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Wings of a Serf (Ivan the Terrible) U,S,S,R. 1926.

Directed by Yuri Tarich, Produced by Sovkino-Moscow, Written by Konstantin Schildkret, Victor Shklovsky, Yuri Tarich, Photographed by Mikhail Vladimirovsky, with Leonid Leonidov as the Tsar Ivan the Terrible.

Wings of a Serf is a vigorously detailed and exact view of a significant period of Russian history. The film, the story of a serf who invents a marvelous method of flying at the wrong time in history, is really most notable for its portrait of Ivan. Leonid Leonidov plays an ~~atypical~~ Ivan for Russian melodrama. Leonidov's Ivan is not terrible because of madness or criminality but for his precise and profound manipulations of power. Leonidov's fine acting, developed from years on the Moscow stage, expresses the extremes of Ivan's character; the devout Christian, humble and penit~~ent~~^{ent}, and the Machiavellian despot.

Yuri Tarich, a "master of repertory," directed ten silent films after 1925. Wings of a Serf was his first picture released abroad, and his best. Ivan Pyriev, who later directed comedies like Accordion and The Rich Bride with the help of Ukrainian scenarist Yevgeni Pomeschchik and the composer Dunayevsky, ~~assisted~~ Yurich; and Esther Shub, later to develop an innovative and sensitive use of newsreel footage in The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty, and The Great Road, edited.