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| **Your article** |
| Strike (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The first feature film of legendary Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein, *Strike* is an anatomy of the germination of collective action, its surveillance within modern networks of power, and its violent repression. Based on the 1903 strikes at Rostov-on-the-Don, *Strike* was conceived as part of never finished seven-film cycle entitled Toward the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Made in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, the film is the first of a series of Eisenstein’s filmic mythologies of revolutionary action—here an historical strike—that includes *Battleship Potemkin* (1926), a film about a famous mutiny, and *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (1927), a picture about the revolution itself. *Strike* is, of course, a propaganda film for the nascent Soviet state, and rooted in an aspiration towards documentary actuality. But it is also one of the director’s most formally exuberant, theatrical films. Its dazzling display of technical trickery (superimpositions, double-exposures, shifting frame dimensions, hyperactive irises and dissolves), and its non-naturalistic performance styles, betray the strong influence of popular culture on the young Eisenstein. The director’s indebtedness to the anti-psychological, externalized approaches to acting characteristic of 1920s Soviet constructivist theatre of the 1920s—the biomechanical principles of Vsevolod Meyerhold, or the illogical, gag-based performance styles of the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS), a Petrograd-based acting workshop with which the young Eisenstein was associated—is also evident in Strike’s pile of gags, acrobatics, and clown routines. Strike illustrates Eisenstein’s early desire to structure his films as sensational attractions, whose aggressive montages—as in *Strike*’s famous intercutting of the slaughtering of an ox and the murder of the striking workers by tsarist forces—were calculated to manipulate spectators’ emotions and allegiances. In the 1930s, under the pressure of a new Soviet demand for Socialist realism, Eisenstein would disavow as youthful excesses the formal experiments of *Strike* that continue to astonish audiences. |
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| Further reading:  (Bordwell)  (Eisenstein , The Montage of Film Attractions)  (Eisenstein, The Montage of Attractions)  (Eisenstein, Through Theatre to Cinema)  (Nichols)  (Nieland) |