin's decision to adopt China as an ally, Svilova frames the film as ultimately self-congratulatory, designed to encourage in Soviet audiences a sense of pride in their country's charitable nature.

## **A period of transition**

In the aftermath of Stalin's death, the Central Committee inherited the difficult task of fulfilling its commitment to re-image the Soviet Union as a modern, cosmopolitan nation. Stalin's sudden absence, whose authority had substituted for real political legitimacy, forced his successors to determine which aspects of his regime should be preserved and which should be discarded. Donald Filtzer suggests that cautious steps toward de-Stalinisation were made almost immediately after Stalin's death.<sup>42</sup> Svilova's films of the 1953 to 1956 period capture the move away from Stalinist rhetoric and document the tentative efforts made at rapprochement with the Western world. Vladislav Zubok argues that priority for the new foreign policy was divided between the bolstering of communist unity and economic reform: associations were developed with countries that could facilitate the Soviet Union's continued expansion



as a global superpower.<sup>43</sup> Although these steps were self-serving, the Central Committee acknowledged that Stalinism had deprived Soviet citizens of much-needed cultural exposure. Consequently, in 1955, foreign tourism – previously banned under Stalin – was allowed and a near total ban on foreign travel for Soviet citizens overturned.<sup>44</sup> As part of its need to refresh the image of the Soviet Union on an international and domestic basis, the Central Committee returned to the Bolshevik diplomacy of the 1920s, viewing trade deals with the West as the way to obtain vital investments and technologies and acquire the support of conglomerates in improving political relations.<sup>45</sup> Other preferred strategies of the new foreign policy included state visits and the promotion of disarmament,<sup>46</sup> both of which were documented by Svilova. The new foreign policy adopted after Stalin's death should not be read simply as the struggle between the friends and foes of his legacy; it was based much more on the external and domestic situation inherited by his successors, 'who agreed that the Soviet state was in crisis ... this realisation came to them within weeks of Stalin's death and was the cement holding together their temporary alliance.'<sup>47</sup>

## Foreign stories: 1953-1956

The Central Committee's move toward a more open foreign policy is reflected in Svilova's films in two main ways: first, there is a wider scope of foreign stories in her *News of the Day* episodes and, second, she directs episodes of *Foreign Newsreel* in 1956.<sup>48</sup> The increase from two non-European stories in the pre-1953 period of Svilova's career to seven by 1956 is the most important statistic because it mirrors the broadening nature of Khrushchev's foreign policy. Analysing a number of the stories broadcast between Stalin's death and Svilova's semi-retirement, the remainder of my chapter makes specific connections between issues of representation and the

Soviet Union's position in the field of global politics. My aim is to explore how the cosmopolitan image Svilova perpetuates might have been received by Soviet audiences and to suggest what political benefits her progressive depiction of otherness reaped. This depiction draws attention to the more ambiguously utopian and perhaps even emancipatory formulations of the Central Committee's adopted cosmopolitan outlook. Moving away from the Orientalism of the Stalin era, during which Svilova underlines the Soviet Union's management and domination of the Other, and where her interest in difference is largely voyeuristic, particularly in her collaborative films with Vertov, after Stalin's death, her foreign-themed films display a stance of openness toward diversity. In this respect, Svilova's representation of the Far East and Central Asia reflects what Mica Nava has described as a cosmopolitanism that is part of modern consciousness, part of the structure of feeling associated with 'modernity'; that is to say, with a mood and historical moment that highlighted the fluidity and excitement of modern metropolitan life and was characterised by a readiness to embrace the new.<sup>49</sup> Svilova's adoption of a cosmopolitan set of attitudes within a modernist frame signals the Central Committee's countercultural revolt against the insular dogma of Stalinism and attempts to overturn what were 'traditional' cultural forms and regimes of belief.<sup>50</sup>

#### *News of the Day* (1954-56)

*News of the Day no.46* (1954) includes a story from Danzig Airport that documents the arrival of Polish sailors having been released from captivity in Taiwan; their merchant ship, *President Gottwald*, had been seized by the Taiwanese Navy on 13 May, 1954.<sup>51</sup>

This story was not only relevant to Soviet audiences because Poland was then part of the Eastern bloc, it was exhibited by Svilova to cast a negative light on Taiwan, a country whose stubbornly anti-communist stance had resulted in the 1954 Taiwanese

Strait Crisis, one of its many territorial disputes with China. A handheld camera tracks a woman running toward a descending aeroplane and weeping into her handkerchief. The aeroplane lands and its door opens; the fishermen raise their fists in a gesture of victory as they walk down the aeroplane's steps in single file. A large crowd has joined the woman on the runway to celebrate the fishermen's safe return. A slow pan captures one of the fishermen jumping over the last few steps into the arms of a waiting woman, presumably his wife. Svilova uses conflict in movement as a means of energising a montage of the various reunions. One couple runs horizontally across the shot toward each other, while another runs vertically. Men and women hold each other in long, heartfelt embraces; there are scenes of both laughter and tears. The final shot does not depict a husband and wife reuniting but focuses on an elderly gentleman kissing a man, presumably his son, on the cheeks and using all of his strength to lift him into the air. This shot is conspicuous in the sequence because conflict is aroused as much by the generation gap between the father and son as by the movement within the shot. Svilova reminds audiences that acts of terrorism do not only disturb the institution of marriage but affect whole family units. The visual impact of the sequence lies in the sentiments of nostalgia encouraged in the Soviet people by the scenes of reunification. Audiences would likely have related the images to their own experiences at the end of World War II when surviving soldiers and displaced family members returned home.

Taiwan's unfavourable representation aimed to underpin its role as the enemy, a stance reinforced the following year by *News of the Day no.45* (1955) in which Svilova documents reunions between the crew members of the *Tuapse*, a Soviet tanker, and their families at a Moscow airport after their release from Taiwanese captivity.<sup>52</sup> It is important to note that these were both genuine news stories, recording recent events

for public education, not stories that were merely described as news despite holding no temporal significance. The two Taiwanese stories confirm, first, how crucial the Far East had become as a venue for a global power struggle, due largely to China's rapid economic growth, and, second, that Mao's widening authority was such that, by the mid-1950s, China no longer had to feature on-screen for its influence to penetrate Svilova's frame. Although the Far East was a location for a power struggle from as early as the nineteenth century, China's development as a pluto-communist state shifted the balance of power; consequently, hope was given to Marxist theories about the inevitability of socialism. When Svilova does feature China on-screen, the condescending depiction illustrated in earlier films such as *Yangtze River* is substituted for an acknowledgement of the country's potential. As Chen Jian argues, these changing representations reflected the Central Committee's awareness that any imagery alluding to China's subordination to the Soviet Union would have been met by China's political elite with disfavour.<sup>53</sup>

Svilova directs three stories from China during this period: the construction of the Trans-Mongolian railway in *News of the Day no.2* (1955), afforestation in *News of the Day no.39* (1955) and the construction of a cement works near Datong in *News of the Day no.1* (1956). These stories collectively depict China as a country committed to progress. Capturing the construction of the Trans-Mongolian railway – a physical connection between China and the Soviet Union – served to represent burgeoning trade links and the exchange of labour forces. Svilova commences the sequence with a conflictual juxtaposition, as high-angle landscape shots of the Gobi desert are contrasted with low-angle wide shots of cattle carrying cargo across the sand. Construction work is depicted in an underexposed mid-shot; a crane transports heavy materials across the desert. Shot from a camera at eye level, one of the cranes

lowers a section of railway line to the ground. Workers attempt to steady it as it approaches their heads from above and carefully guide it to the ground. The audience then views this process from the opposite angle: a camera is placed on top of the section of line as it is lowered to the ground. Reshowing the action from a second camera angle not only represents one of the strongest examples of conflict in Svilova's films but also evokes the aesthetic of early cinema that forms part of *Yangtze River*. Repeating the action, or constructing a 'temporal overlap', as Charles Musser describes it in his analysis of Edwin S. Porter's *Life of an American Fireman* (1903), is evidence, he argues, of early filmmakers' attempts to come to terms with cinematic editing.<sup>54</sup> It establishes spatial, temporal and narrative relationships, and, while a kind of continuity, is radically different from the continuity associated with classical cinema.<sup>55</sup>

André Gaudreault defines Porter's employment of the repeated shot in *Life of an American Fireman* as a means to 'resolve problems of spatial continuity'.<sup>56</sup> This applies to Svilova in that the technique allows her to overcome any logistical shortfalls imposed on the cameramen shooting the scene and permits audiences the opportunity to view the intricate nature of the construction work from both angles. However, the fact that she opts to repeat the same action rather than select shots from a different action is vital in understanding the objective of the story. Svilova's temporal overlap breaks the fluidity of the continuity pattern established thus far in the sequence and obscures it. In doing so, she reminds the viewer of film's synthetic origins, supporting Noël Burch's argument that temporal overlapping was a means of keeping the audience placed firmly in front of the screen and preventing their escape to an imaginary world.<sup>57</sup> When one perceives the newsreels as vehicles of political rhetoric, it is logical that Svilova would incorporate techniques to hold the viewer's

attention. It was crucial audiences did not overlook the ideological messages and, in this instance, remain unaware of the efforts being made to link Soviet and Chinese industry. After the construction sequence, a train emerges from the distance and passes a camera positioned at the side of the railway line; a wide-angle shot depicting the train disappearing into the distance concludes the story. The juxtaposition of these two closing shots are perhaps Svilova's way of reaffirming to audiences the central principle of the story: while the railway acts as a physical connection between China and the Soviet Union, more importantly, the train represents the exchange of products and labour – tangible benefits of the Sino-Soviet relationship and further evidence for the unifying nature of socialism.

Svilova depicts the Datong cement works in similar terms. A wide-angle pan of machinery is followed by a stationary wide-angle shot of a large building. Inside, a mid-shot captures two men looking at the building plans. On the construction site the foreman instructs a worker in his task. Following a montage of wide-angle shots, the camera pans along the horizon in low-angle, depicting workers walking across the scaffolding silhouetted against the grey sky. Thus, the peaceful, simple civilisation portrayed in *Yangtze River* has been replaced on the most part by landscapes of heavy industry. The themes of progress and unity evident in Svilova's stories from China, particularly those set out in the Trans-Mongolian Railway sequence, were supported by stories shot inside the Soviet Union. Svilova did not portray foreign lands in isolation but sought to correlate them with domestic events. *News of the Day No.60* (1955), for example, contains a story depicting the arrival of a Russian delegation at a Kuznetsk steelworks; Chinese workers give the delegation a tour of the factory. Svilova juxtaposes these shots with Russian and Chinese people socialising over day-to-day activities, such as cooking and reading magazines. The future of communism,

Svilova's montage suggests, relies upon transnational unity inside and outside the workplace. Initiatives to send more Chinese workers to the Soviet Union quietly ceased in the late 1950s as all forms of cooperation between the two countries gradually came to a halt.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to China, Svilova's recurring depiction of India during this period reflects the importance Khrushchev assigned to securing and cementing geographical alliances in the East. In December 1953, the Soviet Union signed a five-year trade agreement with India that negotiated the exchange of Soviet machinery and industrial equipment for traditional Indian products. The signing of the agreement coincided with Vice President Richard Nixon's visit to New Delhi, underlining Indian criticism of the United States' involvement with Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> Jerome Conley argues that the fostering of Indo-Soviet relations was in fact founded on shared concern for the ties between the United States and Pakistan.<sup>60</sup> In the view of early to mid-1950s Soviet discourse, this shared concern temporarily eclipsed any differences between the Soviet Union and its Far Eastern ally. As an alternative to Orientalism, Edward Said suggests that producers of knowledge can extricate themselves from Orientalist discourse, and the power relations within, by acknowledging the inextricable interdependence of East and West.<sup>61</sup> Svilova's representation of India recognises the reliance East and West must invest in one another in order to globalise civilisation. With common interests in mind, Indo-Soviet relations developed, further strengthened in 1955 by the announcing of Soviet intentions to build a steel plant in Bhilai, an eastern central city, and the hosting of the Bandung Conference, co-sponsored by India and China. This conference also witnessed the birth of Sino-Cambodian relations, discussed below. In the months following the conference, Svilova documents the President of India's visit to a Bengali cable factory in *News of*

*the Day no.33* (1955). The sequence begins with President Prasad arriving at the entrance with his delegation. Close-up shots of the machinery are juxtaposed with shots capturing the delegation's tour. The story was a means to provide Soviet audiences with an insight into Indian manufacturing and industry, alluding to the economic benefits the new alliance would bring to the Soviet economy.

Later in the same newsreel, Svilova presents a more personal side of India and, rather than comment negatively on its primitiveness, she sympathises with the difficulties faced by Indian populations to protect themselves against natural disasters. This empathetic approach signposts a clear development in her portrayal of otherness. Filmed on the banks of the Brahmaputra River, local residents hurriedly lay down bamboo canes to prevent their land from flooding. The bamboo is transported by truck before being rolled down the banks and put in place by workers in the river. Svilova depicts in this sequence a vulnerable community whose continued safety relies upon communal labour. This story did not appear to be a means of undermining India – a visual tool, like *Yangtze River*, to highlight the weakness of the East and its need to be rescued – Svilova displays both concern for the inhabitants, by focusing on shots of their anxious faces, and admiration, through the capturing of the speed, strength and dexterity with which they combat the hazard. The most significant event in Soviet-Indo relations was Khrushchev and Bulganin's tour of India, documented by Svilova in *News of the Day no.60* (1955). Two establishing shots, one from an aeroplane and one from street level (the latter giving an indication of India's crowded urban infrastructure), introduce an interior mid-shot of a dining room where Prime Minister Nehru, Bulganin and Khrushchev are supplied food and drink by an array of servants. The voiceover announces Khrushchev's support for



Indian sovereignty over the disputed territory of Kashmir, reiterating for Svilova's audience Soviet commitment to the partnership.

The examples I have offered thus far – stories from Kazakhstan, China and India – are similar in their mode of presentation: Svilova indicates that the Central Committee is willing to assist less-developed Eastern countries for their mutual benefit. It is important to observe that the motivation behind the Soviet Union's forming of these relationships do not directly form a part of the stories' narratives. Svilova represents the resolve of the Soviet Union to assist countries with basic infrastructures and primitive economies as driven ultimately by humanitarianism and, to a much lesser extent, financial gain, particularly in its relationship with India. The fact that the Central Committee established relations in the East to coincide with developments in the Cold War, seeking allies that offered geographical benefits to the Soviet Union's defence policy or countries that sympathised with socialism, remained tacit.

While events in China, Kazakhstan and India were for Svilova relatively undemanding subjects for documentation, in that they aligned smoothly with Soviet foreign policy, other countries held more complex relations with the Soviet Union and required Svilova's careful handling. *News of the Day no.17* (1955), for example, includes a story from Osaka where a local workforce has gone on strike. A wide-angle shot establishes an office building captured from the opposite side of the street. A picket line of workers stands with arms locked across the entrance to the building and sways in unison from side to side. Police use water cannons to disperse the watching crowd. Svilova heightens the atmosphere by juxtaposing the water cannon shots with medium close-ups of the swaying picketers, a tension that is

eventually calmed by the introduction of a new location. Trade unionists sit around a table with company executives to negotiate the strike's resolution. A close-up of a piece of paper being stamped symbolises the meeting's success: the strike is over. The two leading negotiators stand and face the camera to shake hands. A closing mid-shot of the office's clear doorway, like the stamping of the paper, confirms that any disputes about the working conditions have been resolved.

Svilova had featured Japan in a story the previous year, in *News of the Day no.60* (1954), which documents the devastating aftermath of the country's typhoon season. Poorly exposed wide-angle shots capture waves crashing against the shoreline. Locals emerge from the sea carrying the dead and injured on stretchers. Inland, the camera pans along a street to depict the extent of the flooding; a river four feet in height sweeps through the poorly constructed houses. The ferry, *Toya Maru*, floats capsized in the Tsugaru Strait, a channel of water between Honshu and Hokkaido in the northern part of the country. On board the ferry the dead are covered in sheets. A group of women light candles on the beach in memory of those who perished. Svilova concludes the sequence with a montage of waves crashing against the shoreline. Her objective for this closing series of shots might have been to imply irresolution: nature's devastating force has not alleviated; the pain and loss endured by the inhabitants is set to continue. The montage underscores Svilova's sympathy for those affected by the devastation. She displays through her selection of shots genuine interest in the lives of her subjects, sensitively capturing their torment and helplessness.

There is, however, a second possible interpretation of this story. During the Stalin era, and in the period between Stalin's death and Khrushchev's secret speech in 1956,

it was typical for Soviet media to shed capitalist countries in a dark light. From his interactions with media depictions of foreign lands, Emil Draitser, a Soviet citizen, was left with the impression that the United States was a country fraught with danger. He remembers viewing images in which ‘tornadoes smash houses in Oklahoma; an earthquake pulls a chain of automobiles right down into the depths of the Pacific; a hurricane sweeps along the streets of Miami; and immense forests of Montana burn’.<sup>62</sup> As peace negotiations between Japan and Soviet Union had not yet commenced when Svilova documented Japan’s typhoon season, it is possible that her intention was to encourage in Soviet audiences anti-capitalist sentiments through the emphasis on Japan’s vulnerability to natural disasters, which in turn might be read in religious terms: God punishes those driven by self-wealth.<sup>63</sup> Soviet citizens could feel safe in the knowledge they were protected from biblical wrath by the moral goodness of socialism. More so, the absence of wrath confirmed for the Soviet people that socialism was the only right and honourable system. Svilova’s depiction of the typhoon season could be read in the simplified terms of ‘us versus them’, a reliable structure to generate meaning and influence the perception of the viewer. Recalling the moral vocabulary described by Mark Steinberg in his analysis of the Russian print industry, visual symbols of suffering, redemption and salvation enabled people to understand their lives.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Svilova represents a more flexible and engaging means by which viewers are able to make sense of their identities in a way that other, more complex, interpretations of Marxism could not allow.

Despite the validity of this reading, it does not wholly account for the energy Svilova invests to capture the suffering of the people. Documenting the dangers to foreign lands as a means of eliciting sympathy recalls the strategy used by Svilova in her documenting of Indian floods. For this reason, my initial reading – decoding the

story as one designed to stimulate compassion – is more rational. Although it was broadcast prior to formal negotiations, it might have been used as an ‘olive branch’, a cultural exchange calculated to trigger the thawing of deep-rooted disputes, and the news of the strike in Osaka the following year testifies to this reading.<sup>65</sup> Also, the story of the strike has communist undertones that would have increased its newsworthiness. The fact that the Japanese workforce in the Osaka story unite to battle a capitalist organisation – people of inferior wealth joining forces to defeat those of superior wealth – might have been documented to heighten the distrust of capitalism and underline the importance of working-class solidarity, the latter in line with the cohesive workforces documented by Svilova in, for example, stories from China and India. Moreover, Svilova does not use a fade to mark the transition from one geographical location to the next, as she typically did in her *News of the Day* episodes, instead cutting from the end of one sequence to the beginning of the other. This technique serves to fuse the two locations in the mind of the viewer, representing another means by which Svilova aims to link the Soviet Union and the Far East.

#### Rural women in *News of the Day no.60* (1954)

*News of the Day no.60* contains a four minute montage depicting Eastern Soviet women working in various agricultural processes. The length of this montage is significant as a *News of the Day* episode, which comprised approximately ten minutes of film, would rarely contain an item longer than two minutes. Therefore, this montage functions as the anchor of the episode. The overriding tension between the inclusion of these women as Soviet and their exclusion on grounds of ethnicity is resolved by the women’s Sovietisation – they are both familiar and unfamiliar. The female spectator would have observed with intrigue as her body was substituted with

one of difference but one with which she could identify. Svilova focuses on the inclusive nature of cosmopolitanism. The attention she pays to the Eastern women's decorated bodies suggests feelings of attraction for, and identification with, otherness, the type defined by Mica Nava as 'intimate and visceral cosmopolitanism'.<sup>66</sup> Despite the differences between East and West, they are bound by a mutual commitment to socialism, which adds a layer of domesticity to the cosmopolitanism on display. While the Eastern Other in *Soviet Kazakhstan* is in the process of shedding her traditional methods, no such demands are made of these workers – the heterogeneous Other thus combines with the cosmopolitan Western Soviet citizen to construct a progressive and diverse Soviet identity, and in doing so removes any doubt that the Central Committee is committed to its newly adopted modern consciousness. Svilova represents them not as abject or excluded but as modern and liberated. The montage is a utopian vision in which cultural difference is promoted, appreciated and even desired. As Nava argues, 'desire for the Other, for something different, is also about the desire for merger with the Other, about the desire to become different.'<sup>67</sup>

The first scene opens with a stationary wide-angle shot of Mukuzani, a Georgian village. A tracking shot captures a row of grapevines; the camera moves along the row before drawing slowly to a stop on a mid-shot of grapes on a branch. Once the location of the scene is established, Svilova concentrates on the workers themselves. Framed in medium long-shot, three women sit on their knees and pick grapes from the low hanging branches of a tree. The shot is poorly exposed, and the women's white headscarves appear conspicuously against the dark background of the shot. First, the focus is on the woman to the left of the three; she is framed in a head and shoulders mid-shot as she cuts the grapes from the tree's branches. The most striking

aspect of this shot is the joy with which the woman carries out her work. Although one becomes accustomed to the overzealous facial expressions of workers in Svilova's films, the joy on display in this scene exceeds convention. This joy suggests that collective farm workers are sufficiently equipped to handle state expectations. Capturing women enjoying their work was not a motivational technique exclusive to the films of Svilova but was a motif characteristic of Soviet cinema in the Stalin era. Gail Lapidus argues that it deflected blame away from the Central Committee: women in the audience would not associate their own problems with their state commitments.<sup>68</sup> A wide-angle tracking shot, moving left at eye level, depicts the scale of the working environment: white dots pepper the dark under-exposed landscape. As previous mid-shots have informed us, each dot represents the white headscarf of each individual female worker. This was not the first occasion in which Svilova represents women by a conspicuous item of clothing. *Soviet Kazakhstan* too contains wide-angle shots in which the size and distribution of the female workforce is indicated to the audience through the movement of white headscarves juxtaposed against a dark landscape.

The second location, Zailiyski (a region in the foothills of the Ala-Tau mountain range), is established through a wide-angle pan moving left. Svilova aims for continuity between locations, carrying on the movement of the previous tracking shot. The cut, however, is striking, not only through the change in camera movement (tracking shot to pan) but also through the change in light, as the second location is considerably brighter due to overexposure. The pan depicts a number of women on ladders picking apples from tree branches. An extreme close-up shot of one of the glistening apples, with dew rolling down its side, connotes a sentiment of vigour and sustenance. The glistening apples imply that the women who defeat the strains of the

double burden produce the healthiest and most wholesome fruit, and could themselves be defined as the nutritious and unblemished fruit of the regime. The camera then tracks from right to left, following a woman walking across the midground of the shot. Although the camera is positioned approximately fifty metres from the subject, the viewer can identify her vitality and energy: she walks, almost skips, between the trees carrying two baskets of apples. As soon as the woman's position eludes the tracking camera's focal range, Svilova redirects the sequence back to the women on ladders. One of the women is framed in the right of a mid-shot and faces left, allowing the viewer to see her exaggerated facial expressions as she carries out her work.

Svilova's decision to hold on the shot of the woman's face introduces to the text corporeal readings. Béla Balázs argues that cinema restores to humanity a language of facial expression rendered illegible by literacy.<sup>69</sup> The face is for most of us the locus of another person's being and, although the camera can show the body in action, there is something unattainable about its transience. The film audience is far more constrained than an observer in daily life. Yet, this shot of the woman's face, though seen in passing, becomes a more stable object of attention and a receptacle for feelings about the body as a whole. In other words, the close-up shot provides a tactility absent in ordinary human relations. As David MacDougall suggests, 'When we meet others in day to day exchanges we do not explore their faces with our fingertips, but in the cinema we come close to doing this, becoming especially alive to the liquidity of the eyes and mouth and, at a more interpretive level, the flickering signs of emotions.'<sup>70</sup> The close-up shot creates a proximity to the face that we experience much less commonly in daily life. The conventions of social distance (and real distance) restrict proximity except in moments of intimacy. Cinema thus

combines the private view with the public spectacle, creating a sharp sense of intimate exposure of the film subject and a secondary sense in the viewer of being personally exposed by witnessing the other's exposure.

A second woman on a ladder, this time framed to the right of the shot facing left, looks up from her work and smiles. The editing suggests that she is smiling at the woman in the previous shot, which again implies to audiences a sentiment of female bonding and unity, the same technique used by Svilova in the cleaning sequence in *Metro* and in the Federation films shot in Prague and Paris. The third location of the montage, the Murgab Valley in Tajikistan, is established in a poorly exposed wide-angle stationary shot. A solitary tree stands in the foreground while mountains extend across the background. The shot illustrates a harsh, dry climate, one in which crops stubbornly resist cultivation. This atmosphere is enhanced by the second shot: a high-angle pan from right to left. The location feels cold and intimidating to the viewer. This impression is contradicted by the third shot of the sequence: framed in wide-angle, a flowing river is depicted meandering underneath the overhanging branches of the trees lining its banks. A woman in the background picks fruit from the trees. A connection is established between the feminised worker and the feminised environment. The shot seems to imply that she is bringing life to her surroundings; without her interaction, this location would remain as uncultivated as the first two in the sequence. The idyllic nature of this shot is strengthened by a second, slightly tighter, wide-angle shot of the running water, followed by a high-angle wide shot of an enclosed lake steeped in tranquillity.

The vineyard itself is introduced by a wide-angle establishing shot; a row of large trees, rich in foliage, cuts the shot vertically in half. A woman walks along the row



toward the camera carrying a basket of fruit. Her dress appears strikingly colourful, even on black and white film, and her headwear is noticeably exotic to a Western audience, standing upright on her head in the style of a fez. A low-angle mid-shot depicts a second female worker. Although this worker is partly hidden behind a layer of thick foliage, the intimate framing allows for a closer inspection of her dress and headwear, both of which are highly decorative: patterns of gold endow the front of the headwear while the dress, and the sleeves in particular, are embellished with sequins. A medium close-up shot of a third woman, again on a ladder picking fruit, further celebrates the elegant aesthetic of this working community. Cinema, as an ideologically approved medium, negotiates the chasm between ‘us’ and ‘them’, individuality and belonging, and dress forms a crucial component to these distinctions. For Svilova, the clear-cut oppositions of belonging and non-belonging characteristic of the Stalin era begin to break down and, in a new language of dress, an all-encompassing vision of Sovietness emerges in their place.

Jane Gaines argues that the celebration of the female form is a dominant trait of female filmmakers, most evidently when costume is used to emphasise it.<sup>71</sup> In Svilova’s sequence, the women’s exotic dress does not only exist to disguise the body, it exists to be admired in its own right by the female spectator. The Eastern woman as a model of Soviet discourse retains her feminist virtues; she is chaste and honourable while simultaneously willing to reproduce when the state demanded. The fourth shot in this sequence of mid-shots depicts a young girl cutting a bunch of grapes from a branch. She holds the bunch in front of her face at eye level and smiles proudly. The presence of children accompanying their mothers at work further cements the efforts made by the Central Committee to encourage women to merge their home life with their work. Rather than depicting women carrying out household

duties at home, women perform these duties at work, crystallising the symbol of the new Soviet woman as a worker who unites her domestic and state responsibilities. Shots of mothers labouring at work accompanied by their children are utilised by Vertov and Svilova in *Lullaby* to propose a solution for those women struggling under the strain of the double burden. This scene from the Murgab Valley assures women that it was their right, as well as their responsibility, to seek work outside the home.<sup>72</sup>

Lynne Attwood's research into the role played by magazines to construct the new Soviet woman in public consciousness is pertinent to this newsreel and, to an extent, *Soviet Kazakhstan*. Her research allows for an understanding of how audiences responded to gender representations at different turning points of the Stalin and post-Stalin eras. One conclusion Attwood draws is that, in media representations, women wanted to see the double burden defeated; they wanted to see other women achieving their goals and overcoming any restraints imposed on them.<sup>73</sup> The sequence, then, not only provided female audiences with the representation they preferred, it also integrated Eastern women into the Western Soviet ideal by highlighting their commitment to socialism, manifested mostly through the women's ability to overcome the double burden. While they should continue to be good mothers and wives, a further dimension was added to modern women's responsibilities: they had to be loyal citizens and display patriotism through their work.

The women in this sequence, however, have not been thoroughly Sovietised. The attention paid to their faces and exotic dress suggests that Svilova wants female audiences to acknowledge the beauty of the garments and to appreciate the women's

valuable contribution to the evolving Soviet identity. Western Soviet admiration for Tajikistan – admiration that was justified by virtue of the republic's location within Soviet borders – overturned the more typical narrative in which the larger, dominant power is the giver of civilisation to the smaller, subordinate one. Instead, the women are to be perceived as adding a further layer to the fabric of national selfhood, where the old is not replaced by the new, a substitution highlighted by the *traktoristka* sequence in *Soviet Kazakhstan*, but where both can exist harmoniously. In her discussion on the representation of Central Asian women in Western media, Meyda Yeğenoğlu argues that autonomous identification can only be reclaimed through the authentic and the traditional.<sup>74</sup> For the Eastern regions already assimilated into the Soviet Union, the West must be taken as a model but the primitive native cultures should be preserved. This reading is inconsistent with the representation of Central Asia in the Stalin era, the latter implied an ambivalent double gesture, exemplifying what was a split character of nationalist thought. Svilova's depiction of the women implies that, by the mid-1950s, an expanded tolerance of international difference had come to fruition, something that stemmed, according to Ted Hopf, from a stronger sense of Soviet identity at home, a confidence that permitted differences as long as people were ideologically united on fundamental principles.<sup>75</sup> Permitting difference at home, Kopf argues, made it less threatening to accept differences elsewhere.<sup>76</sup>

## **The *Foreign Newsreel* series (1956)**

Whether personal choice or a decision made outside of her control, Svilova stops directing episodes of *News of the Day* in early 1956 to begin work on *Foreign Newsreel* (also produced by the Central Studio for Documentary Film). *Foreign Newsreel* was part of a media campaign that inundated the masses with images of foreign lands.

While the countries documented coincided with developments in international relations, Anne Gorsuch argues that ‘exposure to foreign lands was supposed to help citizens become more Soviet ... it would help them become more aware of the difference between capitalism and socialism and they would grow to love their country even more.’<sup>77</sup> Challenges to Soviet ideological superiority were a concern for Khrushchev but the benefits of exposure to foreign lands were thought to outweigh the potential risks. Svilova’s foreign newsreels were crucial because they allowed audiences to enjoy the exposure without leaving the safety of the Soviet Union. She offers a series of ideologically controlled expeditions that transports audiences to the East, across the vast territories of the socialist empire, and to the West, where the advantages of peaceful coexistence are mapped through the documenting of cultural events and scientific innovations.

Svilova’s directorial methods for *Foreign Newsreel* revolve around a similar, but not identical, process to *News of the Day* – the assembly of pre-shot footage dispatched to Moscow from the shooting location – though it is unlikely that footage shot for *Foreign Newsreel* would have been captured by Soviet cinematographers. My research into British Pathé newsreels from the 1950s indicates that the stock footage was shot by local cameramen and sold to documentary studios abroad.<sup>78</sup> Newsreel directors would have then crafted a unique product representative of their studio or government’s agenda. This change in production process does not require a rethinking of my approach to Svilova. There is no evidence to indicate that she had any authority over the shooting of domestic or foreign footage in the pre-production or production stage; her role commenced only once the footage was ready for editing. Svilova directed three episodes of *Foreign Newsreel*, episodes four, six and nine, before retiring from full-time work. I discuss the episodes simultaneously in

order to make the necessary connections and provide the most lucid and articulate analysis possible.

Svilova documents the events following Tunisia's gaining independence from France in *Foreign Newsreel no.4* (1956). A mid-shot depicts a light aircraft landing on a runway and passing the camera. A low-angle mid-shot captures Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia's first President, stepping out the open door. As he attempts to alight the aircraft, he is mobbed by his ardent devotees: his male followers shake his hand while a female supporter attempts to thrust her young daughter into his arms. Once at the bottom of the steps, Bourguiba disappears behind a flurry of journalists vying for a statement or photograph. Bourguiba walks across the runway; now encircled by the military, he is able to walk without interference from his supporters. The second and final location of the story is Tunis Stadium where the country holds an official celebration of its independence. A wide-angle shot depicts a women's army division marching around the track to the applause of the spectators. Despite the terseness of the story, Svilova manages to convey in only a handful of shots the significance of Tunisia's independence, a country once starved of autonomy and forced to conceal its culture and heritage at the expense of outdated sovereignty. Released from imperialism, the people of Tunisia have reclaimed their country for themselves. The film supports the right of citizens to repossess their land and share it among its rightful owners, and arguably it is this notion that Svilova intended to communicate; the one to which her audiences would emotionally respond, having either remembered or been taught about the events of 1917 that led to the deposition of Tsar Nicholas II and the birth of the Soviet Union. The energy and excitement emitting from the shots of Bourguiba is reminiscent of early footage of Lenin in the aftermath of the revolution, footage that documented him on makeshift podiums speaking to crowds of avid

supporters – the same footage Svilova spent many years collating and editing.

Audiences were encouraged to draw comparisons between the events on-screen and their identity as Soviet citizens, what it meant to be or feel Soviet.

Attempts to draw on the audience's memory or knowledge of its country's history re-emerge in Svilova's next newsreel, *Foreign Newsreel no.6* (1956), where scenes from Rajasthan capture celebrations commemorating India's independence. A float in the shape of a swan approaches the camera and subsequent close-up shots depict people following behind it dressed in horse costumes, re-enacting a battle using rehearsed movements. A handheld camera captures women dancing to a beating drum, the frenetic cinematography reflecting the energy of the dancers and the passion for their art. Svilova perceives India as a country steeped in aesthetics, a view reinforced by scenes from Bombay's Festival of Dance and Music in her final episode, *Foreign Newsreel no.9* (1956). Accompanied by the sounds of an applauding audience, women dance on stage under the weight of enormous water jugs positioned on their heads; medium close-up shots capture their remarkable poise. Svilova's representation of India as a country savouring its liberation supports the political stories documented in *News of the Day*. Between 1954 and 1956, Svilova provides audiences with the opportunity to observe India's renaissance: freed from Western imperialism, it could now forge international agreements on its own terms. Svilova encourages Soviet citizens to recognise India as a valuable ally, a country with ambitious programmes of industrialisation and nuclear rearmament, in addition to a wealth of cultural traditions.

While not a celebration of independence, the crowning of Norodom Suramarit as the new King of Cambodia, documented in *Foreign Newsreel no.4*, displays a similar sense

of optimism that surrounds a change of government and, again, it would have sought to inspire in audiences a sense of familiarity with their own collective identity as Soviet citizens. In Phnom Penh, Suramarit and his wife, Queen Sisowath Kosamak, are addressed by a court dignitary in the throne room. In its presentation, the scene is equivalent to one held in any country with a constitutional monarchy. A handheld pan captures the majesty of the occasion: flowers and gold adorn their surroundings. The thrones, in particular, are decorated with exotic accessories. The King is portrayed in a medium close-up shot; his cone-shaped headwear is exotic and eye-catching. Outside, the King and Queen travel in a horse-drawn carriage. The camera tracks the carriage in a low-angle pan as it pulls away surrounded by townspeople, some in traditional Cambodian dress and others in military attire. On 13 May, 1956, shortly after Suramarit's coronation, the Soviet Union and Cambodia made public their formal diplomatic relations, which not only determined the story's inclusion but strengthens my general argument: the newsworthiness of Svilova's foreign stories – packaged in both *News of the Day* and *Foreign Newsreel* – depended upon developments in the realm of foreign policy, far removed from the camera's frame.

Even though Svilova's *News of the Day* stories from China and India allude to burgeoning relations with the Soviet Union (though not explicit about the primary motivation behind their new affiliations), it is important to observe that the story from Cambodia does not refer to the emerging alliance between the countries. There is no attempt to mobilise the masses into supporting an association with a new ally; instead, Svilova states to audiences, matter-of-factly, that events in Cambodia are worth documenting on their own merit. In the months leading up to the public announcement of the coalition, it was imperative that Soviet audiences were exposed to Cambodia – its customs, heritage and rule of government – so that, by the time

the announcement was made and relations between Cambodia and the Soviet Union had been legitimised in public consciousness, the masses were able to identify with the new ally and in turn support the relationship. In only a few shots, Svilova's coverage of the crowning ceremony provides a broad picture of the traits intrinsic to Cambodian national identity, and the informative, concise nature of newsreel made it an ideal medium to encourage interest in Cambodia. She forms in the mind of the viewer a connection between Cambodia and the Soviet Union through the shared emotions associated with coronations and revolutions. While this is a fairly overt connection, the story also alluded implicitly to China. Similar to Svilova's documenting of the Polish fishermen's release from captivity in Taiwan, China does not directly feature in this story but its underlying influence is detectable through the web of political relations in the Far East during this period. In 1956 China and Cambodia had mutual interests: China required Cambodia's cooperation due to the latter's geographical location (it was deemed dangerous if Cambodia became an ally of the United States) and, in turn, Cambodia relied upon the Chinese military to restrain Vietnam and Thailand during territorial disputes.<sup>79</sup> Their relationship was further consolidated by a personal acquaintance between Mao and Suramarit. Impressed by Cambodia's gaining of independence from France in 1953, Mao sent a telegram every year to the Cambodian royal family to offer his continued congratulations.<sup>80</sup> Mao's support suggests that any colonies surrendered by Western countries were viewed by the communist world as a victory against capitalism, a stance that associates this story with Svilova's coverage of Tunisia and India rejoicing in their own emancipation.<sup>81</sup>



## Eastern Europe: The 'Soviet Abroad'

Svilova's *Foreign Newsreel* episodes do not only include stories from the Far East. Countries in closer proximity to her base in Moscow were also considered foreign, and it is evident from my analysis that distance held no relation to definitions of foreignness. Anne Gorsuch describes this phenomenon as a type of local difference.<sup>82</sup> Referring to the Soviet representation of Estonia during the Thaw as an inner abroad, due to its combination of historic West European architecture and contemporary European style, she argues that the region was newly marketed for Soviet citizens as an outside world both different and familiar.<sup>83</sup> The stories from Western and Eastern Europe came as part of a rhetoric that sought to position Eastern Europe as a domestic, yet exotic, tourist attraction and encourage Soviet citizens to visit there – in 1956 countries in Eastern Europe were the most popular destinations for Soviet travellers.<sup>84</sup> Her portrayal was meant to encourage friendship and mutual understanding between citizens of the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries, and to contribute to the Soviet Union's ideological and economic appropriation and integration of recently acquitted territories considered especially important in the Cold War battle for hearts and minds, as well as geographical spaces. Moreover, documenting the East discouraged viewers from drawing comparisons between their quality of life and the more rapid post-war economic recovery of the capitalist West. By documenting Eastern Europe – essentially a domestic abroad – as part of foreign news, Svilova simultaneously provides evidence of progress in the global socialist revolution while reasserting Khrushchev's cosmopolitan rhetoric. The shared purpose of both threads was to increase Soviet patriotism.

Many of the themes inherent to *Foreign Newsreel no.4* are maintained by Svilova in *Foreign Newsreel no.6*. For example, the motif of celebration that links stories from Tunisia, India and Cambodia re-emerges in *Foreign Newsreel no.6* in the form of Labour Day commemorations. Svilova's montage of shots from parades in Prague, Warsaw and East Berlin occupies a large segment of the film. The inclusion of these particular cities implies that Svilova is promoting communist unity, a goal perhaps foreseeable considering the socialist origins of Labour Day itself. The montages from Prague and Warsaw are similar in design. First, both are based around street processions. In Prague low-angle shots depict a balcony on which people wave at the passing people below; they march and cheer, and banners blow in the wind. The high-angle photography facilitates for the viewer a comprehension of the vast number of people, who walk so tightly together that on occasion it is difficult to discern one person from the next. Warsaw also hosts a parade enjoyed by a large crowd: soldiers march holding flags; women march pushing prams in one hand and waving flags with the other; and infants sit up in their prams to look at their surroundings. A high-angle wide-shot of the procession moving from right to left is followed by a reverse-angle of the same shot, eliciting conflict in movement. The Prague montage contains similar juxtapositions: shots captured from camera positions situated on opposite pavements conflict with one another, and the resulting tension is augmented by the shot type – wide-angles precede extreme close-ups and vice versa. Last, two young women walk confidently and smile to the camera, clearly relishing its attention and the atmosphere of the event. A young man in military uniform walks in between the women and interlocks his arms in theirs. The trio marches along with the procession, laughing at the young man's bravado before smiling again to the camera.

Svilova represents the East Berlin celebration as a more formal and subdued event. The camera pans across the interior of a stadium from pitchside, first capturing shots of the politicians who are seated in the highest stand and then tilting down to capture the lower stands where the public are gathered. A procession enters a wide-angle shot from the left carrying white flags. People follow behind waving to the bystanders. A high-angle shot depicts people walking right to left and waving to the camera. Svilova arguably uses this shot to emphasise the range in demographic – women, children, soldiers and elderly people are all present to celebrate. The concluding high-angle shot captures the street procession; the people walk right to left across the shot, passing the Brandenburg Gate. This scene, in addition to the celebrations shot in Prague and Warsaw, would have felt familiar to Soviet audiences. Not only did similar events take place in Moscow annually but there would have also been a cultural recognition triggered by the Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic signed the pact, along with other member states of the Eastern bloc, as a response to the forming of NATO the previous year. In doing so, these countries pinned their loyalties to the communist side of Europe's dichotomy in the Soviet-led opposition to capitalism. Cultural recognition was not limited to events in the post-war era but had been unfolding gradually since the Soviet Union's expansion into the USSR in 1922.<sup>85</sup> This sense of familiarity – audiences would have identified with events held in neighbouring Soviet states – suggests that foreign lands were only foreign to Soviet audiences in the sense that they existed outside Soviet borders. To Svilova, 'foreign' does not describe a strange or exotic subject, as one might expect from a foreign newsreel. Emil Draitser recalled in his memoirs that, 'If the narrator [of the newsreel] hadn't informed me that the action takes place in Prague, Danzig or Bucharest, I would think that the footage was shot in our country, the USSR.'<sup>86</sup> Under the premise of cosmopolitanism, Svilova's

foreign-themed newsreels provided an opportunity for the Central Committee to project Sovietness back onto itself, which allowed little room for state filmmakers to expose audiences to anything genuinely foreign. Dissecting foreignness in this way, on a semantic level, reiterates my primary argument: Khrushchev's commitment to educating the Soviet masses on global affairs was driven by a need to legitimise Central Committee policy and secure the population's support.

#### Documenting the East and West

My analysis of Svilova's stories from China, India and Cambodia suggests that, even when the scenes are to an extent foreign, the decision to document them was still a political one, and I have described the relations between the Soviet Union and these respective countries to make clear why each story was considered newsworthy by the Central Committee. Svilova also documents Chinese Labour Day celebrations in *Foreign Newsreel no.6*, and by once again drawing on the concept of familiarity – in this instance, images that would have felt largely unfamiliar to Soviet audiences – it is evident that depicting otherness, and the consequential effect this had on the continual shaping of national identity, was a complex process. The scene begins with a high-angle shot of the procession moving left to right along a bank of the Chaobai River in Peking. The procession is far more elaborate than those held in Warsaw or Prague, comprising ornamented floats, decorated billboards and a greater number of people. The people walking in the procession are captured in a side-angle shot; they turn their heads and look into the camera, smiling and waving. The sequence is edited in such a way as to suggest that the smiles are directed at Mao who is watching the procession from an elevated platform. The concluding segment of the story communicates an inherently Chinese aspect of the proceedings. A series of shots captured from a handheld camera positioned inside the procession imparts a carnival

atmosphere that is heightened by medium close-up shots of women performing a traditional Chinese dance routine, swivelling in their oriental clothing and dancing to the beat of a drum. Wearing identical white outfits and captured in close-up, a second dance group makes patterns using body movement to create a visual spectacle. In contrast to the European celebrations, here Svilova documents an event that is steeped in foreign traditions, representative of a distant, outside world: an exhibition of otherness comprising music, costume and dance.

Svilova's objective for this story is to strengthen in the viewer's mind the Sino-Soviet allegiance, and the imparting of cultural awareness is an integral part of this process. The Central Committee wanted audiences to appreciate and understand the nuances of Chinese traditions, but only as a means of serving the political affiliation of both countries. The celebration of exoticism, particularly through the close-up shots of the costumes, corresponds with the celebration of Central Asia in *News of the Day no.60* (1954). This is an important comparison because it suggests that, by this historical juncture, China had been initiated into the Soviet family, represented as a kind of pseudo republic. Yet, while Svilova celebrates difference, the scene can also be read as a tribute to the progress China had made. It had matured from a primitive and backward country existing in its own history, as seen in *Yangtze River*, to one with history. Svilova appears to acknowledge China's break from history as well as the history itself. In this respect, the commemoration of China's progress is not so much indebted to the efforts of the Chinese population as it is to the effectiveness of Soviet guidance since 1949. The sequence does not only use the festivities as a way of recognising China's development – and in turn congratulating the ingenuity of the Soviet centralised system – a second possible reading is that it also serves to honour the unifying power of socialism. It is important to remember that the sequence was

shot on Labour Day, an appropriate time to mark China's initiation into the Soviet empire. The scenes in Peking reminded audiences that socialism draws people together; differences in culture or ethnicity, though worth observing, pale in comparison to the strength of ideological congruence. So much was said to be shared between the older and wiser Soviet Union and China that any significant expression of ethnic or national difference is often eclipsed in favour of a socialist identity.

Once again, this reading supports Edward Said's view that producers of knowledge can extricate themselves from Orientalist discourse by acknowledging the inextricable interdependence of East and West.<sup>87</sup> As Xiaojia Hou argues, to maintain the pretext of the Soviet Union's guiding of less-developed countries, socialist discourse proclaimed sameness.<sup>88</sup> Although China was a foreign land with a distinct culture and history, socialism negated the traits that afforded the country its individuality. Mao's 'On People's Democratic Dictatorship' article written in June 1949, which outlined to the world China's special relationship with the Soviet Union, suggested that socialism's power to disavow the characteristics that provided China its unique identity was a decisive selling point.<sup>89</sup> Mao was willing to sacrifice his country's distinctiveness as a preventative measure against 'military intervention from imperialist countries', namely the United States.<sup>90</sup>

By situating China as a central figure in the socialist family, Svilova's story remained consonant with Khrushchev's need to pacify Mao's concerns about de-Stalinisation. Despite Stalin's 'mistakes', Mao still regarded him as a 'great Marxist-Leninist revolutionary leader';<sup>91</sup> to say otherwise would only have repudiated his grand enterprise of continuous revolution and undermined the centralised economic system he had implemented.<sup>92</sup> One of Stalin's mistakes, in Mao's opinion, was his failure to

treat China as equal. The representation depicted in *Yangtze River*, for example, was offensive to Mao, and through his criticism he served a reminder to Khrushchev that such transgressions would no longer be tolerated. The formal elements of the procession sequence, which appear to locate Mao as a deity looking down on his subjects, reaffirms for Soviet audiences Mao's status, and, though indirectly, massaged the inflated sense of self-importance that had burgeoned since Stalin's death. Mao believed that he should have had a greater voice on questions concerning the Sino-Soviet relationship and also on the fate of the entire communist movement. As Chen Jian argues, when Mao criticised Stalin's mistakes he was asserting that he now occupied the morally paramount position to dictate the direction of the world proletarian revolution.<sup>93</sup> Another reading of Svilova's story, therefore, might interpret it as a visual response to Mao's haughtiness, a means of humouring his ego without surrendering any significant ground in what was, even at its most cordial, a precarious relationship.

The need of the Central Committee to appear resilient to the socialist world while simultaneously attempting to reconcile with nations of the West resulted in a complex rhetoric that is not only evident within Svilova's *Foreign Newsreel* episodes but in many ways defined the overall purpose of the series. *Foreign Newsreel no.9*, for example, depicts five Chinese women using a photograph of the Empire State Building as a guide to stitch the image onto a huge piece of canvas. The use of an American icon, one that symbolised the profits of capitalism and was at the time the world's tallest building, cannot be overlooked. As Gordon Chang has argued, relations between China and the United States were considerably hostile during this period; events in Taiwan, Vietnam and South Korea had contributed to a state of permanent aggression between the two countries.<sup>94</sup> It is difficult, therefore, to fathom

a scenario whereby Mao would sanction the production of American-inspired artwork. It is more logical to interpret the artwork as a Soviet initiative. Despite the tempestuous relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union in the post-war period, the mid-1950s witnessed efforts for reconciliation. At the Geneva Summit in July 1955 Khrushchev outlined a future of peaceful coexistence with capitalism, also meeting with Eisenhower personally to discuss the Central Committee's concerns about the Soviet economy.<sup>95</sup> In the following year Khrushchev used his secret speech as the platform for a number of peace treaties, mostly pertaining to arms reduction, trade agreements and general steps toward de-Stalinisation. In light of these surrounding events, I interpret Svilova's story as one designed to inform Soviet audiences that, along with the Soviet Union, China was also thawing its relationship with the United States. Documenting these Chinese women is for Svilova a process of legitimisation, an attempt to silence any concerns from inside Soviet borders that Khrushchev was abandoning his communist allies to conspire with the enemy.

As part of Khrushchev's efforts to appease Soviet relations with the United States, Svilova documents a story about oncological research being undertaken at the University of San Francisco. Beginning in 1954, Central Committee files include descriptions of trips by Soviet scientists to capitalist countries.<sup>96</sup> Svilova's story suggests to audiences that the Soviet-imagined West was not intended as a site for developing individualism but was for learning and affirming officially approved aspects of Western civilisation. The Central Committee determined which aspects of American modernisation and technological innovations could be adopted, tolerated or forcibly suppressed. In this case, advancements in ontological research were breakthroughs from which the Soviet Union hoped to benefit. The story was



included as part of *Foreign Newsreel no.6*. Svilova establishes the medical institute, a building with modern architecture, in a mid-shot at street level. Two male doctors stand together in a two-shot inspecting their medical equipment. A montage of close-ups captures the laboratory's revolutionary equipment and machinery. A low-angle mid-shot depicts a female patient seated inside a CT scanner. One of the doctors, now seated near the patient in front of his equipment, presses a series of buttons. Framed in close-up, the scanner begins to function and lights appear near the patient's neck. Shot from the previous low-angle, the chair in which the patient sits begins to rotate. The doctor is depicted controlling a dial with his hand, shot from his point of view. A slight movement of the dial slows the patient's chair to a halt, which is captured in a closing mid-shot. By focusing on the technology, Svilova glorifies the scientific abilities of the United States and identifies the country as the leading authority on cancer detection.

Despite the Soviet Union's admiration for the contribution of the United States to the fight against global diseases, the relationship between the two countries remained largely belligerent. Disagreements over relations in the Far East – namely Soviet investments in Chinese, North Korean and Indian development – ultimately negated any progress. This investment was communicated to Soviet audiences through the variety of stories I have already discussed, as well as through sequences shot within Soviet borders. Svilova's foreign stories worked in conjunction with the documenting of domestic events, forming together a rhetoric of legitimisation. For example, *News of the Day no.49* (1955) documents the visit of Homi Bhabha to the University of Moscow.<sup>97</sup> Bhabha was an esteemed Indian physician and the director of India's nuclear weapons programme. Khrushchev spoke openly against nuclear weapons, but his willingness to support Bhabha's research – corroborated by his and

Bulganin's visit to Bhabha's nuclear research institute in Mumbai during their tour of India in November 1955 – highlighted the complex position he occupied on the subject. Although Bhabha's visit was not shot overseas, and by definition was not foreign to the Soviet Union, it reflected the tentative and contradictory nature of Soviet foreign policy, shaped by Khrushchev's need to reassure audiences that his stance of peaceful coexistence was not symptomatic of weakness.<sup>98</sup>

Cultural exchanges might not have succeeded in thawing relations between the Soviet Union and the United States but minor progress was made in other established capitalist countries. *Foreign Newsreel no.4*, for example, contains two stories shot in Great Britain. The first concerns the visit of Georgy Malenkov to Calder Hall in Cumbria, Britain's first nuclear power plant, on 26 March, 1956.<sup>99</sup> His trip was followed by Khrushchev's tour of Britain between 18 and 27 April. The report from Calder Hall was directly linked to the arms race. The story cast a positive light on Great Britain and suggests that any unity between developments in British and Soviet industry would prove fruitful for both economies. The story begins with a wide-angle shot of the plant. A handheld tracking shot of the delegation approaching the entrance is followed by an extreme low-angle shot capturing the inside of the plant. Its vast height renders the open roof barely detectable on the horizon of the shot. The delegation's reaction to the magnitude and innovation of the plant is captured in a series of facial close-up shots. While the delegation is taken on a tour of the plant, the head of each official turns in a different direction as they absorb their surroundings. The story concludes with two wide-angle shots of the plant, allowing the audience to appreciate fully its size and scale. Svilova's second story from Great Britain is coverage of the Boat Race. This story might have been intended as a gesture of goodwill: if Britain were to share its nuclear power facility with the Soviet

Union then, in return, the Soviet Union would show interest in quintessential British culture. Svilova commences the sequence with an establishing shot of the boat house, before selecting a mid-shot of a rowing boat being lowered into the water. Once the teams start rowing, Svilova assembles a montage of shots captured from a camera positioned on the bow of an engine-driven boat shooting the teams rowing away from the camera. The Oxford team's synchronised rowing is portrayed in mid-shot, the camera capturing the effort exerted by each member through medium close-ups. Conflicting with the previous camera position, Svilova selects shot from the stern of a boat sailing ahead of the racing boats. The concluding shot, captured from a position on Chiswick Bridge, depicts the Cambridge team crossing the finish line in first place.

The sequence depicts Great Britain as strong, determined and spirited. The boat race is an important choice of event as it allows Svilova to highlight the scholarly reputation of the country – Soviet audiences could enjoy observing a physical competition between two of the world's most illustrious universities – and, as with Soviet discourse, underscore the perfect combination of human strength, courage and intelligence. Svilova had documented quintessential Britishness for the final time in *Foreign Newsreel no.6*, editing shots of the 1956 F.A. Cup Final between Manchester City and Birmingham City. The sequence begins with a high-angle establishing shot of Wembley Stadium, followed by a wide-angle shot of cheering fans. The players warm up on the pitch, captured in a high-angle shot. Svilova then selects an eye-level shot tracking backwards of the players walking onto the field; the camera stops to allow the teams to walk either side of the camera. The match itself is documented from numerous camera positions in the stands and pitchside. A number of shots of the crowd cheering and dignitaries in the royal box are juxtaposed with the action on

the pitch. Often Svilova selects shots that do not offer a comprehensible account of the action; for example, she selects shots of players who are not involved in the match at that moment. Also, although the result was three goals to one in Manchester City's favour, only two goals appear in the sequence.

Svilova's chaotic and unmethodical handling of the footage cannot be attributed to a lack of usable shots. A comparison with British Pathé's coverage of the event, which contains all the important action in chronological order, confirms that the necessary stock footage was available to document the match in full.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, if Svilova's inability to collate the footage in a traditional manner cannot be explained by a dearth of usable footage, it might instead be attributed to her lack of experience documenting an event of this nature, a point her filmography supports. There is a possibility that she is simply unsure of the etiquette; i.e. what constitutes the 'highlights' of a football match. The popularity of football in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, however, renders this scenario somewhat unconvincing. The only remaining viable likelihood is that there is a motivation on Svilova's part to impose her own style on the proceedings. Cutting between cameras positioned on both sides of the pitch, Svilova challenges the audience to keep up with the action: both teams appear to attack both goals simultaneously, a pattern complicated further by the teams' changing of ends at half time. Eliciting conflict from the footage is in this instance unnecessary and in fact detrimental to the viewer's comprehension of the event. Criticism aside, Svilova succeeds in creating a dramatic and energetic sequence that not only complements the thrill and spectacle of the occasion but also the talent and athleticism of the footballers involved. Relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain deteriorated in July 1956, two months after the football match, when Britain, France and Israel declared war on Egypt, a Soviet ally.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Svilova's foreign stories were part of Khrushchev's efforts to re-image the Soviet Union as a modern and progressive country, and the timing of *Foreign Newsreel's* introduction supports this premise. On the surface, its creation implied that the Central Committee wanted to educate Soviet citizens on global events and international customs. However, Svilova's documenting of other socialist countries did not necessarily signify a foreign point of view; their common interests evoke almost self-representation. There is a sense of elasticity in the way that Svilova controls the distance between the 'here' and 'there', pulling countries closer in an attempt to negate difference, or to push them further away, underlining cultural disparity and repositioning the Other as unfamiliar through a lens of imperialism – what can be understood as a regression back to the Orientalist portrayals of the Stalin era. The Central Committee used foreign lands as a means of communicating rhetoric to Soviet audiences under the pretext of cosmopolitanism. This pretext was important because it fitted in with Khrushchev's long-term plan to re-image the country by gradually loosening the control imposed on the population during Stalin's dictatorship while, in reality, mobilising cinema as the same tool of legitimisation that was used so effectively by Stalin to establish his cult of personality. Svilova's films of the 1953 to 1956 era coalesce cautious optimism about permitting a now Sovietised 'difference' with profound anxiety about the threats too much of this might pose. As Anne Gorsuch has argued, exposure to capitalist societies was a crucial step in legitimising foreign policy, an ideologically charged topic at the heart of Central Committee discussions throughout the Cold War.<sup>101</sup>

The benefits of documenting capitalist societies were understood to outweigh the risks. As the masses learned about new places and people, exposure to the capitalist Other was supposed to help the Soviet population become more Soviet by shaping its collective identity in terms of what it knew it was not. This relates to the ultimate purpose of Svilova's foreign-themed films: to reassert in audiences passion for and commitment to the building of the utopian socialist empire. The way in which Svilova documents other socialist countries, using them as a platform for the Central Committee to express itself and in the process eliciting a fraternal socialist bond, reminds us of socialism's perceived attractiveness. To impoverished people struggling to improve their lives, the Soviet promise of economic equality and rapid development had a strong allure, while its idealistic vision of shared burdens and brotherhood held a deeply spiritual attraction, particularly, as Christina Klein argues, to populations in the East.<sup>102</sup>

My initial objective for this chapter was to read Svilova's foreign stories as signposts for a country in a state of transition. The stories represent Khrushchev's attempts to renew the image of the Soviet Union in a global context: they mark the repercussions of the Warsaw Pact, efforts to spread communism to the Far East and the Central Committee's taut relationship with the capitalist world. However, this chapter has not only acknowledged a reshaping of Soviet identity but has, from a Soviet perspective, observed similar transformations in the countries Svilova documents: India's early period of independence, Great Britain's first experimentations with nuclear power and King Suramarit's coronation, for example, point to a wider-reaching scope of national redefinition. Moreover, the stories can be used to map variations in the policies of countries indirectly referenced. Pakistan's growing relationship with the United States in a story from India, increasingly cold relations

between Taiwan and China in a story from Danzig, and the enduring Sino-Soviet partnership in a story from Cambodia provide an insight into the 1950s on an international scale, a period defined by changes in leadership, the gaining of national autonomy and insecurities about armament. Yet, while the brief nature of newsreel made it an effective medium to disseminate ideology to the masses, opportunities to learn more about Svilova as a director-editor are limited; delivered in short packages, analysing the films is a difficult task. Nevertheless, their importance should not be underestimated. If my conclusions are accurate, in that the films explored in this chapter can be interpreted as an insight into global relations during a highly politicised period of the twentieth century, then Svilova occupies a significant position. The films allow for our recognition of Svilova as a major contributor to the preservation of modern history, not least a vital constituent of documentary cinema.

## Chapter 5:

### Conclusion

By highlighting the Central Committee's deployment of cinema as a tool of legitimisation, I have made clear the purpose of Svilova's films and assessed how they fitted into the agenda ascribed to the medium. Svilova puts to use her artistic prowess to prompt the viewer to make the cognitive leap between the images on-screen – of sporting events, cultural ceremonies and distant lands – and Central Committee policy. Through shot selection and montage assembly, she encourages audiences to perceive the images as rhetoric and, in turn, shape their emotional response. I have linked Svilova's use of shot juxtaposition to the semiotic theories associated with the Soviet montage school of the 1920s, which has allowed for an identification of the catalysts that trigger the generation of meaning. Svilova's atrocity films are exceptions to this pattern in that they do not only comply with the state's use of cinema as a tool of legitimisation but are constructed according to Allied strategy and the indictments that catalogued the crimes of the Nazis – Svilova designed *Oświecim* and *Atrocities* to fit into the post-war rhetoric that did not acknowledge Jewish suffering. Beyond omitting visual imagery connected to Jews, Svilova organises the remaining footage to emphasise the pain inflicted by the Nazis



in their pursuit of global domination. For example, she elicits the audience's emotional response by contravening established patterns of editing and, particularly in *Atrocities*, focuses on visceral shots with the force to wound the spectator. The film's grievability – its power to engage the audience in pathos – is measured by a number of scenes that augment one's sensory response to the horrors depicted. In prioritising images with visceral impact, it can be argued that Svilova consciously stresses the atrocities audiences could comprehend, those that each viewer could picture and recreate in his or her mind.

Svilova's mobilisation of the female population is arguably the most prominent trait of her films. By drawing on Lilya Kaganovsky, Anne Eakin Moss and Jackie Stacey, I have been able to link the representation of Svilova's 'celluloid heroines' to wider discussions of gender representation and engage theoretically with the desires of the female spectator. Svilova constructs a complex interplay of similarity and difference between the female spectator and the female ideal – their need to be inspired in their real-life pursuits while simultaneously escaping from them. Although this interplay legitimises the policies of the Central Committee, the proliferation of women's stories, and the unwaveringly positive depiction of the new Soviet woman resonating from each one, together imply that this mode of representation was not forced upon Svilova but instead might reveal an agenda on her part to support and encourage her fellow Soviet sisters in a time of gender upheaval and insecurity.

Juxtaposition plays a featured role in Svilova's handling of gender policy, particularly in the construction of the socialist fantasy, allowing women to escape the drudgery of their lives and dream of a safe, peaceful working environment. By highlighting the dress and hair of the feminine ideal, Svilova assembles the shots to inform the female

viewer that certain occupations will allow them to overcome the masculinity of industrialisation and retain their femininity. Promotion from blue-collar labour was not only a means to financial independence and an escape from the exhausting work of construction sites and coal mines, it enabled women to be women, to preserve their feminine characteristics and refined qualities. Preserving their feminine characteristics is perceived as a victory, an act of patriotism equal to that of the women who have sacrificed their femininity on the path to the socialist utopia. Svilova's montage arrangements, then, serve to empower and unify women. In the post-war era, she constructs from the images of liberation and solidarity cinematic icons of femininity. *International Democratic Federation of Women* focuses on Nina Popova, a signifier for the Soviet Union's growing influence in the Eastern bloc, while the closing shot of the following year's conference in Paris features Vera Mukhina's statue, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, which reasserts to the spectator the pivotal role of women in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union. A timepiece of female inspiration, creativity and vision, the artwork underpins the central message of the federation and the Soviet influence within its ranks.

My analysis of Svilova's foreign stories discussed the evolving representation of otherness, from the insular Soviet Union of the Stalin era, where Eastern backwardness is not only highlighted as different to the advanced Soviet Union but also where this difference is simultaneously seen to be steadily eroding in order to render Soviet willingness to guide countries such as China and Kazakhstan a philanthropic gesture – Svilova's socialist discourse proclaims sameness while reinforcing a hierarchy of power. Beyond legitimising Stalin's decision to adopt China as an ally and integrate countries in Central Asia as Soviet republics, Svilova's films of

this period are ultimately self-congratulatory, designed to encourage in Soviet audiences a sense of pride in their country's charitable nature.

The gradual change in the representation of China – from a feminised, submissive country with a penchant for outdated spirituality explored in *Yangtze River*, to the stronger and more resourceful nation observed in *News of the Day no.1* (1956) – reflects clearly how Svilova's films are tools of legitimisation. The evolution of the Eastern ally, which mapped the nuances of the relationship between the two countries, guided the perception of Soviet audiences. Acknowledging China as a central figure in the socialist family was consonant with Khrushchev's need to pacify Mao's concerns about de-Stalinisation; it was a means of humouring Mao's ego without surrendering any significant ground in what was, even at its most cordial, a precarious affiliation. Svilova's newsreels also inform us how the Central Committee went as far as to use China as a pawn in its plans to build a relationship with the United States, legitimising its decision to initiate peaceful coexistence by intimating that China too was keen to improve relations with the capitalist superpower. While the *News of the Day* films are often regarded as stale and void of artistry, my analysis suggests that they include important traits of Svilova's editorial repertoire and, just as importantly, can be used 'as a source for the study of the possibilities of ideological influence on the everyday consciousness of Soviet citizens'.<sup>1</sup> With knowledge of history broadened, Svilova's newsreels help to fill in the blank spots of Soviet film by allowing us today to create a socio-psychological profile of her audience.

Exploring Svilova's evolving depiction of otherness has been crucial to a study of her films because it helps to connect the various facets of her contribution to Soviet cinema. The transformation of the Other that takes place in her films – from a strange and primitive being to one with whom Svilova positively engages – is most

explicitly read through her representation of women: the feminine ideal of the post-war era incorporates Eastern ethnicity, redefining for the female spectator the object of her desire and the parameters of national identity. The agricultural clothing worn by the traktoristka in *Soviet Kazakhstan*, captured in a montage of close-ups, disguises any notion of the exotic. Her androgynous protective clothing demonstrates, along with the tractor itself, the successful Sovietisation of Kazakhstan. Differences in corresponding ethnicity are hidden behind agricultural clothing on a literal level and Sovietness on a more abstract level, for ultimately it is the Sovietisation of agricultural methods that renders any distinctions imperceptible to audiences. Yet, these efforts to nullify, or at least disguise, the differences between the Western and Eastern populations of the Soviet empire eventually cease after Stalin's death. The story narrating Tajik fruit-pickers in *News of the Day no.60* (1954) implies that Eastern Soviet women are free to be Soviet while remaining loyal to their traditions.

By focusing on the aesthetic details of the women, their strikingly colourful dresses, highly decorated with patterns of gold, and their exotic headwear, Svilova celebrates the women's distinctiveness. Close-up shots of the dress are juxtaposed with shots of the agricultural produce, the latter serving as a metaphor for the workers themselves. The women are crops in as much the same way as the fruit they yield – a product of care and cultivation – assuming them the same parental role as the party: they are the caregivers and life-providers. The attention paid to their femininity suggests that, despite their dedication to the state, they have retained the customs of their heritage, and Svilova wants audiences to acknowledge its beauty and value in a world committed to modernism and industrialisation.

My analysis of the Eastern ideal concludes, first, that Svilova's handling of Self and Other, and the means of expressing – or separating – the two, are deeply problematic, and, second, that feminism is a key category for exploring assimilation into and exclusion from the Soviet community. Jane Miller has argued that, in laying the foundations of Orientalism, Edward Said largely ignored women as participants in imperial power relations.<sup>2</sup> Applying this notion to Svilova, her role in determining the formal stylistic and thematic markers used to construct a relationship between the subjects and the audience – or the East and West – point to the hand of a female editor. It is important to note that including Eastern women into the model of the ideal served above all to highlight the Soviet Union's adoption of cosmopolitanism, an outlook Svilova documents throughout her films of the mid-1950s, particularly in her construction of the 'Soviet abroad'.

The guise of cosmopolitanism was crucial because it fitted in with Khrushchev's long-term strategy to re-image the Soviet Union by gradually loosening the control imposed on the population during Stalin's dictatorship while, in reality, using cinema as the same tool of legitimisation and mobilisation that was used so effectively by Stalin to establish his cult of personality. Revolving around a type of local difference, the Soviet abroad sought to position Eastern Europe as a domestic, yet exotic, land. This was an intentional contradiction, a means of drawing attention to the region's shared socialist identity. Audiences were encouraged to collude in the fantasy of difference by acknowledging other regions in Eastern Europe as remote territory and allowing themselves to believe that the revolution was having a greater and far-reaching global impact than it perhaps was. A form of patriotic redress, Svilova's depiction of 'otherness' engages audiences in a ritual of public self-admiration on which the prestige of the Soviet Union is perpetually reaffirmed.

My analysis of Svilova's editorial techniques has identified her contribution. The acknowledgement of her contribution is important for two main reasons: it confirms that Svilova was an artist whose creativity was the result of a conscious decision-making process and, despite its unifying objective, it argues that the Soviet industry comprised creative and industrious artists whose individual voices can be located through rigorous analysis. This last point suggests that a film read with an appreciation of its maker and creative abilities offers more valuable results than a film read in isolation. It is far more fruitful, and enjoyable, to read them as a whole body of work and connect them according to what we know about their common denominator. Therefore, the methodologies I have employed to identify the prevailing traits of Svilova's editorial repertoire have pedagogical appeal, in that they represent a model for other researchers dedicated to distinguishing a voice within similarly elusive production processes.

Beyond recognising Svilova's contribution, my thesis has highlighted the snares that have beset her legacy. In doing so, I have argued that Svilova's work is worthy of greater and, more importantly, of a different type of attention than it has received until now. Inconsistencies in filmographies, biographies and archive catalogues have resulted in a disjointed and ambiguous picture of Svilova's contribution.

Characterised by numerous collaborations and various production roles (most notably alongside a film pioneer) and by her gender, her films have not until now been deemed compatible with traditional texts of film history. This perceived incompatibility effaced Svilova's body of work, and the same can be said for countless other women filmmakers who have been suppressed, disregarded and forgotten, so that in terms of film scholarship, classification and canonisation they are nowhere, or only somewhere peripheral, to be found. As one can gather from the

many catalogues, compilations, and histories in which early women filmmakers are scarcely mentioned, filmographies and archive catalogues do not tell us as much about films and filmmakers as they do about the status of our knowledge on the subject. The inconsistencies in records dealing with Svilova's legacy inform us that, unlike conventional resources which undermine the need for discussion by presenting their findings as fact, as Radha Vatsal argues, we need sources that foreground their research procedures, thereby accounting for and underlining the contingency and limits of their knowledge, and in turn encouraging further investigations and multiple conclusions.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, my project represents a process of analysis and close reading, but also an opportunity to rethink early film history and the modes through which historiographic and filmographic knowledge are transmitted.

Researching Svilova's contribution to Soviet documentary film practice has broadened my horizons to future studies. The most pressing issue is to continue uncovering the women filmmakers who were prominent in the Soviet industry. I have mentioned numerous other directors who have up to now received little to no critical attention. Detailed analysis of the films of Olga Preobrazhenskaya, Aleksandra Khokhlova and Yulia Solntseva, for example, would, first, allow for a wider appreciation of the contribution women made to the industry, and, second, prevent the risk of my research becoming isolated. My interest in uncovering further female influences within Soviet cinema and, more specifically, the relationship between the gender of a filmmaker and modes of representation, alludes to a second interest directly related to my studies. On a number of occasions, Svilova's representation of women was designed either to celebrate or denigrate an Eastern Other. My analysis of stories from China, India, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan suggests

that gender can be used to explore how and why the populations of these countries were included into – or excluded from – the Soviet family. I would like to develop this thread beyond Soviet contexts. While Svilova's films edify our knowledge of the construction of national identity in the formative post-war years of the Soviet Union, when the borders and socialist fraternity were subject to interminable growth and reduction, comparative studies might determine to what extent colonial women in, for example, British newsreels were constructed as 'British'. This analysis would allow us to understand further the common points of identity certain civilisations in specific periods of history deemed themselves to have. Moreover, it would be essential to map how these points were shaped according to external influences or interventions, such as the threat of military attack or technological innovation.

Comparing newsreel representations across international borders is an exercise I have to an extent already undertaken. The way in which Svilova edits the highlights of the 1956 F.A. Cup Final has drawn my attention to the sharing of footage and its consequent re-editing by individual newsreel studios. Any research that attempts to trace how source footage of an event is reassembled to accommodate audiences in different countries and across varying time periods would not only encourage fresh insight into our awareness of editorial practices but could also allow for a stronger comprehension of the event in question. As my analysis of Svilova's atrocity footage has demonstrated, the policies to which she complies provide more of a lesson on the political climate during the aftermath of World War II than it does on the war itself. Throughout my research it has been crucial I understood, or at least tried to understand, the thought processes behind Svilova's organisation of the footage and how these processes relate to, and comply with, the overarching policies of the Central Committee. My point above indicates that this was a particularly complex



task in my analysis of war footage, especially *Atrocities*. I would like to use this film as a departure point for a more detailed study of cinema and law, exploring footage employed to provide evidence of a crime and also footage that documents trials, the latter of which can be assembled to determine whether audiences believe the trial was conducted fairly and, more importantly, whether the defendant(s) is/are guilty. Footage of this nature is endowed with a power that eludes most, if not all, others. Since Nuremberg, cameras have become a feature of courtrooms, particularly in the United States where the creation of Court TV in 1991 rose in popularity after the high-profile case of O.J. Simpson four years later. The presentation of courtroom footage for television and film audiences is a relatively undiscovered field, researched in only a handful of books and articles such as Marjorie Cohn and David Dow's *Cameras in the Courtroom: Television and the Pursuit of Justice* (2002) and Jennifer L. Mnookin's 'Reproducing a Trial: Evidence and Its Assessment in *Paradise Lost*'. Documentaries such as the *Paradise Lost* trilogy (Berlinger, 1996-2012), *Murder on a Sunday Morning* (de Lastrade, 2003), *The Staircase* (de Lastrade, 2004), *Witch Hunt* (Hardy Jr. and Nachman, 2008) and *Presumed Guilty* (Hernández and Smith, 2008) constitute a genre that encourages a theoretical engagement with the techniques employed to assemble such sensitive and commanding footage.

My analysis of Svilova's films has come as part of a general effort in film studies to rewrite history by empowering female subjects, texts and readings. As long as filmmakers such as Svilova remain marginalised, projects of this nature are critical. The subject of my thesis arose from the premise that mapping a history of women's engagement in cinema meant being willing to explore the range of techniques in which women produced, consumed and performed in the growing industry. Insofar as Svilova was somewhat exceptional in her early and productive engagement in the

male-dominated field of filmmaking, giving room to this specific subject has been a long overdue but culturally vital gesture. Kay Armatage makes a strong claim for the value of research into women filmmakers: 'Besides the fact that we [Western culture] do not know much about them, they enlighten our understanding of the industry and women's position within it.'<sup>4</sup> Armatage alludes to the notion that Shipman's authorship is worth going back to, not because she was unjustly ignored in the construction of film history, or because she was unique and ahead of her time (Armatage admits that this was the original premise of her research), but because her work 'welcomes a variety of readings and unfolds issues of modernity, generic conventions and cinematic practice'.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, my thesis has sought to identify important threads within the films of a female director-editor, one who can help us to address issues of national identity (its construction and defence), political legitimacy and mass mobilisation. The power bestowed on cinema by the Soviet authorities is not a new discovery, but my analysis of Svilova's films has provided original insight into the exact nature of this power and a fresh appreciation of its force.



# Notes

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## Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Julia Wright, 'Making the Cut: Female Editors and Representation in the Film and Media Industry', <http://www.csa/publications/newsletters/academic-year-2008-09>, accessed 28 November, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Lynne Attwood, 'The Stalin Era', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Gunning, 'The Whole World Within Reach: Travel Images Without Borders', in Jeffrey Ruoff (ed.), *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 25.

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> All the autobiographies are stored on one roll of microfilm, archived under the label 2091/2/483.

<sup>2</sup> Annette Michelson (ed.), *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (London: Pluto, 1984), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Masha Enzenberger, 'Elizaveta Svilova', in Annette Kuhn and Susannah Radstone (eds.), *The Woman's Companion to International Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> Gwendolyn Foster, *Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), pp. 349-350.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Rollberg, *The Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 675.

<sup>6</sup> Translated and reprinted in Yuri Tsivian (ed.), *Lines of Resistance: Dziga Vertov and the Twenties* (Pordenone: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, 2004), pp. 87-89.

<sup>7</sup> Enzenberger, *The Woman's Companion to International Film*, p. 390.

<sup>8</sup> Rollberg, *The Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*, p. 675.

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- <sup>9</sup> Peter Waldron, *The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917* (London: St Martin's Press, 1997), p. 97.
- <sup>10</sup> Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 43.
- <sup>11</sup> Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (eds.), *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), p. 57.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Rashit Yangirov, 'Onwards and Upwards: The Origins of the Lenin Cult in Soviet Cinema', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (Routledge: London, 1993), p. 30.
- <sup>14</sup> Yangirov, *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, p. 30.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 31.
- <sup>16</sup> Elizaveta Vertova-Svilova and Anna Vinogradova (eds.), *Dziga Vertov in the Memories of his Contemporaries* (Moscow, 1976), p. 6.
- <sup>17</sup> Cited in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 88.
- <sup>18</sup> Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2009), p. 40.
- <sup>19</sup> Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society*, p. 43.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 40.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 102.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 105.
- <sup>23</sup> Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 253.
- <sup>24</sup> Mezhrabpom was originally named Rus. Rus was established in 1915 under the financial backing of Michael Trofimov and the artistic guidance of Alexander Sanin, an established theatre director. The change from Rus to Mezhrabpom came in 1923 when the Worker's International Relief (WIR) acquired Rus as an investment. WIR had been established to provide aid to victims of the Russian famine. From its offices in Berlin, the organisation solicited relief funds from various leftist organisations in Europe and the United States. WIR promptly turned to film as a means of advancing relief efforts. In the course of supplying materials to several Soviet industries from 1922 to 1924, WIR supplied Goskino and other Soviet film companies with celluloid and equipment; this advance was to be redeemed when WIR received distribution rights for future Soviet feature productions. See Vance Kepley Jr, 'The Origins of Soviet Cinema: A Study in Industrial Development', in Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (eds.), *Inside the Film Factory* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 70.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Cited in J. Hoberman, 'A Face to the Shtetl: Soviet Yiddish Cinema 1924-36', in Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (eds.), *Inside the Film Factory* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 149.
- <sup>28</sup> Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, pp. 172-189.

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<sup>29</sup> John MacKay, 'Dziga Vertov', <http://www.yale.edu/slavic/resources/download/Dziga-Vertov-Short-Biography-MacKay-1.doc>, accessed 3 July, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, pp. 214-220.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 190.

<sup>32</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> D.W. Spring suggests that the Central Committee called for Soiuzkinoekhranika to be disbanded. The studio temporarily existed as the Moscow Central Newsreel before becoming the Central Studio for Documentary Film. The Central Committee was also dissatisfied with the Moscow Central Newsreel, due mainly to the studio's apparent failure to record important incidences during World War II. The management at the studio defended its methods and claimed that a higher degree of organisation had been sacrificed to improve the working conditions for the camera operators. The Central Committee did not share the studio's concern for its workers, nor did it acknowledge the heroic efforts the workers had made to portray the country at war. See D.W. Spring, 'Soviet Newsreel and the Great Patriotic War', in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring (eds.), *Propaganda, Politics and Film 1918-45*, second edition (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1986), p. 286.

<sup>34</sup> Leonid Kozlov, 'The Artist and the Shadow of Ivan', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 172. The directors of the local camera divisions, who until 1944 had focused on the human interest aspect of war, were instructed by the management of the Central Studio for Documentary Film (then directed by established theatre and film director, Sergei Gerasimov) to concentrate the crux of their newsreels on the Red Army's strategic operations. The images of war – the bloodied bandages, weary soldiers and the myriad of corpses – all captured from real life battlefields rather than reconstructed on a film set, were considered too candid for the general population. Peter Kenz summarises the tone of the later Soviet war films in that 'during the Stalinist years artists did not dare to touch upon any genuine issue facing society. Directors either turned to the past for subject matter, or depicted a never-never land of smiling and singing collective farmworkers.'<sup>34</sup> *Berlin* (Raizman/Svilova, 1945) is an example of the depersonalised approach to narration the studio adopted. Post-produced graphics map the advancement of the Red Army from Stalingrad to Berlin, while the voiceover details each individual strategy that led Marshal Zhukov and the Red Army to victory.

<sup>35</sup> All the Pumpyanskaya references are taken from 'I Dreamed of Working in a Studio', *Kinozapiski* 62 (October 2002).

<sup>36</sup> John MacKay, 'Dziga Vertov', in Stephen Norris and William Sunderland (eds.), *Russia's People of Empire* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012), p. 291.

<sup>37</sup> After the revolution, the Bolshevik faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Central Committee

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was then absorbed into the Communist Party. I do not refer to Bolsheviks or Bolshevism because these terms are deemed incompatible with Stalin's rule of government. Instead, to provide continuity from the revolution to the Khrushchev era, I refer to the governing body as the Central Committee.

<sup>38</sup> Cited in Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2005), p. 157.

<sup>39</sup> Jamie Miller, *Soviet Cinema: Politics and Persuasion under Stalin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> A. Voronsky, *Iskusstvo ekrana. Rukovodstvo dlya kino-akterov I rezhissеров* (1924). Translated in Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> Boris Eichenbaum, *Poetika Kino* (1917). Translated in Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Cited in Ted Parry, *Masterpieces in Modernist Cinema* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> Valeriya Selunskaya and Maria Zezina, 'Documentary Film – A Soviet Source', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 178.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in Lynne Attwood, 'The Stalin Era', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 54.

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, p. 108.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Kenez, 'Soviet Cinema in the Age of Stalin', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 55.

<sup>51</sup> R. Pikel, *Zhizn Iskusstva* (April 1928). Translated in Taylor, *The Politics of the Soviet Cinema*, p. 118.

<sup>52</sup> Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, p. 93.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 92-93.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> The GRK (State Repertoire Committee) was established in 1923 as a means to uphold the Central Committee's policy of legitimisation. In 1936 it was absorbed into the All-Union Committee for the Arts, before becoming part of the Cinema Committee structure in 1938. See Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, pp. 53-55.

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- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 55.
- <sup>59</sup> Cited in Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, p. 61.
- <sup>60</sup> Miller, *Soviet Cinema*, p. 62.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 102.
- <sup>62</sup> Kenez, *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, p. 61.
- <sup>63</sup> Miller, p. 94.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 100.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> Ivan Bolshakov, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* (20 March, 1951). Translated in Ian Christie, 'The Director in Soviet Cinema', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 166.
- <sup>67</sup> Kenez, *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, p. 55.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 63.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 66.
- <sup>71</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 116.
- <sup>72</sup> 'The Foundation of the Museum', <http://www.orientmuseum.ru>, accessed 23 October, 2010.
- <sup>73</sup> Kathleen Cioffi, *Alternative Theatre in Poland 1954-1989* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 24.
- <sup>74</sup> Christie, *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, p. 167.
- <sup>75</sup> Alison McMahan, *Alice Guy Blaché: The Lost Visionary of the Cinema* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2002), p. 21.
- <sup>76</sup> Paisley Livingston, 'Cinematic Authorship', in Richard Allen and Murray Smith (eds.), *Film Theory and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 300.
- <sup>77</sup> Cited in Linda Seger & Edward Whetmore, *From Script to Screen: The Collaborative Art of Filmmaking* (Hollywood: Lone Eagle, 2004), p. 174.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 67.
- <sup>79</sup> Graham Roberts, *The Man with a Movie Camera* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), preface.
- <sup>80</sup> Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, p. 52.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 53.
- <sup>82</sup> Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 24.
- <sup>83</sup> Cited in Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, p. 12.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 88.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 8.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 72.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 90.



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- <sup>89</sup> Jeremy Hicks, *Dziga Vertov: Defining Documentary Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 40.
- <sup>90</sup> Mikhail Bleiman, 'Shagai, Sovet!', *Leningradskaia pravda* (26 August, 1926). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 166.
- <sup>91</sup> Aleksandr Fevralsky, 'Shagai, Sovet!', *Pravda* (12 March, 1926). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 161.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 41.
- <sup>93</sup> N. Makovskaia, '2000 metrov v strane bolshevikov', *Trud* (17 March, 1926). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 162.
- <sup>94</sup> Izmail Urazov, 'Shagai, Sovet!' (source unknown). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 164.
- <sup>95</sup> Vladimir Korolevich, 'O pervykh slovakh', *Zhenshchina v kino* (Moscow: Teakinopechat, 1928), pp. 90-93. Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 203.
- <sup>96</sup> Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, p. 194.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 211.
- <sup>98</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 46.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 48.
- <sup>100</sup> Nikolai Aseev, 'Shestaia chast ... vozmozhnosti', *Kino* (26 October, 1926). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 200.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 56.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 60.
- <sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 61.
- <sup>104</sup> Vladimir Fefer, 'Odinnadtsati Dziga Vertova', *Ezhenedelnik literatury i iskusstva* 4 (1928). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 304.
- <sup>105</sup> D. B., 'Odinnadtsati', *Tambovskaia pravda* (7 June, 1928). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 306.
- <sup>106</sup> 'Rabochie ob Odinnadtsatom' (author unknown). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 307.
- <sup>107</sup> Elizaveta Svilova, 'Gde Odinnadtsati', *Kino* (17 April, 1928). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 294.
- <sup>108</sup> For example, see Vlada Petrić, *Constructivism in Film: The Man with the Movie Camera: A Cinematic Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Roberts, *The Man with a Movie Camera*.
- <sup>109</sup> Konstantin Feldman, 'Kino i Aristotel', *Sovetskii ekran* 5 (1929). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 323.
- <sup>110</sup> Petrić, *Constructivism in Film*, p. 107.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

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- <sup>112</sup> Kazimir Malevich, 'Zhivopisnye zakony v problemakh kino', *Kino i kultura* 7-8 (1929). Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 344.
- <sup>113</sup> Judith Mayne, *Kino and the Woman Question: Feminism and Soviet Silent Film* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1989), pp. 166-170.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 169.
- <sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 169.
- <sup>116</sup> Vlada Petrić, 'Cinematic Abstraction as a Means of Conveying Ideological Messages in *The Man with the Movie Camera*', in Anna Lawton (ed.), *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 107.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid, p. 162.
- <sup>118</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 91.
- <sup>119</sup> Cited in Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, p. 122.
- <sup>120</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 93.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid, p. 194.
- <sup>122</sup> Jeremy Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 201.
- <sup>123</sup> Mayne, *Kino and the Woman Question*, p. 31.
- <sup>124</sup> David Bordwell, 'The Idea of Montage in Soviet Art and Film', *Cinema Journal* 11.2 (Spring 1972), p. 16.
- <sup>125</sup> Apart from Eisenstein, who Svilova described meeting in her introduction to *Dziga Vertov in the Memories of his Contemporaries*, I have been unable to ascertain whether Svilova personally knew Pudovkin or Kuleshov.
- <sup>126</sup> David Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 129.
- <sup>127</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>128</sup> Cited in Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 79.
- <sup>129</sup> Petrone, *Life has Become More Joyous*, p. 78.
- <sup>130</sup> Ibid, p. 80.
- <sup>131</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>132</sup> Having gained his first experience in the late 1910s as a filmmaker directing agit films during the Civil War, Pudovkin was mentored by Vladimir Gardin (for whom Svilova edited films in the mid-1910s) at VGIK where he was taught a conservative, logistical-driven style of filmmaking. He left this classical approach behind to experiment with Kuleshov, before departing again to create a symbolic, narrative-based structure. See David Gillespie, *Early Soviet Cinema: Innovation, Ideology and Propaganda* (London: Wallflower, 2000), pp. 57-58.
- <sup>133</sup> The experiment consisted of intercutting a shot of the face of Ivan Mozhukhin, an actor of the Tsarist era, with shots of a bowl of soup, a dead woman lying in a coffin and a young

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girl playing with a doll. When the sequence was shown to audiences, Kuleshov claimed that they believed Mozhukhin's face changed to portray the emotion appropriate to each of the three objects, even though Kuleshov had simply intercut the same facial shot three times.

<sup>134</sup> Vertova-Svilova and Vinogradova, *Dziga Vertov in the Memories of his Contemporaries*, p. 66.

<sup>135</sup> Cited in Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinions in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 124.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p. 134.

<sup>140</sup> Wright, 'Making the Cut: Female Editors and Representation in the Film and Media Industry'.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Patricia Zimmerman, 'Flaherty's Midwives', in Diane Waldman and Janet Walker (eds.), *Feminism and Documentary* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Wright, 'Making the Cut: Female Editors and Representation in the Film and Media Industry'.

<sup>146</sup> Hicks, *Dziga Vertov*, p. 108.

<sup>147</sup> Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, p. 12.

<sup>148</sup> Enzensberger, *The Woman's Companion to International Film*, p. 390.

<sup>149</sup> Kay Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 75.

<sup>150</sup> Wright, 'Making the Cut: Female Editors and Representation in the Film and Media Industry'.

<sup>151</sup> Cited in Tom Gunning, *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 32.

<sup>152</sup> Dudley Nichols, John Ford's accredited collaborator, directly addresses Ford's status of authorship in *Twenty Best Film Plays* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1943), preface.

<sup>153</sup> Kay Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 41.

<sup>154</sup> Cited in Michelson, *Kino-Eye*, p. 190.

<sup>155</sup> The women included here are not the full extent of early Soviet women filmmakers. I have identified a number of others on film credits for whom no biography or existing research exists. Irina Setkina, for example, is one *News of the Day* director-editor who, despite

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her prolific output from the 1930s to the 1950s, including a documentary film about Majdanek in 1945, is now forgotten.

<sup>156</sup> Rollberg, *The Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*, p. 543.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 544.

<sup>158</sup> Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country*, p. 76.

<sup>159</sup> Maya Turovskaya, 'Woman and the Woman Question', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 145.

<sup>160</sup> Cited in Efim Levin, 'Yulia Solntseva', in Kuhn and Radstone (eds.), *The Woman's Companion to International Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 374.

<sup>161</sup> Levin, *The Woman's Companion to International Film*, p. 374.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Lynne Attwood, 'Women, Cinema and Society', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 43.

<sup>165</sup> Cited in Attwood, *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 43.

<sup>166</sup> Aleksandra Khokhlova, *Lev Kuleshov: Fifty Years in Film* (Moscow: Raduga, 1987), p. 213.

<sup>167</sup> Ulrich Gregor and Svenja Simon, *Amazons of the Avant-Garde in Film* (Berlin: Kinemathek and Deutsche Guggenheim, 1999), p. 38.

<sup>168</sup> Cited in Dziga Vertov's diary. Translated in Tsivian, *Lines of Resistance*, p. 281.

<sup>169</sup> Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 224.

<sup>170</sup> Maya Turovskaya, *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 144.

<sup>171</sup> Graham Roberts, *Forward Soviet! History and Non-fiction Film in the USSR* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), p. 51.

<sup>172</sup> Judith Mayne, *Kino and the Woman Question: Feminism and Soviet Silent Film* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), pp. 28-29.

<sup>173</sup> Attwood, *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 30.

<sup>174</sup> Renee Baigell and Matthew Baigell, *Peeling Potatoes, Painting Pictures: Women Artists in Post-Soviet Russia, Estonia and Latvia* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>175</sup> Gail Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society* (London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 6.

<sup>176</sup> Mayne, *Kino and the Woman Question*, p. 29.

<sup>177</sup> See Judith Mayne, 'On the Edge of the Dialectic: Women's Space in Soviet Film Narrative', *Jump Cut* 23 (October 1980), pp. 26-29. I use the silent era to contextualise Svilova because there were very few women directing films between the 1930s and 1950s. E. Ann Kaplan goes as far as to describe this period as one where 'women were silenced', that is before they began to speak again in the 1960s. See E. Ann Kaplan, 'Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms', in Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis and Valerie Raoul (eds.), *Women*

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*Filmmakers: Refocusing* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), pp. 17-18. For this reason, my thesis defines 'early' as any filmmaker active in the industry prior to 1950.

<sup>178</sup> Angela Martin, 'Refocusing Authorship in Women's Filmmaking', in Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis and Valerie Raoul (eds.), *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), p. 29.

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, *The Girl from God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema* (Armatage, 2003), *Women in Polish Cinema* (Mazierska and Ostrowska, 2006) and *Women Filmmakers in Early Hollywood* (Ward Mahar, 2006).

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> A production document signed by Svilova on 20 May, 1945, suggests that she had some, if not all, control over the direction of *Oświecim*. Svilova lists the main scenes and the order in which she plans to cut them together. This order is identical to the narrative of the final cut. RGALI 2091/2/642.

<sup>2</sup> Genadii Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina: Vlast' i antisemitizm* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2003), p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Vorontsov is interviewed in *The Liberation of Auschwitz* (von zur Mühlen, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, pp. 181-182.

<sup>7</sup> 'Osventsim: Stsenarii i stenarnyi', signed by Svilova, 20 May, 1945. RGALI 2487/1/509, sheet 13.

<sup>8</sup> Judith Doneson gives a brief overview of the history of 'Holocaust Film' in the introduction to her book, *The Holocaust in American Film*, second edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 6-10.

<sup>9</sup> Since 1992, ten Holocaust-themed films have been nominated for an Academy Award.

<sup>10</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> A. Krol, 'Oswentsim: Novyi dokumental'nyi fil'm', *Pravda Ukrainy* (7 June, 1945), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Correspondence between G. Fradkin, Soiuzintorgkino representative in Berlin, and P. Brigadnov, manager of Soiuzintorgkino, on 4 October. 'Otchet o finansovom sostoianii predstavitel'stva 'Soiuzintorgkino' v Germanii po sostoianiiu na 1 oktiabria 1945 goda.' RGALI 2918/1/142, sheet 10.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Tode, 'KZ Film in Vienna Cinemas: Considering two Atrocity Films 1945/46', in Karin Moser (ed.), *Occupied Images: Film, Culture and Propaganda in Austria 1945-1955* (Vienna: Filmarchiv, 2005), p. 363.

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- <sup>14</sup> Tode gives more details about this screening in Moser, *Occupied Images*, pp. 357-374.
- <sup>15</sup> Febiofest 2005, 'Documentaries on the Second World War: Auschwitz', [http://www.febiofest.cz/12\\_archive/detail\\_filmu.php](http://www.febiofest.cz/12_archive/detail_filmu.php), accessed 4 May, 2009.
- <sup>16</sup> Thomas Tode, 'Of Course, One Could Have Closed the Dead Person's Eyes', *Kolík Film* 4 (October 2005), p. 100.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 101.
- <sup>18</sup> John MacKay, 'Dziga Vertov: 1896-1954', <http://www.yale.edu/slavic/resources/download/Dziga-Vertov-Short-Biography-MacKay-1.doc>, accessed 23 May, 2010.
- <sup>19</sup> Jeremy Hicks, 'Confronting the Holocaust: Mark Donskoi's *The Unvanquished*', *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3.1 (2009), p. 35.
- <sup>20</sup> Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein*, p. 146.
- <sup>21</sup> Cited in Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, p. 55.
- <sup>22</sup> The children belong to the group of ninety sets of Jewish twins who were kept alive for the purpose of genetic experimentation.
- <sup>23</sup> Janina Struck, *Photographing the Holocaust* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 194.
- <sup>24</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, second edition, trans. H. Gray (London: University of California Press, 2005), p. 10.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 14.
- <sup>26</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. R. Howard (London: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 92.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 79.
- <sup>28</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 87.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 84.
- <sup>30</sup> Cited in Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 84.
- <sup>31</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 85.
- <sup>32</sup> Correspondence with the film group of the 1st Ukrainian front, 2 January to 29 June, 1945. RGALI 2487/1/1021.8/7, sheet 55.
- <sup>33</sup> Auschwitz protocol of inspections, GARF R7021/I08/17, sheet 156.
- <sup>34</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 11.
- <sup>35</sup> See Yitshak Arad, 'The Holocaust as Reflected in the Soviet Russian Language Newspapers in the Years 1941-1945', in Robert Shapino (ed.), *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2003), pp. 199-220.
- <sup>36</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 12.
- <sup>37</sup> Zvi Gitelman, 'Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union', in Zvi Gitelman (ed.), *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 20.

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- <sup>38</sup> Genadii Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina: Vlast' i antisemitizm* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2003), pp. 242-249.
- <sup>39</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 179.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 45.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 50.
- <sup>42</sup> The pigeon was likely viewed as a threat to the Nazis due to its potential use as a communication device.
- <sup>43</sup> Valerii Fomin (ed.), *Kino na voine: Dokumenty i svidetel'stva* (Moscow: Materik, 2005), pp. 141-42.
- <sup>44</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 7.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 11.
- <sup>46</sup> Karel Berkhoff, 'Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population: The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941-1945', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 10.1 (Winter 2009), p. 96.
- <sup>47</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 60.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 187.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 186.
- <sup>50</sup> Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgement: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 42-3.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Lawrence Douglas, 'Film as Witness: Screening Nazi Concentration Camp before the Nuremberg Tribunal', *Yale Law Journal* 105.2 (November 1995), p. 462.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> Robert Jackson, *Volume II, International Military Tribunal: Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945-1 October 1946, in 42 Volumes* (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), p. 118.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 462.
- <sup>56</sup> Douglas, *Yale Law Journal*, p. 462.
- <sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Sussex, 'The Fate of F3080', *Sight and Sound* (April 1984), p. 92.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 93.
- <sup>60</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (London: Blackwell, 1994), p. 216.
- <sup>61</sup> Frontline, 'Memory of the Camps', <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/camp/faqs.html>, accessed 10 February, 2010.
- <sup>62</sup> Sussex, *Sight and Sound*, p. 92.
- <sup>63</sup> Frontline, 'Memory of the Camps'.
- <sup>64</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 214.

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- <sup>65</sup> Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany: World War II Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p. 143.
- <sup>66</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Different Worlds: British Perceptions of the Final Solution During the Second World War', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Final Solution* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 261.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Tony Kushner, 'The Memory of Belsen', in Joanne Reilly et al (eds.), *Belsen in History and Memory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 187.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid, p. 191.
- <sup>70</sup> Cited in Kushner, *Belsen in History and Memory*, p. 187.
- <sup>71</sup> Kushner, *Belsen in History and Memory*, p. 187.
- <sup>72</sup> Reilly, *Belsen: The Liberation of a Concentration Camp*, p. 61.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 61.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 228.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 214.
- <sup>77</sup> Tode, *Occupied Images*, p. 372.
- <sup>78</sup> Susan Carruthers, 'Compulsory Viewing: Concentration Camp Film and German Re-education', *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 30.3 (2001), p. 742.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 742.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 743.
- <sup>81</sup> Tode, *Occupied Images*, p. 367.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 372.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>84</sup> Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 58.
- <sup>85</sup> Carruthers, *Millennium*, p. 744.
- <sup>86</sup> André Pierre Colombat, *The Holocaust in French Film* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), p. 14.
- <sup>87</sup> Tode, 'KZ Film in Vienna Cinemas: Considering two Atrocity Films 1945/46', p. 361.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 363.
- <sup>89</sup> Colombat, *The Holocaust in French Film*, p. x.
- <sup>90</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* (London: Bantam, 1986), p. 403.
- <sup>91</sup> French cinema during and after the occupation displays a similar lack of concern about the destiny of Jews. No French film was entirely dedicated to the subject of Jewish persecution until Frédéric Rossif's *Le Temps du Ghetto* in 1961. Until then, French films about World War II either omitted the Holocaust or mentioned it only within general representations of the



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deportations, the concentration camps or the history of the war. Even the acclaimed 'retour au reel' and the aesthetic revolution instigated by the New Wave did not alter this general attitude. See Colombat, *The Holocaust in French Film*, p. 367.

<sup>92</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 273.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001), pp. 65-66.

<sup>96</sup> Fomin, *Kino na voine*, p. 142.

<sup>97</sup> Nina Markovna, *Nina's Journey: A Memoir of Stalin's Russia and the Second World War* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), pp. 230-31.

<sup>98</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 191.

<sup>99</sup> Gwendolyn Foster, *Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 350; Peter Rollberg, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 675; Masha Enzenberger, 'Elizaveta Svilova', in Annette Kuhn and Susannah Radstone (eds.), *The Women's Companion to International Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 390.

<sup>100</sup> The archive can be viewed online at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/findaid/russian.html>.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Marrus, 'The Holocaust at Nuremberg', *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998), p. 41.

<sup>102</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Rhetoric of the Image (1964)', reprinted in Liz Wells (ed.), *The Photography Reader* (Oxen: Routledge, 2003), p. 120.

<sup>103</sup> Christian Metz, 'Photography and Fetish', *October* 34 (Autumn 1985), p. 84.

<sup>104</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2010), p. 97.

<sup>105</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 69.

<sup>106</sup> Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*, second edition (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997), p. 90.

<sup>107</sup> Colonel Pokrovsky, 'Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 7: Fifty-Ninth Day', <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/02-14-46.asp>, accessed August 2010.

<sup>108</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 19.

<sup>109</sup> L.M. Smirnov, 'Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 7: Fifty-Ninth Day', <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/02-19-46.asp>, accessed August 2010.

<sup>110</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 65.

<sup>111</sup> L.M. Smirnov, 'Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 7: Fifty-Seventh Day', <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/02-19-46.asp>, accessed August 2010.

<sup>112</sup> Smirnov, 'Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 7: Fifty-Ninth Day'.

<sup>113</sup> Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (United States: First Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 182.

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<sup>114</sup> L.M. Smirnov, 'Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Volume 7: Sixty-Second Day',

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/02-19-46.asp>, accessed August 2010.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 192.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Shermer and Alex Grobham, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 117.

<sup>119</sup> Ewa Mazierska, 'Wanda Jakubowska: The Communist Fighter', in Ewa Mazierska and Elżbieta Ostrowska (eds.), *Women in Polish Cinema* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 153.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 125.

<sup>122</sup> Hicks, *First Films of the Holocaust*, p. 17.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> Lynne Attwood, 'The Stalin Era', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen: Soviet Women and Cinema from the Beginning to the End of the Communist Era* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 54. I use the term 'feminine ideal' to refer to cinematic depictions of the 'new Soviet woman', the perfected model of industriousness and dedication the female population was encouraged by Stalin to emulate.

<sup>2</sup> Kristen Whissel, 'The Gender of Empire: American Modernity, Masculinity and Edison's War Actualities', in Jennifer M. Bean and Diana Negra (eds.), *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, 'Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema', in E. Deidre Pribram (ed.), *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television* (London: Verso, 1988), p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Engel, *Women in Russia 1700-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 164.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 250.

<sup>7</sup> Choi Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture and Bolshevik Ideology 1910-1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Beatrice Farnsworth, *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), p. xiii.

<sup>9</sup> Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 53.

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- <sup>10</sup> Denise Youngblood and Maria Enzensberger, 'Soviet Union', in Annette Kuhn and Susannah Radstone (eds.), *The Women's Companion to International Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 379.
- <sup>11</sup> Maya Turovskaya, 'Women's Cinema in the USSR', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen* (Michigan: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 144.
- <sup>12</sup> Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, p. 71.
- <sup>13</sup> Norma Noonan and Carol Nechemias, *Encyclopaedia of Russian Women's Movements* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 133.
- <sup>14</sup> Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 67.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 43.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 68.
- <sup>17</sup> Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 177.
- <sup>18</sup> Jeremy Hicks, *Dziga Vertov: Defining Documentary Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 108.
- <sup>19</sup> These three films derived from a project in 1933 carrying the generic title, *She*. See Annette Michelson (ed.), *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 296.
- <sup>20</sup> Elżbieta Ostrowska, 'Polish "Superwoman": A Liberation or Victimisation?', in Ewa Mazierska and Elżbieta Ostrowska (eds.), *Women in Polish Cinema* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 56.
- <sup>21</sup> Ewa Mazierska, 'Wanda Jakubowska: The Communist Fighter', in Ewa Mazierska and Elżbieta Ostrowska (eds.), *Women in Polish Cinema* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 162.
- <sup>22</sup> Oksana Bulgakova, 'The Hydra of the Soviet Cinema: The Metamorphoses of the Soviet Film Heroine', in Lynne Attwood (ed.), *Red Women on the Silver Screen: Soviet Women and Cinema from the Beginning to the End of the Communist Era* (London: Pandora Press, 1993), p. 157.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 158.
- <sup>24</sup> Françoise Navailh, 'The Emancipated Woman: Stalinist Propaganda in Soviet Feature Films 1930-1950', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 12.3 (1992), p. 206.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 162.
- <sup>26</sup> Bulgakova, *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, p. 161.
- <sup>27</sup> Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, p. 60.
- <sup>28</sup> Cited in Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, p. 61.
- <sup>29</sup> Stacey, *Star Gazing*, p. 36.
- <sup>30</sup> Jennifer M. Bean, 'Towards a Feminist Historiography of Early Cinema', in Jennifer M. Bean and Diana Negra (eds.), *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 10.

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- <sup>31</sup> See Chapter 4 of Lilya Kaganovsky, *How the Soviet Man was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity under Stalin* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008) titled 'Heterosexual Panic', pp. 67-118.
- <sup>32</sup> See Anne Eakin Moss, 'Stalin's Harem: The Spectator's Dilemma in Late 1930s Soviet Film', *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3.2 (2009).
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 158.
- <sup>34</sup> Stacey, *Star Gazing*, pp. 126-175.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 130.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 136.
- <sup>37</sup> Karen Hollinger, *In the Company of Women: Contemporary Female Friendship Films* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 22.
- <sup>38</sup> Moss, *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, p. 167.
- <sup>39</sup> Gillian Frith, *The Intimacy which is Knowledge: Female Friendship in the Novels of Women Writers* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1998), p. 3.
- <sup>40</sup> Ostrowska, *Women in Polish Cinema*, p. 62.
- <sup>41</sup> Stacey, *Star Gazing*, p. 151.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 152.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 159.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 136.
- <sup>45</sup> Antonia Lant, *Blackout: Reinventing Women for Wartime British Cinema* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 113.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 11.
- <sup>47</sup> In 1939 Svilova also directed *Greater Force* (1939), a film committed entirely to eulogising the efforts of Soviet women. *Greater Force* is now unwatchable due to the film's nitric base but its synopsis indicates that it documented women's indispensability in industries such as agriculture, transport, public health and culture. *Greater Force* served not only to celebrate female liberation but also to remind women of the burgeoning responsibilities attached to this freedom.
- <sup>48</sup> Nancy Huston, 'The Matrix of War: Mothers and Heroes', *Poetics Today* 6 (1985), pp. 154-55.
- <sup>49</sup> Lant, *Blackout*, p. 79.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 102.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> This is also evident in one of Svilova's later newsreels, *News of the Day no.43* (1948). In the village of Mstera in the Vladimir region, a woman artist, set up in a studio in her kitchen, paints intricate details on a miniature, an art form that has since made the village famous throughout Russia.

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- <sup>53</sup> Lant, *Blackout*, p. 61.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> 'Metro', signed by Svilova. RGALI 2091/2/642.
- <sup>56</sup> Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, p. 143.
- <sup>57</sup> Lant, *Blackout*, p. 107.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 93.
- <sup>59</sup> Charles Drazin, *The Finest Years: British Cinema of the 1940s* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 18.
- <sup>60</sup> Janet Thumin, 'The Female Audience: Mobile Women and Married Ladies', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.), *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 249.
- <sup>61</sup> See Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16.3 (1975), pp. 6-18.
- <sup>62</sup> Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, p. 213.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 215.
- <sup>65</sup> Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. J. Rose (London: Verso, 2007), p. 128.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 216.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 78.
- <sup>68</sup> Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, p. 83.
- <sup>69</sup> Catherine Gourley, *Rosie and Mrs America: Perceptions of Women in the 1930s and 1940s* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing, 2008), p. 4.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 4.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>72</sup> Philip C. DiMare, *Movies in American History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Santa Barbara, 2011), p. 1087.
- <sup>73</sup> Thumin, *Nationalising Femininity*, p. 246.
- <sup>74</sup> Lant, *Blackout*, p. 85.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>76</sup> R. W. Davies, *Soviet Economic Development from Lenin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 65.
- <sup>77</sup> Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, p. 143.
- <sup>78</sup> Ostrowska, *Women in Polish Cinema*, p. 56.
- <sup>79</sup> Bradley Abrams, *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 57. Czechoslovakia was identified as a pivotal country in determining the future of Europe. George Marshall, U.S. Secretary of State, proposed a plan to stabilise the socio-political situation in Western Europe, incorporating West Germany into the Western bloc and reducing the level of Soviet influence in Eastern

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Europe. A meeting held on 28 May, 1947, negotiated Eastern Europe's participation in the programme of European rehabilitation, but only if countries rejected the near exclusive orientation of their economies toward the Soviet Union in favour of broad European integration. Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, sanctioned the provision of aid to Czechoslovakia but rejected any form of American control over its economy. Under guidance from Soviet economist, Evgeni Varga, Molotov deemed the Marshall Plan manipulative, a programme that was not designed to assist the helpless war-torn nations of Eastern Europe but one that was in fact self-serving, needed by the United States, first, to alleviate the anticipated threat of overproduction, and, second, to establish a bloc of bourgeois countries under American domination. Nikolai Novikov, Soviet Ambassador to the United States, increased Molotov's wariness by suggesting that the Marshall Plan amounted to 'the establishment of a Western European bloc as a tool of U.S. policy'. See Mikhail Narinsky, 'Soviet Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Cold War', in Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1991: A Retrospective* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), p. 107.

<sup>80</sup> Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing*, p. 136.

<sup>81</sup> Gay Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 125.

<sup>82</sup> Untitled document. RGALI 2091/2/643.

<sup>83</sup> Svilova documents two similar stories in 1950. *News of the Day no.28* (1950) features an Ural automobile factory in which a female supervisor teaches a room full of male and female workers. She uses a diagram to explain a new production method. The workers then commence production, putting into practice what they have been taught. *News of the Day no.32* (1950) documents a female supervisor delivering a motivational speech to her female workforce in a Moscow electro-lamp factory. They are encouraged to increase production for the good of the revolution. Svilova includes a sequence of close-ups of the women's faces as they listen. Their joyful expressions suggest that they are receptive to the message. The close-ups also reveal the ethnic variety within the workforce, as both Western and Eastern Soviet women are seen on the factory floor.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>85</sup> Liubov Denisova, *Rural Women in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*, trans. I. Mukhina (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), pp. 144-145.

<sup>86</sup> Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 168.

<sup>87</sup> Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, p. 47.

<sup>88</sup> Greta Bucher, 'Struggling to Survive: Soviet Women in the Post-War Years', *Journal of Women's History* 12.1 (2000), p. 139.

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<sup>89</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, 'Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms', in Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis and Valerie Raoul (eds.), *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), p. 25.

<sup>90</sup> Untitled document. RGALI 2091/2/643.

## Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie (eds.), *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Julian Graffy, 'Scant Sign of Thaw: Fear and Anxiety in the Representation of Foreigners in the Soviet Films of the Khrushchev Years', in Stephen Hutchings (ed.), *Russia and its Other(s) on Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> See Martin Stollery, *Alternative Empires: European Modernist Cinemas and Cultures of Imperialism* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 100-139.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Mica Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> I use 'empire' here to refer to the Soviet Union's influence over satellite nations. Although the Soviet Union was not ruled by an emperor and defined itself as anti-imperialist, some scholars have argued that it shared a number of characteristics with the rise and fall of other more easily defined empires. See Mark Beissenger, 'Soviet Empire as "Family Resemblance"', *Slavic Review* 65.2 (2006), pp. 294-303.

<sup>8</sup> Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Bergfelder, 'Love Beyond the Nation: Cosmopolitanism and Transnational Desire in Cinema', in Luisa Passerini, Jo Labanyi and Karen Diehl (eds.), *Europe and Love in Cinema* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> All of Svilova's foreign stories are described in Appendix One of my thesis.

<sup>14</sup> Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 205.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 205.

<sup>18</sup> J. Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR 1937-1949* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 2.

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- <sup>19</sup> Melanie Ilić, 'Traktoristka: Representations and Realities', in Melanie Ilić (ed.), *Women in the Stalin Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 121.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 123.
- <sup>21</sup> Kay Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 43.
- <sup>22</sup> Cited in Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country*, p. 43.
- <sup>23</sup> Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1999), p. 79.
- <sup>24</sup> Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country*, p. 136.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 126.
- <sup>26</sup> Emma Widdis, 'Dressing the Part: Clothing Otherness in Soviet Cinema', in Stephen Morris and Zara Torlone (eds.), *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 49.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 127.
- <sup>28</sup> Louis Menashe, *Moscow Believes in Tears: Russians and their Movies* (Washington D.C: New Academia Publishing, 2010), p. 167.
- <sup>29</sup> Engel, *Women in Russia*, p. 206.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 207.
- <sup>31</sup> Ella Shohat, 'Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema', in Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar (eds.), *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), p. 39.
- <sup>32</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 52-53.
- <sup>33</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 7.
- <sup>34</sup> Judith Mayne, *Kino and the Woman Question: Feminism and Soviet Silent Film* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), p. 160.
- <sup>35</sup> The term 'panorama' originates with Wolfgang Schivelbusch who, in his account of the way in which the landscape was viewed from a rapidly moving train, described it as emblematic of modern perception, calling this new mode 'panoramic'. Panoramic perception involves a separation between the viewer and the spectacle observed: in contrast to traditional perception, it no longer belongs to the same space as the perceived objects. See Tom Gunning, 'The Whole World Within Reach: Travel Images Without Borders', in Jeffrey Ruoff (ed.), *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 37.
- <sup>36</sup> Cited in Gunning, *Virtual Voyages*, p. 36.



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<sup>37</sup> Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Cinema, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), p. 56.

<sup>38</sup> Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination 1945-61* (London: University of California Press, 2003), p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Xiaojia Hou, 'Get Organised: The Impact of Two Soviet Models on the CCP's Rural Strategy, 1949-1953', in Thomas Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li (eds.), *China Learns From the Soviet Union: 1949 to Present* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 167-196.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup> Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous*, p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Donald Filtzer, *The Khrushchev Era: De-Stalinisation and the Limits of Reform in the USSR 1953-1964* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War, From Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 95.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Filtzer, *The Khrushchev Era*, p. 14. After Stalin's death, Georgy Malenkov took the early reins of leadership, assuming the role of chairman of the Council of Ministers, with Molotov (also foreign minister), Lavrentiy Beria, Nikolai Bulganin and Lazar Kaganovich named as his deputies. On 14 March, 1953, Malenkov's request to resign was granted by the Central Committee and he was replaced by Nikita Khrushchev, who had stepped down as first secretary of the Moscow party organisation. In July 1953 Beria, whose alliance with Malenkov threatened Khrushchev, was arrested and shot. In the following September a Central Committee plenum established the post of new party first secretary and awarded it to Khrushchev. In August 1954, during a vacation in the Crimea, Khrushchev met informally with other high-ranking members of the Central Committee and gained their support to transfer authority from the office of the Presidium, then under the direction of Malenkov, to the General Department of the Central Committee, placing it under Khrushchev's absolute control. Therefore, although a number of influential figures contributed to the Soviet Union's early years of rebuilding, the need to update the country's image and build communist allies in the East while maintaining a strong defence policy against the threat of capitalism and future war was agreed by all in the Central Committee, particularly Khrushchev, and it is this notion that provides the basis for my analysis of Svilova's foreign-themed films.

<sup>48</sup> My quantitative data can be articulated in the following terms: During the Stalin era, Svilova documented fifteen episodes of *News of the Day* and five separate documentaries,

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spanning an eight year period. These films contain twenty-nine individual foreign stories from twelve different countries, two of which are non-European. Between 1953 and 1956 she directed fourteen episodes of *News of the Day*, comprising twenty-seven individual stories shot in seventeen countries, four of which are non-European. Including her three *Foreign Newsreel* episodes, the figures increase to forty-five stories shot in twenty-four countries, seven of which are non-European. These statistics confirm that, while Svilova's *News of the Day* episodes did not witness an increase in foreign news after Stalin's death, the number of countries from which the stories originated did increase, as did the number from outside Europe.

<sup>49</sup> Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Lisle Rose, *Power at Sea: A Violent Peace, 1946-2006* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2007), p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> The seizing of the tanker is described in John Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 121.

<sup>53</sup> Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 62-63. The mid-1950s represented the golden age of the Sino-Soviet alliance. In 1954, Khrushchev led a delegation to China to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the People's Republic, which prompted a number of negotiations, including the return of the Port Arthur military base to Chinese control, industrial support for China's first five-year-plan and, in April 1955, assistance with China's nuclear technology.

Khrushchev, who had only recently emerged as Stalin's successor, perceived Mao's cooperation as indispensable.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Musser, 'The Early Cinema of Edwin Porter', *Cinema Journal* 19 (Fall 1979), pp. 1-38.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 225.

<sup>56</sup> André Gaudreault, 'Temporality and Narrativity in Early Cinema, 1895-1908', in John Fell (ed.), *Film Before Griffith* (London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 316.

<sup>57</sup> Noël Burch, 'Porter or Ambivalence', *Screen* 19 (Winter 1978-79), p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> This story was produced to coincide with the latest developments in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Friendship. While Chinese industry was modernised, in return, China and the Soviet Union signed a cooperation agreement that initiated the migration of Chinese labourers to rural parts of the Soviet empire. In the summer of 1955 1000 workers were introduced into the Soviet workforce and Soviet media was mobilised to encourage communities to welcome their Eastern allies. See Sun Jianlin, 'The Soviet Union Once Planned to Import Millions of Chinese Workers', *Cultural and Historical Vision* (July 2009), p. 4.

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- <sup>59</sup> Martin McCauley, *The Soviet Union 1917-1991*, second edition (London: Longman, 1993), p. 277.
- <sup>60</sup> Jerome Conley, *Indo-Russian Military and Nuclear Cooperation: Lessons and Options for U.S. Policy in South Asia* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001), p. 11.
- <sup>61</sup> Cited in Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, p. 15.
- <sup>62</sup> Emil Draitser, *Shush! Growing Up Jewish Under Stalin* (California: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 77-78.
- <sup>63</sup> Soviet steps toward peaceful co-existence were not made until the very end of 1954, timed to coincide with the deadline for the San Francisco Treaty. See Kimie Hara, *Japanese-Soviet/Russian Relations Since 1945: A Difficult Peace* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 210.
- <sup>64</sup> Mark Steinberg, *Moral Communities: The Culture and Class Relations in the Russian Printing Industry 1867-1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 234.
- <sup>65</sup> By the mid-1950s strains in Soviet-Japanese relations were long established, going back to the competition between the Japanese and Russian empires for dominance in Northeast Asia. During the first half of the 1950s other unsettled problems included Japanese fishing rights in the Sea of Okhotsk and repatriation of the Japanese prisoners-of-war still being held captive in the Soviet Union. The two countries agreed to continue negotiations for a peace treaty, including territorial issues. The Soviet Union pledged to support Japan in its pursuit of United Nations membership and to waive all World War II reparations claims. The Joint Declaration was accompanied by a trade protocol that granted reciprocal most-favoured-nation treatment and provided for the development of trade. In 1956 the two countries signed a Joint Declaration, providing for the continued restoration of diplomatic relations.
- <sup>66</sup> Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, p. 9.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 30.
- <sup>68</sup> Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, p. 249.
- <sup>69</sup> Cited in David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 21.
- <sup>70</sup> David MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, p. 22.
- <sup>71</sup> Jane Gaines, 'Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body', in Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds.), *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 3.
- <sup>72</sup> Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, p. 249.
- <sup>73</sup> Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity 1922-1953* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 166.
- <sup>74</sup> Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 133.
- <sup>75</sup> Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow 1955 and 1999* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 92.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

<sup>77</sup> Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> A selection of Pathé's newsreels can be viewed online at [www.britishpathe.com](http://www.britishpathe.com).

<sup>79</sup> Zhai Qiang, 'China and the Cambodian Conflict', in Priscilla Roberts (ed.), *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam and the World Beyond Asia* (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 370-373.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Kau and John Leung (eds.), *The Writings of Mao Zedong: 1949-1976* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), p. 27.

<sup>81</sup> Once the Soviet-Cambodian alliance was made public in May 1956, Cambodia, like China and the Soviet Union's other Eastern allies, became a staple of Soviet newsreels for the remainder of 1956. *Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia* (Babushkin, 1956) documented Prince Sihanouk, the son of Suramarit, visiting the Kremlin to agree on the negotiations of the allegiance. He and his delegation are given a tour of Moscow, visiting the city's university, the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition and the Moscow Hippodrome. Following his stay in Moscow, Prince Sihanouk travelled to Saint Petersburg where he visited the Smolny Institute, the Saint Peter and Paul Fortress Stadium and the Leningrad Mechanical Plant. *News of the Day no.24* (Katanian, 1956) and *News of the Day no.27* (Solovyov, 1956), released in June and July respectively, incorporated additional shots from Sihanouk's visit. *News of the Day no.27* documented his meeting with Klim Voroshilov, the chairman of the Central Committee, during which, according to the voiceover, Sihanouk was presented with the Order of Suvorov, for his role in 'promoting peace, neutrality, non-alignment and cooperation among nations'.

<sup>82</sup> Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, p. 50.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Sawka, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 135.

<sup>86</sup> Draitser, *Shush!*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>87</sup> Cited in Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> Hou, *China Learns From the Soviet Union: 1949 to Present*, p. 76.

<sup>89</sup> Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, p. 50.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Mao Zedong, 'On the Historical Experience of Proletarian Dictatorship', *People's Daily* (5 April, 1956). The article was published to coincide with the arrival in Peking of a high-ranking Soviet delegation.

<sup>93</sup> Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, p. 68.

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<sup>94</sup> Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China and the Soviet Union 1948-1972* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 160.

<sup>95</sup> Vladislav Zubok, 'Soviet Policy Aims at the Geneva Conference', in Gunter Bischof and Saki Dockrill (eds.), *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955* (Louisiana: Louisiana State Press, 2000), p. 64.

<sup>96</sup> Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, p. 59.

<sup>97</sup> Homi Bhabha is not related to philosopher, Homi K. Bhabha.

<sup>98</sup> The complex stance Khrushchev took on rearmament is documented a number of times by Svilova. *News of the Day no.17* (1955), for example, features a story from Budapest in which a group of Hungarian workers sign the 'Vienna Appeal of the World Council of Peace Against Preparation of Atomic War', one of the many protests organised by World Council of Peace, an organisation that had, since 1949, chaired international peace conferences to condemn Western armaments and weapons testing but, importantly, refrained from criticising communist and other non-capitalist activities. The passive aims of the Council aligned with the self-image Khrushchev wanted to project back onto the Soviet people, one that depicted the Central Committee as the altruistic government portrayed in films such as *Yangtze River*. As an elderly male worker approaches to sign the book, Svilova cuts to a medium close-up shot of a young woman signing it. The transition is continuous in space and time, in that the woman replicates the man's position on-screen, literally replacing him. This editorial technique gives the impression that, first, the workforce was united and, second, the World Council of Peace upheld the interests of every demographic. The story is important because it not only highlights the complex stance the Central Committee took on policies of rearmament – speaking out against the prospect of future war while legitimising decisions to build its own arsenal of weapons and assist its allies in developing their nuclear technology – it also drew on the protective traits within Stalin's cult of personality as a means of reassuring the masses. The Council was initiated by Stalin and any steps it made to appease nuclear war were attributed to his memory. This theme largely continued until Khrushchev's secret speech on 25 February, 1956, when Stalin's regime was officially denounced.

<sup>99</sup> By 1956 Malenkov had been demoted to the Ministry of Electric Power Stations.

<sup>100</sup> British Pathé, <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=40510>, accessed 3 July, 2011.

<sup>101</sup> Gorsuch, *All This is Your World*, p. 60.

<sup>102</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, p. 53.

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## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> Valeriya Selunskaya and Maria Zezina, 'Documentary Film – A Soviet Source', in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Miller, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), p.156.

<sup>3</sup> Radha Vatsal, 'Re-evaluating Footnotes: Women Directors of the Silent Era', in Jennifer Bean and Diane Negra (eds.), *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Kay Armatage, *The Girl from God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



## Appendix 1:

### Svilova and foreign stories

Svilova's first experience of editing footage shot outside the Soviet Union occurred during World War II. *News of the Day no.6* (1945) includes a story from Warsaw, where a cargo of trolley-buses arrives by train – a gift from the Soviet Union.

Svilova's following newsreel, *News of the Day no.9* (1945) contains shots of a Soviet delegation visiting Stuttgart and American troops entering Strasbourg. *News of the Day no.28* (1945) features footage shot in Sofia, where a meeting is held to discuss diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, and also footage shot in Bucharest, where a military parade celebrates the anniversary of Romania's democratic government. Svilova directed two films in the aftermath of Germany's surrender: *Oświecim* and *Atrocities*, both produced in 1945. These films include footage shot in a number of European locations outside the Soviet Union, including Poland, Germany, France and Czechoslovakia. *News of the Day no.14* (1946) comprises a story concerning the construction of a power plant in Latvia and the opening of a reconstructed bridge – rebuilt by a Soviet workforce – on the Danube. Latvia featured again in *News of the Day no.28* (1946), where a new tram is unveiled transporting citizens through the streets of Riga. This episode also documented May Day celebrations in Paris. The first of Svilova's documentaries filmed entirely outside



the Soviet Union was *The General Assembly of the United Nations* (1946), in which shots of New York's iconic sights provide the content for the opening montage. *News of the Day no.39* (1947) documents the production of beer in a Riga brewery, followed by the coverage of an international fair in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in *News of the Day no.58* (1947).

The next two examples of foreign stories occurred in *The International Democratic Federation of Women* (1947) and *The International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris* (1948). *News of the Day no.27* (1948) features two foreign stories: Soviet Ambassador Pushkin delivers a speech in Budapest, and Greek refugees, having fled the Greek Civil War, arrive in Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia also features in Svilova's next foreign story. In *News of the Day no.7* (1949) a conference is held in Prague to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Lenin's death. In Vilnius, Lithuania, the Republican Congress of Collective Farmers meets with Prime Minister Gedvilas to discuss women's rights in the workplace. This story, featured in *News of the Day no.32* (1949), is accompanied in the same episode by a story from Warsaw where a new housing project is in development. In 1950 Svilova directed *Yangtze River*. In contrast to the concise delivery of foreign stories contained within *News of the Day*, *Yangtze River* is a twenty-minute documentary that captures the lives of Chinese people residing along the river's banks. *News of the Day no.28* (1950) features a story from Soviet-occupied Berlin, where a demonstration is held in honour of the Soviet Youth Army. *News of the Day no.9* (1951) concludes with two foreign stories, the first from Latvia, where a symphonic orchestra performs in the House of Culture, and the second from Poland, in which a montage of Warsaw's streets, buildings, transport and pedestrians is accompanied by the voices of a singing choir. The opening of a polygraph centre in Bucharest is recorded in *News of the Day no.29* (1951), followed by

coverage of a crop festival in Poznan, Poland, in *News of the Day no.46* (1951). *Pioneer 11* (1952) documents the travels of Young Pioneers (a Communist Scout organisation) as they hike from Bulgaria to Poland. Last, a two-shot story depicting a train entering and leaving Changchun railway station in China appears in *News of the Day no.9* (1953).

*News of the Day no.38* (1953) documents the opening of a hydroelectric power station on Lake Drūkšiai, situated on the border between Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia. Shots of the air-traffic control tower and aeroplanes of Soviet design at Bucharest's Băneasa Airport are featured in *News of the Day no.53* (1953). *News of the Day no.46* (1954) includes a story from Danzig Airport where Polish sailors arrive having been released from captivity in Taiwan. The destruction caused by Japan's typhoon season is reported in *News of the Day no.60* (1954), followed by shots of the Trans-Mongolian railway's construction in *News of the Day no.2* (1955). The Sovietisation of the North Korean textile industry features in *News of the Day no.11* (1955), while *News of the Day no.17* (1955) comprises three foreign stories: workers in Bucharest signing a petition for improved conditions; workers picketing their office building in Osaka, Japan; and a ship heading for Romania on the Danube departing from Bratislava. *News of the Day no.22* (1955) documents an Estonian collective farm, a Budapest automobile factory, and a group of students leaving Prague to visit sites of agricultural importance in the Czech countryside.

*News of the Day no.33* (1955) captures the manufacturing of two-storied train carriages in East Germany and Warsaw, as well as an Indian delegation's visit to a West Bengali cable factory and measures taken to prevent flooding along the banks of the Brahmaputra River. The testing of a railway bridge crossing the Danube, a festival of

twins in an unnamed Dutch village, and a gymnastics competition in Brno, Czechoslovakia are all featured in *News of the Day no.39* (1955). *News of the Day no.45* (1955) captures the Allies' declaration of Austria's independence in Vienna and events at the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw. The inventor of a spring device used in telephones oversees his product being manufactured in a Riga factory in *News of the Day no.49* (1955), while *News of the Day no.60* (1955) features four foreign stories: Khrushchev and Bulganin visiting New Delhi; miners digging for coal in Czechoslovakia; English and Polish motorcyclists competing in Warsaw Stadium; and a hairdressing competition taking place in Paris. *News of the Day no.1* (1956), Svilova's last episode of the newsreel, documents the construction of a cement works near Datong, China, and the extraction of salt from sea water on the Japanese island of Shikoku.

Svilova commenced her work on *Foreign Newsreel* in time to direct the fourth episode. *Foreign Newsreel no.4* (1956) features Malenkov's visit to Calder Hall, Britain's first nuclear power plant; events following Tunisia's gaining of independence from France; oil storage in the north of Italy; boar hunting in Bulgaria; coverage of the 1956 University Boat Race; Norodom Suramarit's coronation in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; an equestrian competition in West Germany; and a performance by the Slovak National Theatre in Prague. Svilova's next episode, *Foreign Newsreel no.6* (1956) features May Day celebrations in Prague, East Berlin, Peking and Warsaw; Romanian peasants being introduced to collectivisation; research into ontological diseases at the University of San Francisco; the extracting of ore in the An Lushan mountain range in northern China; celebrations in Rajasthan to commemorate India's gaining of independence from Britain; the construction of a hydroelectric power station in Austria; bat research carried out in the south of France; and highlights from the F.A.

Cup Final at Wembley Stadium in London. *Foreign Newsreel no.9* (1956), Svilova's last newsreel before her semi-retirement, documents Kim Il-Sung's visit to an East German metal works; celebrations in Rome to commemorate the anniversary of the Italian Republic; the introduction of television to a Budapest audience; sturgeon fishing in Romania and Bulgaria; the Festival of Dance and Music in Bombay; Chinese women stitching an image of the Empire State Building onto canvas; a beer festival in Belgium; a German 'motoball' competition; and Bulgarian tourists enjoying the sights of Belgrade.



## Appendix 2:

### Filmography of Elizaveta Svilova

Year	Title of Production (English)	Title of Production (Russian)	Production Studio	Role in Production	Archive/ Credit
1918	<i>Kinonedelia No.1</i>	<i>Кинонеделя No.1</i>	Narkompros	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Austrian Film Museum (no credit in either)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1919	<i>Battle of Tsaritsyn</i>	<i>Бой под Царицыным (Оборона Царицына; Царицынский фронт)</i>	The Revolutionary Military Council and the Film Committee of the People's Commissariat of Public Education	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1920	<i>War of War</i>	<i>Война войне</i>	All-Russia Photo-Cine Department	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					

1922	<i>Trial of the Right Socialist Revolutionaries</i>	<i>Процесс эсеров (Процесс правых эсеров)</i>	All-Russia Photo-Cine Department	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> 8 June, 1922. The House of Unions in Moscow. Defendants, defenders, members of the tribunal and the accused sit in the court. Lunacharsky and Pokrovsky are the accused, and Kona represents their defence. 20 June, 1922. A demonstration is held in memory of Volodarsky (a Russian Marxist revolutionary). People demonstrate in the streets and at the House of Unions. A group of Red Army men demonstrate at Paraskeva Pyatnitsa church. A boy sells newspapers in the street. People read the newspapers on trams and in their cars.					
1922	<i>Kinopravda No.7</i>	<i>Киноправда No.7</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of Moscow. A Session of the Supreme Tribunal on the subject of business. Pyatakov and Lunacharsky are both present. Cut to the village of Taseevo in Siberia. The houses in the village have been burnt down by Kolchak's army. Cut to Lake Baikal. Cut to Slyudyanka Railway Station. Cut to a botanical garden in Khudyakov Park in the city of Sochi. The trees are in blossom. Cut to the city of Tuapse. People rest and sunbathe on the beach. Cut to the city of Enzeli in Persia. Silk is loaded onto boats in preparation for the Baku Fair. Cut to a marketplace in the city of Kabul. Celebrations unfold in honour of the religious holiday, Ashura. Cut to a Soviet settlement in the Caucasus.					
1922	<i>Kinopravda No.13</i>	<i>Киноправда No.13</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A peasant ploughs the ground. Cut to a meeting of the German delegation in Moscow and a Session of Country Congress with Krupsk and Voroshilov. Cut to the Session of First Congress of Trade Unions. Cut to machinery workers in a factory. Cut to a demonstration in Leningrad. Cut to scenes in a textile factory, a library and an apiary. Cut to construction workers erecting a building.					
1922	<i>Kinopravda No.14</i>	<i>Киноправда No.14</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> United States. A montage of American urban life: transport, steamships, and skyscrapers. Cut to the Kremlin in Moscow and a scene from the Session of Fourth Congress with Trotsky. Cut to a Session of Congress in the House of Unions with Lozovsky and Tsetkin. Cut to a May Day demonstration in Moscow. Cut to agricultural workers preparing the soil with ploughs and by tractor. Cut to the Session of Second Congress with the participation of the Petrograd Council. Lenin is among the delegates of the Congress.					

1923	<i>Kinopravda</i> No.17 – <i>For the First Agricultural and Cottage Industries Exhibition in the USSR</i>	<i>Киноправда</i> No.17	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (credited as Editor)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Developments of agricultural life in rural Soviet Union. Farmers reap crops and handle livestock. Cut to starving peasants. Cut to the construction of a railway station named after Kanatchikov. A freight train is loaded with construction materials. Cut to scenes from the first agricultural exhibition in the Soviet Union.					
1925	<i>Kinopravda</i> No.20 – <i>Pioneer's Pravda</i>	<i>Киноправда</i> No.20	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The pioneer group, Red Defence, and a wind band marches through a rural street. Pioneers collect wheat, knit sheaves, weed vegetables and read newspapers with peasants. The pioneer group, Young Lenins, visits a zoo. Some pioneers stay behind at the village to prepare fire wood for the local school.					
1925	<i>Kinopravda</i> No.21 – <i>Leninist Kinopravda</i>	<i>Киноправда</i> No.21	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Lenin oversees the parade for the opening of a Karl Marx monument. Cut to a meeting of the Second Congress. Cut to a demonstration of workers in various cities across the Soviet Union. Cut to scenes taken from the funeral of Lenin.					
1925	<i>Cine-Eye</i>	<i>Кино-Глаз</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Prints available in the West (credited as Editor in RGAKFD)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Pioneers camp on the edge of a lake. They hike, rest, reap crops and do gymnastics. The pioneers march with a Soviet banner.					
1925	<i>Kinopravda</i> No.22 – <i>Lenin Lives in the Peasant's Heart</i>	<i>Киноправда</i> No.22	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Participants talk at the opening of Congress. Cut to the opening night in a local theatre, where a season of productions is underway celebrating Moscow life. Cut to a demonstration of the American movie camera in the BFKO (the All-Russia Film and Photo Department at Narkompros). People of Moscow gather around to observe a demonstration of the new movie camera. Yaroslavl performs for the peasants. Cut to the arrival of a delegation of peasants in Moscow. People enter the House of Councils. Cut to people visiting the body of Lenin. Cut to shots of the Kremlin.					



1925	<i>Kinopravda No.23 – Radio- Kinopravda</i>	<i>Киноправда №.23</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Shoppers crowd around a shop counter to buy radios. The shopkeeper packs a radio receiver. Komsomolets (members of the Communist Youth League) are sent to a wood to cut trees. Cut to the same wood in the future - all of the trees have been cut down. Cut to the installation of an aerial above a log hut reading room. Cut to an animated sequence of people listening to their radios. Cut to radio operators working with aërials. Cut to scenes in a radio station. The DJ speaks; employees of the radio station work around him. Cut to shoppers buying radio receivers in a shop.					
1925	<i>The First October without Il'ich</i>	<i>Первый Октябрь без Ильича</i>	Goskino	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The C-80, a steam locomotive given as a gift to the Komintern, is repaired after-hours in a depot at the site of the Northern Railway Exchange. Cut to the construction of a building by the housing organisation, Red Bogatyr (a Russian folk warrior). Cut to the production of cars at the Moscow automobile factory, AMO. Cut to an Agitprop demonstration at a railway station on the Moscow-Aleksandrov line. Cut to people celebrating the 7 November holiday (the anniversary of the socialist revolution) in Leningrad and Moscow.					
1926	<i>Stride, Soviet!</i>	<i>Шагай, Совет!</i>	Goskino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Prints available in the West (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A montage of people's lives in the twentieth century Soviet Union through a comparison of famine and misery before and after the revolution. Cut to May Day celebrations, including a military parade. Cut to scenes emphasising the Party's determination to overcome social diseases such as unemployment, homelessness and illiteracy. The struggle to overcome crime is also referenced, in particular the rise of gangster culture.					
1926	<i>One Sixth of the World</i>	<i>Шестая часть мира</i>	Goskino & Sovkino	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Prints available in the West (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The lives of the rich are shown in parallel to the lives of poor plantation workers in capitalist countries. Cut to scenes taken from all parts and industries of the Soviet Union: agriculture, factory work and shop work, etc. Cut to a steamship entering an unidentified harbour of the Soviet Union. Cut to a second montage emphasising the diversity of the Soviet Union's different countries: the lives of peasants, city life, life with amenities and life without them.					

1927	<i>Gut Production</i>	<i>Обработка кишок</i>	Goskino	Director, Editor	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown, although it can be assumed that it documents the reusable uses of animal guts as seen in Bukhara (see next item).					
1927	<i>Bukhara</i>	<i>Бухара</i>	Goskino	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Yakov Tolchan)	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Shots of the streets, the architecture and the transport links. Cut to the inside of a mosque; Muslims kneel and pray. Cut to workers on an Astrakhan cotton plantation; sheep are sheared and fur coats are manufactured. Cut to an Astrakhan market. Skins are manufactured and animal guts are processed for food and oil, etc. Cut to productions on a weaving mill. Cut to another market to see a hairdresser cutting hair in the street. Cut to a montage of the city's life.					
1927	<i>Tungus</i>	<i>Тунгусы</i>	Goskino	Director, Editor	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1928	<i>The Eleventh Year</i>	<i>Одиннадцатый</i>	Ukrainian Film & Photography Administration (Kiev)	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Prints available in the West (no credit in RGAKFD)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Assembled from 1920s Soviet newsreels documenting the construction of socialism in the Ukraine during the eleventh year of Soviet power; the period of industrialisation, the construction of the Dnepr Dam and other marvels of Soviet industry. Cut to a parade for the public and Party officials.					
1929	<i>Man with a Movie Camera</i>	<i>Человек с киноаппаратом</i>	Ukrainian Film & Photography Administration (Kiev)	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Widely Available (no credit in RGAKFD)
<b>Synopsis:</b> An audience enters a movie theatre to see the film we are also about to see. Morning time. People, machines, things, all sleep. The audience watch the cameraman shooting the film we are now watching. The city awakes. Commuters go to work; factories, shops, marketplaces all come to life. Weddings, funerals, the birth of a child, all take place. Cut to the cameraman in the steel mine of the Donbass. Cut to the end of the working day. The workers of the Soviet Union relax by drinking alcohol, watching sport, visiting the countryside and playing music.					
1930	<i>Enthusiasm (Symphony of the Donbass)</i>	<i>Симфония Донбасса (Энтузиазм)</i>	Ukrainfilm	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Widely Available (no credit in RGAKFD)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The labour of the Komsomolets in the coal mining region of the Donbass is celebrated through the use of original noises and sounds recorded in the mines.					

1934	<i>Three Songs of Lenin</i>	<i>Три песни о Ленине</i>	Mezhrabpomfilm	Editor, Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Open Society Archive (no credit in either)
<p><b>Synopsis:</b> The museum of the life of Lenin. Muslim women, some wearing a veil, some without, enter a mosque to pray. Cut to workers teaching adults to read and write. Cut to Uzbek women studying, working in shops, in factories and on collective farms. Cut to archive material of Lenin's life recorded between 1918 and 1920. Cut to the funeral of Lenin at the House of Unions. Kalinin and Ordzhonikidze stand in a guard of honour. A funeral procession begins. The coffin containing Lenin's body is brought into the Mausoleum. A salute from the rifles. Workers in turn enter the Mausoleum. Cut to a montage of Lenin's achievements: a parade of Soviet athletes; industrial enterprises; and the mine in Magnitogorsk by the Ural River. The Heads of the VKP and other Soviet officials visit Lenin's body. Cut to Stalin on his election campaign, which includes meeting Moscow workers.</p>					
1937	<i>Lullaby</i>	<i>Колыбельная</i>	Soiuzkino	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (credited as Editor), Open Society Archive (no credit)
<p><b>Synopsis:</b> Mothers play with their children. Cut to pioneers engaged in military preparation. Children perform music and ballet, women work in factories and mothers feed their new-born babies. Cut to the participation of girls in sporting activities across the Soviet Union. Party officials and their wives meet with each other. Stalin meets members of his party at the Kremlin. Cut to groups of girls of different nationalities and from different republics. Cut to women in a maternity hospital breastfeeding their children. Cut to members of the Spanish delegation marching across Red Square during a parade. Party officials welcome communist Spaniards.</p>					
1937	<i>In Memory of Sergio Ordzhonikidze</i>	<i>Памяти Серго Орджоникидзе</i>	Soiuzkino	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Austrian Film Museum (no credit in either)
<p><b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. 23 February, 1937, the day of Ordzhonikidze's funeral. Among the present at the funeral are Zhdanov, Yezhov, Schmidt, Tchkalov, Molotov, Stalin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich. Visitors wish farewell to Ordzhonikidze's body in the Columned Hall of the House of Unions. A funeral procession takes place. The urn containing Ordzhonikidze's ashes is buried within the Kremlin's walls.</p>					

1937	<i>Sergio Ordzhonikidze</i>	<i>Серго Орджоникидзе</i>	Soiuzkino	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Austrian Film Museum (no credit in either)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Archive material from the Civil War. Ordzhonikidze and Tukhachevsky organise their troops in Baku. Ordzhonikidze, on the day of Stalin's 50th birthday, is at war on the Black Sea. Also fighting are Kalinin and Voroshilov. Cut to a meeting held by Tchkalov at the Gorki automobile factory. Cut to material from Ordzhonikidze's funeral used in <i>In Memory of Sergio Ordzhonikidze</i> (1937).					
1938	<i>Hail the Soviet Heroines!</i>	<i>Слава советским героиням</i>	Soiuzkino	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Austrian Film Museum (no credit in either)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. People welcome Grizodobova, Osilenko and Raskova, the three female pilots of the aeroplane, <i>Native Land</i> , at Belarus train station. The pilots exit the carriage of a train and meet people on the platform of the station.					
1938	<i>Three Heroines</i>	<i>Три героини</i>	Soiuzkino	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD/ Austrian Film Museum (credited as Co-Director in both)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Radio operators accept messages from the aeroplane, <i>Native Land</i> . The plane glides through the sky. The radio operator transfers the radio signal from the pilots. Cut to the pilots meeting sailors on a ship. Cut to the pilots meeting with other pilots in Khabarovsk. The pilots meet with local residents at railway stations along the line trains. Cut to a passenger train approaching the platform of Moscow station. Yaroslavl meets the pilots on the platform. Grizodubova and his son pass the house of Osilenko in their car, which is decorated with colours. Raskova addresses the pupils of the school where her daughter studies. Kalinin hands over government awards to the three pilots at the Kremlin.					
1939	<i>Greater Force</i>	<i>Большая сила</i>	Moscow Newsreel	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Women of the Soviet Union work in the industries of agriculture, transport, public health services and culture. Stalin hands out awards at the Kremlin.					
1939	<i>House in Gori</i>	<i>Домик в Гори</i>	Moscow Newsreel/Tbilisi	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Georgia. Landscape shots of the Caucasian mountains, rivers and gardens. Cut to the railway station. A passenger train arrives. Cut to the museum converted from Stalin's childhood home. Cut to shots inside the museum. Cut to pioneers on an excursion. Cut to Gori's streets, buildings, landscapes and fortress.					

1939	<i>Roof of the World</i>	<i>Крыша мира</i>	Moscow Newsreel	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Landscapes of the Pamir mountains in Central Asia. Cars pass on mountain roads. Cut to the construction of a hydroelectric station. Cut to the city of Khorog. A geological expedition is taking place in the mountains. A herd of yaks graze on a pasture. Collective farmers reap a crop of vegetables and measure the growth of the wheat. A boundary patrol on horses surveys the border.					
1939	<i>In Transport</i>	<i>О транспорте</i>	Soiuzkino	Director, Editor	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Shots from the transport trade exhibition.					
1939	<i>ZIS</i>	<i>ЗИС</i>	Soiuzkino	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Production at the Stalin automobile factory. Motor vehicles, with the mark of the Stalin factory, are transported as cargo on a highway. The Stalin motor vehicles drive through the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow.					
1940	<i>Learn about Collective Farms</i>	<i>В колхозе все учатся</i>	Soiuzkino	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Children of different nationalities travel to school. Teachers teach the children the Constitution of the Soviet Union. Collective farmers, of different ages and from different countries of the Soviet Union, teach adults the nature of their work. They teach in primary schools, in laboratories, in universities, in fields, in high schools and on the radio.					
1940	<i>Metro</i>	<i>Метро</i>	Central Studio of Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Landscapes of Moscow. The Kremlin. Cut to shots of the underground station, Mayakovskaya, a station on the Zamoskvoretskaya Line of the metro and Belorusskaya, a station on the Koltseveya Line. Trains travel through tunnels deep underground. For the few hours when the metro stations are closed, cleaners get to work emptying bins and sweeping rubbish.					
1940	<i>River Chusovaya</i>	<i>Река Чусовая</i>	Central Studio of Documentary Film	Director, Editor	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown					
1941	<i>Union Film Journal No.77 – Newsreel Cameraman in the Line of Fire</i>	<i>Союзкиножурнал No.77</i>	Central Newsreel Studio	Assistant Director (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (credited as Assistant Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Pilots help collective farmers to harvest. Cut to aeroplanes in battle. Soviet bombers shoot down German planes. German and Romanian pilots are captured by the Red Army. The enemy's planes are kept as trophies.					

1941	<i>Union Film Journal No.87 – In the Region of the ‘A’ Heights</i>	<i>Союзкиножурнал No.87</i>	Central Newsreel Studio	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown					
1941	<i>The USSR on the screen No.11 (the English variant)</i>	<i>СССР на экране No.11 (Английский вариант)</i>	Central Newsreel Studio	Director	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A military air station. Soviet bombers are prepared for battle. Aerial bombardment commences. Fighting also takes place between soldiers on the ground. Cut to aeroplanes assisting collective farmers to harvest. Cut to tanks engaged in warfare. A proficient tank operation results in the surrendering and capturing of a German army.					
1941	<i>Blood for Blood</i>	<i>Кровь за кровь</i>	Central Newsreel Studio	Editor (Directed by Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The destruction of German offences in the Soviet Union’s cities and villages. The victims of the German bombers, who are maimed and homeless, share their stories. Cut to the Red Army launching its retaliation.					
1942	<i>Soviet Kazakhstan</i>	<i>Советский Казахстан</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	RGAKFD (Credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Combine harvesters thrash crops. Women work on the fields; they rake behind the combines and also load bags with grain in preparation for sale. Trucks transport bread. ‘Bread – for the Front’ is inscribed on the side of the trucks. Grain is stacked in bags in a storehouse. Cut to a collective farm in Kazakhstan producing cotton. Cut to the loading of bags of grain onto the steamship, Proletarka, docked in an Aral port. Cut to members of tank crews receiving instructions from their commanders. The crews prepare the tanks. Cut to tanks battling in warfare. Infantry battles the Germans in rivers and on land. Cut to destroyed German tanks and artillery lying with the bodies of the dead German soldiers.					
1943	<i>Banner of Victory</i>	<i>Знамя победы</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1943	<i>Atrocities of Fascists on the Soviet Soldiers</i>	<i>Зверства фашистов над советскими воинами</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	RGAKFD (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Shots of the bodies of the Soviet soldiers murdered by German soldiers in a prisoner of war camp in the Stalingrad and Gorodischenska region.					

1944	<i>For You at the Front!</i>	<i>Тебе, фронт</i>	Alma-Ata Film Studio	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A wife sees off her husband on his trip to the front. He works in a coal mine in the Karaganda region. Cut to the extraction and processing of a fish at a floating factory in the Caspian Sea. Cut to a collective farmer as he looks after a bird and harvests wheat, sugar beet and rice. Cattle breeders and sheep breeders work. Cut to nurses looking after wounded men in hospital. Cut to cavalry passing through the streets of a city.					
1944	<i>In the Mountains of Ala-Tau</i>	<i>В предгорьях Ала-Тая (В горах Ала-Тая)</i>	Alma-Ata Film Studio	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with Dziga Vertov)	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1944	<i>The Oath of Youth</i>	<i>Клятва молодых</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director with Vertov)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Stalin talks to the citizens of a destroyed city. Komsomolets restore Stalingrad; they work in mines, harvest crops and work in factories. Foreman Shashkov describes his role working in a Moscow factory. The Komsomolets fish on the Caspian Sea, work on a cattle-breeding and poultry farm and cut trees. Young girls work in a laundrette. The Komsomolets compete in sporting activities and sew in a sewing workshop. They also prepare for military duties.					
1944	<i>Soviet Art</i>	<i>Советское Искусство</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	No Print Exists
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown					
1944	<i>News of the Day No.10</i>	<i>Новости дня No.10</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The capture and interrogation of General Franek. Cut to the delivery of awards to the soldiers who captured Franek. Cut to the extraction of ore in the lead mines of Sikhote-Alin in the Far East of Russia. Cut to the delivery of bread to the Front. Cut to the cleaning of hemp in Mordovia. Cut to the harvesting of peaches. A pasture of goats grazes in the mountains of Uzbekistan. Cut to a train arriving from Teheran with ammunition brought for the Red Army. Cut to the departure of the Finnish governmental delegation from Moscow Airport. Among the people there to see the departure is Senior State Diplomat Dekanozov.					

1945	<i>News of the Day</i> No.6	<i>Новости</i> дня No.6	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> People congregate at Moscow Airport. Cut to a funeral at Novodevichy church. A cemetery of urns with ashes of the Ambassador of the Soviet Union Umansk, his wife and three of his employees of the embassy. Cut to Soviet tanks in the streets. Cut to a train being loaded with trolley buses which are a gift to the inhabitants of Warsaw. Cut to restoration of the railway bridge which passes through Dnepr into Kiev. Cut to woodcutters in Georgia cutting trees. Cut to an exhibition in Tashkent for the Soviet Union's 20th anniversary, which attracts visitors from all over the world. Cut to agricultural scientists working in the state farm, Kizyl-Artek.					
1945	<i>News of the Day</i> No.9	<i>Новости</i> дня No.9	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (Credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Soviet armies in the German city of Stuttgart. Cut to the American armies entering Strasbourg. Cut to the aviation hero, Valentina Grizodubova, accepting the Soviet Hero Star medal in Moscow. Cut to workers in factories collecting motors for tanks and engines for planes. Cut to miners extracting manganese from the mines of the Northern Urals Mountains. Collective farmers receive an award and a round of applause. In a small Soviet theatre, a celebration is held for the 75th birthday of actress, Evdokiya Turchaninova.					
1945	<i>News of the Day</i> No.28	<i>Новости</i> дня No.28	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A Romanian government delegation arrives in Moscow. A meeting is held. Cut to a celebration in Bucharest to commemorate the anniversary of its democratic government. Cut to a meeting in Sofia held to discuss diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria. Cut to a radio chess match between the Soviet Union and the USA. Cut to children in Leningrad arriving at school. Cut to the installation of the Saratov-Moscow pipeline which runs through the Oka River. Cut to a competition between different fire-fighting crews organised by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and held in Dynamo Stadium, Moscow.					
1945	<i>Auschwitz</i>	<i>Освенцим</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	Open Society Archive (no credit)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Red Army liberates Auschwitz. The released prisoners leave the camp. Injured prisoners are assisted by other prisoners and Red Army soldiers. A Soviet delegation of generals inspects the camp. The generals inspect the mountains of hair, clothes dentures and suitcases. A funeral is held for the victims of Auschwitz. Soviet doctors examine prisoners and reveal the results of the doctors' gruesome experiments, including prisoners subject to plastic surgery and sterilisation. Photographs of the Nazis responsible for the tragedy of Auschwitz are shown.					



1945	<i>Berlin</i>	<i>Берлин</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Editor (Directed by Yuli Raizman)	Open Society Archive (credited as Co-Director with Raizman)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Marshall Zhukov organises the Red Army at the River Oder. An unprecedented force of attack is launched to push the Germans back to Berlin. Intense fighting on land and sea ensues. The Red Army enters Berlin. They feed the starving Berliners and uphold the moral law by preventing crimes such as looting and raping. A Soviet flag is hoisted over the Reichstag. Field Marshal Keitel signs the Act of Unconditional Surrender on Germany's behalf. A victory parade is held in Red Square.					
1945	<i>News of the Day No.21</i>	<i>Новости дня No.21</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A train from Berlin is welcomed at Belarus Station in Moscow. Cut to the Kemerovo region. A montage of workers in shops, factories, metal works and aviation factories. Workers drill into pipes at the gas mains of Saratov-Moscow. Cut to Kalinin presenting an award to the maximum command structure of the Soviet navies. Celebration Day of the navy fleet on Himkinska, a water basin near Moscow.					
1945	<i>News of the Day No.26</i>	<i>Новости дня No.26</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The signing of the agreement between the Soviet Union and Poland concerning the indemnification caused by Germany. Molotov signs the agreement on behalf of the Soviet Union and Prime Minister Morawski signs on behalf of Poland. Present at the signing are Stalin and President Craiova. Vice-President Vares awards Star medals to the heroic pilots of the Red Army. Cut to the departure of General Eisenhower from Moscow. Marshal Zhukov and General Antonov are all at Moscow Airport. Cut to the restoration of the Kharkov tractor factory. Cut to a collective farm. Flocks of sheep graze on pastures; Altai horses and camels are herded with thoroughbred Siberian cows. Cut to the Arshan Tunka valley at the foot of the Sayan Mountains. Some people relax while others walk peacefully around the valley. Cut to a parade of Allied armies marching with the Red Army. Included in the parade are General Konev and other generals representing the American, English and French command.					
1945	<i>Born By a Storm (Young Guards)</i>	<i>Рожденные бурей. (Молодая Гвардия)</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					

1945	<i>News of the Day No.14</i>	<i>Новости дня No.14</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Prime Minister of Iran arrives in Moscow. The Delegation of Leningrad offers Kalinin the Certificate of the Deputy of the Supreme Body of the Soviet Union. Cut to the construction of the Kegums Power Plant in Latvia. Cut to workers in the Red October metal works in Stalingrad. Cut to production in Leningrad steelworks. Cut to stories told by the tankmen of the Kantemirovskaya division. Cut to the opening of the bridge across the River Danube, restored in Bratislava by the Soviet Union. Cut to children in a music school.					
1946	<i>News of the Day No.23</i>	<i>Новости дня No.23</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Hungarian governmental delegation, led by Prime Minister Nagy, arrives in Moscow. Molotov, representing the Soviet Union, arrives to meet them. Cut to the production of firm alloys, and then to the Moscow knitting factory, The New Dawn. Cut to a train crossing the restored bridge at Dnepr. Cut to Doctor Shahuridin, a doctor of agricultural sciences, discussing experiments he has carried out with Albidium 43, a high-yielding wheat extract using incubators in Turkmenistan. Cut to students at the Zakarpattia University in Uzhgorod listening to Professor Sinitsyn of the Gorki Medical Institute. Sinitsyn lectures on animal heart transplants. Cut to performers entertaining at the Moscow circus.					
1946	<i>Session of the Executive Committee of the World Federation in Moscow</i>	<i>Сессии Исполкома Всемирной Федерации в Москве</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Content of the film is unknown.					
1946	<i>News of the Day No.28</i>	<i>Новости дня No.28</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Enterprises of the Soviet Union meet in honour of the new state loan. Cut to the production of cement at Novorossiysk, the centre of the cement industry in the Soviet Union. Cut to Kharkov tractor factory. Cut to a Sulphur factory in the Karakum desert. Cut to Latvia. A new tram transports people through the streets of Riga. Cut to the production of tea on a plantation in Armenia. Cut to May Day demonstrations in Paris.					
1946	<i>News of the Day No.30</i>	<i>Новости дня No.30</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Polish governmental delegation arrives in Moscow. Cut to cotton production in the Ordzhonikidze factory in Chelyabinsk. Cut to rice growing in a Kazak collective farm. Cut to production in a metal design factory in Orsk. Cut to production on collective farms in Tadjik and Kirghiz. Cut to Abkhazia, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. Cut to an international chess match between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.					

1946	<i>News of the Day No.47</i>	<i>Новости дня No.47</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Following its restoration the Belarus-Moscow Baltic channel opens. The delegation of Britain's Labour Party leaves Moscow. Cut to the Finnish Exhibition to Moscow. Cut to harvesting in collective farms in Moscow. Cut to the restoration of the Tbilisi railway workshops in Georgia. Cut to the gathering of sulphate on the Caspian Sea. Snake charmers work in the Karakum desert in Turkmenistan. Cut to Republican competitions of motorcyclists in Ashkhabad. Cut to the commencement of a new project at the Central Aeronautics Observatory in Moscow.					
1946	<i>The Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations</i>	<i>На сессии Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of New York: the streets, traffic, port and harbour. Cut to members of the Soviet delegation at the Session of General Assembly of the United Nations. Molotov and Vyshinsky travel on a steamship. Cut to a building displaying the fifty-one flags of the countries participating at the Session. Participants of the Session listen to the speakers. Among the speakers are Paul Spaak, the Chairman of General Assembly of United Nations, Harry Truman and Molotov.					
1946	<i>Parade of Youth/Young Guard</i>	<i>Парад молодости</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director with Boikov)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Dynamo Stadium is filled with spectators for a parade. Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Malenkov are on the governmental tribune. Secretary Mikhailov and Chairman Romanov observe the athletes. Participants of the parade march through the stadium. Schoolboys compete. Children present bouquets of flowers to party officials. Athletes from Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia perform. Students from Moscow's high schools perform. Athletes from Moldova, Finland and students from the Leningrad Institute of Physical Culture also compete. Sportsmen from Tajikistan, Kirghizia and sportsmen representing the sports society, Dynamo, perform. Young footballers from Dynamo play. Sportsmen from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, from the society, Manpower Reserves, athletes from Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan all compete. Performances also take place by boxers, the Trade Unions Motorcycle Club, gymnasts, runners and weightlifters. Stalin addresses the stadium.					
1946	<i>Judgement of the Nations</i>	<i>Суд народов</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Co- Director (Directed with Roman Karmen)	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director with Karmen), no Credit in OSA
<b>Synopsis:</b> Nazi war criminals are trialled in a Nuremberg court.					

1947	<i>News of the Day</i> No.12	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня</i> No.12	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The final Session of the Central Selective Commission's elections. Cut to the work of the famous Latvian weaver, Savelyev. Cut to the work of Kirghizia Konzhekazneva on a pasture in the mountains of Tian-Shan. Cut to scenes from Giant, the state farm in the Rostov region, where workers are preparing for harvest. Komsomolets work in a mechanical repair factory in Zapolarya. Cut to mechanics working on the motorcycle, Moscow, on the factory conveyor belt. Cut to weavers making Gobelin tapestries in the Alma-Ata workshop. Cut to collective farmers competing as equestrian sportsmen in the Lithuania.					
1947	<i>News of the Day</i> No.26	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня</i> No.26	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Hashkovski, the Ambassador of Poland for the Soviet Union, addresses the Kremlin. Cut to a delegation of coal miners in Karaganda observing the work of miners in a Moscow coal basin. Cut to the manufacturing of agricultural machines in Lyuberetsky. Cut to the gas distribution station in Karachev and then to a gas boiler-house in Moscow. Cut to an exhibition of new fiction books written about the city of Moscow. Cut to workers in the Voroshilov state fruit farm. Cut to the manufacture of astrakhan skins in the state farm, Plain, in the Karakum desert. Cut to Dynamo Stadium where sportsmen and sportswomen train in preparation for the new sports season.					
1947	<i>News of the Day</i> No.32	<i>Новости дня</i> No.32	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Representatives of the collective farms in the Altay region experiment with grain in a laboratory. Cut to shepherds in the Altay region. Shepherds work in the collective farm, Siberian Merino. Cut to shepherds resting during the hot summer in the collective farm, Red Hero. Cut to the manufacture of automobile bearings in the first state bearing plant. Cut to Ivanov, an engineer in his laboratory in the Ural Mountains. Cut to the Statesmen of Yugoslavia at the Session of the National Assembly as it passes the law on the five year plans for the development of a national economy. Cut to passenger ships in the port of Odessa.					
1947	<i>News of the Day</i> No.39	<i>Новости дня</i> No.39	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Beet production in the collective farm, Red Plowman, in the Kursk region. Cut to Moscow. The meeting of the representatives of different countries at the Fourth Session of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Cut to Ukraine. The construction of a new plant in a Nikopol. Cut to the assembly line of automobiles in the fourth largest car factory in Gorki. Cut to the production of beer in a Riga brewery.					

1947	<i>News of the Day No.44</i>	<i>Новости дня No.44</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Work on the restored metal works, Red October, in Stalingrad. Cut to a tractor factory. Cut to the preparation and transportation of wood from Bryansk Forest. Cut to new medical buildings in Kursk. Cut to collective farmers harvesting the fields of Red Dawn in the Saratov region and Family Red in the Kiev region. Cut to a supervisor spot-checking the alloy work on rafts on the river Kama. Cut to exhibits in the museum of the Kremlin. Cut to Leningrad. Exhibits of the Soviet furs in the auction house, Sojuzpushnina.					
1947	<i>News of the Day No.58</i>	<i>Новости дня No.58</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Spassky monastery in Kiev. Cut to the Dolgorukov family tomb. Cut to Ukrainian farmers harvesting grain, beet and sugar. Cut to a mountain landscape in Abkhazia. Cut to the construction of the Sukhum hydroelectric power station. Cut to northern Ossetia. Climbers of the sports society, Petrel, make an ascent. Cut to a Spartak Moscow match in Dynamo Stadium. Cut to Plovdiv in Bulgaria. The international fair is taking place. President Kolarov examines an exhibition.					
1947	<i>International Democratic Federation of Women</i>	<i>Международная демократическая федерация женщин</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of Prague. A delegation from each of the participating countries listens to a speech by Nina Popova. The delegation visits the newly opened Lenin Museum. Popova delivers a speech to a female workforce.					
1947	<i>All-Union Parade of Athletes 1947</i>	<i>Всесоюзный парад физкультурников 1947</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A parade of sport societies in Dynamo Stadium. Stalin, Malenkov, Hodja, Molotov, Kosygin and Zhdanov watch the parade from their box.					
1948	<i>International Democratic Federation of Women in Paris</i>	<i>Выставка международной демократической федерации женщин в Париже</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Panoramic shots of Paris from the Eiffel Tower. The Soviet delegation visits a house in Mary Rose Street to see a memorial of Lenin. Cut to a demonstration of Parisians to celebrate Bastille Day. Cut to scenes from the exhibition. France, Vietnam, USA, England, Greece, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Romania and the Soviet Union all participate. Torez, Kazan, Ibarrudi, Joliot-Curie, Kotton and Triole visit the Soviet display.					

1948	<i>News of the Day No.9</i>	<i>Новости дня No. 9</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Romanian governmental delegation, led by chairman Sovmina, departs from Moscow. Molotov and Vyshinsky see off the delegation. Cut to construction of the Mingechaur hydroelectric power station. Cut to the opening of the Mossovet theatre. Cut to the construction of a multi-storey house in Dagestan. Cut to Stalin speaking on the subject of the construction of a collective farm hydroelectric station. Cut to the draw of the first circulation of the three per cent internal loan in the House of Culture. Cut to a meeting of the Moscow Club of Writers, devoted to the 70th birthday of the writer, Prishvin. Prishvin reads from his latest work about a walk in a wood.					
1948	<i>News of the Day No.21</i>	<i>Новости дня No.21</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Finnish government delegation, led by prime minister Pekkaloj, arrives at Leningrad Station. Molotov and Vyshinsky are at the station to meet them. Cut to assemblers in the Moscow electrolamp factory at work. Cut to the World Chess Championship in the House of Unions. Playing in the competition are Botvinnik, Smyslov, Keres, Reshevsky and Euwe. Cut to a visit to Moscow State University by a Professor Gavronin of Prague University. Cut to students of the Tashkent Agricultural Institute on work placements. They prepare beet seeds for sowing on the Uzbek collective farm, <i>Stalin</i> . Cut to house building in the Molotov region. Cut to the restoration of houses in the city of Pskov which were destroyed during the war. Cut to an audience watching <i>Victory</i> in a Pskov cinema.					
1948	<i>News of the Day No.27</i>	<i>Новости дня No.27</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Uzbek Academic Theatre in Tashkent. The foreign visitors, who have arrived to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Ali-Sher Navoi (a fifteenth-century poet of the Medieval East), enjoy the exhibition. Cut to a group of Soviet Heads examining the first tractors constructed at the Moscow factory, <i>VARZ</i> . One of the tractors passes through Moscow streets. Cut to the city of Budapest. Soviet Ambassador Pushkin delivers a speech in the presidential residence of the Hungarian Republic. Cut to the arrival of Czechoslovakian refugees in Greece. Cut to the building of houses in Sevastopol which were destroyed during the war. Cut to the preparation of fire wood by woodcutters in Zakarpattia. Cut to the processing and pollination of plants in the Rostov area.					

1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.31	<i>Новости</i> дня No.31	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Assembly of automobiles at the Moscow factory, Vladimir Ilyich. Cut to the manufacturing of bulbs at a Moscow glass factory. Cut to the oil derricks of a Turkmen craft and the drilling of chinks. Cut to workers in a Voronezh collective farm digging irrigation canals. Cut to the opening of an irrigation system in a Chapaev collective farm. Cut to Marfino, a collective farm near Moscow, to see the hotbed facilities and the cultivation of tomato bushes using synthetic acids. Cut to the reconstruction of houses in Minsk that were destroyed during the war. Cut to landscapes of Crimea: a sanatorium on the seacoast; the pioneer camp, Artek; people sunbathing, playing chess and walking on Ah-Petri (a famous hill). Cut to a steamship on the Black Sea.					
1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.38	<i>Новости</i> дня No.38	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Kuznetsk Metallurgy Laboratory. Cut to the Kubano Black Sea oil fields. Cut to the city of Tallinn. Workers at the hydroelectric power station, Volta. Cut to Ural collective farm, Dawn. A tractor ploughs the earth. Cut to the maiden voyage of the first river vessel designed from building berths at the Gorki factory, Russian Sormovo. Cut to the Kostroma dairy-breeding state farm, Karavaevo. Cows graze in a pasture. Cut to the Moscow elevator-mill. Cut to Tsyurupa and the arrival of bread from Kuban. Cut to Belovezhskaya, a dense forest in Belarus. Zebras and lynxes are kept in a territory reserve.					
1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.43	<i>Новости</i> дня No.43	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The restored Kharkov tractor factory and the completion of the 15,000th tractor. Cut to the restored mine, Cheluskintsev. Workers extract and transport coal in the Donbass. Cut to collective farmers on the Voronezh farm, New Life, harvesting grain. Cut to farmers on the collective farm, Ilyich, growing sunflowers, herding horses and farming sheep, pigs and cows. Butter and sausages are produced. Cut to Kuznetsk Metallurgy Laboratory. Cut to a skating rink. Cut to the village of Mstera in the Vladimir region. Artists create wax miniatures. Cut to Lake Teletsky in the Altay mountain range. Scientists study the lake and wildlife reserve.					
1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.47	<i>Новости</i> дня No.47	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The meeting of Moscow industry workers in the Columned Hall of the House of Unions. Cut to the building of the first state bearing plant. Cut to a skating rink. Cut to a metal works. Workers operate the grinding machinery. Cut to the Stalin Medical Institute. Cut to Tartusky University. Students collect their student cards and attend lectures. Cut to shots of a self-propelled ferry. Cut to the construction of a highway in Kalinin-Kashin. Cut to the cleaning of tobacco leaves in Alma-Ata state farm, Tobacco. Cut to the gathering of grapes on vineyards in Zakarpattia. Cut to wood landscapes in Bulgaria. Cut to the construction of a dam in the mountains of Rodopski.					

1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.52	<i>Новости</i> дня No.52	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. A speech is delivered by the Ambassador of Hungary, Molnar. Cut to a factory in Magnitogorsk. Cut to students working in the Metallurgical Institute. Cut to oil developments in Tuymaza. Cut to cotton-picking machines in the cotton fields of the Lower Chirchik region. Cut to the manufacturing of paper in Rahovschina. Cut to an assembly of collective farmers on one of the advanced collective farms preparing wood. Cut to Budapest. Visitors examine an exhibition of Soviet literature.					
1948	<i>News of the Day</i> No.56	<i>Новости</i> дня No.56	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A Voronezh stone steppe surrounded by a wood. Workers at the Dokuchayev Institute discuss beet growth. Cut to corn fields and the streams created in drought areas. Cut to the opening of a garden in the Penza collective farm, Fifteen Years of October. Cut to a Moscow rubber factory and a meeting to discuss performance in relation to the annual plan. Cut to a metal works in the city of Rustavi. Cut to the Republican Agricultural Exhibition in the city of Frunze. Visitors view cattle-breeding and cotton-growing stands. Cut to Paranayska, a paper factory in southern Sakhalin. Cut to the headquarters of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in the town of Michurinska in southern Sakhalin. Cut to the cropping of vegetables in hothouses and on fields. Cut to the Sakhalin mines. Miners work in a coal face. Coal is transported along a conveyor belt.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.7	<i>Новости</i> дня No.7	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Ambassador of the Korean People's Democratic Republic in the Soviet Union, Du En-Xa, hands over the accrediting letter to the Chairman of the Soviet Union, Shvernik, in the Kremlin. Cut to the Session of the Academy of Arts. The artists present include Gerasims, Fedorovsky and Grabar, and sculptors Manizev and Mukhina. Cut to the metal works factory, Hammer and Sickle. Cut to afforestation collective farmers in Stalingrad as they become acquainted with samples of various bushes. Cut to the Leningrad orchestra under the direction of conductor, Mravinsk. Stalin addresses workers in the Kirov factory, Electric Power. Cut to a Prague conference devoted to the 25th anniversary of Lenin's death.					



1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.12	<i>Новости</i> дня No.12	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A meeting of the governmental delegation of the Korean People's Democratic Republic in Moscow. Present are the Chairman of the Cabinet of Korea, Kim Il-Sung, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pak Khen-En, and the Vice-President of Cabinet, Khon Man-Xi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gromyko, and the Vice-President of the Ministerial Council of the Soviet Union, Mikoyan. Cut to a meeting of workers in the Moscow factory, Ordzhonikidze, to discuss the Ministerial Council and the Party Central Committee's decision to reduce wages. Cut to the Proletarka factory in Kalinin. Cut to a new physiotherapist table and x-ray machine at a hospital in the village of Belovezhskaya in Chuvashia. Cut to an exhibition of home appliances in Moscow. Cut to Officers of the Artillery Academy visiting a Moscow children's home.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.24	<i>Новости</i> дня No.24	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Construction of new houses in Moscow. Cut to a model of the south-west area of Moscow. The architect, Rudnev, acquaints students with the building project. Cut to Dr Bakhtadze working in the laboratory of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Tea and Subtropical Cultures. Cut to fishing in the delta of the River Volga. Fishermen fish for sevruga (a type of caviar) and sturgeon. Cut to an exhibition of Felix Dzerzhinsky's work in the Moscow House of Engineering and Technology. Cut to the opening of a monument in Treptower Park in memory of the Soviet soldiers who died in the Battle of Berlin.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.32	<i>Новости</i> дня No.32	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The automobile factory, Uralzis. Lorries leave a gate of the factory. Cut to the city of Vilnius. The Republican Congress of Collective Farmers meets in a Lithuanian theatre with Prime Minister Gedvilas of the Ministerial Council of Lithuania to discuss women's rights at work. Cut to Tajikistan. Tractors drive along the mountain roads. A mechanic checks tractor engines at a tractor station in the mountains. The collective farm, Parent Glory, is awarded a medal for its productivity. Cut to house building projects in Warsaw.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.34	<i>Новости</i> дня No.34	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Wheat is cleaned by self-propelled combines in Zernosovhoz, southern Russia. Grain is loaded into machines. Cut to the construction of the Kurganskaya dam; builders work with shovels. Cut to Moscow. Members of a selection committee from the Moscow tool factory, Calibre, talk with children about their vocation. Cut to the state farm, Gzhelka, in Moscow which specialises in the cultivation of ducklings. Ducklings are fed and weighed after hatching. Cut to scenes from the Czechoslovakian Mechanical Engineering and Textile Exhibition in Moscow's Central Park. Cut to Gdansk in Poland for the Day of the Sea celebrations. The steamship, <i>Peter</i> , arrives in the port.					

1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.36	<i>Новости</i> дня No.36	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The collective farm, Molotov, in Kuban. Wheat is harvested by combines. Cut to workers in the boiler factory, Red Sormovo. Cut to children on a hike during a pioneer camp for the children of the UFA locomotive repair factory's workers. Cut to cadets of the Baku Navy School getting acquainted with navigating devices on an educational vessel. Cut to the city of Vilnius in Lithuania. Architect Mikuchanis, the Head of the General Plan of Restoration and Reconstruction of Vilnius, talks to architects in a workshop. Masons work on a building site. Cut to Hungary. The Ambassador of the Soviet Union for Hungary, Tishkov, meets with the President of the Hungarian Republic, Sakashicho.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.50	<i>Новости</i> дня No.50	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> An oak nursery in Kalinin, in the Tambov region. Cut to a knitting factory on Vitebsk Street. Cut to the Molotov collective farm, where rice and figs are harvested. Cut to the Moscow factory, Hammer and Sickle, and the collective farm, Red Banner in Chuvash. Cut to a ceremonial meeting in the Moscow Conservatory devoted to the centenary of Shopena's birth. Cut to the elections of the GDR president in Berlin.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.54	<i>Новости</i> дня No.54	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A conference for the leaders in the field of animal experimentation. Cut to Moscow State University. Students study military defence strategies. Cut to workers moulding steel in the Chelyabinsk metal works. Cut to the construction of a dam in the Tambov region. Cut to the construction of a dam on the Arzhenka River and a collective farm power station. Cut to cotton fields in Uzbekistan. Raw clap is gathered and packed in the collective farm, Aydin. Cut to a demonstration in Sofia in honour of the 32nd anniversary of the October Revolution.					
1949	<i>News of the Day</i> No.58	<i>Новости</i> дня No.58	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Workers meet in a Moscow electronics factory in honour of Stalin's 70th birthday. Cut to the Dzerzhinsky steel works in Dneprodzerzhinsk, Ukraine. Cut to the assembly of electronic devices in a second Moscow factory. Cut to the harvesting of citrus fruits in a Georgian collective farm. Workers pack the fruit into boxes. Cut to participants in the Republican Olympiad in Kiev. Cut to the work of Kostorezy, an artist from the village of Lomonosov in the Arkhangelsk area. Cut to the repair of steam locomotives in the Parovoz factory in Sofia, Bulgaria.					

1949	<i>The World Will Win the War</i>	<i>Мы победим войну</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Co-Director (Directed with Bubrik and Gerasimov)	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The All-Union Conference of Supporters of the World held in the House of Unions in Moscow. Among the delegates of the conference are Lysenko, Fadeev, Vavilov and Nikolay. The conference is in support of peace in Leningrad and other democratic capital cities. Different topics of political, cultural and economic significance are discussed relating to both the Soviet Union and foreign countries.					
1949	<i>For a High Crop</i>	<i>За высокий урожай</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Salskaya Forest, Georgia. Citrus fruits are harvested. Cut to the strengthening of sand in the Bukhara Oasis. Saxaul seeds are sown. Cut to the preparation of seeds for sowing in collective farms in the Ukraine and Kuban.					
1950	<i>Yangtze River</i>	<i>По реке Янцзы</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film/Peking Studio of the Chinese National Republic	Director	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Yangtze River. Cut to different settlements along the banks of the river: Chongqing; Wuhan; Shanghai; Nanking; and Hankow. Chinese people work in fields. Cargo is transported along the river. Fisherman cast nets. Builders mix cement in a shipyard. Cut to the Purple Mountain Observatory in Nanking. Cut to the Mausoleum of Sun Yat-Hay. Cut to the construction of domestic and commercial city buildings.					
1950	<i>News of the Day No.28</i>	<i>Новости дня No.28</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Stalin speaks at the First Session of the Supreme Body of the Soviet Union. Present are Kaganovich, Bulganin, Andreev and Molotov. Cut to the Prime Minister of Finland, Kekkonena. Cut to the cleaning of grain in the Turkmen collective farm, Komsomol. Cut to workers in Stalin, the Ural automobile factory. Cut to a demonstration in Berlin in honour of the youth army, with the participation of Khonekkera.					

1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.5	<i>Новости</i> дня No.5	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Memorial evening for Lenin held at the Bolshoi. Present are Stalin, Beria, Svernika, Khrushchev, Malenkov and Kosygina. Pospelov performs for the audience. Wreaths are hung in Lenin's Mausoleum by chosen diplomatic representatives of a number of socialist countries. Cut to the operation of a propaganda centre before the general secretarial elections. Cut to the metal works, Azovstal. Cut to a meeting in honour of the pre-schedule completion of the repair of a steam locomotive, <i>Kitaysko-Soviet Friendship</i> .					
1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.12	<i>Новости</i> дня No.12	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Production in a pulp and paper factory in the Kaluga region. Cut to the Penza watch factory. Cut to Tarasova acting in a theatre production. Cut to the Rybnovsk tractor factory in the Ryazan region. Cut to the production of vegetable oils at the Chimkent factory in Kazakhstan. Cut to a weaving workhouse in Moscow. Cut to the production of cotton in a Romanian cotton mill.					
1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.32	<i>Новости дня</i> No.28	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The first session of the meeting halls of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to attend the session of Stalin. Kaganovich, Bulganin, Andreev, Molotov and Beria are all in attendance. Zverev gives a speech. Cut to a meeting in Moscow with Prime Minister Kekkonen of Finland. Cut to the harvesting of grain in the fields of the Turkmen farm, Komsomol. Cut to labourers working in the Ural Automobile Plant named after Stalin. Cut to a demonstration in Berlin to honour the German youth rally.					
1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.32	<i>Новости дня</i> No.32	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> 4 July, 1950. The Fourth Session of the Supreme Body of the Soviet Union in the Kremlin. Present are Molotov, Shvernik, Malenkov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Andreev, Suslov and Mikoyan. Cut to a meeting in the Moscow electrolamp factory, Ordzhonikidze. Cut to a meeting in the Riga VEF factory to organise a petition to uphold the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Cut to the city of Minsk and a montage of Minsk's streets, buildings and work places. Cut to the harvesting of grain in the state farm, May Day in the Crimea. Cut to the city of Yaroslavl. Montage of Yaroslavl's streets and landscapes. Cut to the Volkova theatre. People gather in the foyer to see Virty's play, <i>Plot Doomed</i> . Cut to Beijing. A meeting is held to sign the Stockholm Appeal, a petition to uphold the prohibition of nuclear weapons.					

1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.36	<i>Новости дня</i> No.36	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. A ceremonial meeting is held devoted to the Day of the Railwayman in an open-air theatre in Central Recreation Park. Cut to a railway station. Railwaymen work with the trains. A steam locomotive passes through the station. Cut to production at the factory, Red Proletarian. Cut to the meteorological station at the Academy of Sciences in Kazakhstan in the Tyan-Shan mountains. Cut to sheep grazing in a field. Cut to an architectural project in the city of Karaganda and shots of residential buildings under construction and roads being asphalted. Cut to the meeting of the Third Congress of the Socialist Uniform Party of Germany (SEPG) in Berlin.					
1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.50	<i>Новости дня</i> No.50	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The second All-Union Conference at the factory, Commune of Paris. Cut to production at the Kharkov tractor factory. Cut to the drainage of the marshy grounds in Estonia. Cut to the movement of freight trains through the Ural Ridge. Cut to elections in the National Chamber in East Germany. Cut to a landscape of the grounds in the Dresden village of Dalevits.					
1950	<i>News of the Day</i> No.53	<i>Новости дня</i> No.53	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The government elections in Moscow. Stalin holds a pre-election meeting at the electro-factory. Demonstrations are held on 7 November in Red Square, Leningrad, Kiev, Baku, Stalingrad and Kakhovka. A festival is held on the bank of the Dnepr River. Cut to a demonstration in Sofia.					
1951	<i>News of the Day</i> No.9	<i>Новости дня</i> No.9	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of Leningrad. Elections of officials of the Supreme Body of the Soviet Union. Cut to the city of Moscow. General meeting of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union devoted to presidential elections. Present are Vyshinsky, Grekov and Nesmeyanov. Cut to the extraction of manganese ore in the city of Chiatura, Georgia. Cut to the performance of a symphonic orchestra in the House of Culture in the city of Cesis, Latvia. A choir performs in Warsaw, Poland. Cut to shots of Warsaw's streets, buildings, transport and pedestrians.					

1951	<i>Visit of the Indian Delegation of Filmmakers to the USSR</i>	<i>Пребывание индийской делегации киноработников в СССР</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Co-Director, Editor (Directed with A. Varlamov)	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director with A. Varlamov)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A group of Indian cinematographers arrives at Vnukovo Airport. Delegations also arrive from Tbilisi, Bern, Leningrad and Kiev. Cut to meetings with workers of the Moscow factories, Three Mountain Manufacturing and Red October. Cut to events at the film studios and theatres, Mosfilm, TSDRI, Moscow House of Cinema, TSSDF and the Bolshoi. Cut to the Leningrad factory, Fast Walker, then to the House of Pioneers, a pre-school in Kiev. Cut to a sanatorium on the Black Sea coast and to a collective farm in Georgia.					
1951	<i>News of the Day No.20</i>	<i>Новости дня No.20</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. Construction of a skyscraper in Kotelnicheskaya Quay. Cut to the arrival of the International Union of Students. Cut to greenhouses in a mechanical engineering factory in Ural. Fruits and flowers blossom in the gardens of the state farm, Agriculturist, in the Krasnodar region. Cut to a performance of Tchaikovsky by the Hungarian National Army Orchestra. Cut to Austria for the signing of a petition to coalesce working industrial enterprises.					
1951	<i>News of the Day No.29</i>	<i>Новости дня No.29</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Delivery of the International Stalin Award in Korea. Cut to Uzbekistan. A coal mine in the basin of Angren. Wood is collected near the Kama River. Cut to Moscow and to the celebration of a decade of Ukrainian art and literature. Cut to the opening of a polygraph centre in Bucharest, Romania.					
1951	<i>News of the Day No.46</i>	<i>Новости дня No.46</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Opening of a dam across the Don. The river flows in its new channel. Cut to productions at the Dnepropetrovsk metal works. Cut to the growing of vegetables at the New Life collective farm in Yakutsk. Farmers display the crops they have managed to grow on permafrost. Cut to a montage of the city of Baku; shots of the streets, buildings and stadium. The stadium is opened for a football match. Cut to Poznan in Poland for a crop festival. Among the present is Marshal Rokossovsky of Poland.					
1951	<i>News of the Day No.54</i>	<i>Новости дня No.54</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The ceremonial meeting to celebrate the 34th anniversary of the BOCF at the Bolshoi. Among the present are Kaganovich, Malenkov and Khrushchev. Cut to a demonstration in Red Square to mark the 7 November anniversary. Cut to a government tribunal. Present are Beriya, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and Bulganin. The 34th anniversary of the BOCF is also celebrated in Romania and Bulgaria.					

1952	<i>1 May 1952</i>	<i>1 Мая 1952</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Co- Director (Directed with V. Belyev)	RGAKFD (credited as Co-Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> 1 May. Streets are decorated; the military parade in Red Square. Heads of the Soviet Union visit the Mausoleum of Lenin.					
1952	<i>News of the Day No.3</i>	<i>Новости дня No.3</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Production at Rustavsky, a metal works. Cut to Turkmenistan's centre of culture, Nebit Dag. Cut to the testing of an elevating crane in a Kaliningrad factory. Cut to the hunting of muskrats in the Buryat region of Mongolia. Cut to a concert performed by the Chinese actors of Moscow. Cut to the collective farm, 30 December, in Romania.					
1952	<i>News of the Day No.36</i>	<i>Новости дня No.36</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. A ceremonial meeting in the open-air theatre of the Central Recreation Park in celebration of All-Union Day. Cut to the construction of the Ivanovo pump station in the Zaporozhye area. Cut to the town of Tkvarcheli in Abkhazia. Schools and a hospital are in construction. Cut to the Stalin coal basin in the Tkvarchelska region. Cut to a miners' rest home in Abkhazia. Miners from the Donbass, Arhipov and Mishin regions all rest. Cut to a fishing vessel on the Baltic sea. The cadets of the Riga Seaworthy School work as cabin mates, in the engine room and on deck. Fish are caught in nets. Cut to the suburb of Lianozovo in the north of Moscow. Amateur actors perform. Cut to a demonstration of workers in Poland meeting to mark the 8th anniversary of victory over fascism.					
1952	<i>Pioneer No.11</i>	<i>Пионерия No.11</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The international pioneers hike from the edge of the Black Sea in Bulgaria to Czechoslovakia. They camp in the village of Sobeshan, Belgium. They travel to Hungary and finally to Poland, where the pioneers meet other groups of travelling pioneers in Warsaw. The pioneers visit a monument dedicated to Soviet soldiers.					
1952	<i>Pioneer No.13</i>	<i>Пионерия No.13</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. The delivery of gold and silver medals to schoolgirls of the 494th school. A nature reserve is built at the school. Cut to Yerevan, Armenia. Pioneers work at Yerevan Palace. Cut to sports day at a Riga school.					

1953	<i>News of the Day No.9</i>	<i>Новости дня No.9</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Retraining collective farmers through agricultural lecturing by teachers, doctors of science and academics. Cut to pipe-rolling production at the Chelyabinsk factory. Cut to an amateur fine arts exhibition. Artists paint in a studio. Cut to the opening of a railway in Chungking in China. A train enters and leaves the station. Cut to the National Assembly building in Prague. A Session is held for the World Federation of Democratic Youth.					
1953	<i>News of the Day No.38</i>	<i>Новости дня No.38</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Kremlin. The Ambassador of Austria in the Soviet Union, Norbert Bishoff, meets with Voroshilov, a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee. Cut to an open-air theatre in Gorki Park for a celebration of Navy Fleet the Day. Cut to an opening of a monument dedicated to writer, Chernyshevsky, in Saratov. Present are the grand daughters of the writer. Cut to the opening of a hydroelectric power station on Lake Drisvyaty, which lies on the borders of Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia. Cut to Moscow railway station to see the departure of the Korean delegation which is heading to Bucharest for the Festival of Youth. Cut to the House of Unions. An evening of celebration is held to build Soviet and Chinese relations. Young Chinese dancers perform.					
1953	<i>News of the Day No.53</i>	<i>Новости дня No.53</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Celebrations for the fourth anniversary of the Chinese National Republic. Present are the Chinese Ambassador, composer Glier, artist Efanov and writer Surkov. Cut to workers in a dairy cannery in Belarus. Milk is condensed in a warehouse. Cut to the manufacturing of grand pianos in a Tallinn factory. Pianist Bruno Lukk plays a grand piano. Cut to an exhibition of the Chinese fine arts in a museum dedicated to Eastern cultures. Cut to Beneasa Airport near Bucharest. Shots of the pilots' room, the dispatching office and aeroplanes of Soviet design and manufacture.					
1953	<i>Under a Banner of Unity</i>	<i>Под знаменем единства</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Vienna. The Third World Congress of Trade Unions called under the initiative of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Delegates vote for the statement of the resolution of the Congress.					
1954	<i>Soviet Hungarian Friendship Becomes Stronger</i>	<i>Крепнет советско- венгерская дружба</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Celebrations in the Columned Hall of the House of Unions, Cut to Moscow State University for a photo exhibition, then to the Udamnik and Colloseum cinemas for the screenings of Hungarian films. Cut to tours of a Budapest opera theatre.					



1954	<i>News of the Day</i> No.31	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня No.31</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Celebrating the 300th anniversary of the reunion between the Ukraine and Russia. Cut to demonstrations and a sports parade in Kiev. Moscow buildings are decorated with posters. Birds fly in Izmaylovo Park. A parade is held in Dynamo Stadium. Cut to evening time in Moscow.					
1954	<i>The 11th</i> <i>Congress of Trade</i> <i>Unions</i>	<i>11-ый съезд</i> <i>профсоюзов</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Opening of the 11th Congress of Trade Unions of the Soviet Union in the Kremlin Palace. Among the present are Shvernika and Suslov. Closing of Congress. A concert of amateur performances is held at the Bolshoi in honour of the Congress.					
1954	<i>News of the Day</i> No.46	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня No.46</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. The New Soviet Village farm exhibits its cattle-breeding industry. Cut to the arrival of a Finnish delegation at Leningrad station. Cut to farmers from China working in a field. Cut to production in a Gorki car factory. Cut to the Norkskoi children's sanatorium near Yerevan. Cut to seals on the island of Sakhalin. Cut to Danzig Airport where a group of Polish seamen return from their captivity in Taiwan.					
1954	<i>News of the Day</i> No.60	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня No.60</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The construction of the Kuybyshev hydroelectric power station on the Volga River. Cut to a wood-cutting factory in Sverdlovsk. In a laboratory next to the factory, the cutter's work is inspected. Cut to agriculturist, Maltsev, at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. Maltsev's delivers a speech titled, 'New Systems of Ground Processing'. Cut to the gathering of grapes in the Georgian village of Mukuzani. Cut to the gathering of apples in a collective farm in the foothills of Zaplijsky Cut to the gathering of apples, grapes and watermelons in the Murgab valley of Tajikistan. Clap is also gathered. Cut to sculptor Igor Konenkov in his workshop, followed by an exhibition of his work in a Moscow studio. Cut to a typhoon on the island of Kyusyu in Japan. The streets and rice fields are flooded. Victims are rescued from a sunken ferry in the Tsugaru Strait. Cut to an ice hockey match between the youth teams of the Soviet Union and Poland. The Soviet Union wins the match.					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.2	<i>Новости</i> <i>дня No.2</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> A suspension bridge stretches across the Volga in Stalingrad. Cut to Kalinin hydroelectric power station in Voronezh. Cut to the opening of a 630 ton press works. Cut to collective farmers mucking out a pigsty at Tchkalov. Cut to landscape shots of the Gobi Desert. Cut to Vienna where children meet from 160 countries of the world. Vienna. Cut to a performance of <i>Hamlet</i> at the Moscow theatre. Cut to the New Year's ball at the House of Unions.					

1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.11	<i>Новости</i> дня No.11	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Miners extract potash salt in the Ural Mountains. Franc, a member of the Academy of Medical Sciences, talks about the application of radioactive substances in medicine. Cut to a skiing competition in Ulyanovsk. Cut to an exhibition of fabrics in the Ministry of Industrial Goods in Pyongyang, North Korea. A decade of Belarus art is celebrated at the Bolshoi. Zolotaryov's ballet, <i>Ardent Hearts</i> , is performed.					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.17	<i>Новости</i> дня No.17	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Scenes from a metal works in Rustavi and a pipe-rolling factory in Sumgait. Cut to a pigsty in the state farm, Ordzhonikidze, in the Urals Mountains. Cut to the Korovnik and Michurin collective farms in Kazakhstan and Spring in Tajikistan. Vineyards and gardens are in blossom in Stalingrad. Cut to the Dyadkovsky crystal factory in the Bryansk region. Workers produce the crystals using machinery and their own hands. Cut to a performance of Giselle at the Bolshoi. Cut to workers in Budapest signing a petition for workers' rights. Cut to a picket of strikers in Osaka. The strikers win. Cut to a port in Bratislava. A ship leaves the port for Romania. Cut to figure skaters performing for foreign delegates in Dynamo Stadium. Cut to the 22nd Soviet Chess Championship. Geller and Antoshin are playing. Cut to the parachutist, Zhdanov, completing a 2000 metre jump.					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.22	<i>Новости</i> дня No.22	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Leningrad. Ballerina, Mathilde Kschessinska, performs. Cut to Smolny Palace. Cut to the Russian cruiser, <i>Aurora</i> . Cut to iron production in Magnitogorsk, the largest metal works in the Soviet Union. Cut to a pigsty on the Estonian state farm, Ulenurme. Cut to the Svinootkormochny complex in Stavropol. Cut to the new opera and ballet theatre in Chelyabinsk. The opera, <i>Bohdan Khmelnytsky</i> , is performed. A tiger is hunted in the village of Kartun in Ussuriysk. A leopard is also caught. Cut to the start of a bicycle race from Tashkent to Samarkand. Cut to workers in the automobile factory, Gansh, in Budapest. Cut to a group of young people from Prague travelling by bus to see the development of rural land in Czechoslovakia.					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.27	<i>Новости</i> дня No.27	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Celebrations to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of Germany's unconditional surrender. A military parade takes place in Red Square. A performance is held at the Bolshoi. A delegation of members of the Indian Parliament visit the Kremlin. Cut to the release of new transformer designers at the Zaporozhe transformer factory. A memorial is held in the Columned Hall of the House of Unions to mark the 10th anniversary of Czechoslovakia's liberation from Nazi Germany.					

1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.33	<i>Новости дня</i> No.33	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Prime Minister Neru of India delivers a wreath to the Lenin and Stalin Mausoleum. Cut to the opening of a summer season at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. Cut to the assembly of the turbine at Kama hydroelectric power station. Cut to shots of a two-storied train carriage in East Germany. Cut to similar shots in Warsaw. President Prasad of India examines a cable factory in West Bengal. Bamboo canes are used to strengthen the banks of the river Brahmaputra in India. Cut to the Bolshoi. Ballet dancers of the Bashkir Opera Theatre perform an adagio from ballet, <i>The Crane Song</i> .					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.39	<i>Новости дня</i> No.39	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The city of Moscow. Participants meet at Leningrad Station to depart for the World Assembly for Peace in Helsinki. Cut to delegates meeting in Vladivostok. Cut to Kuznetsk Metallurgical Combine where the application of radioactive chrome is being tested. The automatic device for the control of the balls is operated. Cut to the cleaning of grain on the fields of collective farm, Yavansky, in Tajikistan. Corn is sown and wheat is cleaned. Fishermen on <i>Udarnik</i> catch fish on the Bering Sea. Tourists travel in the Caucasus. Parachutists from the Tchkalov Aeroclub jump from a plane. The parachutists fall to the ground. Cut to the testing of a railway line on a bridge crossing the Danube in Hungary. A steam locomotive travels over the bridge. Cut to afforestation in China. Cut to the village of Ojerskhot in Holland. Twins from around Europe meet together. Cut to Brno in Czechoslovakia. Gymnasts compete in Brno Stadium.					
1955	<i>News of the Day</i> No.45	<i>Новости дня</i> No.45	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Moscow. A Yugoslavian government delegation, led by Bakarichem, visits an automobile factory. The delegates inspect an assembly of vehicles. Cut to collective farm, Molotov, in Georgia. Agriculturist, Dzhorbenadze, examines a new grade of corn. Cut to a sanatorium in Kislovodsk. Collective farmers rest in the sanatorium and receive medical attention. Cut to a meeting at Moscow Airport between the public and the command of the Soviet tanker, <i>Tuapse</i> , who have just been released from captivity in Taiwan. Cut to Chinese singers performing a Stanislavski opera at the Moscow Academic Musical Theatre. Cut to Vienna. The Soviet, American, French and English divisions of armies leave the city as it has now been restored of its independence. The allies' flags are hoisted down. Cut to a meeting of the Soviet and French delegates at the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw.					

1955	<i>News of the Day No.49</i>	<i>Новости дня No.49</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Belgium for the Soviet Union, Loridan, meets with Saryevu at the Kremlin. Also present are Gorkin and Zorin. A delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany, led by Adenauery, meets at Vnukovskoy. The delegation meets Bulganin, Molotov and Pervuhin. Cut to a meeting at Moscow Airport with the parliamentary delegation of Japan, led by Kitamura. Cut to a visit to Moscow by the Indian physicist, Khomi. Cut to Lomonosov visiting Moscow State University. Cut to Riga factory, <i>VEF</i> , to observe the production of springs for the telephone relay, designed by Mengelisy. Cut to the poppy farm, Red Star, in Kirghizia. Collective farmers extract the raw material required for the manufacturing of opium. Cut to French tourists enjoying the sights of Leningrad. Cut to the international equestrian competition at Moscow Hippodrome. The winner is Nasibov.					
1955	<i>News of the Day No.60</i>	<i>Новости дня No.60</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director as E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Delhi, India. A dinner is given by Neru in honour of Bulganin and Khrushchev. Bulganin and Neru give speeches. Cut to the opening of the Metro in Leningrad. Passengers board a train and go on a journey. Cut to Chinese engineers working at the Kuznetsk Metallurgical Combine. Cut to urban architectural wonders in the apartment houses and office buildings of Voronezh, Moscow and Tbilisi. Cut to coal mining in Czechoslovakia. Coal is transported by conveyabelt. Cut to an international competition between English and Polish motorcycle racers in Warsaw Stadium. Cut to a hairdressing competition in Paris. Cut to an exhibition of Hungarian sculptor, Shtroblya, in Moscow. Visitors examine the sculptures. Cut to a celebration of Soviet Union actress, Pashennaya. Pashennaya speaks to the crowd in sync-sound.					
1956	<i>The International Exhibition in Kabul</i>	<i>Международная выставка в Кабуле</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The International Industrial Exhibition in Kabul.					
1956	<i>Foreign Newsreel No.4</i>	<i>Иностранная кинохроника No.4</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Soviet engineers visit the newly constructed Calder Hall nuclear power station in Cumbria, England. Cut to France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pino, signing Tunisia's Declaration of Independence. Cut to oil storage in the north of Italy. Cut to boar hunting in Bulgaria. Cut to scenes from the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. Cut to the crowning ceremony of Norodom Suramarit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Cut to equestrian sport in Germany. Cut to a performance by the Slovak National Ensemble in Prague.					

1956	<i>Foreign Newsreel No.6</i>	<i>Иностранная кинохроника No.6</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Celebrating May Day in Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany and Peking. Cut to the introduction of Romanian peasants into cooperative society. Cut to the research into oncological diseases at the University of San Francisco. Cut to the extraction of ore in the An Lu Shan Mountains in China. Cut to Rajasthan in the north-west of India to celebrate its independence from Great Britain. Cut to the construction of a hydroelectric power station in Austria. Cut to research in caves near Fua in the south of France. Cut to scenes from the FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium between Manchester City and Birmingham City.					
1956	<i>Foreign Newsreel No.9</i>	<i>Иностранная кинохроника No.9</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited – Director as E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Production at a factory in Czechoslovakia. Cut to the visit of North Korean Prime Minister, Kim Il-Sung, to a metal works in East Germany. Cut to celebrations in Rome for the 10th anniversary of the Italian Republic. Cut to the installation of a 70 metre television aerial in Budapest. Cut to fishing in Romania and Bulgaria. Cut to Bulgarian tourists in Belgrade. Cut to the Festival of National Dance and Music in Bombay. Cut to a beer festival in Belgium. Cut to a German motoball competition.					
1956	<i>Moscow Newsreel No.10</i>	<i>Иностранная кинохроника No.10</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> Scenes from a meeting held to decide on ways to improve socialist conditions in Moscow, chaired by the secretary of the Moscow Committee, Kapitonov. Cut to the postman bringing the first pension to former weaver, Vlasova. Weavers work on their machines at the Kupavinskoy factory. Cut to the movement of transport in Moscow's streets. Cut to the Exhibition of the Fine Arts of the Mongolian National Republic in Moscow. Cut to a group of Italian cinematographers in Moscow: Dhirotti, Latuada, Pompanini, Korteze and Della Nage. Dhirotti gives an interview to the SINHR. Cut to a tea exhibition on the streets of Kirov. Different stands have different grades of tea. People taste the tea on offer. Cut to the Hall of the Central Telegraph. Women who work at the Telegraph enjoy the Festival of Workers. People sing and dance.					

1956	<i>News of the Day No.1</i>	<i>Новости дня No.1</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Director, Editor	RGAKFD (Credited as Director – E. Vertova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Iran, Ansari, meets with Voroshilov at the Kremlin. Cut to a ceremonial meeting of representatives of cultural organisations. The 8th anniversary of Burma's liberation from colonial dependence is celebrated at Tchaikovsky Concert Hall. Present is Tikhonov, the Ambassador of Burma for the Soviet Union. Cut to a gathering of builders at Kybyshev hydroelectric power station to witness the start-up of the first hydrounit. Present is the Chief of Construction, Komzin. Cut to collective farmers of the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan as they load an aeroplane with fertiliser. The fertiliser is dispersed over the fields. Cut to the transportation of logs on the island of Sakhalin. Cut to a Minsk machine-tool construction factory. Workers Voroshen and Lisagor explain their production methods. Cut to a New Year's Eve party in the Georgievsk Hall in the Kremlin. A young man is presented with a prize for the best dance. Cut to the construction of a cement works near Datong, China. Cut to the extraction of salt from sea water on the island of Sinoku. Cut to the American theatre company, Everyman, arriving in Leningrad. The actors perform a segment of the Gershwin opera, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> .					
1956	<i>The Fifth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR</i>	<i>На пятой сессии Верховного Совета СССР</i>	Central Studio for Documentary Film	Co- Director (Directed with O. Kutusova), Editor	RGAKFD (Credited as Co-Director –E. Vertova with O. Kutusova)
<b>Synopsis:</b> The Fifth Session of the Supreme Body of the Soviet Union. The Chairman of the Ministerial Council, Bulganin, delivers a report. Present are Yasnov, Nuriev, Nesmeyanov, Shepilov, Popova, Tikhonov, Latsis, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Molotov, Malenkov, Konev and Lysenko.					



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