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AELITA (1924)

Translation from the Russian intertitles on the film print at the Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California 94720. All notes pertaining to individual titles are placed to the right in parentheses.

1. From the collection of films of Gosfilmofond, U.S.S.R.
2. The history of Soviet feature film cinematography
CYCLE 1
THE SILENT FILM
3. The Head Board of Film Circuits and Distribution and the All-Union State Film Fund present:
4. AELITA

N.B. Here should be added some credits that are inexplicably missing from the extant print. I have not given them numbers, but they are as follows:

Scenario: Fyodor Ostep
Alexei Faiko

Director: Yakov Protazanov

Photography: Yuri Zhelyabuzhsky
E. Shöneman

Set Decoration: Sergei Kozlovsky
Alexandra Exter
Isaac Rabinovich
Victor Simov

A Mezhrabpom-Rus Production

(hereafter the titles are numbered as they appear on the print)

5. This film was made in 1924 and based on the novel of the same name by Alexei Tolstoi (1922)
6. This is one of the early screen versions (or: one of the early films) of the Soviet silent cinema
7. Deviations from the novel somewhat lower the artistic level of the film.
8. A collective of talented actors worked in the picture. The sets are of special interest.

(here the narrative titles begin)

9. On 4 December 1921 at 18 hours 27 minutes Central European time, all the radio stations on earth received a strange radiogram.
10. Anta...
odeli...
uta... (There's no need to subtitle here, as #12 and #13 are shown in Latin script)
11. Anta...
odeli...
uta...
12. Anta...
odeli...
uta...
13. The Moscow radiostation was temporarily being superintended by engineer Los /N. M. Tsereteli/
14. "Give this immediately to the Deciphering Bureau."
15. At the evacuation station at Moscow's Kursky Station.
16. One of those serving at the evacuation station was Natasha, wife of Engineer Los. (Actress' name not given??)
17. An arrival for convalescence from the front, Red Army soldier Gusev /N. P. Batalov/
18. The Deciphering Bureau was unable to decode the mysterious radio message.
19. "Didn't this radio message come to our inventors from Mars?"
20. Closest friend and colleague of Engineer Los -- Engineer Spiridonov /N. M. Tsereteli/
21. "It may well be that someone on Mars has started being concerned about us!"
22. "Come here, you happy newlywed, your wife is calling you again."
23. "... I got off earlier today, come out to meet me."
24. All Los' powers of mind and all his energy were given over to the solution of an unusual task -- the flight to Mars -- and he often imagined ...
25. Aelita -- the Sovereign /Yulia Saintseva/
26. Ikhoshka, Aelita's favorite servant /A. F. Peregonets/

27. Tuskub -- the Ruler /Konstantin Eggert/
28. Gor -- the Guardian of Planetary Energy /Yuri Zavadsky/
29. The model of an apparatus constructed by Gor which makes it possible to observe life on other planets.
30. "A great discovery, but let it remain a secret -- to everyone!"
31. "Show me other worlds -- nobody will find out about it"
32. "Let's do this: I'll meet you in the evening at the tower of radiant energy." ("radiant" is the correct word here)
33. That evening.
34. "To you alone will I show the life on the neighboring planet."
35. "It's time to return, Tuskub might catch us."
36. "Touch your lips to mine, as do the people there on Earth."
37. Spiridonov spent every evening at his friend's, working with him on inventing an apparatus for a flight to Mars.
38. "If only we could find a source of energy to enable us to overcome the earth's gravity!"
39. Since the very first evening, Gusev had become the favorite of the entire hospital.
40. The nurse Masha /Y. G. Orlova/
41. "Love me, love me not!
A Soldier has no money!..." (Gusev's song)
42. In 1921 the railroads were not complaining of an absence of passengers.
43. Comrade Erlich and his wife Elena /P. N. Poli, N. M. Tretyakova/
44. "We do not rent out rooms. Apply to the Women's Committee."
45. "You are so ..."
(N.B. This is a note being written, partly illegible, about 335 feet from the end of the reel. Cf. #54)
46. "Get out of here! Such impudence!"

47. "Victor, I have the address of an old acquaintance ... let's try that!"
48. That day at the evacuation station they were distributing rations.
49. "Victor Karlovich Erlich" (N.B. This is the name on a tag on something she is putting in a basket.)
50. "I don't hold the past against you, Elena"
51. "Introduce me to him as your brother."
52. "White bread ..."
53. "What sort of thing is this he's writing to you?"
54. "You are so charming I cannot believe that you will be so cruel to me..." (N.B. a message on a card)
55. "Are you jealous?"

End of Reel 1

Reel 2

1. The provisions that Erlich had brought made it possible to organize a feast, a rarity in Moscow, and to recall "the beautiful past".
2. "The Devil knows, this isn't wine, but vinegar!
But we used to have...." (the word underlined, used to, might be done in italics for emphasis)
3. "Ah, it used to be that all personal relationships were so fine, so delicate..."
4. "Yes sir, there used to be or-r-r-der...."
5. The days passed ... Los doggedly continued with his experiments.
6. After each unsuccessful experiment, Los continued to dream ...
7. "Excuse me! I'm Chairman of the House Committee and I'm carrying out my duties."
8. "Your laboratory has to be vacated for a new lodger."
(or: ... has to be vacated to make room for a new lodger.)
9. "But we know each other. Do you remember?"

10. "Meet Citizen Erlich, our new lodger."
11. At the evacuation station they were actively preparing for a performance.
12. "Come on over ... We're having a terribly good time!"
13. Elena carried out her husband's instructions with success.
14. On the day of the performance, Elena received the house-community's food ration at the People's Commisariat for Food.
15. Erlich felt splendid in the role of a Soviet official.
16. (Not a title: Erlich changes the number on a card for ration of sugar. An English title such as "A sugar ration card" is probably sufficient.)
17. "I've brought some sugar ... we have to hide it ... hurry!"
18. "I told you that this is a goose to be plucked"
(This expression has no real equivalent in English -- it means something like "I told you we could make use of him/ get something out of him.")
19. The inhabitants of the evacuation station decided to outflaunt the professionals.
20. "This is Comrade Gusev, our Chief Assistant Director."
21. "Real chocolate!".
22. "I have to return home, I have a lot of work to do."
23. At the food distribution center they made an unpleasant discovery.
24. The manager of the food distribution center turned for help to the head of the Criminal Investigation Department.
25. "Investigate it, and if necessary carry out a search at Citizen Erlich's place."
26. "God, I've got talent ... I'll prove it to you!"
27. "Citizen Kravtsov, I'll tell you once more: I will not hire you, I consider you incapable."
28. It was necessary to go to Spiridonov's to get India ink.

29. "Tired, comrade? I sympathize, with all my soul, I sympathize."
30. "I know ... I found it in the pocket of your overcoat ... You lie, you lie at every step!"
31. The night dragged on for an agonizingly long time after this first quarrel.
32. "Do you want to go out tonight to the ball and have a good time despite everyone?"
33. (a letter) "To Engineer Los,
The Administration of Volkhov-stroi thanks
you for your work of nearly a year"
- (Volkhov-stroi is a hydro-
electric dam on the Volkhov
River at Novgorod)
34. "Are you going?"
35. Kravtsov decided to investigate the matter of the disappearance of the sugar on his own.
36. Meeting place of the "business people".
37. "What a bastard! He was really generous, one locket in exchange for a whole week!"
(The word here, medal'on, medallion or locket, refers to the practice during the NEP period of giving valuables instead of money for goods or services.)
38. Each recollection about the mysterious radiogram made his imagination work with new strength.
39. It had been many days since Aelita had been able to see the earth and
40. "There's a meeting of the elders today. Nobody will see if you go into the tower."
41. "How dare you hide Gor's apparatus from me?"
42. "You reign, but we rule. The tower will remain closed."
43. "Thus the elders decree that one-third of the live power shall be placed under refrigeration for storage."

(End of Reel 2)

(Reel 3)

1. All the worker population had toiled for the "elders" and had never abandoned their underground dungeons.
2. "The first third into the refrigerators! The first third!"
3. "Are you avoiding me, Aelita? The man from Earth is occupying your thoughts ..."
4. "Wait for me here. I'll come out to you."
5. The inhabitants of Mars were no strangers to the feeling of jealousy.
6. "You love the man from Earth. You shall never see him!"
7. "I will leave all the plans for my "interplanetary ship" with you. Guard them. This work is the main thing in my life."
8. "Are you going alone? But what about Natasha?"
9. Natasha was impatiently waiting for her husband.
10. "Let's go to the ball. The most elite society will be gathered. Your husband won't be against it, of course."
11. "Let's go!... in spite of him ... We'll have a good time!"
12. The unauthorized ball of the "society elite".
(Gatherings such as dances had to be permitted by the authorities.)
13. The organizers of the ball persuaded Natasha to have supper.
14. "But I thought you were at the station seeing your husband off on a distant business trip."
15. "Enchantress, darling. Stay half an hour more. Well, a quarter of an hour."
16. "I have to leave today. I regret that I was unable to say goodbye. I may be delayed on the business trip for a long time.
Your L."
(this is a note that Los leaves for Natasha, not a title)
17. The single joy left to Los was the realization that he was able to participate in the great work of constructing a new Russia.
18. Slowly but irrepressibly, life was being put straight, and there was less and less work to do at the evacuation station.

19. "Give me permission the see this patient off."
20. "Go, go, Masha. I will manage alone."
21. "Three months have passed since the day of your departure and in this time you have sent only three postcards. If this is the end ...
(This is a letter, not a title, and the message is incomplete.)
22. "Register documents of civil status here."
(a sign at a table)
23. After the evacuation post was closed, Natasha received a post as manager of an orphanage.
24. Los' business trip was coming to an end.
25. "To Engineer Los.
The management of Volkhov-stroi thanks you for your six months of work."
(a note, not a title)
26. "Dear friend!
It's been two months already since I left Russia ... forever. I'm ashamed to admit it, but experiences and habits of the past turned out to be stronger than I am. I hid your drawings in the fireplace in your room, where ..."
27. And daydreaming once again took possession of him.
(there are no interscenes between #27 and #28)
28. In his reveries, Los disguises himself as Spiridonov.
29. "It's a strange business ... didn't show his face for two months, and today he appears out of the clear blue."
30. The new crime promises to bring new laurels to Kravtsov.

(End of reel 3)

(Reel 4)

1. Kravtsov is at work.
2. "Don't touch it! I will track down the criminal with this glove."
3. The absence of both external and internal battlefronts and a forced inactivity was oppressing Gusev.

4. "I can't stand it with nothing to do! I set up four republics, but here you just stagnate."
5. Hot on the trail.
6. "I arrest you on a charge of ..."
7. "Your warrant?!"
8. "As regards the flight, I'm all for it."
9. "Think, comrade, there's great risk but little gain ..."
10. "See what ambition has brought me! Tomorrow I'm flying to Mars!"
11. On the eve of departure the last workers were let go.
12. Next morning Moscow was celebrating one of the great days of the revolution.
13. Where the good detective cannot drive through, he'll be able to walk through.
14. Five minutes to take-off.
15. "We're flying! We're flying!"
16. "Engineer Spiridonov, you are arrested for returning unauthorized into the R.S.F.S.R."
17. A good Pinkerton -- he didn't notice the stick-on beard and wig.
18. "In that case, Engineer Los, you are arrested for impersonating someone else."
19. "This missile is flying towards us from Earth!"
20. "The observatory will determine the time and place of the missile's landing. The strangers from Earth must be annihilated."
21. "You must not harm the strangers from Earth."
22. "They will be destroyed! We will not allow onto Mars the plague of earthly revolts!"
23. "I know both the time and place where the missile will fall."
24. The "elders" were awaiting the reports from the observatory and had not dispersed.

25. "Hurry so that you can meet the guests from Earth and bring them to me."
26. The moment fixed by the chief astronomer is drawing close.
27. "Comrades, you wouldn't be the militia, would you? A certain person must be arrested."
28. "Permit me to present myself: Brigade Commander Gusev from Budyonny's Red Cavalry."
29. "Tuskub! Tuskub! This is an earthling!"
30. "Comrade Tuskubov, I request permission to arrest according to warrant the criminal Los, who has arrived on your territory."
(The "russianized" name used here, Tuskubov, is intentional)
31. "Touch your lips to mine as you people do on Earth."

(End of reel 4)

(Reel 5)

1. "Do you recognize this necklace, Tuskub?"
2. "Love me, love me not!
A soldier has no money" (Gusev's song again)
3. "You are mine! We will reign together here over everybody!"
4. "I will never, never forgive myself for raising a hand to you!"
5. "Aelita, by command of the "elders", this man from Earth is arrested."
6. The free word of free people has vanquished the thousand-year hypnosis of the "elders".
7. "Comrades! Only you yourselves can help yourselves! With us it was once like this, with us it all started with ..."
8. "... by our example, comrades, organize a single, laboring family of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Mars."
9. "I'm with you, too! I will lead you myself!"
10. "Eh, I don't believe it ... It's no affair of masters to be organizing revolutions!"
(Or: "It's not a lordly business this organizing of revolutions!")

11. "We have achieved power. Lay down your weapons. They will no longer be necessary on Mars!"
12. "Victory! The army is on our side!"
13. "Open fire on the rebels! Drive them back into the underground!"
14. "Now I alone will both reign and rule!"
15. "Only buy tires trademarked Anta ... odeli ... uta!!
We are revealing the meaning of the mysterious radio message --
it's the trademark of our tires." (Not a title: a poster advertisement)
16. "We're going to the Far Eastern front, but have another hour to wait for our train."
17. "I fell into daydreaming again, and half an hour ago I killed my wife ... but I won't run away, no ... I'll return to her."
18. "One cannot just leave a man like that ... maybe he needs help!"
19. "I was insane when I shot at you ... and all my life I'll be thanking fate that I missed."
20. "Are you still worrying about something?"
21. "No, no, I believe you, forgive me."
22. "You are arrested by order of the Investigator."
23. "Enough dreaming. A different, real work awaits us all!"
24. The End.