

FROM IMPRESSIONISM TO COMMUNISM: LÉON MOUSSINAC'S TECHNIQUES OF THE CINEMA, 1921-1933

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'In cinema everything, apart from its techniques, must be destroyed.
And everything remains to be created.'
-- Léon Moussinac (1929g: 135; Abel 1988a: 428)

Photogénie and Technics

Cinema's 'Impressionists', the vanguard film-makers and critics of the late 1910s and 1920s France, saw the cinema as the supreme modern art, combining movement and plasticity with psychological insight by means of a mechanical device. As early as 1918 Louis Delluc had declared cinema to be the 'child of machinery and idealism' (1986b: 118) while Ricciotto Canudo described the cinema as 'a fabulous new-born of the Machine and the Senses' (1927b: 5).

The belief in cinema's special status was founded on the elusive concept of *photogénie*, which was adopted throughout the decade by most of the Impressionist critics. Photogénie was the cinematic transformation of reality, of a modern world in movement; Jean Epstein, in 1923, described it as a photographic reproduction which enhanced the 'moral quality' of movement (1974b: 137-8; Abel 1988a: 314-5). In his 1921 book *Bonjour Cinéma* Epstein had expressed the Impressionists' fascination with the apparatus of cinema in a way we might more readily associate with Futurism or Constructivism than with an 'Impressionism':

The Bell and Howell is a standardised metal brain, manufactured and sold in thousands of copies, which transforms the external world into art. The Bell and Howell is an artist and it is only behind it that there are other artists, the director and camera operator (1974a: 92; Abel 1988a: 244).

Paul Willemsen, curiously, nevertheless defines photogénie as a 'viewer's aesthetic', a 'relationship between viewer and image' (1994: 127). While the movement's cinephilia and its pioneering ciné-clubs might seem to support such a view, the overwhelming fascination of the Impressionists with cinema's technology suggests that it is only half-right. Jacques Aumont, for example, instinctively restricts his discussion of this 'nebulous' concept to technology and production, not spectatorial postures, whether the effect of photogénie be achieved through technical 'mastery' or the innate 'miraculous' quality of the photographic image (1997: 235-40).

Léon Moussinac would appeal to both 'mastery' and 'miracle' as the basis of *photogénie*. At the same time, he would advocate an unprecedented role for the spectator, conceived here as a collective defined by class. *Photogénie*, a mechanical phenomenon, was the unique quality of an art form whose development was joined to the historical destiny of the labouring classes:

The twentieth century, the century of machinery, has thus logically enough discovered the first art of movement which joins, as never before, the senses with scientific reasoning. Here is the first formula for providing the masses with sustenance. It was logical that the masses would take communion there enthusiastically; even better, universally. In this way they found in this nascent art a new material in which to fix their aspirations (1925: 7-8).

Such was the pace of technological innovation in the cinema and the Impressionists' fascination with cinema's technological capabilities that, as Canudo declared, a new kind of artist was being born, one who was a 'visual artist and composer at the same time, like the art of cinema itself . . . Yet cinema's technics [*technique*] monopolises almost all the director's attention' (1927d: 24).

Or, as Moussinac wrote in 1923, 'technics commands' (*technique commande*); 'we are all in thrall to it' (1923: 11; 1925: 36). *Technique commande*: it is essential to distinguish the Impressionists' use of the term *technique* from its current meaning in English ('the manner of artistic execution or performance' - *Oxford English Dictionary*). In French, 'technique' encompasses both 'technique' and 'technology'; at the very least, it becomes necessary to distinguish from the context which meaning an author intends [1].

Here, I believe, the Impressionist use of the term 'technique' often reveals something even more complex than this translator's pitfall of double meaning. 'Technique' was a central category of their entire critical and cinematic project, one that imbricates the two meanings given above. For the Impressionists, the evolution of film art - and theirs is an aesthetic in which evolution is an overriding concern - derives, on the one hand, from the dynamic of constant technological innovation proper to the cinematic apparatus, the emblematic mechanical device of the modernity they celebrate. But film art, for the Impressionists, depends also upon the experimental embrace of these new technologies by the 'écraniste' or 'cinégraphiste', the film author whose birth they heralded. Technology's inexorable progress affords seemingly limitless potential for artistic expression and 'photogénie'; neither 'technology' nor 'technique' has meaning or value without the other.

I will call this particular doctrine 'technics', a now rare English term for the 'science or study of the arts, especially the mechanical or industrial arts' (*OED*). This term is suitably empty of meaning to the contemporary reader for it to be adopted to this new use. Its obsolete meaning also suggests the sense in which 'technique' was understood by the Impressionists: cinema as both art and technology, a cultural form equally subjective and mechanical (from the Greek *techne*, art as arising from both medium and craft). Impressionist rhetoric was part scientific, part aestheticising: 'We have married Science and Art', Canudo announced (1927b: 8). And yet, as this article will discuss, by the end of the 1920s the Impressionists would disavow this doctrine; in the face of sound cinema they felt rather that they had been 'left behind by technology' [2] (Ghali 1995: 310). Moussinac, in a 1925 revision of his 1923 article cited above, foretold this unleashing of technology and the film-makers' inability to direct its course: 'Everything becomes possible and more formidable than we had ever dared hope. Our impotence in the face of [technology]!' (1925: 37).

Moussinac, a close friend of Delluc's, played a central role in Impressionist criticism from the start. He began writing criticism in 1919 and inaugurated the first column of film criticism in a 'serious' French literary magazine, *Le Mercure de France*, in 1921, which he maintained until 1928. He began writing film criticism regularly for the Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité* in 1922 (two years before joining the Party), continuing until 1933. He was also responsible for film criticism in Henri Barbusse's journal *Monde* and wrote for

several other newspapers and journals, making him, in Roger Boussinot's estimation, the leading French film critic after the deaths of Canudo and Delluc in 1923 and 24 respectively. Of all the writing on cinema in France in the 1920s it was Moussinac's 1925 book *Naissance du cinéma*, in the view of film historian and fellow communist Georges Sadoul (Moussinac 1967: 12), which first attempted a comprehensive study of the cinema that considered its social, technological and economic as well as artistic aspects: a 'summa' of Impressionist theory, in David Bordwell's assessment (1974: 125). The volume functions as both this summa and as a foretaste of the ways in which Moussinac's criticism would depart from Impressionism in the latter half of the decade.

As the decade progressed, Moussinac's theories began to resemble more the ideas of the Soviet film-maker theorists, especially those of Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov. Eisenstein and Moussinac would become friends later in the decade, the work of each influencing the other; *Naissance du cinéma* was published in Russian translation in 1926. But it is startling to read Moussinac's statement, in 1923, on the use of montage (quoted here in a more concise 1925 revision), when his mentor Delluc had made only very cursory comments on rhythm as an 'equilibrium of photogenic elements'(1985a: 58) and Eisenstein was just publishing his own first and even more embryonic statement on montage in the theatre:

The rhythmic combinations that result from the choice and the order of the images will provoke in the spectator a complementary emotion to the emotion determined by the subject of the film . . . [A] complementary emotion which can not only reinforce the primitive emotion, but which *must* surpass it . . . the subject will no longer be the essential part of the work, but rather the pretext, or rather, the visual theme. (1925: 76-7)

By the time of his 1929 article 'Avenir et technique', Moussinac would criticise the films of the French avant-garde for their lack of structure and their greater concern for pictorial values than for structural problems (1929g: 133). He contrasted the French with the new Soviet directors -after travelling to the Soviet Union in 1927, he wrote a book on Soviet cinema (1928c) and, in the absence of French translations of Soviet writing on film [3], had by this date become the principal source in France on developments in Soviet cinema. Unlike the French, the Soviets understood that:

There are laws of montage which, like those of any rhythmic composition, are implacable. It is a question of discovering them. Each image is closely linked, by 'mathematical relationships' [a reference to his 1923 article cited above] to the preceding and following images, and to the film as a whole. Until now the study of these relationships has not concerned film people, who are more interested in enriching the plastic expressivity of the image, usually at the expense of the film's rhythmic expression. A film is, above all, A CONSTRUCTION (1929g: 134; Abel 1988a: 427-8).

Another of Moussinac's inflections of Impressionist film criticism concerned the movement's curious insistence that the cinema, mechanical art form of the 20th century, was ideally suited to depicting immateriality and the human subconscious. Canudo, writing in 1921, had declared: 'The subconscious revealed. The immaterial or what we call immaterial, plastically evoked in movement. These are things that no other art could address, and which music could suggest. The cinema can and must represent them' (1927a: 42).

Germaine Dulac, writing in 1924, attempted to resolve the apparent contradiction at the heart of the Impressionist project, between movement on the one hand and psychological introspection on the other: 'Movement, the inner world, these two terms are not at all incompatible. What could be more agitated than one's psychological life?' (1994a: 45). And yet the paradox remains. The Impressionists adopted a mass-produced, mechanical art, popular among the working class and in great disrepute in intellectual circles, to represent the individual, interior world.

It was the nature of *photogénie*, the Impressionists all agreed, to alter what came under the 'recording eye' (Delluc) of the camera. It was only much later, at the close of the movement in 1928-9, that Epstein would relate the concern with the interior, subconscious world to *photogénie's* transformative abilities. If material objects were transformed by *photogénie*, the same must be true of human subjectivity, the immaterial, the subconscious:

Now, there is never the appearance of anything anywhere without a fundamental reason. A new appearance supposes a new essence, makes such a thing necessary. In this way the cinema creates a new aspect of the soul. (1974c: 199-200)

Even at this late date Epstein conceives of this transformation only at the level of the individual subconscious. Yet we need travel only a short distance to imagine the same operation taking place, through the cinema, in the *collective* consciousness of the film audience. Here in essence can be seen Moussinac's trajectory from Impressionism to Communism. The cinema could transform the consciousness of its working class audience as easily as that of its cinephilic defenders. That class, armed with an understanding of the cinema, and with a cinema that spoke to the social collective in a revolutionary form, could effect a similar revolutionary change in society itself. The essential factor, common to Impressionism and to Moussinac's communist activism, was a cinematic technics, which ascribed transformative powers to the unique formal properties of the medium.

This power of social transformation was precisely the utopian future imagined for the cinema in an essay by the poet Blaise Cendrars published in 1926, *L'ABC du Cinéma*. Cendrars suggestively conflates cinematic movement with the film spectator's new consciousness and with social and historical movements set in motion by the cinema. His is a delirious vision of an audience mobilised and a world torn asunder by a cinema liberated by its own movement. His A-B-C is that of a 'no-longer immobile camera'; a spectator who is 'torn out' of his or her seat; and a crowd which 'at the same time, in every city of the world, exits the cinema and spills into the street like black blood. Like a powerful beast, it extends its thousand tentacles and, with a tiny effort, crushes palace and prison' (1926: 23-4).

Moussinac, however, was the only critic of these years to fuse the formalism of Impressionism with a vision of the cinema as a revolutionary social art in a more tangible way than Cendrars' poetic vision or Delluc's expressions of solidarity with the patrons of the working class cinemas he frequented (1986c: 70-5; Abel 1988a: 159-64). This activism would take two forms: his critical/theoretical writing and his practical work in the ciné-clubs and agitating against commercial interests in the film industry from the pages of *L'Humanité*. From this agitation issued the famous *Sea Beast* affair: in 1926, in a review of this US film by Millard Webb, Moussinac advised his readers that this was a film 'to hiss at without hesitation' (1926). The comment earned him a lawsuit which initially went against him for having 'overstepped the rights of critics' [4]. Finally on appeal the decision was overturned in December 1930 (1930c); in Richard Abel's words, the decision 'in effect guaranteed . . . film critics freedom of expression' (Abel 1984: 263). Moussinac transformed hissing and booing in the cinemas into a political act (a campaign that seems to have had some effect [1931b]) and proposed to organise 'spectators' unions' for the purpose of influencing film production through tactics that would include strikes (1929f).

We have seen how, for Moussinac, the cinematic movement exalted by the Impressionists could be harnessed as a structuring rhythm capable of producing new meaning. By 1927, in his essay 'Cinéma: Expression sociale', this formal concern was wedded to his political ideas to elaborate his view of cinema as embodying, in its very form, the historical destiny of the working class. Henceforth the role of technics would be social and historical. Fast- and slow-motion were to become tools of political education:

Rapidity and complexity are the characteristics of modern life. We need to create instruments which will prolong our senses and our faculties to understand and to feel. This will finally

render us masters of Space and of Time, whose qualities have fundamentally changed in the past century. We need fast-motion to foresee, and slow-motion to understand (1927: 26).

The Ciné-Club in the Service of the Revolution

Moussinac had been one of the primary forces behind the ciné-club movement since its beginnings in the early 1920s, when it played an instrumental role in gaining acceptance for avant-garde cinema in French intellectual circles. But another challenge remained: that of exposing larger numbers of the general public to the films. To some, such as Canudo and Dulac, the ciné-clubs had the unabashedly elitist goal of bringing artists and intellectuals together to discuss avant-garde work. Moussinac began to work in the opposite direction. The arrival in France, through the ciné-clubs, of the new Soviet cinema would prove to be the catalyst for his conception of the ciné-club as a mass working-class organisation. In 1926, at the Ciné-Club de France, which he had co-founded, Moussinac organised the Paris premiere of Eisenstein's *Bronenosets Potyomkin/Battleship Potemkin* (1926). This event, immortalised by the presence of the Surrealists, provoked 'stupor and enthusiasm': a whole new film aesthetics, that of the montage Moussinac was groping towards in his criticism, was revealed. The film was doubly revelatory, because it showed how the working class could be brought into the ciné-clubs, where both artistic education and political action would be carried out.

Two years later, in March 1928, Moussinac founded the Ciné-Club les Amis de Spartacus; it would become the first alternative exhibition network on a national scale anywhere in the world. With tens of thousands of members, in its short six-month lifespan it very nearly upset the established order of film exhibition and censorship in France, primarily by screening new Soviet cinema. Most Soviet films were banned a priori by the French government, but the Amis de Spartacus took advantage of a loophole in the law which treated ciné-club gatherings as private and not public and therefore not in need of a censor's visa.

At the Amis de Spartacus' inaugural screening on 15 March 1928, of Pudovkin's *Mat/Mother* (1926), 4,000 people were said to show up to a cinema with a capacity of 1,500. Soon afterwards the group screened *Potemkin*, officially banned in France (as it would remain until 1952). Jean Lods, one of the group's co-founders, claimed that 25-30,000 people throughout France saw *Potemkin* at Amis de Spartacus screenings (Grelier 1974: 77); overnight, the group became the most popular ciné-club in history. Estimates of its membership vary (admission was by membership only, but this, as the right-wing press did not fail to note, was available to anyone at the door for a small sum): Moussinac, in a handwritten note (Moussinac n.d.), reports that they had hoped for 10,000 members by 1 May but had obtained 15,000 (although a notice in *L'Humanité* on 12 May made the claim for only 8,000 (*L'Humanité* 1928a)); while another of his undated, handwritten notes gives the following tabulation: Paris, 15,000, suburbs, 19,000. Later historians of the ciné-club give an entirely different figure: Jeander (1949: 384-5), and following him Vincent Pinel (1964: 31) and Maurice Peling (1980: 3), gives the figure of 80,000 in Paris, its working-class suburbs, and the provinces [5] 'after five months' (early fall; the club was dormant for much of the summer).

True to its appeal to a mixed audience of working-class communists and ciné-club cinephiles, the group offered a varied programme of new and classic films [6]. The group rescued one film, Delluc's *Fièvre* (1921), in which Moussinac had a small part as a sailor, when its negative was about to be destroyed. But of course the real attraction was the illicit Soviet films, and in addition to *Potemkin* and *Mother* the group showed Pudovkin's *Konyets Sankt-Peterburga/The End of St Petersburg* (1927) before premiering, in what is mistakenly believed to have been its final presentation, Eisenstein's *Oktyabr'/October* (1928) in October 1928. Moussinac's memories of the group's screenings at the Casino de Grenelle, in the 15th arrondissement, evoke the mixture of political fervour and mixed-class cinephilia that was their hallmark:

There were people from all walks of life. Lots of workers, of course, and office

workers and government employees, all rubbing shoulders with 'society types' whose cars blocked, at that time, the Avenue émile Zola. One night something characteristic but probably unique in the history of cinema occurred: at the end of the screening, people refused to leave, and vehemently called for an encore. We had to show the last reel of the film again. It was Eisenstein's *October*. The last subway had left, and most of the audience had to walk, at night, to their more-or-less distant neighbourhoods (Moussinac n.d.).

As Moussinac noted laconically immediately following this passage,

All of this didn't fail to rile, as they say, the public authorities. A newspaper campaign described the situation as 'intolerable'. François Coty, in his newspaper *Le Quotidien* . . . demanded that the organisation be banned (Moussinac n.d.).

Such an interdiction is what historians have passed on to us as the fate of the club, but this is only half true, according to documents in Moussinac's papers. The authorities were certainly disturbed by the sight of huge audiences of all classes seeing banned Soviet films because of a loophole in the law. This was only aggravated by the group's flaunting of its status, for example by holding press screenings of its films, an unusual practice for a ciné-club. The city's cinema managers were just as perturbed. Moussinac claimed in *L'Humanité*, in fact, that the 'real reasons' for government action against the group were the concerns of commercial interests (1928a).

While discrepancies in the accounts of the protagonists and of latter-day historians exist, we know that the group was informed by the Paris police in early October that it would no longer be allowed to screen films without a censor's visa. The most curious aspect of the affair, however, and one which has not been commented on by historians, is that this was not the immediate end of the Amis de Spartacus. They had simply been prohibited from screening banned Soviet films, a move which could hardly have come as a surprise given the group's visibility and the anti-Communist campaigns under way in the country at the time [7]. By 25 October, the group had in fact resumed its screenings, *sans* Soviet films, with a programme of three Charlie Chaplin films. A newsletter to its members announcing these screenings declared that the group intended to continue operating, showing only films with a censor's visa, in order to remain active while they continued to lobby for their exemption to be reinstated (Les Amis de Spartacus, n.d.). Among the interim options being discussed was the possibility of continuing to screen Soviet films, but by hand-delivered invitation to Party activists only. A final decision on what to do with the group was to be taken at a board meeting on 12 November.

There the documentation ends. There is no record of the board's final deliberations, but evidently a decision was taken to liquidate the Amis de Spartacus. The board must have concluded that the chances of their exemption being reinstated were slim. Maurice Pélain claims that Moussinac urged the board to pursue the notorious Paris police chief Jean Chiappe in court for 'abuse of power' but that the others saw this step as 'inopportune' and chose to let the organisation die [8] (1980: 5). That there was a rift in the group is clear from Moussinac's unsigned note in *L'Humanité* in 1931, after a ciné-club in Strasbourg had won a court victory allowing it to screen Soviet films: 'What do our former comrades from the Amis de Spartacus think of this? Those who, three years ago, didn't want to resist Chiappe with a show of force?' (*L'Humanité* 1931).

Whatever the case, the decision reveals much about the status of culture in French Communist circles in the late 1920s. Perhaps the board believed that maintaining interest in the group would be difficult after the loss of the Soviet films. And yet ciné-clubs were far from out of fashion; as late as 1931, as Germaine Dulac noted at the time, 17 ciné-clubs existed in France (1994b: 143-5). The Amis de Spartacus, in 1928, was the only one with a national reach. Its membership, uniquely, was predominantly working class. Liquidating it seems not only to have squandered this achievement but to belie the stated goal of

acquainting its audience with the highest achievements of the cinema and of carrying out political activities, such as the campaign for better films, from its position of strength. If the group viewed the formalism and political engagement of the Soviet cinema as indispensable to this mission, it could not have foreseen the juncture that would arise in the French film industry within months of its disappearance. Had it lived to participate in the sound revolution, however, it would also have had to confront the widening gap between Moussinac's theories and the cultural orthodoxy of the French Communist Party.

Propaganda or Art

The loss of the Amis de Spartacus in late 1928 had inestimable repercussions not only for the status of culture within the Party, a status which reached its nadir in the 1929-31 period, but, as I will argue, for the direction of French cinema during this same crucial period. In the first place, it is sobering to realise that after 1928 the most important Soviet films were once again unseen in France. Some Soviet films obtained censor's visas, but these were not the most significant or political, and were often severely cut. It is also tempting to imagine a role for the group, had it survived, which would have extended beyond exhibition and distribution to that of a catalyst for and even a producer of a 'second avant-garde' in France. As French and European avant-garde and independent film-makers turned increasingly towards the documentary in the late 1920s, sound cinema, arriving on the Continent in 1929, precipitated an aesthetic and industrial rupture in both commercial and avant-garde practices, perhaps especially in France. We are left to speculate whether an activist organisation such as the Amis de Spartacus could not have nurtured, and provided a venue, for an encounter between the avant-garde and the documentary, with its otherwise limited opportunities for exhibition, thereby fulfilling Moussinac's vision of an organised, cinephilic working class influencing the kind and quality of films made. We might also wonder whether such an opportunity would have been purely conjunctural or whether the basis for this elusive cinema with both formal and social concerns did not lie in fact with the documentary and, contrary to all conventional wisdom, with sound cinema. These questions will be taken up below.

In a less speculative vein, we can see immediately how the Amis de Spartacus could have played a political role by serving as a venue for films produced by the Party; by dismantling it the Party's cultural activists revealed just how remote such a project was, even at this late date. For by 1928 in France there had still been no attempt to produce an activist cinema, whether in the form of workers' newsreels, features intended to be shown inside or outside of commercial circuits, etc. Such films existed, from the mid-1920s on, in many neighbouring countries, particularly Germany. This lack, and the feeble and unsuccessful efforts by the Party to fill it in the years leading up to the Popular Front, in 1932-34, lead Richard Abel to suggest that Moussinac's evident disillusionment with cinema by 1933, when he virtually abandoned the medium for other interests, was born of a frustration with the Party's inability or unwillingness to undertake such a programme (1988b: 31 n. 62). I contend that the evidence demonstrates the opposite, that Moussinac kept the Party at a distance from his projects, discouraged its involvement in film production, and pursued a critical agenda at odds with Party ideology.

How can we account for the lack of left-wing film production in France throughout the 1920s? Censorship certainly existed, but it was present in all Western European countries, which shared a very real fear of the 'Soviet threat'. There was a much more fundamental reason why such a cinema did not develop in France: the French Communist Party, the logical sponsor of such work, had no interest in such a venture and was in no position to undertake it. After 1924, the Party had become distrustful of intellectuals and engaged in severe internal 'proletarianisation' and 'bolshevisation' campaigns. By the mid-1920s, David Caute suggests, Moussinac was one of only four intellectuals of any note to have ties with the Party (1964: 93) [9]. By the end of the decade it appeared to face extinction, its membership reduced to insignificant numbers: in 1928, there were only 58,000 members nationwide, fewer than those ascribed by some historians to the Amis de Spartacus that same year; by 1933 there were about half that number (Racine and Bodin 1982: 97; Caute 1964: 14). By

1929 the Party was regarded, Cauter writes, 'with almost universal hostility by the intellectual Left' (1964: 14), while the historians Nicole Racine and Louis Bodin describe the Party as having 'eliminated all internal opposition and [was] in addition in the throes of 'proletarianisation' and a definite anti-intellectualism' (1982: 99).

The idea of making films within the Party was however mooted during this period. V. Barel, a rank-and-file member, writing in the July 1928 issue of a Party journal, at the height of the success of the Amis de Spartacus, proposed that films be used to attract people to political meetings. But Barel was not suggesting they mount 'large-scale screenings, these would require resources we don't yet have' (1928: 672-4) (after the April 1928 elections, the Party was broke). Instead, he suggested renting and buying films in an amateur format and making films within the Party with the same equipment. 'Here's how. Anybody can make a film. Without special photographic training, anyone can handle the camera . . .' (1928: 673-4). In a final dig at the Amis de Spartacus, he urged them to make their stock of films available for use in the Pathé-Baby amateur format (1928: 674).

Barel ended his article with the question 'What will the Central Committee think of this project? I don't know'. We can't be sure either, but there was a swift and merciless response from one prominent Communist opposed to it: Léon Moussinac. In a long article in *L'Humanité* in September 1928, Moussinac first outlined all the practical reasons why the idea wouldn't work: the Pathé-Baby projectors were 'toys' which wouldn't stand up to heavy use; there were no suitable films available for rental in this format; and, in response to the suggestion that the Amis de Spartacus make reduced format copies of its Soviet films, negatives, not positive copies, were needed to do this (1928b).

We should note a curious fact of film history here. Beginning in 1923, firms in the United States (Kodak, Victor, Bell and Howell) began producing 16mm cameras and projectors for the amateur market. Late in 1922 the French firm Pathé had entered the same market, but with a 9.5mm device, the Pathé-Baby, which had a single sprocket hole between frames rather than a hole on each side of the frame. This format dominated the French amateur market until the Second War, but unlike 16mm was unsuited (was not sturdy enough and did not give very good image resolution) for semi-professional use. Throughout the world, while 16mm was being adopted by political activists and documentarists as a more portable, affordable format than 35mm, the French amateur market was restricted to the Pathé-Baby (Raymond Fielding 1967: 32; Georges Charsenol 1966: 63). As late as 1932 Moussinac could lament that 16mm was 'used today for education and propaganda in every country except France' (1932a). In his response to Barel, Moussinac proposed for propaganda purposes the 17.5mm Pathé-Rural, manufactured by slicing 35mm stock in half and introduced in France in 1924, where it was used for commercial exhibition in rural areas. It, like 35mm but unlike either 16mm or 9.5mm stock, was inflammable. This singular format, however, was never adopted by independent or amateur film-makers or used outside of France and it disappeared in 1940. This historical anomaly, the lack of an adequate amateur format, also accounts in part for France's late arrival to activist film-making: there simply wasn't access to an appropriate technology.

Moussinac's greatest objection was to Barel's suggestion that the rank-and-file make films. For Moussinac, it was a 'serious error to think that "anyone can film"'. His argument began with the inadequacy of 9.5mm stock but quickly shifted to the question of training and the formal qualities of the medium. His comments on the problem of making 9.5mm prints from 35mm positive copies could also be read as an argument against amateur film-making itself: 'The plastic quality of the images would be practically destroyed and in this way the expressiveness of the film so reduced that its impression on the public would be very weak' (1928b).

Was this a simple elitism? Herman Lebovics (1992: 156-61) describes how, during the years of the Popular Front (1935-38), the French Communist Party paradoxically embraced French high culture precisely during the years of great social change, when it shared power in a left-

wing governing coalition. Distrustful of artistic vanguards, the Party endorsed classical French culture. Moussinac, we should make clear, was writing from an entirely different perspective. His model was the new Soviet cinema, with its radical formalism at the centre of its revolutionary politics. And he had emerged from the Impressionist avant-garde, which hardly constituted a conservative canon of French high culture.

The role of the rank-and-file, for Moussinac, was not to transform itself into cultural producers, for they had neither the training nor the proper tools. Rather, its task was to make of spectatorship something active and political, with influence upon cultural policy and production. The greatest achievements of the cinema, which could only be understood through familiarity with the history and techniques of the medium, had far greater revolutionary potential than newsreels filmed by the rank-and-file. Its formal qualities had, innate property of the cinema, the ability to alter the consciousness of its audience. Moussinac's position was doubly remarkable: not only was it argued from within a Communist Party hostile to the intellectual Left and in the throes of 'proletarianising' the literature it endorsed; but it was, for the most part, set out in the popular press, in the Party organ *L'Humanité* no less, and not in specialised film journals.

In early 1931 it was announced (1931d) that a group Moussinac was involved in, which would later be called the Fédération ouvrière du ciné-photo (1931c), would sponsor or undertake newsreel and propaganda production in addition to its short-lived distribution activities. Either the suggestion met with no response, or it was not pursued energetically by Moussinac and his comrades; no more mention was made of the idea. Then, in May 1932, an unsigned notice in *L'Humanité* announced the formation of Huma-Film (*L'Humanité* 1932). This project, which, as its name suggests, enjoyed the blessings of *L'Humanité* and thus of the Party leadership, produced five 16mm films for that year's electoral campaign; these are now lost. It also proposed to sell projectors to interested groups and invited Party members with motion picture cameras to enquire about becoming correspondents for a newsreel service (about which no more was ever heard).

Although this notice indicated that four films had already been produced and were in circulation, it was four months before Moussinac viewed and reviewed them. This fact, and the nature of his comments on them, make it clear that he had absolutely no involvement in the enterprise. Although he prefaced his remarks with perfunctory comments about the need for such propaganda within the Party, the need to take his criticism constructively, etc, his long-standing opposition to this sort of cinema showed through clearly. What is most surprising is that such harsh criticism of an official Party endeavour was allowed and given so much space in the Party organ; Moussinac's criticism was, as he himself described it, 'merciless'. After a relentless list of technical defects, he concluded that: 'We need to achieve a photographic quality which is equal to that produced, with the same material, by the operators used by the bourgeoisie' (1932a).

A month later, Moussinac's now-infrequent column in *L'Humanité* was devoted to responding to an anonymous criticism of his article by a group calling itself Quelques amis du cinéma ouvrier. Their letter, which Moussinac reproduced in its entirety, appealed to the Party in its dispute with Moussinac: 'We ask that the Party apply its class criticism to films, to replace aesthetic criticism' (1932b). In his response, which deplored the evident ignorance of the film medium betrayed by the letter's authors, Moussinac's bitterness over past defeats and the Party's indifference to his programme was all too evident:

It is not our custom, here, to respond to anonymous notes. But it is impossible not to reply to 'Quelques amis du cinéma ouvrier', who considered it their duty to attribute to me precisely that attitude that is the death of certain initiatives and ideas in our organisations. Like the death, for example, of the Amis de Spartacus, or, more recently, the project of a 'Fédération du Cinéma-ouvrier' [sic]' (1932b).

A Paroxysm of Realism

In his review of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) (1922a; 1922b) and in *Naissance du Cinéma*, Moussinac had described a category of films as 'documentary' - a term rarely found in Impressionist criticism but by no means absent from it, as Dudley Andrew suggests it was (1997: 242) [10]. These early steps towards the documentary and the seemingly evident appeal the documentary should have held for a leftist activist did not prevent Moussinac, by the end of the decade, from falling largely silent on its possibilities, precisely when numerous independent and avant-garde film-makers had taken it up [11]. Documentary became for Moussinac a secondary genre, a 'rude but fine path to activism' (1930b). His comments in the period 1928-32 almost invariably quarantined documentary off with sound cinema: not only was each suited to the other, but both were antithetical to the Impressionist project of a 'pure cinema' to which he still clung at this late date. For Moussinac, virtually the only justification for sound cinema would be its ability to create an aesthetic of documentary hyper-realism: '[T]he documentary film . . . will make use of recorded words and sounds to the point of a paroxysm of realism' (1929g: 244-5).

A 'paroxysm of realism': the expression is richly suggestive of the artistic and social possibilities of the documentary in this period of national and international political and economic crisis, when cinema's own crisis drove the avant-garde into the documentary's arms. But Moussinac himself seems to have been deaf to the sonorities of his own expression; perhaps he instinctively equated documentary cinema with the kind of 'workers' newsreels' he so feared, remaining faithful to Impressionist doctrines as a way to safeguard his formalism and cosmopolitanism and to prevent cinema's becoming subject to the Party's political and cultural doctrines. Paradoxically, however, here we sense for the first time that his thought was no longer at the forefront of French criticism, just when film culture began to be politicised through the documentary.

Since the mid-1920s French avant-garde film circles had developed a fascination with the science film. One of its advocates was Germaine Dulac, one of the staunchest proponents of a 'pure cinema' dedicated to representing the 'imperceptible', who took up work in 1930 for a commercial newsreel service and by 1932 would declare that 'the formula for pure cinema is in the documentary' (1994e: 17 n.35). There the 'stuff of life itself' could be found (1994c: 161). Nature films using microscopic and underwater photography and medical and surgical films (which Moussinac's brother-in-law Jean Lods made for a time) came to be seen as the natural home for a cinema which aimed to 'marry science and art':

Rarely has a written poem left a stronger lyrical impression than this medical demonstration film, where the workings of the organism visually struggle with the brain and the human envelope. The scientific film ceaselessly reveals to artists a great lesson: the lesson of cinema itself. (1994c: 165-6)

The Impressionist faith in technics was reaffirmed in this new turn to documentary realism. Epstein, embracing new film technology (colour, 3-D, sound), lamented the 'brutality' of existing film technology and asked 'Do you think that a lie, filmed and recorded in slow-motion for the eye and the ear, could escape detection?' (1974c: 200). Dulac explained that: 'If cameras decompose movement and explore the domain of the infinitely small in nature, it is in order to show us visually the dramas and beauty that our too-synthetic eye does not perceive' (1994c: 164).

'A paroxysm of realism'; the 'stuff of life itself': these descriptions of the documentary by the French avant-garde easily call to mind the work of Dziga Vertov during the same period, and it would be worthwhile to return to the relationship between French and Soviet cinema, mediated as always by Moussinac, in these final years of the decade. Vertov's singular style, and abundant theoretical writings, insisted on a montage of documentary footage without the artifice of acting, mise-en-scène, etc. Moussinac, in a chapter on Vertov in his 1928 book on Soviet cinema, credited his influence for the 'documentary effect' in Eisenstein's *Potemkin*

and commented that Vertov, in constructing a model of 'document-life', employed 'materials which are considered definitive in themselves, because they are irrevocable, indisputable' (1928c: 175).

In this early and prescient assessment, made even before Vertov produced his major works, Moussinac saw Vertov differently from how he is seen today (as someone who maintained that his work was without authorial intention or artistry). For Moussinac, it was the documentary materials themselves which were not artistic: 'A quite serious theoretical contradiction appears, however, in Vertov's films. How is it possible to apply an 'artistic' process of construction to a film whose elements are not in themselves 'artistic'?' (1928c: 177-8). The answer, as Georges Sadoul pointed out in his posthumously published book on Vertov (1971: 134), can be found in embryonic form in an early article by Moussinac's mentor Louis Delluc. On viewing a documentary film in 1917, Delluc had written:

I've recently realised that the cinema is destined to give us fleeting and eternal impressions of beauty that only the spectacle of nature and sometimes of human activity can give us. Those impressions of grandeur, of simplicity, of clarity, you know, which will brusquely make you find art useless . . . The cinema is precisely this, a working towards this suppression of art, which surpasses art, being life itself. (1986a: 30-1; Abel 1988a: 137)

Such a belief in the ability of documentary reality to supersede art did not take root in Impressionist criticism, despite its insistence that the stuff of film art lay in the medium's mechanical transformation of reality. This, however, was the defining element of Vertov's system, which he began to elaborate, first in sound collages before working in cinema, from the same early date as Delluc's comment above. Yet Vertov's work would find virtually no resonance in France, for the simple reason first of all that after the demise of the Amis de Spartacus there was no venue for it. Unlike Eisenstein, who sojourned in Paris in 1929, Vertov was not comfortable speaking French and visited Paris only two or three times, on special entry visas, in 1929 and 31, to present his films to small audiences of cinephiles. As Moussinac lamented, screening Soviet films in small speciality cinemas during this period not only prevented access to them by large working-class audiences; bourgeois critics, maliciously or out of ignorance, often wrote hostile views that the Left could not effectively counter (1929c). This, in combination with a censorship which cut scenes and re-wrote subtitles for those Soviet films allowed to be screened commercially, resulted, in Moussinac's view, in a sort of 'camouflage' of Soviet films that denied them the political and artistic influence they had enjoyed through the Amis de Spartacus (1929a; 1929e).

Thus throughout 1929-31, the period of Vertov's mature work, his films and writings were virtually unknown in France, although the text of his presentation of his work during his first 1929 visit was published in *L'Humanité* (1929). Ironically, this was the first major Soviet film manifesto to appear in French translation [12]. Written in the interval between Vertov's virtuoso *Tchelovek s Kinoapparatom/The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), a silent film with no intertitles composed entirely of fragments of documentary reality, and his experiments with sound cinema in *Entouziazm/Enthusiasm* (1930), it maintains a revolutionary idealism and an exaltation of cinema's technics which bear a striking resemblance to Moussinac's own Communist formalism:

From the montage of visible events recorded on film (Kino-Eye) we move to the montage of visible and audible events, transmitted by radio (Radio-Ear).

Next we will move to the simultaneous montage of visible-audible-tactile-olfactory-etc. events.

We'll finish up with the spontaneous capture of 'human thought' and finally,

We'll arrive at the greatest experiences of directly organising the thoughts (and consequently the actions) of all humanity.

This is the technics of the Kino-Eye, which was born with the October Revolution (1929).

Phonogénie

Dziga Vertov's experiments, he told his French audience in 1929, had 'surpassed their technical possibilities', and he awaited the sound film and television in order to be able to continue his work:

Recent technological achievements in this field give powerful weapons to partisans of and workers in *documentary sound cinema* in their struggle for a cinema revolution, for the suppression of acting, and for an October of the Kino-Eye (1929).

Such an endorsement of the sound film found little echo in the French avant-garde. Even Moussinac, whose technics aligned so closely with Vertov's 'Kino-Eye', right down to the invocations of mathematics and science, had an ambivalent critical relationship with sound film, by turns accepting or rejecting it, as he did a month before Vertov's first visit, in the name of Impressionism's entirely visual 'pure cinema' (1929h; 1928f; 1928g; 1928e).

Not only did the 1920s French avant-garde, with a few notable exceptions, reject the sound film and above all the talkie as theatrical, immobile and in every respect anathema to *photogénie*; the new medium provoked a crisis in the avant-garde's very faith in the benefits of cinema's constant technological evolution. Abel Gance, for example, for a decade one of the film-makers who had most experimented with new techniques, declared in 1929: 'Here we are, more than ever, slaves to machinery' (Ghali 1995: 310). Moussinac's faith in technics was also shaken, but later the same year that he declared sound cinema anathema to 'pure cinema' he gave this opposing verdict in a discussion of the new genres engendered by sound film: 'There's no question that their legitimacy is beyond dispute (all scientific discoveries are opportune); the task rather is to reflect on their use, which is not without danger, on the contrary' (1967: 243). Science had not failed the cinema, and no technological innovation was intrinsically antithetical to the avant-garde project. Changed production circumstances, in Moussinac's view, were responsible for the death of the avant-garde. This is a subtly but crucially different interpretation than that of many contemporaneous and latter-day commentators, for whom the avant-garde was simply 'killed off' by 'sound cinema'.

In a farewell speech to his public, and the cinema, in early 1933, shortly before embarking on a sojourn in the USSR, Moussinac developed the idea that sound had been calculatedly introduced prematurely (the avant-garde had long expected 3-D and colour to be available to them first) in order to centralise production and eliminate experimentation (1967a). Now technology was seen as a site of the class war: it had been usurped by the bourgeoisie, by the powerful interests which decided to introduce sound when they did, but would itself create new forms of expression which would precipitate the seizure of technology by the proletariat (1931f). This momentary impasse - he was pessimistic and non-committal about how long this process would take - and not the Communist Party's delay in producing propaganda, lies at the root of his disaffection with the cinema and his departure from the scene in 1933. In fact well before his departure it was clear that he had given over most of his time and energy to the organisation of workers' theatre groups, and the assessment of a chronicler of these activities, Wolfgang Klein, is relevant to our discussion here: 'Moussinac's attempt to radically transform the communist notion of theatre had come too early for his party' (1992: 34).

Of the Impressionist film-makers, only Jean Epstein displayed any real enthusiasm for the sound film and appreciation for its artistic - and social - potential. He had hoped to shoot *Finis terrae* (1929), a social drama shot on location in Brittany with non-professional actors, with sound, but French technology was not up to the task and foreign technology not yet available in France. In a 1930 article he argued that if cinema were to survive, it would be

once the mobility of the camera was restored and sound added a marvellous new dimension to the cinema:

Then, with the microphone, we want to hear what the ear doesn't, the way we see with the camera that which escapes the eye. That nothing be silent any longer! That thoughts and dreams be audible! (1974d: 228; Abel 1988b: 67)

The microphone could reveal hidden states of mind, just like the camera. So too movement, essential to the Impressionist aesthetic, would no longer be limited to the image but could also be represented through sound: 'We must spread our microphones across the sound fields of the vast world' (1974d: 226-7; Abel 1988b: 66). Moussinac too sought to incorporate sound into the Impressionist system by endowing it with movement. In a spirited defence of Vertov's first sound film, which had been criticised by prominent French critics after its sole Parisian screening in 1931, Moussinac wrote: 'Music is no longer an "accompagnement". IT CREATES, like the image. Like it, it is movement' (1931a).

In his discussion of the artistic potential of the sound film, Epstein made a curious remark in passing, employing a term, *phonogénie*, which may well have been coined by Moussinac in a July 1928 article in *L'Humanité* (1928g): 'Until now, we have experienced a few rare moments of *phonogénie*, and these have only been in the impure sound of the newsreels' (1974d: 227; Abel 1988b: 67). It is significant that Epstein would locate this elusive *phonogénie* in the newsreel, whose wild sound contrasted sharply with the canned theatre of the new Hollywood talkies. Sound had become an essential component of the 'paroxysm of realism', an aesthetic which none the less never took root in France during this period.

What these occasional responses to the sound film articulate, I believe, is an attraction to the *materiality* of the new technology - an aesthetic, as I discussed at the outset of this article, which was never entirely present in early Impressionist films, despite the reigning ethos of technics - and a belief in the ability of this materiality to engender a new social collective. The silent film composer Arthur Honneger, for example, embraced sound film in 1931 on the basis of its ability to 'fulfil' and 'complete' the musical score, to give it 'concrete representation':

Ceasing to be misunderstood or massacred, music can become itself, can enter into reality, can be, like the cinema and with it, a true force, unanimous, collective. A force no longer subjected to the anarchic interpretations of individuals but which applies itself with all its strength to a transported, mass audience (1931).

What I would like to propose here, in summary fashion, is that viewed from the perspective of the avant-garde's interest in documentary and realism at the close of the silent era, sound cinema, far from being antithetical to the avant-garde project, was the key to its survival. Sound cinema was uniquely capable of joining the demand for materiality and experimentation on the one hand and social engagement on the other. And yet, as Moussinac would argue, this avenue closed even as it was opened, due to the fundamental cleavage in the constituent parts of technics, technology and inspiration, which the circumstances of sound's arrival induced.

Beyond Technics

Somehow technics, and cinematic art with it, had gone off the rails with the introduction of sound. 'The era of the technicians' had arrived, Moussinac reasoned, 'because technology has conquered its full importance' (1931e: 14) [13]. There remained one possible way out of this impasse. While capital controlled the commercialisation of technology, it could not control the advance of technology proper (the reader may well consider this, and many more of Moussinac's final assessments, a dubious claim). The Impressionists, for example, had early on ascribed to technology a mystical life force of its own, and in 1928 Moussinac had

elaborated a view of technological innovation as being something that is 'in the air', developing in various places simultaneously (1928d). Inherently revolutionary technology would appear, but the 'economic and social situation of capitalist countries would render these inventions undesirable and premature' (1967a: 332). Such was the case of television, in which Moussinac placed great hopes in the early 1930s. This new medium was being explored more enthusiastically in the USSR than in the West, he claimed, because 'everyone knows that the development of television is incompatible with the present social system' (1931f).

Like cinema before it, television would produce a shock effect on the spectator which would automatically induce new social relations. What seems to have been lost in Moussinac's new formulation, however, was an insistence on the formal properties, and the artist behind them, that distinguished art from propaganda. Television would present an unmediated reality without need of artistry to achieve its revolutionary force:

Television will precipitate the evolution of the audience [and] increase its demands the moment this audience can see, hear, and absolutely *experience* an event the very instant it takes place anywhere in the world. An event which, although it will of necessity be interpreted by the recording, will be presented without artistic artifice, in the stripped-down, absolute form of truth (1931f).

Of course, capital would resist this revolutionary development. But, in a manner reminiscent of the role Moussinac had ascribed to the public in the days of the Amis de Spartacus, when organised spectators demanded that better films be made and censorship halted, it would fall to the public to seize this technology and fulfil its revolutionary potential:

Trusts, quotas, state film policies will all, of course, make every effort to avoid the collapse. But science, tomorrow, will be ready. It rests entirely with the spectators, finally conscious of their strength, their dignity recovered, to hasten the event (1931f).

In the interim, however, technology under capitalism would follow its own course, divorced from the artist and creating a deformed culture until such time as it is redeemed by revolutionary force:

The Marxist position is indisputable: the proletariat alone will create new forms of art, and thus new forms of entertainment, according to its practical needs and its deepest aspirations and by employing the science of the technicians. Naturally, this presupposes the time required for the birth of a new civilisation, and thus considerable delay. During this period, technology will of necessity outpace inspiration (1931e).

Not only was the Communist society here indefinitely postponed. Art and society were now fated to trail behind technology; and the artist was reduced to insignificance. The brief utopian vision of technics had passed.

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Research for this article was funded in part by a University of Iowa Stanley Fellowship for Graduate Student Research Abroad. My thanks to the staff at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, where Léon Moussinac's papers are held, and at the Bibliothèque du Film et de l'Image, Paris, and the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Université de Paris X, Nanterre, as well as to the Special Collections and Inter-Library Loan departments of the University of Iowa. Rick Altman, Dudley Andrew, and Lauren Rabinovitz kindly read and commented on various early drafts. All translations are my own. Where a

published English translation exists, this is cited (giving preference to later anthology editions over initial periodical publication), but is not the source of the translation which appears here.

Notes

1. See Richard Abel (1988a: 209, for a discussion of this distinction. Abel and his translator Claudia Gorbman, however, devise no way to render this ambiguity in their translations of criticism from the period. (See for example Gorbman's translation of Moussinac's 'Avenir et technique' as 'Technique and the Future' (ibid., 425-8.) The very construction of the title, which the translator felt compelled to invert, suggests a concept more abstract than that of 'technique'.) For a discussion of the problems this confusion can create for the writing of film history, see Rick Altman (1984: 111-15ff).

2. The phrase is Abel Gance's, from 'Réponse à l'enquête "le Film Sonore": Qu'en pensent nos réalisateurs"?'', *Cinéa-Ciné-pour-tous* 138 (1 and 15 August 1929).

3. Richard Abel (1988a: 345 n. 71), limiting himself to specialty film journals, suggests that the first French translations of Soviet writing on the cinema appeared in *La Revue du cinéma* in May 1929 (Vsevolod Pudovkin) and April 1930 (Eisenstein). He overlooks, first of all, Pudovkin's article on montage in *Cinéa-Ciné-pour-tous* in January 1929. But in fact *L'Humanité* was the first to publish Soviet film theory in translation in France, underlining this journal's importance, under Moussinac, in the avant-garde of the period. See for example Eisenstein's auto-critique, and criticism of Soviet bureaucracy, 'October' (1928); his lengthy article 'La Ligne générale' (1929); and Dziga Vertov's article, from a talk he gave in Paris, 'L'école du Ciné-Oeil' (1929).

4. Note that the initial ruling in 1928 awarded the distributor 500 francs in damages (not the 100,000 sought and reported by Abel as awarded).

5. For now there were branches: in Moussinac's account, in 'Montrouge, Bagnolet, L'Häyle-Rous, Montreuil, St Denis' (working-class suburbs of Paris) and 'Strasbourg, Marseille, Clermont-Ferrand'. (Jeander (1949: 384-5) credits the Amis de Spartacus with the spread of the ciné-club movement to the provinces). One can also find mention in *L'Humanité* of groups in Neuilly-Plaisance, Villejuif, Malakoff-Vanves, Puteaux-Nanterre, and Bezons (*L'Humanité*: 1928b), while Maurice Pélina (1980: 3) includes Nice, Bordeaux, Lyon and Toulouse.

6. Moussinac, in his notes, gives the following complete list of films shown, in addition to those mentioned above: Robert Flaherty's *Moana, A Romance of the Golden Age* (US, 1925); Fritz Lang's *Metropolis, Das Schicksal einer Menschheit im Jahre 2000* (*Metropolis*, Germany, 1925); John Brunius' *Karl XII* (*Charles XII*, 1925) and Mauritz Stiller's *Herr Arnes Pengar* (*Sir Arne's Treasure*, 1925), from Sweden; and 'Le Démon des steppes', a Soviet film directed by Leon Scheffer that I have been unable to date. A number of short films also played on the programmes, including some with an evident popular science orientation: *La Vie sous-marine* and *A Travers la Corse* are mentioned.

7. In May 1928, for example, a clash between Communists and the police at Ivry brought about 1339 arrests, while in October the prestigious intellectual Henri Barbusse was charged with espionage, the Party leadership arrested en masse, and *L'Humanité* briefly seized. See David Caute (1964: 93).

8. Unfortunately, Pélina neither names nor quotes from his sources, which I have been unable to identify or recover.

9. The others were Henri Barbusse, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and Gabriel Péri.

10. Andrew is correct to point out that the term is falsely attributed to John Grierson, but its use predates even the 1920s; Georges Sadoul (1971: 100) dates its use as an adjective to 1908 and as a noun to 1914.

11. Some of the new documentary directors and their films in the period under discussion include Jean Lods (*24 heures en trente minutes*, 1927); Jean Vigo (*A propos de Nice*, 1930); Vigo's cinematographer and Dziga Vertov's brother Boris Kaufman (*Les Halles centrales*, 1927); Georges Lacombe (*La Zone*, 1928); Marcel Carné (*Nogent, Eldorado du dimanche*, 1929); the science film-maker Jean Painlevé, friend of both the Surrealists and the Communists (*La Pieuvre*, 1928); Marc Allégret (*Voyage au Congo*, 1926); Luis Buñuel (*Las Hurdes*, 1932); Georges Rouquier (*Vendanges*, 1929); Léon Poirier (*Croisière noire*, 1926); Yves Allégret and Jacques Prévert (*La Pomme de terre*, 1931); André Sauvage (*études sur Paris*, 1929); and Eugène Deslaw (*La Marche des machines*, 1928). There was in addition a marked turn towards realism among some directors of the avant-garde, e.g. Jean Epstein (*Finis terrae*, 1929) and Alberto Cavalcanti (*En Rade*, 1927).

12. See note 3 above.

13. I am of course borrowing Moussinac's comments on the theatre in this discussion.

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