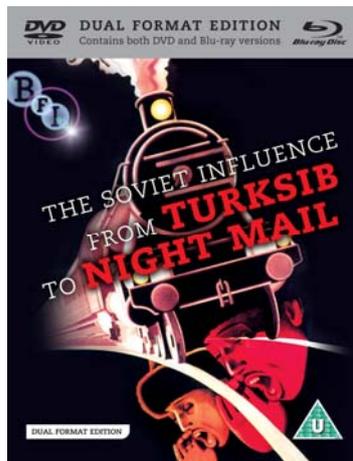


## DVD & Blu-ray press release



### The Soviet Influence: From Turksib to Night Mail

In the early 1930s, a small number of Soviet propaganda films were shown in Britain, and excited filmmakers such as John Grierson, Paul Rotha and Basil Wright – luminaries of the British documentary film movement – who were then developing their ideas of film as an art form.

*The Soviet Influence*, a new BFI Dual Format Edition strand, explores the impact that these films had on British directors by presenting key Soviet works, along with the British films which they inspired, in specially curated editions.

The first release in this occasional series, entitled *From Turksib to Night Mail*, explores the profound effect that the classic, yet little-seen silent Soviet documentary *Turksib* (Viktor Turin, 1929) had on British documentary films, including the celebrated *Night Mail*.

*Turksib* is a bold and exhilarating film which brilliantly illustrates the problems faced by regional farmers and trades people, and highlights the need for the Turkestan-Siberian railway. Dazzling, arresting, and yet curiously overlooked, this fine example of Soviet montage cinema was presented to British audiences in 1930 in a version prepared by documentary pioneer John Grierson. That same version is included here with a **newly commissioned score by Guy Bartell** (from celebrated electronic outfit **Bronnt Industries Kapital**), and is accompanied by a collection of archival British documentary shorts, all of which were made in the wake of *Turksib* by filmmakers whose debt to the film is very much in evidence. The British films are as follows:

***The Workers' Topical News No 1*** (1930): the newsreel shown at *Turksib*'s British premiere; ***Australian Wine*** (Paul Rotha, 1931): charming and lively promotional film employing Soviet-style montage techniques; ***The Country Comes to Town*** (Basil Wright, 1931): a celebration of the importance of the British countryside; ***Shadow on the Mountains*** (Arthur Elton, 1932): expressive titles and cinematography are deployed in this lyrical film about farming; ***The Face of Britain*** (Paul Rotha, 1935): a passionate and ambitious appeal for socialist planning; ***Night Mail*** (Harry Watt, Basil Wright, 1936): justly celebrated, this seminal film applies the aesthetic lessons of Soviet cinema to a very British tale

#### Special features

- Presented in High Definition & Standard Definition with new HD transfer of *Turksib*
- Newly commissioned score for *Turksib* by Guy Bartell (Bronnt Industries Kapital)
- New musical scores for *The Workers' Topical News No 1*, *Australian Wine* and *Shadow on the Mountains* by Neil Thomas
- Extensive, 36-page illustrated booklet which draws on the writings of John Grierson, Basil Wright, Paul Rotha and others to chart the Soviet influence in the development of British documentary filmmaking

#### Release date: 19 September 2011

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIB1130 / Cert U

UK and USSR / 1929-1936 / black and white / English, and silent with music / 163 mins / Original aspect ratios 1.33:1 / Region 0 / Disc 1: BD50 / 1080p / 24fps / PCM mono audio (48k/24bit) / Disc 2: DVD9 / PAL / Dolby Digital (320kbps)

Available from DVD retailers & BFI Filmstore Tel: 020 7815 1350 or [www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore](http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore)

Press contact: Jill Reading, BFI Press Office

Tel: (020) 7957 4759 or e-mail [jill.reading@bfi.org.uk](mailto:jill.reading@bfi.org.uk)

Images are available at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI DVD & Blu-ray 2011