

Vent d'est

Henry K. Miller

Sergei Diaghilev died in Venice on 19 August 1929. A few years later the historian George Dangerfield evoked the impact of his Ballets Russes, and of Roger Fry's exhibitions of Post-Impressionism, on London society between 1911 and 1914. In that milieu 'a Nijinsky, a Stravinsky' might 'seem to be the very sound and shadow of time's wingèd chariot, which, with its terrible occupant, was still at the back of a doomed world, unheard, hurrying near'.¹ Doom had struck St Petersburg and Vienna, but in post-war London, the final reckoning having been deferred, modernism acquired new meanings. In 1919 Fry wondered at London's 'excited admiration' for André Derain's designs for the Diaghilev production *La Boutique fantasque*. 'It was just such a public of cultured people', he wrote, 'as had howled with rage at M. Derain's pictures when six years ago they saw them for the first and only time in England'.²

Diaghilev's ballets became a fixture of the social calendar, and a profound influence on, among others, the film directors Anthony Asquith, Thorold Dickinson, and Michael Powell. In her obituary Lydia Lopokova wrote that 'the love of the English for the ballet has been greater than that of any other people outside Russia'.³ Two months after Diaghilev's death, three months after his company's last bow at Covent Garden, time's wingèd chariot was heard once more. No-one knew what would be the ultimate consequences of the Crash. Even a year later Lopokova's husband could write of 'contemporary events which are too near to be visible distinctly'.⁴ But on 9 November 1929, less than two weeks after Black Tuesday, it was reported in the *Graphic* that 'the fashionable restaurants and night-clubs have been feeling a draught'.⁵ It was in this unsettled climate, the very next day, that London first saw *Battleship Potemkin*, belated yet timely portent of a new world.

'All the "intelligentsia" of London were there,' noted the *Sketch*, 'and artistic Chelsea was well to the fore. I felt that I ought to have worn a Spanish sombrero or an Italian cloak, or both, to be in the swim'.⁶ That day at the Tivoli cinema in the Strand has passed into legend, partly because the same occasion saw the birth of the British documentary movement, the presence of John Grierson's *Drifters* in the programme ensuring, as Ian Christie has written, 'a form of apostolic succession'.⁷ Later on there was a party in Mayfair for Eisenstein and his colleagues Grigori Alexandrov and Eduard Tisse; Mr and Mrs Keynes were invited but unable to attend.⁸ Their host was Sidney Bernstein, owner of a small chain of cinemas and leading light in the body which after many years of effort had at long last brought the Russians and their film to London – the Film Society.

The Film Society had been founded four years earlier as 'a sort of try-out house for pictures', as its young chairman Ivor Montagu put it at the time, showing films that the trade would not touch.⁹ Like its model the Stage Society, which had produced a number of George Bernard Shaw's plays around the turn of the century, the Film Society's screenings were limited to a small membership, and therefore had some protection against censorship, though far less than its theatrical forerunner. Shaw and H. G. Wells, along with Fry and Keynes, were among the names on the list of famous founder members, and from its first

programme on 25 October 1925 the society was a success with much the same 'public of cultured people' who thronged Diaghilev's first nights. Its eight annual 'performances' (as they were called), given on Sunday afternoons, were mounted in major West End venues, with full orchestras, and had little in common with the typical film society experience of later decades.

Montagu – scion of a banking dynasty, nephew of one cabinet minister and cousin of another; he knew Wells and Shaw through an aunt – was the driving force. The story he told was that in late 1924, while in Berlin 'doing a special correspondent tour of the German studios for *The Times*', he and his friend Angus MacPhail saw a preview of Paul Czinner's *Nju* (1924), 'and other stuff they knew their friends at Cambridge would give their eyes to see'.¹⁰ On the train home Montagu and the actor Hugh Miller, who had been working in Germany, 'got together' and asked themselves "'Why shouldn't there be a Film Society for films no one in England would ever see otherwise, just as there's a Stage Society?'"

It was by no means an original idea. In May 1924, for example, the *Evening Standard*'s critic Walter Mycroft had asked 'Why should we not have the cinematographic equivalent of the Sunday Stage Societies?', and he had repeated the question at regular intervals.¹¹ In January 1925, soon after meeting Montagu, Miller published an article in the same paper titled 'An Independent Film Theatre?' which actually referred to Mycroft's campaign.¹² In February Miller introduced Montagu to Adrian Brunel, film director and owner of a Soho 'hospital' for films in need of re-editing; and at some point Montagu introduced himself to Iris Barry, film critic of the *Spectator*.¹³ It was Barry who brought the conspirators together at her Bloomsbury home, and it was Barry who brought in her friend Bernstein. Then in his twenties, Bernstein had inherited a clutch of suburban music-halls and cinemas on his father's death in 1922. At ease in Barry's circle of artists and writers, he was no ordinary showman, but it was his practical ability that made the Film Society possible.

It is not clear who invited Mycroft. In some respects he was the odd man out – 'I had never met that sort of woman before, and was startled,' he recalled of the bohemian Barry – but the early Film Society's project of screening German films which commercial distributors had left on the shelf was his more than anyone else's.¹⁴ A leaflet issued in September 1925 told prospective members that the first year's offerings would include contemporary French abstract films, early American comedies, but above all recent German features, naming *Nju*, shown in the fifth programme, Paul Leni's *Waxworks* (1924), shown in the first, and Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), which could not be shown until 1928, among others.¹⁵ Already released features which the Film Society proposed to revive – uncut and with better intertitles and music – included *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920), as seen and written about by Virginia Woolf in early 1926.¹⁶

Yet there was also, from the very beginning, a strong desire within the Film Society to show Russian films. It was generally held that the first to have reached Britain since the Revolution was the Tolstoy adaptation *Polikushka* (1922), filmed by the Rus' company with members of the Moscow Art Theatre, which had been shown in a single London cinema, the St James's Picture Theatre, round the corner from Buckingham Palace, in October 1924, shortly before the Film Society's founders first came together. Barry, in the *Spectator*, had called it a 'grim and beautiful film', and hoped that 'pictures like it will find their way to England and into our too monotonous picture-palaces'.¹⁷ Mycroft wrote in the

Evening Standard that 'I want films like "Petrushka"' – a telling slip – 'but I have yet to hear that 5000 people a day went to the St. James Picture Palace last week to see that wonderful Russian film'.¹⁸

Although neither critic commented on the political background, it would have quite some bearing on their wish to see more Russian films in Britain. *Polikushka* was presented by the British tentacle of Workers' International Relief (WIR), Willi Münzenberg's Berlin-based Comintern front organization, which had brought the film to international attention a few years earlier; subsequently Mezhrabpom, the Moscow branch of Münzenberg's operation, had formed a film company with Rus', named Mezhrabpom-Rus'. The film's London opening was timed to coincide with the Labour party's annual conference, which ended – as was widely anticipated – with its leader Ramsay MacDonald having to call a General Election after less than a year in power, partly because his attempts at rapprochement with the Soviet Union lost him the support of the Liberal party in parliament. Later in October 1924, just before polling day, the *Daily Mail* published the notorious 'Zinoviev letter', purportedly from the Comintern's chairman, which instructed the Communist Party of Great Britain to use the Labour government's conciliatory policy as an opportunity to radicalize the British proletariat – in which task the Comintern would provide material assistance in the form of propaganda. Labour lost the election, though it increased its vote, and under Stanley Baldwin's new Conservative government relations with the Soviet Union cooled again.

Not, however, to freezing-point. In May 1925, soon after announcing the Film Society's formation to the press, Montagu, who had studied zoology, travelled to Russia to make preparations for a British Museum expedition to the Caucasus to capture living samples of 'an exceedingly primitive vole'.¹⁹ Earlier in the year he had met Münzenberg in Berlin at a screening of Yakov Protazanov's Mezhrabpom-Rus' production *His Call* (1925), staged on the first anniversary of Lenin's death, and obtained letters of introduction before travelling to Moscow in the spring. There he saw a number of other Mezhrabpom-Rus' films; meanwhile Barry, left behind in London and scrambling to secure films for the coming first season, cabled 'ALL GOES WELL BUT SLOWLY GET POLIKUSHKA'.²⁰ But Sovkino, the state film concern which monopolized film import and export in and out of Russia, couldn't see the percentage in providing films to the Film Society for a single screening in front of an audience not markedly proletarian in character. "Here we can only buy and sell," its chief Konstantin Shvedchikov told Montagu.²¹ "We cannot do anything else. Unless you are ready to buy we cannot deal with you." As Montagu passed through the capital on his way back from the Caucasus in September, Francesco Misiano, the Italian head of Mezhrabpom, told him to work through WIR in Berlin; thus Montagu returned to London with a cargo of dead rodents and no films.²²

This failure did not prevent the *Sunday Express*, a fortnight before the Film Society gave its first performance, from airing 'the rumour current in Filmland that the Film Society is not wholly free from political bias of an obnoxious colour',²³ a predictable attack given the paper's politics, but surprising considering that the Film Society's launch had been announced on the front page of its daily sister paper less than six months earlier; and that the film critic of both papers, G. A. Atkinson, had urged upon Montagu the need to get hold of Russian films 'at all costs';²⁴ and that the *Express* group's proprietor, Lord

Beaverbrook, had a financial interest in the cinema which the Film Society had been given permission to use, the New Gallery in Regent Street – an interest which became all the more intimate a few weeks later when its management was taken over by his married mistress, Jean Norton.

Undaunted, Montagu wrote up his impressions of the Russian film industry in a series of articles for the trade paper *Kinematograph Weekly*, their publication being in itself a sign that not everyone was against the idea of doing business with the Soviets. Atkinson's attack on the Film Society was motivated in part by its reluctance to show British films; Montagu, pointedly and in italics, claimed that during his visit '*I saw no English picture; indeed a prominent official engaged in the film industry asked me whether we ever produced films in England.*'²⁵ He also wrote that 'only the productions of Mezhrabpom persistently maintain a level high enough to bear comparison in this [technical] respect with the average technique of American films', and it was these that he continued to try to obtain through WIR.²⁶ *His Call* was his priority, but as he had told Misiano, as 'propaganda' it was 'too dangerous' to be shown alone, and so he also asked for Protazanov's earlier film *Aelita* (1924) and for a third Mezhrabpom-Rus' production, *The Station Inspector* (1925), both of which were given provisional Film Society dates during its first season.²⁷

Montagu had nothing good to say about the productions of Goskino, but it was this studio that would shake the world, a few months after his return from Russia, with *Potemkin*. The film's first screening, held at the Bolshoi on 21 December 1925, was even more narrowly missed by Sidney Bernstein, who had been in Moscow just weeks earlier, accompanying the trade journalist Ernest Fredman, editor of the *Film Renter*. Although they missed *Potemkin*, it fell to Fredman to provide what must be one of the first accounts in English of any of Eisenstein's films:

'The Strike' is a very fantastic kind of picture made by a producer named Isenstein, who, in this film, has made his first picture. It is brilliantly conceived and deals with the effect of a strike in a big factory upon the small town and the successful effort of the military to crush the strike. It is amazingly directed, has enormous crowd scenes, and when the Cossacks ride down the strikers one even sees the horses mounting staircases and riding round the galleries of a six or seven storey building. It is the first time I have ever seen machinery made to appear beautiful in a picture, and many scenes are a sheer revelation of a producer's genius. This film is, however, utterly unsuitable for the British market.²⁸

Potemkin attracted more notice. Its release in Berlin by Prometheus, another Münzenberg outfit, in the spring of 1926, was widely reported in the British press. 'Every producer and kinema artist in Berlin who has seen "Potemkin" regards it as one of the greatest triumphs of screen photography and acting,' reported the *Daily Mail*, 'but is surprised that the picture should have passed the official censor.'²⁹ Britain had recently come through the General Strike, and Trotsky's belief, published in the Comintern journal *International Press Correspondence* in Vienna and relayed by the *Mail*, that the film should be shown to British workers and sailors, did not improve its chances of release.³⁰ Yet even after Trotsky's intervention, Atkinson of the *Express*, with amazing chutzpah, and

under the splendid triple headline 'Why Not Show Us The "Potemkin" Film? | What Is There To Fear? | Bring It Out', wrote:

'Panzer-Kreuzer Potemkin,' the marvellous Russian propaganda film recently described by me, is imprisoned in a safe in Soho-square, and is likely to remain there unless some one does the Sir Galahad act. [...]

Douglas Fairbanks has appointed himself its unofficial publicity agent, and describes Eisenberg, its young producer, as the greatest force in motion-pictures since D. W. Griffith. 'Potemkin' is obviously a production which those interested in films should be allowed to see, but its English sponsor has allowed himself to be intimidated by one of the Government departments into keeping the film under lock and key.

Officialdom seems to think that 'Potemkin' will undermine the British Constitution and send the country crashing to red ruin.³¹

Indeed, the commercial distributor FBO, whose main business was the output of Columbia and other Poverty Row studios, having made a deal with the Russian Trade Delegation in Berlin covering the entire Sovkino portfolio, had imported a copy into the country early in June. The result of all the publicity was that when the Film Society balloted its membership that autumn, *Potemkin*, together with Lotte Reiniger's *Prince Achmed* (1926), were 'conspicuous' among the replies.³² 'These will certainly be shown if they become available,' temporized the anonymous author of the society's programme. 'At the moment their owners contemplate use of them other than exhibition by the Society.' *Prince Achmed* was shown in May 1927; *Potemkin* took a little longer.

In fact FBO's managing director F. A. Enders had quickly realized the error of his ways. At the end of June, after consulting him, J. Brooke Wilkinson, secretary of the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC), informed the Home Office, which had taken a close interest in Eisenstein's work, that Enders 'has no intention of exploiting the film in this country in its present state, nor does he see any possible way of modification which would make it acceptable to our censorship'.³³ Why Enders did eventually submit the film, even in modified condition, for approval that autumn is a mystery; but the Admiralty, the Home Office, MI5 and the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police all conspired with the BBFC to suppress it, as Enders could have foreseen.³⁴

Montagu had all the while been going to great lengths to try to obtain *His Call*. During a trip to Berlin in January 1926 he had found himself on the brink of success with WIR, only for Mezhrabpom-Rus' chief Moisei Aleinikov to swoop in from Moscow and scupper the deal before disappearing entirely. In the event none of the three Mezhrabpom-Rus' films were shown by the Film Society. WIR resumed dragging its feet, moving Montagu to write, though perhaps not send to Misiano the following missive some time that spring:

You must allow me to speak frankly. Your business methods are those of an idiot or a child. How many times have I told you that I have not got any money, that I do not and cannot buy films?³⁵

The FBO deal aided Montagu's cause slightly. In the autumn of 1926 Enders reassured the Russian Trade Delegation in Berlin that Film Society screenings of

Aelita and *His Call* would not harm the films' commercial prospects, probably meaning that he didn't think they had any.³⁶ The Russian embassy in London also underwrote Montagu's credentials, and the Berlin Trade Delegation became Montagu's main point of contact, but it was no more helpful than Mezhrabpom in Moscow or WIR in Berlin had been.

So it was that the Film Society's first Russian film, shown in February 1927, was a compilation of extracts from Protazanov's *Father Sergius* (1918), 'made after the first (March) revolution', as the programme notes carefully specified, focusing on the performance of Ivan Mozzhukhin, who had since established himself in France as Ivan Mosjoukine.³⁷ The print's provenance was almost certainly local. *Father Sergius* had been among the first Russian films to be shown in Britain after the Revolution, having been brought over from Paris early in 1920 in a batch of seven Yermoliev productions – the others included Protazanov's pre-revolutionary *The Queen of Spades* (1916), also with Mozzhukhin – by the showman Leon Comnen, so there were presumably copies to be rented somewhere in Soho.

Around the same time, Montagu borrowed a print of *Polikushka* from British WIR – which he then returned on the grounds 'that it was not considered sufficiently good enough to be utilized by the Film Society'.³⁸ After a change of heart, however, he proposed to utilize the film in a re-edited version. *Polikushka* was duly shown by the Film Society on 10 April 1927, described in the programme as 'primitive in technique', and with it made clear that the film had been chosen largely to satisfy the membership, 250 of them having voted in favour of seeing it.³⁹

Thus, after eighteen months, the Film Society had still not managed to obtain a single Russian film from Russia, or indeed Germany; and it would not do so for another eighteen. From January 1927 the Home Office had begun to issue warrants for the interception of any Russian films it caught wind of, and in May police and intelligence services raided the Russian Trade Delegation in London, together with its associated trading company Arcos; diplomatic relations were broken off, and trade severely reduced. The specific grounds for the breach included the Trade Delegation's alleged role in espionage and propaganda, and although the particular secret document whose alleged theft was grounds for the raid was never found, it was claimed in *The Times* that the police had found 'a number of propaganda films'.⁴⁰

'I do want to know what has happened to "Potemkin,"' wrote Walter Mycroft in the *Evening Standard* a month later, rather disingenuously since he went on to say that it remained 'locked away in the offices of Messrs. F. B. O., with other Russian films, although it was stated in the House of Commons that the matter had not even been raised from the political point of view'.⁴¹ In February 1927 the Home Secretary Sir William Joynson-Hicks – the notoriously reactionary 'Jix' – had said that he had never been asked permission to show *Potemkin*, but that was not at all the same thing as denying his involvement in banning it.⁴² The Film Society's second annual report, presented to the membership in September 1927, did not refer to the Anglo-Soviet breach, but underneath a list of prospects for the forthcoming season, the following comment was made:

It will be noted that the names of no Russian productions appear in the above list. The causes which have operated in the past to hinder the securing of

modern Russian films for exhibition by the Society, i.e. difficulty of securing permission from the Russian authorities, constant change of personnel in the Russian film negotiating staffs, appear likely to continue in the future.⁴³

No Russian film was shown during the 1927–8 season, but Montagu had not given up hope. In the autumn of 1927 he travelled to Berlin with Mycroft, then alone to Moscow for the tenth anniversary of the Revolution, and finally made a deal that held. A print of Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926), a Mezhrabpom-Rus' production that Enders had rejected as propaganda, came into the possession of the firm of Brunel & Montagu – Montagu having recently joined Brunel in his film hospital business – in February 1928, though only because Customs fumbled their attempt at interception at the Harwich docks.⁴⁴

By pure chance, the question of film censorship burst into public consciousness in the same month, when the BBFC rejected Herbert Wilcox's war film *Dawn* (1928), a patriotic biopic of Edith Cavell starring Sybil Thorndike, on the grounds that it might harm Anglo-German relations.

Under the 1909 Cinematograph Act, which had been piloted through parliament by Montagu's cousin Herbert Samuel, under-secretary of state in the Home Office during the Liberal ministry of H. H. Asquith, film censorship in Britain was the responsibility of local authorities. Partly for practical reasons, that responsibility had been devolved to the BBFC, which had been set up by the trade with official approval, but it was theoretically possible to approach the local authorities directly. In 1925 the Film Society, on discovering that unlike the Stage Society its limited membership did not after all guarantee immunity from censorship, had been able to convince the London County Council of its respectability, and was granted a special licence which it had to renew each year.* [*The Film Society was on thinner ice than it knew. In October 1927, Capt. H. M. Miller, the Special Branch officer whose job it was to stop Russian films coming in, wrote to his principal contact at the Home Office that he had heard from the BBFC that 'a section of London County Council were very doubtful about the Film Society and suggestions were being made to stop its licence'.⁴⁵ Miller wanted to discourage the doubters for the tactical reason that a neutered Film Society 'would cease to be a convenient point of observation'.]

Wilcox, having mustered public support, appealed to the same body, as well as Middlesex County Council, to have his film shown in the capital – and won. In the process he revealed the extent of collusion between the nominally independent BBFC and the government, both in his own case and in that of *Potemkin*, raising the spectre, offensive to a broad swathe of opinion, of direct state censorship.

In May 1928, the month after *Dawn*'s premiere, Enders tried to play the same trick and submitted *Potemkin* to the two councils. Iris Barry, on the day of the screening, wrote in the *Mail* that 'Apart from its technical novelty, "Potemkin," though grim, is arresting. As to its subject matter, that becomes objectionable or not in relation to the tenor of its sub-titles.'⁴⁶ Elsewhere Shaw condemned the suppression of the two films, calling the continued ban on *Potemkin* 'simply a move in class warfare'.⁴⁷ The attempt failed, and Enders was harassed by the authorities for his trouble; but the government had overplayed its hand, stirring up opposition to what Anthony Asquith called, in June, 'our mysterious Censor'.⁴⁸

Mother was shown in the first performance of the Film Society's fourth season, on 21 October 1928, and shown without outcry. Barry, who tended not to cover the society's performances in her columns, wrote in the *Mail* that

Even the most ardently Marxist of those present seemed to agree that it would be unthinkable in a cinema in the ordinary way. Yet the ease and vitality with which it goes make other films look like technical inanities and incompetences.

The same skill, the same fire, used to make films that were not propaganda of either a political or moral nature would be exactly what the cinemas of the world need to give another such impetus as did the German studios a few years back. [...]

And as the new Russian films are being seen, not by the general public but by the more enterprising technical experts in Paris, London, Berlin, New York, and Hollywood, the astonishing and effective way in which films like 'Mother' and 'Potemkin' and 'October' have been cut and edited will, perhaps, carry the whole art of film production a stage further.⁴⁹

Pudovkin had introduced London to montage, not only on screen but in print – and not long afterwards in person. A week after his film was shown, Pudovkin's famous statement that the 'foundation of film art is *editing*' was published in *Film Weekly*, a new magazine that claimed a circulation in six figures.⁵⁰ In the same essay, which Montagu had retranslated from a German translation, and would include in the book *Film Technique* the following year, Pudovkin wrote that the individual shot was so much 'raw material' which 'must, by editing, be brought upon the screen so that it shall have not *photographic* but *cinematographic* essence'. Pudovkin came to London to expound his ideas a few months later. After the Film Society screened his *The End of St Petersburg* (1927) on the afternoon of 3 February 1929, in a talk at Stewart's Café in Regent Street, Pudovkin introduced an influential section of the British film world to what has come to be known as the Kuleshov effect.

In the week before Sidney Bernstein had given a radio talk, printed in the BBC's new magazine the *Listener*, titled 'What is Wrong with British Films?', causing outrage in the trade. 'England is the only country that has not been thought adult enough to be allowed to see the great Russian film "Potemkin,"' he had said, whereas 'film directors of all other nations have realised that there is yet one standard to pass in the elementary school of the cinema!'⁵¹ The ideas which Pudovkin and – nine months later – Eisenstein brought with them were not to be the sole preserve of documentarists and theorists, but filtered into the mainstream, just as Bernstein had demanded, transforming British cinema.

'If, for example, you had asked me ten years ago what I considered the most important principle of film production', wrote Asquith in the tenth anniversary issue of *Film Weekly* in 1938, 'I should have replied without the least hesitation "the principle of montage."⁵² He went on – not for the first time – to give a summary of the Kuleshov effect, in which an 'actor's face' – in Pudovkin's rendition it was Mozzhukhin's – 'was just part of the raw material from which the director with camera and scissors created his visual effects', before distilling the lesson of the Russians as being 'the desirability of treating a film not as a series of visually disconnected scenes but as a series of sequences in which

backgrounds and other objects were in some way related – so that the film became “visually dynamic”. This lesson had also been taught him by the example of the ballet. In Diaghilev’s production of *Scheherazade*, first seen in London in 1911, and revived in 1919, ‘the décor and music were directly dramatic in a way which they had never been before,’ Asquith wrote in 1936.⁵³ ‘All the elements in the ballet were in fact concentrated on reproducing the mood of the story. Now in films there was a parallel development.’

The performance which preceded Pudovkin’s talk was the most controversial in the Film Society’s history. On the day itself, G. A. Atkinson used his *Sunday Express* column to protest the screening and decry ‘the “nerve”’ of those who had organized it;⁵⁴ the day afterwards, the *Daily Chronicle* reported that ‘when the words “All Power to the Soviets” appeared on the screen there was an outburst of applause’ and that the National Anthem, customarily played after film performances, was ‘hissed by people in the audience’;⁵⁵ and the day after that the matter came up in the House of Commons.

But there was an element of pantomime to it all. Asked whether the Film Society was ‘largely Communist’, Bernstein was reported by the *Daily Sketch* to have replied, not inaccurately, that “‘The list of members probably contains half the notability.”” And intriguingly Jix – he who had had *Potemkin* banned, he who had had Arcos raided – told the Commons that ‘I am disposed to think, from information that has reached me independently, that such incidents as occurred have been exaggerated, and I do not contemplate any further action in the matter.’⁵⁶ Behind the scenes Anglo-Russian relations were beginning to thaw, prompted by Stalin’s signing of a trade agreement with Germany in December 1928, and by his invitation to Great Britain to follow suit. In the week of the *End of St Petersburg* controversy a group of British industrialists, acting in advance of government policy, accepted Stalin’s invitation to mount a trade mission to Moscow, and so, three days after denouncing the Film Society’s philo-Sovietism, the *Daily Chronicle*, hailing this ‘really important decision’, called the diplomatic breach, soon to enter its third year, ‘a gesture of high Conservative orthodoxy’.⁵⁷ Some resumption of relations was likely even before the election of a new Labour government at the end of May 1929 made it inevitable.

The general rapprochement was reproduced in microcosm in the strange tale of how the Film Society obtained its print of *Potemkin* – for the one shown on 10 November 1929 was not the bowdlerized version which had lain in FBO’s vaults since 1926. In January 1929, shortly before the *End of St Petersburg* screening, Brunel & Montagu showed its print of *Mother* to H. Bruce Woolfe, managing director of British Instructional, the company responsible for Asquith’s first films, for the *Secrets of Nature* shorts which were sometimes shown by the Film Society, and for a series of reconstructions of Great War battles made with the enthusiastic assistance of the Admiralty and War Office, their premieres typically graced by the presence of royalty.⁵⁸ It is exceedingly doubtful that Woolfe cheered Pudovkin’s inter-title. Nonetheless, Pudovkin visited Woolfe’s studio at Welwyn Garden City, and there was talk of him making a film there. In March Woolfe travelled to Berlin and in April it was reported that he had struck a new deal with the Russian Trade Delegation, putting the Sovkino portfolio into the hands of British Instructional’s distributor Pro Patria.

It is possible that Brunel & Montagu had helped broker this deal precisely because of Woolfe's good standing in the eyes of the conservative establishment; there was also the hope, dashed by Woolfe almost instantly on the grounds that the transition to synchronized sound changed everything, that it would bring editing work their way. In any case it led to one of the less popular performances the Film Society ever gave, Walter Summers's *The Marquis of Bolibar* (1928), on 5 May 1929, the first time the society had shown a feature-length British film. A British Instructional production which had been denied a West End opening, supposedly because of the talkie revolution, *Bolibar*'s incongruous presence on the bill baffled the press, but may have served as a bargaining chip.

In March 1929, partly in response to prompts from *Close Up*, the Independent Labour Party, to the left of Labour but affiliated to it, had launched an anti-censorship campaign in its journal the *New Leader*, enlisting Montagu's help. In February, two days after the *End of St Petersburg* screening, the ILP's chairman James Maxton had asked Jix for permission to screen *Potemkin* privately to MPs and others, in order 'to win the support of influential people for the removal of the prohibition on films which have been banned for political reasons', and had been refused.⁵⁹ In response, the magazine printed letters of support from prominent intellectuals and writers including Harold Laski, Robert Graves, and Winifred Holtby. Keynes called Jix's refusal 'intolerable in itself and most unwise from his own point of view. [...] I happen to have seen "Potemkin." It is an imbecility to prohibit it from being shown whether publicly or privately.'⁶⁰

The first intended audience of the prints of *Potemkin* and *October* that Brunel & Montagu eventually received from the Russian Trade Delegation in Berlin, through the offices of Pro Patria, was not the Film Society but the ILP; from the point of view of the Trade Delegation, the second audience was meant to be the ordinary cinema audience that the films, once the ILP had performed its Sir Galahad act, would draw into ordinary cinemas in exchange for hard currency.⁶¹ Labour's return to office in June 1929 gave the ILP, whose newly elected MPs included the *New Leader*'s editor A. Fenner Brockway and John Strachey, a longstanding friend of the Film Society – he had brought Iris Barry to the *Spectator*, then edited by his father – influence sufficient to persuade the Home Office to see the light of reason, or so it was hoped.

On 23 July 1929, while awaiting the films' delivery, Montagu wrote to Fenner Brockway to ask whether the Home Office might be prepared 'to glance at these pictures and express privately and unofficially its view upon them, that could, equally privately be conveyed to the Board [BBFC] itself';⁶² and on the same day in the Commons Oliver Baldwin, the Labour MP son of the once and future Conservative prime minister, asked the new Home Secretary J. R. Clynes 'whether he will take steps to remove the censorship on Russian films which deal with incidents of Russian history, such as the Cruiser Potemkin, etc.'⁶³ Clynes's reply was not quite as full-throated as the ILP might have wished – he did not formally rescind his predecessor's seizure warrant, and the BBFC's ban would not be revoked for another quarter-century – but the way was now clear for the Film Society to show *Potemkin* that autumn.⁶⁴

After the *End of St Petersburg* furore the Film Society had been given a warning by London County Council about the terms of its 'concession',⁶⁵ and the screening of *Potemkin* began 'with a solemn warning to its members and their guests to refrain from improper expression of emotion'.⁶⁶ But the fight had gone

out of the opposition. Atkinson, on the day of the screening, after making routine attacks on the film and on the Film Society, wrote that since 'the propagandist pretensions of Moscow in film fare are now well understood, there seems to be no reason why "Potemkin," at least, should not be publicly shown'.⁶⁷

When Marie Seton first met Eisenstein, in 1932, he was at a low ebb after his tribulations across the Atlantic, and nostalgic for England. "When I went to Cambridge I knew that that was the place I wanted to die in," he told her, not entirely without irony.⁶⁸ 'The colleges and halls, the libraries and chapels, stimulated the urge rising inexorably within him – to devote himself to research, philosophic speculation and pure learning,' she wrote in her biography twenty years later.⁶⁹ 'He talked almost hungrily of the bookshops he had haunted in London, traipsing up and down Charing Cross Road, generally in the company of Jack Isaacs the scholarly lecturer and authority on Elizabethan literature at London University.'⁷⁰

Isaacs, who taught at King's College London, had only joined the Film Society's council in 1929, but had been part of its inner circle since before the beginning: he was at Oxford with Iris Barry's husband Alan Porter, and lived a few minutes' walk from the couple's home. In a book published in 1928 he had written that the 'Russian fever' which he dated back to the publication of Constance Garnett's translations of Dostoyevsky from 1912 was 'the predominant factor in the hectic evolution of young intellect';⁷¹ later he wrote from his own experience of how Dostoyevsky's influence had been fused with that of Freud in the same pre-war years.⁷²

In his autobiography Eisenstein depicted Isaacs as 'someone out of a Dickens novel, with his black gloves, inevitable black umbrella and galoshes all day long, all year round'.⁷³ Everywhere they went he proved an 'inexhaustible mine of information, whose frameless glasses concealed derisive slits of eyes'. Isaacs for his part recalled that 'we saw each other daily, and I heard more sense and more inspired nonsense from him than I have ever been privileged to hear from any other human being, and alas I don't remember a single word of it. Perhaps I should have stopped being human, and taken notes like Boswell, but I'm not that kind of person.'⁷⁴

They had met at La Sarraz in September 1929, and it was there that Isaacs and Montagu invited Eisenstein to give a course of lectures while in London later that autumn. He gave, or was scheduled to give, six two-hour evening lectures, between 19 and 28 November, to a group of between twenty and twenty-five, probably in the new premises of Foyle's bookshop on Charing Cross Road, possibly in what Basil Wright remembered as 'an upper room in Great Newport Street', not far away.⁷⁵ The themes given in the programme were:

1. Technical and Methodological basis.
(Technique of perception).
2. 'Montage' of 'Attractions'.
(Constructive editing of affective impulses).
3. Theory of Conflict.
4. The Three Forms of Expression.
 - a. Psychological (The Human Content).

- (Personal expression; mechanics of expression; basic principles of Totality and Conflict).
- b. In Classical 'Montage'.
(Cutting to affect emotional processes; four sorts of 'Montage'; metric, rhythmic, tonic, overtonic).
- c. Ideological (The New Advance).
(Cutting to affect intellectual processes).⁷⁶

On one occasion Eisenstein failed to turn up, so the group instead went to the offices of Brunel & Montagu in nearby Wardour Street to watch *October*.⁷⁷

Of the lectures Isaacs recalled 'the vast quantity of seemingly irrelevant supporting-matter, the illustrations from art and literature, from painting and sculpture and architecture, the detective story, the novel. Wherever an artist in any of the arts had employed a method for the deliberate creation of an effect, it could be used to illustrate some facet of the problem of film construction.'⁷⁸ The *Manchester Guardian* and *Close Up* critic Robert Herring, writing weeks after the course's conclusion, observed that 'Eisenstein, instead of giving you a few cut flowers of speech, such as "contrapuntal" and "montage," goes to the root of the matter, and that is why he remains for ever new and in this transitional period for ever an encouragement.'⁷⁹ Film culture in the 1920s, Herring went on, had been concerned to show that '[t]he new medium had nothing to do with literature or with the stage', and that it had its own essence, identified by Pudovkin as editing. Eisenstein, however, revealed 'a mind that has drawn from every other art the essence of cinema'.

Little of Eisenstein's eclecticism made its way into the published excerpts from the lectures that appeared in *Close Up*. The closest approximation of his central argument, as identified by Herring, was not given wide circulation until the publication in 1942 of *The Film Sense*. In 'Word and Image', the book's opening chapter, first published in English in Herring's magazine *Life and Letters To-day*, Eisenstein wrote that basic montage, wherein two shots combine to make a third meaning not present in either, 'is not in the least a circumstance peculiar to the cinema', and that the montage principle 'passes far beyond the limits of splicing bits of film together'.⁸⁰ Leonardo's 'Deluge' drawings, and the notes he made towards them, which Eisenstein and Isaacs attempted to see at Windsor, became one of Eisenstein's prime instances of pre-cinematic montage, constituting a 'remarkable "shooting-script"', and 'a brilliant example of how, in the apparently static simultaneous "co-existence" of details in an immobile picture, there has yet been applied exactly the same montage selection, there is exactly the same ordered succession in the juxtaposition of details as in those arts that include the time factor'.⁸¹

But so far as Isaacs was concerned, *The Film Sense* was 'above everybody's head'.⁸² Thorold Dickinson, then a young film editor at Herbert Wilcox's Elstree studio – he asked Eisenstein 'if he had ever consciously matched the action of one shot with that of another' and decided that he 'simply did not understand the question' – came to a more contentious conclusion.⁸³ In 1964 he ventured that 'the British documentary school, which acknowledged Eisenstein as their master, got him wrong'.⁸⁴ Likewise Raymond Durgnat, taking up Dickinson's baton in 1968, wrote that in the documentarists' hands "'montage" came to be synonymous with editing (and secondarily sound-image overlays), all but

ignoring Eisenstein's insistence that montage could exist, not only in the succession of shots but between the different features of one image'.⁸⁵

For Durnat, Eisenstein's legacy was better honoured in the work of Michael Powell, who according to his autobiography 'went to all the great Soviet silent films, admiring their vigorous images, dynamic cutting and forthright acting, more than their political preaching [...] our editing was changed forever and for good'.⁸⁶ In Durnat's view, put forward in Powell's presence at the Midnight Sun Film Festival in Finland in 1987, Powell's affinities with Eisenstein were revealed in his homage to Diaghilev, *The Red Shoes* (1948), whose ballet centrepiece was 'not just a montage of shots, but also a montage of all the elements in the shot'; and not only that but 'of separate art forms: music, dance, the dance of the body counterpointed by the dance of the camera and lit by the flash of the editor's scissors'.⁸⁷

Eisenstein travelled to Cambridge on 7 December 1929, after an interlude in Paris, and stayed for two nights. While there he is said to have given a talk to the Cambridge Film Guild, one of the first film societies outside London, but although Montagu more than once recalled their experience as guests at High Table at Trinity College, Eisenstein's encounter with the varsity cinephiles, whose number is likely to have included Humphrey Jennings, remains hidden from the historian's gaze. On one evening he attended a performance of Milton's masque *Comus* in Dadie Rylands's rooms at King's, starring Rylands, a young don, Michael Redgrave, a promising undergraduate actor, and Lydia Lopokova; it is not unlikely that Keynes was there too.

Early in 1930, back in Paris, Eisenstein wrote to Montagu, who was about to travel to New York to act as his advance man: 'Now Cambridge – please make the preparation – I could make a course there for having the possibilities of passing some months. Speak with some people and give me their names in arranging contact with them.'⁸⁸

On the day before he sailed, properties from Wells and Shaw in hand, Montagu replied that in the event of his failure, 'this is how to arrange the Cambridge affair. Write to H. M. Dobb, Frostlake College, Malting Lane, Cambridge, and R. E. Stevenson.'⁸⁹ Maurice Dobb was a Marxist economist at Trinity who had had Eisenstein to dinner; earlier that year Ludwig Wittgenstein had been his lodger at the same address. Robert Stevenson, author of an unfinished postgraduate thesis on the psychology of cinemagoing, was then, as Montagu had been before him, in the employ of Michael Balcon's company, Gainsborough, and living in what had been Roger Fry's flat in Fitzrovia; he would go on to direct *Mary Poppins* (1964). Montagu felt that Dobb was well placed to arrange 'that you should be in residence and go to the University Library and write your book', while Stevenson was 'acquainted with the psychologists at Cambridge and may be able to arrange (if you do go through Dobb) for you to give some aesthetical lectures in the schools there'.

What Eisenstein told Seton about Cambridge was not mere reverie. At the time of the Revolution, she wrote in her biography, Eisenstein had read Freud's study of his hero Leonardo, and he told a French journalist just before his Cambridge visit that he had planned to 'go to Vienna in order to follow the courses of this most learned professor, but October 1917 was not far off'.⁹⁰ Resuming this line of enquiry was evidently on Eisenstein's mind; meanwhile in

Vienna, the Revolution was on Freud's. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, published at the end of 1929, included his withering remarks on the prospects for communism. Founded on the 'untenable illusion' that the 'human love of aggression' could be extirpated by the abolition of private property, the Soviet regime had found 'psychological support in the persecution of the bourgeois', leaving the learned professor to wonder 'how the Soviets will manage when they have exterminated their bourgeois entirely'.⁹¹

Exactly who Montagu meant when he mentioned to Stevenson 'the psychology people who were interested in the possibility of his doing aesthetics lectures' is unclear.⁹² One candidate is Magdalen Vernon, a researcher at the Cambridge Psychological Laboratory, whose experimental work on visual perception was informed by the Gestalt school, one of whose chief exponents, Kurt Koffka, Eisenstein would later cite in 'Word and Image' to support his argument that montage 'resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot – as it does a *creation*' in the spectator's mind.⁹³ Official Cambridge psychology, established by Charles Myers and W. H. R. Rivers before the Great War, had adopted an initially welcoming attitude towards Freudian psychoanalysis, and while this had faltered under the successor regime of Frederic Bartlett, the university was not lacking in enthusiasts for the controversial new discipline, chief among them, perhaps, Wittgenstein's collaborator Frank Ramsey.⁹⁴

Nor was Cambridge lacking in cinephiles – Wittgenstein was one of them – though they were without institutional home, and had influential sceptics to contend with. It was the vision of Soviet Russia afforded by a Cambridge Film Guild screening of *The General Line* in May 1930 that led F. R. Leavis, then a precariously employed junior lecturer, to write that 'a standardised civilisation is rapidly enveloping the whole world', not merely the capitalist West.⁹⁵ One can only speculate on how Eisenstein might have fared in the town he wished to die in.

Eisenstein himself, in an interview published in *Close Up* in early 1930, speculated on possibility of 'the establishment in England of a permanent film academy, with lecturers in the various branches of filmic art, such as psychological expression; and with adequate facilities for practical work'.⁹⁶ This would train not only filmmakers but critics, and would foster 'research and experimental work. One of the most essential and urgent tasks, for which sufficient material now exists, is to find out the basic principles of filmic art and the laws of its expression and development.' In the decade that followed this project was largely taken up by the documentarists; but it was not until 1960, when Thorold Dickinson became lecturer in film at the Slade School of Fine Art, that it found a home.

With thanks to Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image (BIMI) and BFI Special Collections (BFISC).

¹ George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: Paladin, 1970), 377. First published in 1935.

² Roger Fry, "The Scenery of "La Boutique Fantasque", *Athenaeum*, 13 June 1919, 466.

³ Lydia Lopokova, 'Serge Diaghileff, 1872–1929', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 31 August 1929, 706.

-
- ⁴ John Maynard Keynes, *A Treatise on Money*, II: *The Applied Theory of Money* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 377.
- ⁵ *Graphic*, 9 November 1929, 264.
- ⁶ *Sketch*, 20 November 1929, 379.
- ⁷ Ian Christie, 'Censorship, Culture, and Codpieces: Eisenstein's Influence in Britain During the 1930s and 1940s', in Al LaValley and Barry P. Scherr (eds), *Eisenstein at 100: A Reconsideration* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 110. Such is the significance of this double-bill within British film culture that in 2012 it was reproduced as a BFI Blu-ray disc.
- ⁸ Film Society BFISC, Item 6c: 'At Home for Messrs Eisenstein, Alexandrov and Tisse', November 1929.
- ⁹ *Daily Express*, 7 May 1925, 1.
- ¹⁰ Ivor Montagu, 'The Film Society, London', *Cinema Quarterly*, Autumn 1932, 42.
- ¹¹ *Evening Standard*, 20 May 1924, 12.
- ¹² Hugh Miller, 'An Independent Film Theatre?', *Evening Standard*, 19 January 1925, 3.
- ¹³ Adrian Brunel, *Nice Work* (London: Forbes Robertson, 1949), 117.
- ¹⁴ Walter C. Mycroft, *The Time of My Life: The Memoirs of a British Film Producer* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 121.
- ¹⁵ BIMI Film Society Collection: Film Society leaflet, c. September 1925.
- ¹⁶ Virginia Woolf's 'The Cinema' appeared in two slightly different versions, the first in the June 1926 number of the New York journal *Arts*, the second in the 3 July 1926 issue of the *Nation and Athenaeum* in London. It has been republished on numerous occasions.
- ¹⁷ *Spectator*, 11 October 1924, 520.
- ¹⁸ *Evening Standard*, 14 October 1924, 12.
- ¹⁹ Ivor Montagu, *The Youngest Son: Autobiographical Sketches* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), 283.
- ²⁰ Ivor Montagu BFISC, Item 311: Undated telegram from Iris Barry to Ivor Montagu, mid-1925.
- ²¹ Ivor Montagu BFISC, Item 7a: Undated typescript by Ivor Montagu, c. March 1926.
- ²² Montagu found himself in the same hotel as Keynes and Lopokova during this visit; it was probably then that he recruited Keynes, whose lectures he had attended while at Cambridge, to the Film Society.
- ²³ *Sunday Express*, 11 October 1925, 6.
- ²⁴ Ivor Montagu, *The Youngest Son*, 325.
- ²⁵ Ivor Montagu, 'Present Day Russia and the Film', *Kinematograph Weekly*, 29 October 1925, 36.
- ²⁶ Ivor Montagu, 'Present Day Russia and the Film', *Kinematograph Weekly*, 12 November 1925, 52.
- ²⁷ BIMI Film Society Collection: Film Society programme, 22 November 1925.
- ²⁸ Ernest W. Fredman, 'The Real Position of the Film Trade in Russia', *Film Renter*, 2 January 1926. Reprinted in the New York *Film Daily* ten days later.
- ²⁹ *Daily Mail*, 10 June 1926, 8.
- ³⁰ *Daily Mail*, 21 June 1926, 5.
- ³¹ *Daily Express*, 9 July 1926, 6.
- ³² BIMI Film Society Collection: Film Society programme, 24 October 1926.

-
- ³³ National Archives, HO 45/24871: Letter from J. Brooke Wilkinson (BBFC) to S. W. Harris (Home Office), 30 June 1926. Sir Sidney Harris would go on to become the BBFC's president.
- ³⁴ Temple Willcox, 'Soviet Films, Censorship and the British Government: A Matter of the Public Interest', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 10:3 (1990), 275–7.
- ³⁵ Ivor Montagu BFISC, Item 7a: Undated letter from Ivor Montagu to Francesco Misiano, spring 1926.
- ³⁶ Ibid.: Letter from F. A. Enders to Ivor Montagu, 18 October 1926.
- ³⁷ BIMI Film Society Collection: Film Society programme, 13 February 1927.
- ³⁸ Ivor Montagu BFISC, Item 7a: Letter from Workers' International Relief (British Section) to Ivor Montagu, 31 December 1926. Montagu's contact at British WIR, Comrade Bailey, revealed in the course of this correspondence that he would join the Film Society himself – if only he could afford the membership fee.
- ³⁹ BIMI Film Society Collection: Film Society programme, 10 April 1927.
- ⁴⁰ *The Times*, 13 May 1927, 16.
- ⁴¹ *Evening Standard*, 27 June 1927, 5.
- ⁴² Hansard, 24 February 1927.
- ⁴³ BIMI Film Society Collection: 'Second Annual Report', issued 8 September 1927.
- ⁴⁴ National Archives, HO 45/24871: Letter from Capt. Hugh Miller (Special Branch) to Harold Scott (Home Office), 1 March 1928. Scott was later appointed Metropolitan Police Commissioner.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.: Letter from Miller to Scott, 24 October 1927.
- ⁴⁶ *Daily Mail*, 7 May 1928, 4.
- ⁴⁷ George Bernard Shaw, 'Views on the Censorship', *British Film Journal*, April–May 1928, 65.
- ⁴⁸ Anthony Asquith, 'What About the "Movies" Now?', *Daily Mirror*, 1 June 1928, 6.
- ⁴⁹ *Daily Mail*, 25 October 1928, 21.
- ⁵⁰ V. I. Pudovkin, trans. Ivor Montagu, "'Composing" a Film: Pudovkin's New Theory of Screen Technique', *Film Weekly*, 29 October 1928, 17.
- ⁵¹ Sidney Bernstein, 'What is Wrong with British Films?', *Listener*, 30 January 1929, 91.
- ⁵² Anthony Asquith, 'Ten Years of Technique', *Film Weekly*, 22 October 1938, 36.
- ⁵³ Anthony Asquith, 'Ballet and the Film', in Caryl Brahms (ed.), *Footnotes to the Ballet* (London: Lovat Dickson, 1936), 239.
- ⁵⁴ *Sunday Express*, 3 February 1929, 4.
- ⁵⁵ *Daily Chronicle*, 4 February 1929, 9.
- ⁵⁶ Hansard, 7 February 1929.
- ⁵⁷ *Daily Chronicle*, 7 February 1929, 8.
- ⁵⁸ Ivor Montagu BFISC 40a: Letter from Sergei Nalbandov to Ivor Montagu, 18 January 1929.
- ⁵⁹ *New Leader*, 8 March 1929, 14.
- ⁶⁰ *New Leader*, 22 March 1929, 12.
- ⁶¹ Film Society BFISC 15: Letter from Ivor Montagu to Edmund Zöhrer, 13 August 1929.

-
- ⁶² Ivor Montagu BFISC 65: Letter from Ivor Montagu to A. Fenner Brockway, 23 July 1929.
- ⁶³ Hansard, 23 July 1929.
- ⁶⁴ The next day in the House of Commons, Fenner Brockway challenged Clynes's refusal to grant Trotsky asylum in Britain; Clynes was unmoved.
- ⁶⁵ Ivor Montagu BFISC, Item 7: Letter from London County Council to Film Society, 25 February 1929.
- ⁶⁶ *New Statesman*, 16 November 1929, 191.
- ⁶⁷ *Sunday Express*, 10 November 1929, 4.
- ⁶⁸ Marie Seton BFISC, Item 1: 'Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein, As I Knew Him', undated typescript.
- ⁶⁹ Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein* (London: The Bodley Head, 1952), 147.
- ⁷⁰ Marie Seton, 'Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein, As I Knew Him'.
- ⁷¹ J. Isaacs, 'England', in William Rose and J. Isaacs (eds), *Contemporary Movements in European Literature* (London: Routledge, 1928), 12.
- ⁷² J. Isaacs, *An Assessment of Twentieth-Century Literature* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1952), 29–30.
- ⁷³ S. M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works, IV: Beyond the Stars: The Memoirs of Sergei Eisenstein*, ed. Richard Taylor, trans. William Powell (London: BFI, 1995), 309.
- ⁷⁴ Basil Wright and J. Isaacs, 'Eisenstein's Lectures in London', BBC Third Programme, 17 December 1949. Transcript held in BFI Library.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Hans Richter's classes, which followed Eisenstein's, took place at Foyle's. In the 1930s 9 Great Newport Street became home to the Group Theatre and was the site of numerous lectures on film, by Wright among others.
- ⁷⁶ BIMI Film Society Collection: 'Study Groups', Film Society leaflet, autumn 1929.
- ⁷⁷ Ivor Montagu BFISC 7: Letter from Montagu to J. M. Harvey, 5 October 1930. It was an inferior print, probably the German release version, and Montagu returned it to Berlin. A full version was not seen in London until the Film Society brought over a print approved by Eisenstein in 1934.
- ⁷⁸ Wright and Isaacs, 'Eisenstein's Lectures in London'.
- ⁷⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 January 1930, 14.
- ⁸⁰ S. M. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, trans. and ed. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), 4; 36. 'Word and Image' was written in the spring of 1938, published in *Iskusstvo Kino* in January 1939, then translated and serialized as 'Montage in 1938' in *Life and Letters To-day* later that year. Leyda adapted the 1939 translation for book publication.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24; 30.
- ⁸² Wright and Isaacs, 'Eisenstein's Lectures in London'.
- ⁸³ Thorold Dickinson, 'Scissors and Film Cement', *Era*, 29 July 1931, 3. It was Dickinson who oversaw the British premiere of *October*, having taken over backstage duties at the Film Society from Adrian Brunel.
- ⁸⁴ Thorold Dickinson, 'Has the Cinema Grown Up?', *Films and Filming*, July 1964, 46.
- ⁸⁵ Raymond Durnat, 'Style and the Old Wave', *Films and Filming*, October 1968, 12. Republished in Henry K. Miller (ed.), *The Essential Raymond Durnat* (London: BFI, 2014), 109.
- ⁸⁶ Michael Powell, *A Life in Movies* (London: Heinemann, 1986), 147; 182.

⁸⁷ David Lazar (ed.), *Michael Powell Interviews* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 156.

⁸⁸ Ivor Montagu BFISC 104: Undated letter from Sergei Eisenstein to Ivor Montagu, c. February 1930.

⁸⁹ Ibid.: Letter from Ivor Montagu to Sergei Eisenstein, 3 March 1930.

⁹⁰ Cited in Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein*, 30.

⁹¹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1930), 88–91.

⁹² Ivor Montagu BFISC 104: Letter from Ivor Montagu to Robert Stevenson, 3 March 1930.

⁹³ S. M. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, 7–8. The citation from Koffka's 1935 book *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* did not appear in 'Montage in 1938'.

⁹⁴ John Forrester, 'Freud in Cambridge', *Critical Quarterly*, 46:2 (2004), 1–26; John Forrester, '1919: Psychology and Psychoanalysis, Cambridge and London – Myers, Jones and MacCurdy', *Psychoanalysis and History*, 10:1 (2008), 37–94.

⁹⁵ F. R. Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (Cambridge: The Minority Press, 1930), 30.

⁹⁶ Mark Segal, 'Filmic Art and Training (an interview with Eisenstein)', *Close Up*, March 1930, 195.