

Further Reading on OCTOBER

From *Masters of the Soviet Cinema: Crippled Creative Biographies* by Herbert Marshall (London ; Boston : Routledge & K. Paul, 1983.)

Yet Eisenstein's co-worker, Yutkevich, in 1964, still insists that 'Soviet cinema art created a new kind of artist. Working in conditions of genuine creative freedom, not bound by any obligations, except one – to be useful to his people. . . . And our art – is genuine *INTELLECTUAL CINEMA* . . .' three years later, when re-Stalinization sets in, Yutkevich goes on:

And how contemporary sound those pages where Eisenstein as today, polemicizes with our opponents from the bourgeois camp and turncoats of the revisionist sect, pitifully prattling about the impossibility of expressing creative individuality in the so-called 'rigid' frame-work of socialist art!

Here is what Eisenstein himself said about the 'rigidity' that ruined his film, *The Old and the New*:³⁰

In passing it might be worthwhile to recall the sad fact that the epic pathos of, say, the 'rural theme' in the cinema, in its direct initial 'premise', was catastrophically smashed to pieces on the iron grill of prescribed demands of former scenario departments and former Chief Repertory Committee for the cinema:³¹ 'Co-operatives not shown', 'weeding campaign not shown', 'the work of the Village Soviet is missing', etc. And the noble attempts to embody the pathos of the theme of socialism, which had alighted upon the face of the art, withered away on their roots, to use agriculturally 'poetic' terminology.

And Ivor Montagu wrote recently about Eisenstein's other film, '*October* was slashed to ribbons in response to political changes.'³² And confirmation is given by the following:³³

Grigory V. Alexandrov, co-director with Mr. Eisenstein . . . who

said Stalin had ordered 3,000 feet to be cut out of *October* just before the film's première on the 10th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1927, on the ground that the scenes gave too much prominence to Lenin's role in the revolution. Mr Alexandrov described the incident, when a few hours before the film was to be shown, Stalin and a few other persons unexpectedly went into the cutting room. . . . Stalin said he wanted to see the virtually completed film and during the showing, to our surprise, asked for cuts of several important scenes totalling more than 900 meters (approximately 3,000 feet).

He continued:

When Eisenstein and I asked why the cuts had to be made, Stalin said evasively: 'You don't know what is going on. This is not the right time for Lenin's liberalism.'

As to 'intellectual freedom of film-makers', Yutkevich's own film *Miners* consumed three years in adjusting to changing requirements of Party censors. His film *Light over Russia* was totally banned, though it was based on the Stalin-approved play by Pogodin, *Kremlin Chimes*, and his film of Mayakovsky's *The Bath-House* was withdrawn.

And this is not all. Yutkevich too was condemned as a 'cosmopolite,' which was the Party's polite word for a 'Yid' – for indeed Yutkevich was Jewish. He was expelled from teaching at the GIK and some of his students arrested.