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A study in the letter of the law climaxed by a private hanging in the year 1900 at Lakuya Bay, Alaska. Based on a true story, "The Unexpected", by Jack London, published simultaneously in McClure's Magazine and Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for August 1906. (The birthday party in the script comes from an episode in Dostoiévski.) Scenario by Viktor Shklovsky & Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov. Décor by Isaak Makhlis. Photography by Konstantin Kuznetsov (supervised by Aleksandr Levitzky). Directed by Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov (assisted by B. Sveshnikov). Produced by the First Studio of Goskino in Moscow. 6 reels.

Exhibited outside of Russia under the titles of By the Law, Expiation, Sühne, and Dura Lex.

The 16mm. print projected to-night comes from the Scientific-Research Institute in Moscow; circulated in the United States by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Shown to members of the class in "Memorable American and European Films: 1899-1954" on Friday evening, 28 March 1958, at 8, in Room 15, Annex C, downtown campus of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee (at 623 W. State St.) on the same bill with reels 4-7 of The Cloak [Shinél], based on two stories by N. V. Gógol, "Nevsky Prospekt" (1835) and "The Cloak" (1842), directed by Grigori Kozintzev and Leonid Trauberg for Leningradkino in 1926.

[C A S T]

Aleksandra Khokhlova, Vladimir Fogel, Sergèi Komarov, Pyotr Galadzhiev, & Porfiri Podobed are the chief interpreters in this grim drama of the Klondike gold rush.

[DRAMATIS PERSONAE]

Edith Whittlesey, a lady's maid born in Britain; a fast thinker in an emergency; adjusts herself readily to any environment; an upholder of the law.

Hans Nelson, a restless Swedish immigrant & rover; a carpenter by trade; unimaginative, rather slow-witted, loyal, sturdy, affectionate, a man of immense initiative; a raging beast when aroused; marries Edith in Chicago and eventually migrates to Alaska with her in quest of gold.

Michael Dennin, a large, powerful, witty Irishman; prone to sudden rushes of anger over little things & of an unfailing good humor under the stress & strain of big things; away from Ireland for 15 years and still poor; a sentimental soul even though a murderer; ends up dancing upon air.

Harkey, a long, lank, friendly Texan with a saturnine disposition. Thinks gold "grows" in Alaska.

Dutchy, the butt of the jokers among the gold-seekers. Even goes out of his way to raise a laugh at his own expense in order to keep things cheerful.

Negook, the Indian head of a little Siwash village; dignified, illiterate, not easily plussed; wary of the white man and his wily ways since they usually spell trouble to the natives.

Hadikwan, Negook's illiterate uncle, a Siwash; a reluctant witness to an Irish murderer's confession.

[C O M M E N T A R Y]

The leading Soviet cinema directors...are the formalists, headed by Kuleshov, whose film By the Law was worked out in the spirit of an algebraic formula, seeking to obtain the maximum of effect with the minimum of effort.--Joseph Freeman, "The Soviet Cinema." Voices of October: Art and Literature in Soviet Russia (1930), p. 263.

Kuleshov used & abused close-ups, forcefully emphasized details & stylized the acting in his pictures. Despite the faults there are portions of By the Law and The Death Ray which are as important in the development of the Soviet film as some of Griffith's and Ince's films were important in the development of the American film.--Maurice Bardèche & Robert Brasillach, Histoire du Cinéma (1935). Translated and edited by Iris Barry (1938), p. 176.

On Saturday evening at 8, April 5, the Milwaukee Film Circle, meeting monthly at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 914 E. Knapp St., will show Carol Reed's version of An Outcast of the Islands (1952), based on the 1896 novel of the same title--a sequel to Almayer's Folly--by Joseph Conrad [pseudonym of Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski].