

PARE LORENTZ AND
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
FILM PRODUCTION

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White diarrhea, the life cycle of the botfly, the lovelife of the honeybee, coating copper wires, and subjects of a similar nature have understandably only a limited appeal. But dreary short films dealing with topics such as these, highly specialized in purpose and theme, represented the typical product of hundreds of motion pictures made or commissioned by Federal agencies before 1935. Until then, except for the rather innocuous propaganda films sponsored by the "Creel Committee" during World War I, the United States government had not given serious consideration to the production or distribution of motion pictures that would be accepted for commercial exhibition, or of interest to the general movie-going audience.¹

In May, 1935, James La Cron, a Department of Agriculture official, invited Pare Lorentz to Washington, D. C., to discuss the possibilities of using films to inform the public about New Deal viewpoints on vital social and economic problems. A native of West Virginia born in 1905, Lorentz had achieved stature as a film critic while still comparatively young. After a short stint as Judge's movie critic, he served as a reviewer for Vanity Fair, the New York Journal, Town and Country and McCall's. Intermittently he had worked as a free lance writer and as an editorial staffer for Time, Newsweek and Fortune. With Morris Ernst he had co-authored a book dealing with movie censorship, The Private Life of the Movies (1930), and a few years later he edited a dramatic compilation of news photos, The Roosevelt Year (1934), which vividly recorded significant events during the first year of F. D. R.'s presidency. On the strength of the second book Hearst's King Features syndicate engaged Lorentz to write a Washington column. But praise of Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace and the government farm program shortly caused Lorentz to be fired. The erstwhile movie critic's Washington sojourn as a columnist had been brief and unimportant except for the friends he made among the New Dealers, especially Wallace's secretary, La Cron, with whom Lorentz had discussed the idea of turning The Roosevelt Year into a movie.

Back once more in New York City reviewing and writing about films for various magazines, Lorentz stormed against Hollywood's cinematic provincialism and damned the studio bosses for producing, with very rare exceptions, "the same old escape stuff," in momentous times that "cried

out to be filmed." An answer to his cries came from an unexpected quarter when La Cron wrote him that Wallace believed there could be better government motion pictures; Lorentz should come to Washington and discuss his ideas with those in charge. Shortly after his arrival Lorentz found himself being turned over to the newly created Resettlement Administration which W. L. White has characterized as "an expansive womb where many . . . New Deal ideas were gestating."²

The Resettlement Administration had been established in April, 1935, with Rexford G. Tugwell, Undersecretary of Agriculture, as Administrator. The general objectives of the R. A. included the improvement of the conditions of impoverished farm families and the prevention of waste due to improper land use. As part of the government's attempts to bring some order into the utilization of land resources, the R. A. was expected to recultivate great areas of worn out and submarginal land as well as to relocate thousands of families upon good land.³

John Franklin Carter, Jr., Director of Information for the R. A., asked Lorentz to examine the program and objectives of the new agency and to indicate what he thought the motion picture could do to interpret them. Lorentz selected a single major aspect: land use and misuse. After the release of The Plow That Broke the Plains -- the film dealing with this problem -- Lorentz declared that there had been "two prime objectives in making this picture: one to show audiences a specific and exciting section of the country; the other, to portray the events which led up to one of the major catastrophes in American history . . . the Great Drought and its effects" ⁴

If it followed the usual procedures for making federally sponsored films, the R. A. had its choice either (1) of establishing an organization with full-time personnel, expensive precision equipment and a regular office staff, or (2) of contracting with a private party for the production of the film. Government agencies had used both methods extensively. In 1935 Agriculture, Interior, and the Signal Corps maintained their own units, while Commerce and some other federal departments had deals with private motion picture producers. Lorentz, feeling that both methods fell short of meeting the standards he desired, followed neither of the established policies. He did the research and wrote the script. And when necessary he employed technical experts, but only on a per diem basis. Both The Plow That Broke the Plains and later The River proved correct his assumptions that this technique would avoid expensive overhead and administrative headaches while at the same time obtaining better results and more efficient personnel. At a time when even the Grade C lower half of a double feature usually cost upwards of \$75,000, Lorentz completed both these films for less than \$70,000; The Plow That Broke the Plains cost only \$19,500.⁵

In the 1930's the making of documentary films such as those contemplated by Lorentz differed considerably from making a movie in one of the big Hollywood studios. Being films of reality, documentaries were all either wholly or in great part made in the field. "Shooting" -- usually by a mobile, dedicated unit of three or four -- took place wherever the subject happened to be. This at a time when Hollywood recreated the world in its own image on the studio back lot.⁶ A documentary producer like Lorentz wanted to make a film about a subject such as dust storms and the Great Plains. He had a general idea about the things he wanted to say, the main points he wished to make, and the effects he desired to achieve. Usually he prepared in advance a rough shooting script which outlined broadly the sort of pictures he wanted to get, perhaps even designating certain sequences. Cameras and crew took to the field. Once in the field the unit shot key sequences as it could get them. New ideas occurred, sometimes even a new perspective was gained on the subject, and shooting was arranged to conform to the revised pattern. But always the man in charge must have had in mind some form of continuity, or else when he got back to the cutting room he would have found he had merely a collection of haphazard shots impossible to edit into any sort of dramatic composition. Except in some rare instances when re-enactments with professionals were especially desirable or absolutely necessary, the documentary producer made his pictures with the people of whom it tells. Mostly "shot silent," documentaries usually would be provided with sound tracks (including commentary and music) during editing. In the expert editing or "cutting" of a documentary lay much of the secret of its effectiveness. This could be a description of how any documentary of that time was made; it is a summary of the methods used by Lorentz in creating The Plow That Broke the Plains and The River.⁷

From June to September, 1935, Lorentz did research and wrote his script. On September 3, he hired his camera crew: Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz. These three represented the typical American documentarians of the period, zealous practitioners of their craft whose financial status was as shaky as their desire to film was strong. As did Lorentz, each in his own way stood apart from the Hollywood tradition. Steiner had gained fame as a still photographer and for his movie shorts, especially H₂O, a cinematic poem about water. Paul Strand, a onetime protege of Alfred Stieglitz, had studied film technique in the Soviet Union; he had just returned from Mexico where he had produced and brilliantly photographed for that country's government a prize-winning documentary, Redes (The Wave), which had a fisherman's strike for a hero. Leo Hurwitz had made a short for the California W. P. A. and had excited leftwing audiences with "agit-prop" shorts about the Scottsboro Boys and about a "hunger march" on Washington, D. C.⁸

Lorentz and his crew headed for the Great Plains and, ranging from the Montana-Wyoming border to the Texas Panhandle, spent about seven weeks traversing eight states. Lorentz's scenario, which had been approved by Tugwell and Carter, puzzled his cameramen. He knew exactly what he wanted, but could not detail it in the precise jargon of the cutting room. Dissatisfied, Strand and Hurwitz prepared their own shooting script and submitted it to him. He did not like it and would not accept it because they wanted the film to be "all about human greed" and "how lousy our social system was," and he could not see what this had to do with land use or dust storms. After a number of turbulent conference sessions they agreed to continue with the project but declared they would take no responsibility for the completed film.⁹

The unit engaged no professional players. The cameramen used the Plains people as they found them. One exceptional performance came from Bann White, a 72-year-old sharecropper from the Texas Panhandle whom they discovered leaning dejectedly against a plow. Sometimes people did not wish to be filmed at all. And other difficulties arose: one farmer, after reluctantly agreeing to let his home and family appear in the film, forbade Lorentz to speak directly to his wife. Any instructions to her had to be passed through the suspicious husband.¹⁰

After the actual shooting had been completed, Lorentz left for Hollywood where he hoped to get some bits and pieces of "stock shots" -- film clips from older motion pictures which would fill in his film's introductory historical outline. But he met only suspicion and hostility. Lorentz stated that he was kicked out of every major Hollywood studio. Word of this ultimately reached former Assistant Attorney-General Mabel Walker Willebrandt, then a Washington lobbyist for the picture industry. She put in a few phone calls to Hollywood, but, according to Lorentz, "had no good effect." He finally got the necessary stock footage through the efforts of Hollywood friends who sneaked him into projection rooms and sneaked out the footage he selected.¹¹

The Plow That Broke the Plains achieved its final form in the cutting room. There a triple process of creating took place as Lorentz wove together pictures, music and chanted prose. To compose the music Lorentz selected the young American composer Virgil Thomson, whose recent score for Gertrude Stein's Four Saints in Three Acts had won considerable critical acclaim. Thomson went back to what he called "just the music of the Plains" for the picture's themes, as he blended together "white spirituals" and past popular hits with cowboy ballads and dirt farmer songs. Thomson's score served as the main emotional accompaniment: Lorentz wrote only 700 words of expository commentary for the 29 minutes of film. He liked the silent picture technique and thought that action and music could often talk more loudly than words. To speak his narration Lorentz chose Thomas Chalmers, a mellow-voiced actor who, before an ill-timed, unfortunate

operation, had been a successful performer with the Metropolitan Opera in the days of Caruso. Much of the effectiveness of Lorentz's Whitmanesque prose came from Chalmers' reading of it.¹²

"This is a record of the land," began the prologue,
 of soil, rather than people,
 a story of the Great Plains:
 a high tireless continent
 without rivers, without streams . . .
 a country of high winds,
 and sun
 and of little rain.

The film begins with views of lush billowy grass, ends with the hulk of a dead tree filling the screen. Using the land as its protagonist and central theme, the picture chronicles the conquest of the grain belt and its conquest of the conquerors. Lorentz described the finished film as "a melodrama of nature -- the tragedy of turning grass into dust." In fine, it is a brief history of the Great Plains area, dramatizing the successive movements which had converted a verdant 400,000,000 acre belt into an arid wasteland. According to one commentator it made "the rape of millions of acres . . . more moving than the downfall of a Hollywood blonde." The film has a brief epilogue which portrays the R. A.'s plans for the future, and contains a few short glimpses of the model homesteads on recovered land upon which some drought-stricken farmers and their families had been resettled.¹³

Lorentz told his story simply and in a straightforward manner. An example is sequence eight, dealing with a dust storm: A windmill whirls furiously . . . a farmer looks to the sky . . . a little whirlpool of dust begins . . . a hanging lamp bangs in the wind . . . a horse grazes for what grass he can find. The "Black Blizzard" approaches . . . a terrified child runs toward a house . . . the dazed horse runs fearfully about . . . children run across a street for shelter as the fury of the dust storm increases. Dust is everywhere . . . it drifts against the fences like snow . . . dust seeps into the house through plugged cracks. The tempo of the music increases with the storm and indicates its fury. As it dies down, and as the sun sets, from inside the house we hear the strains of "Old Century," a hymntune of 18th century origin.¹⁴

Government regulations did not allow the R. A. to charge for the film. Most theaters would not take it as a gift. Despite a generally favorable critical response, obtaining any sort of wide distribution for the picture became a serious problem. The eight major commercial distributors refused it for a variety of reasons. The ostensible excuse generally given was that its 29-minute running time was too long for a newsreel, too short for a feature. An unobtrusive but seemingly concerted effort was made to keep The Plow That Broke the Plains from being seen. Some theater chain owners did not hesitate to speak their minds. One, after seeing it, agreed

with the critics who had praised it but added that he "resented" many things "the Administration was doing . . . and that is why the film will never be booked into our . . . theatres." In answer to an inquiry from the New York Times another theater executive replied, "I wouldn't release any government picture not even if it was Ben-Hur." And yet another explained that "if any private company or individual made that picture it would be a documentary film, when this government makes it, it automatically becomes a propaganda picture." When asked what he considered to be offensive propaganda in the film, the exhibitor did not voice any specific objection; "It was just the principle of the thing."¹⁵

These attempts to censor the government failed. Denied commercial exhibition, the R. A. established non-theatrical distribution by offering the film to any educational group or institution. Lorentz traveled around the country arranging previews for the press. Just before the film began he would say, "If you like it, please say the picture can't be shown in your town." This government barnstorming broke some of the barriers. The picture did not open in many of the big first-run houses, but it received playing time across the country in many small, second-run, non-chain theaters as well as in hundreds of classrooms, community centers and the like. By 1940 Lorentz, in testimony before a congressional committee, estimated that the film had obtained more than 5,000 non-commercial play dates and over 2,000 commercial bookings.¹⁶

The Plow That Broke the Plains was good, but The River was better. The success Lorentz had with his first film indicated to Tugwell the effectiveness with which certain social problems might be presented to the general public. He authorized Lorentz to proceed upon a film dealing with the economic problems of the Mississippi River Valley. Research on this film, The River (which began under the working title, "Highway to the Sea"), including location trips and preparation for actual shooting, occupied Lorentz for much of the summer of 1936. Richard McCann believes that in this project Lorentz was strongly influenced by the Mississippi Valley Committee report prepared in 1934 for the Public Works Administration which favored a TVA type project.

To film The River Lorentz put together a new camera crew with whom he had no trouble; as he later explained, "They were professionals, not cultists." His new crew consisted of Stacey Woodward, cinematographer for a series of noteworthy nature films, who had just served as co-director of the award-winning Adventures of Chico, a film about a Mexican boy and his pets; Floyd Crosby, a globe-trotting cameraman who had helped make two of the most beautiful outdoor films ever produced -- Matto Grosso and F. W. Murnau's Tabu; and Willard Van Dyke, a protege of Edward Weston and a leader of the "F. 64" group of American pictorialists.¹⁷

Using the same methods which had been so successful in capturing footage for The Plow That Broke the Plains, Lorentz and his crew traveled

21,000 miles by truck, car, boat and plane, and filmed in 19 states. Much of this time Van Dyke spent by himself in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama touring in a station wagon filming "cotton closeups" which he thought ultimately might be utilized effectively. Except for a brief one week jaunt in the South, Lorentz spent most of his time with Crosby and Woodward in the Mid-West. After ten weeks in the field during the fall of 1936, Lorentz wanted to return to New York City to edit his film. But a check in mid-December with meteorologists and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated the imminence of tremendous floods in the Ohio-Mississippi Valley regions. Lorentz and crew went back to these areas, and in January and February, 1937, were able to record the drowned cities and submerged countryside. Coast Guard boats and planes as well as the facilities of other federal and local agencies were made available to the filmmakers. The motion picture camera fully documented a major national disaster. It caught the strain and fear of the workers on the levee, and it depicted the muddy slop left behind as the waters receded. The New Statesman and Nation considered "the floods . . . so wonderfully photographed that it is difficult to remember that they were no spectacle but a gigantic . . . disaster." By the end of February, filming had been finished and Lorentz had begun editing; this time he had the technical assistance of Lloyd Nosler, an experienced Hollywood editor.¹⁸

Lorentz, again using the services of Thomson and Chalmers, wove his unique pattern of pictures, music and chanted prose. Operating with a much larger budget, he did not have to beg stock shots and could buy what he needed, some of them coming from a Hollywood trifle aptly entitled "Come and Get It." Once more Thomson, using well-known themes, created a splendid musical accompaniment to the film. And Lorentz wrote a commentary for the film which James Joyce considered "the most beautiful prose" he had heard in ten years. Making use of place names, battle names, proper names and names of years and trees, Lorentz wrote and Charles beautifully spoke:

From as far west as Idaho --
 Down from the glacier peaks of the Rockies
 From as far east as New York
 Down from the Turkey ridges of the Alleghanies --
 Down from Minnesota, 2500 miles,
 The Mississippi River runs to the Gulf.¹⁹

Into thirty minutes is packed the epic of the Mississippi River, its tributaries and the "greatest river valley in the world." Lorentz told a story of neglect, ignorance and greed, of eroded land, soilmining and cut-over forests. He pictured a river in rebellion against the industrial and agricultural forces which had attempted to tame it. And he depicted the future (still in its initial stages) of reforestation, dams and power plants and model homes. As the New York Times review pointed out, "It is the story

of the Mississippi as told by a modern realist, not by Edna Ferber in romantic salute to a romantic past." And it was done with pictorial brilliance -- for example, the sequence where the small trickle which signified the headwaters enlarged into flood: Icicles dripping . . . the trickle begins . . . clear shallow streams over pebbles . . . the ever-increasing rush of the water . . . the flow into the river . . . the high motion of flood crest.²⁰

The River opened in New Orleans, October 28, 1937, under the auspices of the R. A. 's successor, the Farm Security Administration. After being shown in a series of screenings in Mississippi River towns, it had a successful three-week run in Chicago, and in New York City it had the unusual distinction of being held over while the accompanying Grade B feature, Scandal Street, moved on. Although Lorentz did not face as many distribution difficulties with this film as he had with his first one, the Motion Picture Academy barred The River from competition for its annual Awards. But, shown at the annual International Exposition of Cinematographic Art in Venice in the summer of 1938, it won first prize as the best picture in the documentary class. This helped to end its exhibition difficulties. It allowed forces within the Administration to exert pressure upon recalcitrant distributors, and it led to a non-fee contract with Paramount Pictures, which undertook to distribute the film free of charge. By 1940 The River had been shown in more than 4,000 American theaters to over 10,000,000 people. To this day it remains a favorite, still being shown all over the country. Teachers in disciplines as disparate as geology and political science continue to make use of it, as do community centers and other groups. And twenty-five years after its commercial release, a Washington Post reporter viewing The River at a ceremony honoring Lorentz, declared that ". . . the film remains fresh and masterful . . . despite [the] . . . years that have passed since its making."²¹

Praise of The Plow That Broke the Plains and The River had been virtually unanimous; the critics found few faults. Said Bernard De Voto: "All the superlatives you have been hearing about are justified." President Roosevelt endorsed Lorentz's work. And the films became the first such American motion pictures accepted for the files of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, although other government films had been submitted earlier. However, it must be noted that there had been some reservations expressed in both major political parties about the validity of Lorentz's first film. Harley J. Bushfield, Republican State Chairman of South Dakota, branded The Plow That Broke the Plains a vicious lie in support of the New Deal "canard" that a drought existed in his state, and he had predicted that the film would place South Dakota firmly in the Republican column in the November, 1936, presidential election. Eugene Worley, a Texas state representative and a delegate to the 1936 Democratic national convention, termed the picture a libel on "the greatest section of the greatest state in

the U.S.A." and threatened to punch Tugwell in the nose if he did not destroy it.²²

Commentary of a different sort has come from England. Dr. Roger Manvell, the eminent British film critic, considered the films of Lorentz to be good propaganda. He asserted that Lorentz's work set up an emotional reaction in the audience that "this must stop, this must never happen again." Then, when the audience is most revolted, the solution follows simply in the New Deal plans. A more critical view came from Paul Rotha, one of the founders of the documentary movement, who, while praising Lorentz for his ambition and vision, argued that the two films contained many of the faults characteristic of the earlier British documentaries, including "overcomplex editing, no human contact, a mannered style, and most guilty of all from a propagandist viewpoint, a tacked-on ending explaining why the film had been made." Yet Rotha also believed that the Lorentz films must always rank as important because they showed other Americans the way and amply demonstrated that the documentary was no longer the monopoly of England.²³

Perhaps the most interesting analysis of Lorentz's technique has come from Mark Van Doren, who, in his review of The River, declared that both films were works of art which created "the effect of tragedy." Van Doren believed the spectator to be attacked on three sides simultaneously as "he sees pictures, he hears music, and a certain incantation of words moves on his mind. Any one of these things by itself would be incomplete. . . . The three of them accomplish an enormous result in thirty minutes."²⁴

The Plow That Broke the Plains and The River are not the only motion pictures created by Lorentz, but notwithstanding his other work -- which includes a vivid 1941 feature-length film about infant mortality and the fight for life -- these two shorts remain the high points in his career. These two works of Lorentz remain as alive as ever even though, since the 1930's, remarkable technical innovations (as well as television) have revolutionized the making of factual motion pictures. Recently, the New York chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences held a symposium which was to deal with the documentary on television; nonetheless, a large part of the discussion centered on Lorentz's films. They remain an inspiration as well as absolutes against which, even now, a quarter of a century after their production, many judge their own work. Lorentz was not the first to make films for the United States government, but he remains one of the best, a pioneer documentary filmmaker who overcame the most strenuous of obstacles and achieved artistic recognition for federally-sponsored films.

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Footnotes:

¹ Arthur Mayer, "Fact Into Film," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII (October, 1944), 210; Arch Mercey, "Films by American Governments: The United States," Films, I (Summer, 1940), 5-6 (hereafter referred to as Mercey, Films); Arch Mercey, "Film as a Medium of Government Information," mimeographed copy of a paper presented at the 34th meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1938 (in the files of the Museum of Modern Art Library, New York City).

² "Pare Lorentz," Current Biography (New York, 1940), 343-345; W. L. White, "Pare Lorentz," Scribner's Magazine, CV (January, 1939), 7-11, 42; J. P. McEvoy, "Young Man with a Camera," Scribner's Commentator, VIII (July, 1940), 40-48.

³ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston, 1959), 368-376.

⁴ Pare Lorentz, "Movies," McCall's Magazine, XVI (July, 1936), 18.

⁵ Mercey, Films, 6; White, "Pare Lorentz," 9.

⁶ Definitions of the documentary are numerous. They range from the over-simplified idea of a "film that answers a question by the creative dramatization of actuality" through elaborately complex formulations. Regardless of descriptive terms selected, the basis of documentaries is the presentation of facts (from whatever point of view) in a visual form. The modern documentary movement comes from Great Britain. Young British filmmakers were interested in giving the movie a wider social reference. They had been inspired by Robert Flaherty and excited by the Soviet film. The British government listened to their proposals to bring the screen to bear on life and the Empire Marketing Board created a film unit headed by John Grierson which was to help in a "Buy British" campaign. The film which laid a foundation was Grierson's Drifters (1929), a straightforward account of the herring industry. (Richard Griffith, "The Film Faces Facts," Survey Graphic, XXVII [December, 1938]; "The Development of the Documentary in Britain and America," 3 pp., a mimeographed paper from the Visual Materials Center, Chicago Public Library, 195-; Paul Rotha, "Films of Fact and Fiction," Rotha on Film [Fair Lawn, N. J., Essential Books, 1958], 205-213.)

⁷ Bosley Crowther, "Documentary Films," New York Times Magazine (August 25, 1940), 12-13; Edward Schustack, The Documentary Film (New York: Film and Sprocket Society of City College, 1938), *passim*.

⁸ Mayer, "Fact Into Film," 204; Paul Rotha, Documentary Film (London, 1952), 3rd ed., 183, 198-199 (hereafter referred to as Rotha, Documentary); "Documented Dirt," Time, XXVII (May 25, 1936), 47-48.

⁹ Schustack, The Documentary Film, 19-20; White, "Pare Lorentz," 9; Richard McCann, "Documentary Film and Democratic Government" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1951), 178.

¹⁰ "Dust Storm Film," Literary Digest, CXXI (May 16, 1936), 22-23; Crowther, "Documentary Films," 9-10.

¹¹ McCann, "Documentary Film," 182-183.

¹² White, 9-10; C. M. Black, "He Serves Up America," Colliers, CVI (August 3, 1940), 20; U.S. Film Service, Study Guide for "The Plow That Broke the Plains," mimeographed release in the files of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

¹³ White, "Pare Lorentz," 10.

¹⁴ McEvoy, "Young Man," 44.

¹⁵ Frank Nugent, "Raw Deal for the New Deal," New York Times, May 24, 1936, section 9, 3; "Dust Storm Film," Literary Digest, CXXI (May 16, 1936), 23.

¹⁶ White, "Pare Lorentz," 9; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Hearings on Labor -- Federal Security Appropriation for 1941, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, 1940, 245 (hereafter referred to as U. S. Congress, Senate, Hearings).

¹⁷ Schustack, The Documentary Film, 25; White, "Pare Lorentz," 11; "News from the American Film Center, New York City," April, 1940, mimeographed press release, 2 pp.; McCann, "Documentary Film," 191.

¹⁸ New Statesman and Nation, quoted in "The River," World Film News, III (August 11, 1938), 177; "Old Man River," World Film News, III (July, 1938), 118-119; White, "Pare Lorentz," 11, 42; McCann, "Documentary Film," 194.

¹⁹ Muriel Rukeyser, "'The River' Damned," World Film News, III (July, 1938), 121; McEvoy, "Young Man," 47; Pare Lorentz, The River (New York, 1938), 4.

²⁰ New York Times, February 5, 1938, 19; Rukeyser, "'The River' Damned"; McEvoy, "Young Man," 46-48.

²¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings, 245-246; Washington Post, January 29, 1963, A-18; Frank Nugent, "Short Films," New York Times, February 13, 1938, Section X, 5.

²² "Dust Storm Film," Literary Digest, CXXI (May 16, 1936), 23; "The River," World Film News, III (August 11, 1938); New York Times, June 10, 1936, 12; New York Times, August 4, 1936, 11; Rotha, Documentary, 199-200; Bernard De Voto, "The River," Saturday Review of Literature, XIII (April 9, 1938), 14.

²³ Roger Manvell, Film (London, 1946), 120; Rotha, Documentary, 199. (That Rotha had some grounds for his criticism is demonstrated by the fact that when The Plow That Broke the Plains was shown at the World's Fair in 1939, New Deal policy had shifted so much that the epilogue on R.A. activities had been deleted.) McEvoy, "Young Man," 44.

²⁴ Mark Van Doren, "Films," Nation, CXLV (October 30, 1937), 485-86.