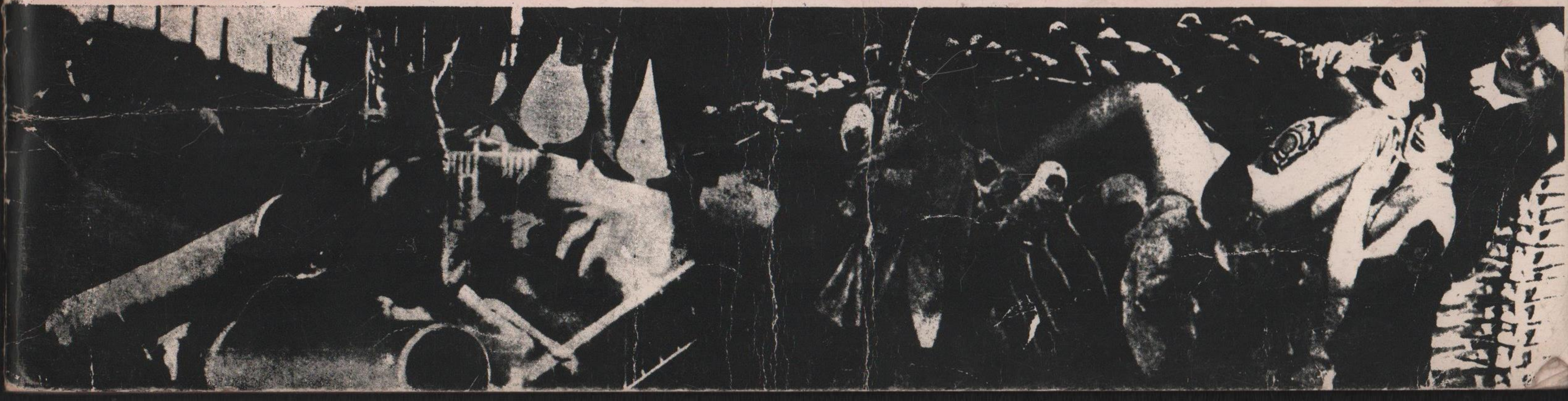




A. S T E A R N
M. S Z C Z U K A



EUROPA

A POEM BY ANATOL STERN

**ILLUSTRATIONS & LAYOUT BY
MIECZYSLAW SZCZUKA**

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TERESA ZARNOWER**

**REPRODUCED HERE FROM THE
ORIGINAL POLISH EDITION OF
1929**

GABERBOCCHUS, LONDON 1962

© Anatol Stern, 1925
Original Polish Edition, Warsaw 1929
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translated by S.T. & M.H.

**with a new introduction
by MICHAEL HOROVITZ**

**and photographs
from the film**

EUROPA

**made in 1930 by
Stefan and Franciszka Themerson**

preface by Oswell Blakeston

TRAGEDY IS NOT THE SUDDEN INTRUSION OF CATASTROPHE: IT is man reaping what man has sown. Anatol Stern's poem sings such tragedy, hurling at us what has been sown and reaped and reaped and sown through hoop-curved idiot years of violence leading to violence, of war to war. "They feed us", cries the poet; and some fifty years ago it was, in terms of the political poster, "Propaganda for Proper Geese". It goes on being true, and it is heart-rending. But *Europa* is not just a marching song for lemmings. We rush to our doom, and here are words separated from the romantic gesture of our annihilation, deliberately kept commonplace so that we can regard them without assimilating them into the elaboration of our excuses.

The absolute is not relative in the realm of manifestation; and so the poet is trying to create something which has no terms of contrast in its being. Hence the epigrammatical use of clichés. It is as if the poet were saying: You must be so bored with knowing that surely you *know*. He is a pleading oracle; and is it not remarkable—an oracle you can understand?

It is a test. A test whether you have succumbed to conditioning, to thinking of the absolute as an infinite number of relative values. Here poetry breaks down and—the poet breaks through. You must not, cries a tortured man, deny the simple statement: some things are wrong, absolutely wrong. The line must be drawn with scissoring heroic. You must not pass! man must say to his own blood.

Yes, we are all tainted. We are born with original sin, the unoriginal sin of thinking that an argument is juster if one holds a club, a sword, a machine gun, an atom bomb in one's hand. So, refusing to evade, the poet dives back into his body, the war between white and red corpuscles. We must face this in order not to project it on to the world, in order to grow up, to make terms with the vegetable gods, the spectres of the mechanised psyche. Thus the poet's use of flatness is a deliberation, a manipulation to remind us that many problems cannot be solved but can be transcended. As above, so it will not be beneath.

Commitment at last: No, and no—not this again. Words, simple and terrible as Cocteau reciting a list of numerals on a disc of the thirties, urge fearfully a transcendence.

Hence the purpose of Stern's "simplicity"—that it will drive us to cry stop to the words, and so stop to the whole indiscriminate monster distraction of power politics and wars to end wars and sorrows to exploit banners. The poet writes here in order not to have to write again. Let us read in order not to have to read our tragedy once more.

Oswell Blakeston, 1961.

ANATOL STERN, born in 1899, fuses the animal and the social in poetry of the present and the future. He was a co-creator of the Polish literary movement 'futurism and avant-garde' after the first world war, and became a zealous apostle of the cult of the irrational, of subconscious associations as the source of inspiration. But along with this he was all for the responsible conquest of new shapes, and one of the first to voice in poetry the vital importance of scientific and industrial development. His published collections include the titles 'Futuryzie', 'Earth to the Left', 'The Angelic Churl', 'Run to the Pole', 'Conversation with Apollinaire', 'Translations from Mayakovsky', and 'Naked Man in the City Centre'.

'Europa' sets down the forces conflicting within the poet: the conscious quest for a mechanical synthesis of

reality is broken down by the involuntary twitching of bones, inward knowledge of its failure. The only salvation lies in unconditional abandonment of the unfinished in favour of a revised affirmation of human values. The poem was first printed in the magazine 'Reflektor' in 1925. The present 'Europa' preserves in facsimile the format, the photomontage cover by Teresa Zarnowerowna, and the original collages and design of Mieczyslaw Szczuka for the bibliophile edition of 1929, which won a prize two years later at the international exhibition of modern books in Paris. Szczuka was killed on a mountaineering expedition just after he had completed the art-work, which employed a mixture of techniques unheard-of at the time—and hardly absorbed to this day. We might take it as signal, there is still no English for collage . . .

for myself, everything to do with this work functions as a signpost—but with a reach more global than may have been intended by the author ten years before my birth: anatol stern points back, and forward in poetry of the extreme situation, written with the whole body—

“ My strongly strung guts sound like string
and my body is hungry like a bellicose lyre ”

a stark utterance, compulsive, not refined and formulated from the ashes of polish symbolism—the stock dilutions of a rimboud or a staff cannot quench his thirst—to match the strident cacophonies which shatter all traditions, which demand to be echoed

the stranglehold of materialism is not to be evaded, but articulated in images and forms equal to those revealed by science and technology—glibly spurned by so-called experimental artists, committed critics—deaf to mayakovsky's order (to the army of the arts)—

“ While we dawdle and quarrel
in search of fundamental answers,
all things yell :
'give us new forms !'
. . . give us a new form of art ”

—yet he gave it, and stern who translated him, and republics toil in the mud . . .

with stern's europa we enter a realm of the absolute, no question of similes in face of the naked reality—a far cry from the faded conventions of poetic diction and addiction then and now—no rein to the marginal versification of word-ideas-counters of genteel play, no felicity of phrase-ornament-words that capitalise and gloss over—

mangled feelings cobbles vegetables governments workers force their counterpoint : how weave again the bedraggled cobwebs of civilised aesthetics . . . stern frames his spidermouth perception in a massive, seething construct of bare materials to reflect the ruthless advances of the machine age after 35 years the blinkers are snapped down, the ruins almost cleaned away, pylons factories tower and scrape the sky—but see through that matchbox monster, penetrate the flimsy groundwork—there is a gash beneath—sewers of blood

“ when the town subsides/into void ” the motorcars remain and countenance the beauty man has created to destroy : stern forestalls the wreckage—destroys to create : poet as resistless screaming fact of recording-machine ; and poet as human species, surveying from within the live corpses on a futurist landscape—become the present

and again from without—chaplin beckons with clinical irony ; the luminous projections of the (surrealist) painter isolate the seeds of european despair without qualifying syntax—the objects and elements juxtaposed, seen each in its own right and yet part of the inevitable process as if for the first time : stern commits himself to no single consistent or polemical attitude—attacks the reader in the guts : no heroic mystification of protest for noble sentiments, nothing liberal—nothing but disgust directed from a milliard dead souls and starved bodies at every ramification of comfort, intellectualism not least

his europe is conceived as it is suffered—with all the poet's senses : he breaks down poetic form deliberately as the continent is deformed, suggests it with a piercing biologic regard, at once detached and involved—dirty—burning—compassionate

—but no consolation : no-one escapes untouched by the poison flitguns of totalitarianism—the acid in our lungs—the censor in the stomach : “ we/who drag along the streets/our queue of sunken bellies . . . they feed us/they feed us/they pour down our throats/food for the spirit ! ”

stern evokes the physical repercussions of mechanist authority in savage caricature through photographic stills, immediately graphic qualities which bring to mind the vision of eisenstein : the sombre repetitions effect a ghoulish resignation which constitutes the final indictment of standardised man, and pronounces the crack of doom for a civilisation in the paws of mammoth power politics

today as yesterday brain-detergents of the hidden persuaders are eagerly devoured : our capitulation to the decay is complete in practice—we speak of a sick society and swallow an aspirin, of rat-races and are ratlike but do not bite—merely race for bigger better armaments, swifter vehicles, richer laurels, east or west—yet here is our myth exploded :

we are not rats, only maimed people; stern connects with the roots of horror in wordsparks live as wires plugged into his navel—sees the automated legions of propaganda-merchants cannot but extend the bloodshed : vivisection of a continent exposes the hypocrisy of dialectical temporising with death as the end in sight ; analysis of a continent tells the mind of man has not progressed an iota from barbarism

the poet's voice calls from the edge of silence : individual and proletariat alike give up—labelled gagged and battered to dumbness by the miles of daily crap; suicide is the only remaining problem—no—not the word, not the concept, not the problem—“ aaa !! . . . drop that bayonet ”—everything that remains of what was planted must go, the brick by brick demolition of a universe of architectures of cultures, total desecration of the work of ages, systematic atrophy in the name of “ the liberated/heart/of man ”—divided against itself, for its organic plurality that must perforce burst through and overflow the bonds of imposed mechanic unity

—stern was at pains from the first to emphasize the validity of technical progress, but unity (like tradition and continuity) is now an illusion, impotent to mask the yoke of mechanised conformity ; the individual and the collective cancel each other out in a vicious circle of meaningless reactions : no solace is found in the threatening social revolution, in an intelligentsia of parrots canned and branded with sterile formulae : labour as glorified for of and by the faceless masses is no organic growth but a diseased frenzy, drawing ever more efficiently to its own annihilation

with a subterranean cunning “ the life of a city ” is probed and diagnosed as the death of its inhabitants : its ghastly apparitions are summoned up and reetailed, its sounds and fragments—the abstract labyrinths and unrelated switches that govern anthropoid activity—the developments in laboratory and warehouse spelling disasters of flesh and blood : the response to such a drive cannot be realised in words (whose premium is fixed—yet a blade of grass splits the measured cliché), only in terms of tools and weapons; man has utilised scientific discoveries the better to imprison himself : the caveman's club lunges against the bulldozer, wroughtiron sea and airships collapse in battleddeath, families erupt with an agony unsuspected by bombpower's button ; but seeping with countless atomised reverberations into the poet's social sensitivity—now yearning for the ultimate purification which begins with the holocaust of all that europe has come to stand for

The Polish critic Jan Nepomucen Miller wrote in his introduction to the original edition that “ Anatol Stern's ‘ Europa ’ is not an isolated phenomenon in the cultural life of post-war Europe. It does not constitute a static moment in the works of the poet, but rather an inevitable junction, a meeting place for all the divergent tendencies with which European culture, as a consequence of its development, has been faced.

“ The buddhistic negativism of Schopenhauer, the superhuman individualism of Nietzsche, that romanticism of the future wildly pulsating in Marinetti's manifestos, every encounter with the technical achievements that triumphed on the battlefields, from the Marne to the Vistula, from the Neva to Kamchatka, all the conscious gestures and unconscious reflexes peculiar to 20th century man, all these have found their expression in that lynching of Europe by herself that was shown by Spengler, Ehrenburg and many others.

“ Another symptom of the decadence of a civilisation and of the paralysis of art can be found in Tristan Tzara's dadaist manifestos, followed by the first stage of André

Breton's anarchistic surrealism. From these sources of the rebellion against the supremacy of the European intellect in favour of an organic conception of existence, Anatol Stern's ardent protest was born. In ‘ Europa ’ he traces the fateful Writing on the Wall of the perishing continent. He traces an interrogation sign over the scars that have smoothed the wounds, and sounds a raspberry at the hypocritical idyll of the bourgeois method of pacifying the world. He offers the cosmic universality of an epileptic Dionysos who will at last be able to satisfy his need for conquest by gorging himself on the carrion of Europe.

“ . . . it is not against work itself that the poet revolts, but against those ‘ metaphysical flagellants ’ who use the tragedy of labour in order to chastise themselves. That is why the poet's decalogue of the belly, and his bacchantes, who batten on the carrion of Europe, are the personification of the famished flesh of the masses dancing a frenzied carmagnole, those masses whose work will erect a new civilisation and a new law on the ruins of the old.”

—the only tragedy is that man must reap what he has sown : stern's contemptuous prophecy has been fulfilled in a second world war ; and our communal dehumanisation to automata reacting mechanically to stimuli is challenged all the more, arrested by the sustained insistent dynamics of one man's pulse—an instinctual orchestration tuned to the breaking strings of his nerves : the outburst of this “ seismograph

of the unconscious", its total implicit rhythm and design could well be taken as catalyst towards a new synthesis

more truly sensational than the concerted howls of seven contemporary continents, the passionate stronglined embrace of european discord and chaos puts our generation to shame; whose muses rejoice if a subject makes itself worthy of their exploitation, having tacitly agreed to slick over the warwounds, unite tastes—but: where are the new forms of art... things may look better if we judge from the shop-fronts as is our wont, but if the inspired vitality of stern at the point of extinction is lost on us, they could not be worse:

on reading europa, can we rest content with our perfection as automat-persona, fodder not for machine-guns but for the nuclear medicine prescribed by the invisible scientific barbarians... perhaps the greatest danger, when men have forgotten how to feel for all mankind, is that an arbitrary series of multi-form buttons could easily gain control of uniform buttonpushers: in the end anaton stern's poem should at least keep alive that of the european heritage which has stayed alive of its own momentum—the possibility of an organic civilisation glimpsed by a precise, exacting anatomy of human suffering and aspiration; and heralded in a living language—sadly unknown to the slop-machine—bearing its own accents and promise of myriad individuality at one with nature

It was the conviction of Mieczyslaw Szczuka that "the artist breaks away from the framework of today's system, he wants to participate in the organisation of life". He began with easel-painting, but gave it up, proclaiming fanatically the uniqueness of functional art—"art for every day", to serve as a function of the community and not its fiction. In 1923 he and his life-long friend Teresa Zarnowerowna had a very successful first exhibition in the Berlin gallery 'Sturm'. In the following year he co-founded the art publication 'Blok', which was to play an important part in establishing contact with the best avant-garde artists of the time—Picasso, Léger, Braque, Marcoussis, Jean Arp, Tzara, etc. He pioneered suprematism in Poland, took in dada and cubism and developed independently towards constructivism. Szczuka's

painting-literature compositions and his multi-level sculptural constructions, compositions from the sphere of sceno-plasticism or functional drawing bore the hallmarks of discovery. His triumphs in the architecture exhibitions of Warsaw and Moscow promised a Polish Bauhaus or 'a Polish Corbusier' according to the enthusiasts, and his views on architecture are not far from the truths at which we have arrived today after years of facade error and pompousness. Stern accepted with fervour the artist's proposition in 1924 that he illustrate 'Europa', though "with very little hope that it would see the light of day"—and yet it did, due to the poet's persistence, that the work of Szczuka "be suitably preserved". This is what Stern said in his foreword:

"It is some years since Mieczyslaw Szczuka gave visual form to 'Europe', which I had just written, thus adding a red and black exclamation mark to my dry chronicle devoted to the tragedy, the misery, the wisdom and the wickedness of Europe.

"The man who had collaborated in the creation of 'Europe' did not live long enough to see the appearance of our work in its final form. An obscure presentiment had already guided his hand when, as he was finishing the cycle of collages which were to illustrate my poem, he put a black border round the last of his drawings, that of the Dead Peak, the witness of his first climbing triumphs in the Tatra mountains, and of his last descent from the rocks.

"The new art lost in him an irreplaceable leader, a creator of new values, not only in Polish, but also in international art (architecture, painting, film, printing); a never-satisfied seeker after a living art that would wrest from the contemporary chaos a new artistic form and, through it, a new reality and a new man, in spite of the protests of a million lazy stomachs.

"The fanaticism and obstinacy with which he forced his way through the tangle of compromise, his unbridled pursuit of art, made him no friends in Poland, which anyway is very much the case with most intransigent artists. But he found friends outside his own country, where his work was enthusiastically appreciated by the best artists.

"The splendid art of Szczuka, with its multiple aspects, gave concrete form to the proletarian society of the future; nothing in it aimed at titillating the nerves of the coffee-house snobs. Art, for Szczuka, was a tireless cavalcade of perpetually new forms which rode roughshod over the regions of art that had already been conquered, and left the spectator no time for quiet contemplation.

"These brief notes can neither embrace the whole of his work nor describe all its discoveries. A vast monograph is now being prepared which will aim at fulfilling this task. There was in Szczuka the fire of enthusiasm and protest, of construction and devastation. In his collage for 'Europe' he showed, as if in the luminous beam of a searchlight, the two faces of modern art: Chaplin, bursting into sardonic laughter before the european spectacle he contemplates, and Petrarch, crowned with laurel, among a thousand others, turning his back on the continent drowned in a sea of blood. Szczuka only saw the two poles; he abhorred the debauchery of nuances.

"The harsh wind of the new art which yesterday swept through Europe, and which in 1920 we evoked in Poland, has recently abated. The flaming shreds of our revolutionary flag, which once was jeered at by the representatives of the official parnassus, were seized on by these same nurslings of the bourgeois muse who, with the astonishing agility of lyrical conjurers, succeeded in dressing up the ideas of exploiters and idlers in modern style. Nevertheless, the craving for an original mode of expression has not yet awoken in the spectator, as is proved by the appalling indifference to the art of today. The work of the avant-garde must be recommenced! We must resume our struggle against the aesthetic fetishism of our adversaries and of ourselves. It is in the revolutionary and still living art of Szczuka that the Polish avant-garde will find its signpost and one of the strongest stimulants to the new work which will end in the victory of our art." [A.S., 1929]

A
B
C

abecedary of slaughter
of dirt lice fires
and mercy
united states
and argentine brazil chile
states at war
phenomena and noumena
eternity and nothingness—
two fattened boxers
who will always win !

we

who wolf meat
once a month
we
who breathe
sulphur
expensive sulphur
like air—

we
who drag along the streets
our queue of sunken bellies
our powerless fists
stuffing our pockets
we shall
lose
lose

lose

as always !!





they feed us

they feed us

they pour down our throats
food for the spirit !

500 metres of trichinae of
sermons

faded tapeworms of
newspapers

sweet

virulent

bacilli of words

are shoved into our mugs
by the gluttonous fraternity of

scribblers of

presidents of

ministers of education

china of the west !!

stop poisoning us

we are not rats !

o if we could only be

a proletarian swarm of rats

we could

bite the

white

fleshy

fingers

which incessantly push towards us

the

white

poisoned

dust of

powderised pages

grand
showerbath
of meetings
the massage of propaganda
the gospel of terror——
this is the chasm
into which we jump
since we cannot jump
into heaven

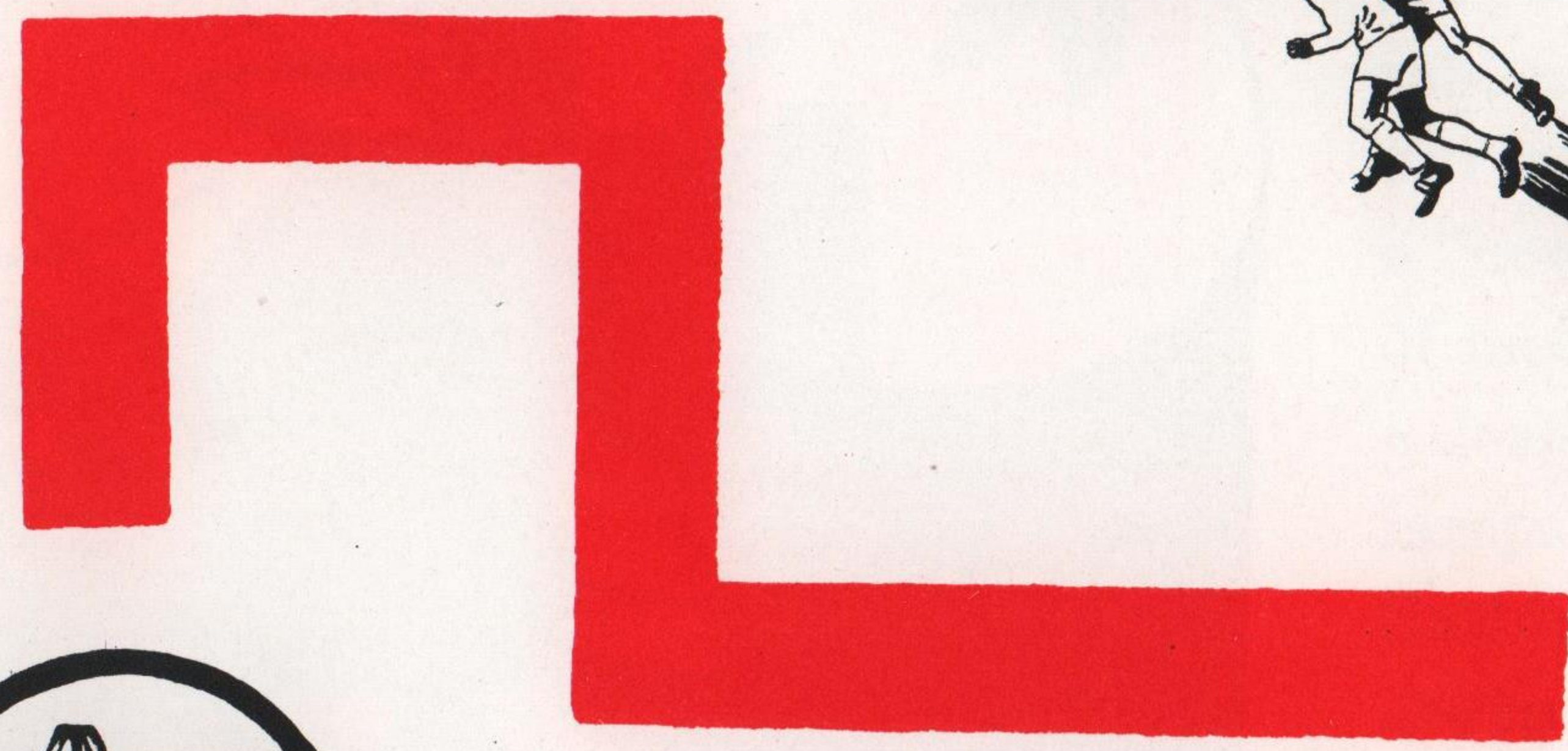
film of world war
directors
cameramen
blinded
all captions erased
impossible to understand
the howling gesticulation
of a milliard arms
the ham acting
of the players' eyes

film of folly

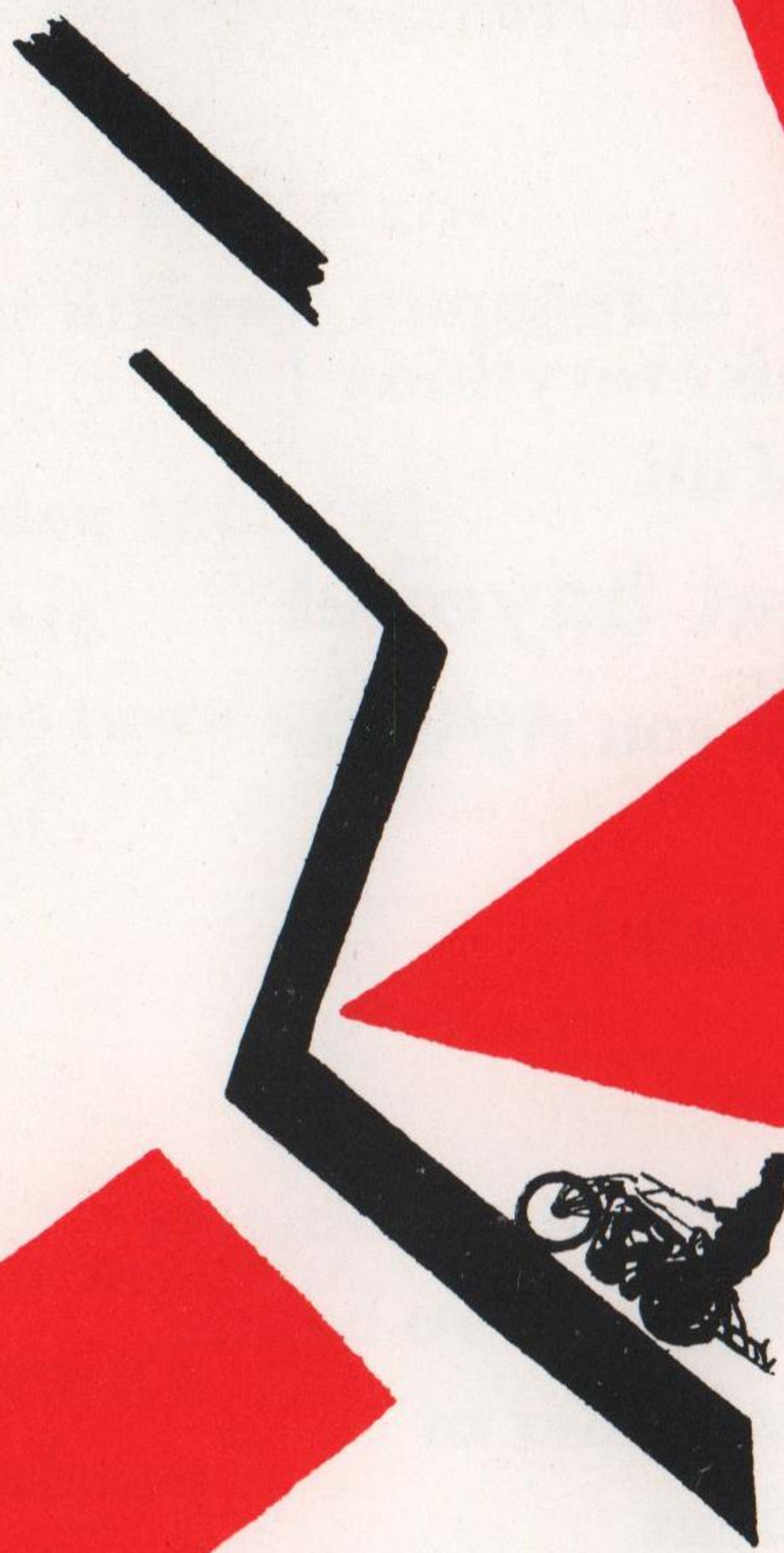
stuffed with the vermin of
numbers
which explain nothing

spurting forth
hatred
terror of turnings
all of which
all
are red——
but who
but who
fights
for that——dearer than all the
silesias of the world
dearer than all the independences——
the liberated
heart of
man ? !

millions of dance-halls grin
with their black faces
here's the jazz-band
of discoveries
shimmy of relativity
jig of
economic
catastrophes
under which collapses
the parquet floor of
europe



115



this

**this is
what we need :
a little bairam of concepts
a scouring of the intellect
in the eastern fashion
(a la maniere orientale)**

**aaa !!
to hell with everything !
but first of all
drop that bayonet
with which you rip open
the belly
of that wretch !**

**the nearest family of objects
given life by our own hands
the infinite ladder of
complications
the building of a new expression
—words
oneself**





the life of the city
at all hours
the polyphonic concert of
cables
of rat-a-tats
a "honneger pacific"
of the sewer-pipes
a desperate signalisation of
lamps
flashing on with night
the most difficult moment to
endure
the sudden agony of
motorcars
when the town subsides
into void

the city's zeppelin
not eckener's
—columbus's
discovering the new america
of sensitivities
I can't
I don't want to express it in words !



what you need here are millions
of
steel tools

all the Timeses of the world

aren't enough for one line

you have to sing it by centuries

to register

all the explosions of

atoms to

lay bare the

seismograph of the

subconscious

the man made up of

match-sticks

and the other one 3000 years
old

from the magyar cave

are two separated brothers

the stone age

never mind which one

cuts across our
reinforced-concrete
it is the race of the ages
always the same
the venerable
murder of
civilisation
the ecstasy of sensuality
a brain
twisted with intensity

the XXth. century is a haarman

devouring his own loves !
intellectualism is
psychological sadism
do not transform life
into a fight between types of logic
great therapeutics
of the future—
training in gluttony is
approaching !

tradition and continuity—
those imaginary quantities . . .
o inventor—
you are born of coincidence !

we hasten to the great
reaction of liberty
crowned with the 20-centuries old
bondage
the only real station is the one
missing
from the yellow timetable
allow me to rest for a while
to sever the cables
of my sensitivity

this green blade of grass
squeezed up between two paving

stones
this wreck tearing itself loose
on the chequered
stony
atlantic
is the messenger of death—
look
in his wan hand he holds the
mountains
valleys
fir trees
sycamores

the angels of destruction
whirring their wings
his dumb lips proclaim
all the sweetnesses of leisure
he drags behind him the rabble
of olympians
with his ram he batters the
chest of the walls
strips the tramways of their
red skin
melts glass and iron—
the brain of the city
he breaks down
the frail and exalted jigsaw puzzle
of civilisation
—this couple
hiding in his shadow
in an animal fear
of microcephals
—the fetish of parliament
and the wisest of mistresses
o ! terrible is the death of europe
—o ! blessed

epileptic dionysos

leads them
the women
with flapping breasts
in their hands
trembles the naked body of a
radio torn to pieces
the mechanical orpheus

the others have already burst
into the trampled herd of
motor cars
locomotives
those panic-stricken lambs
bleating with their
hoarse trumpets
and still they have not supped
their fill of it
towards the dreamy heifers of the
suburbs
and the heated bullocks of the cities
who jump on them
the women forage
stir panic
disperse the herd of
parises
warsaws
lisbons
londons
this one's jaws ate into the
stretched spine of the church of
la medelaine
—she with her red mane rends the
trembling columns of the
stock exchange
with their hips they push asunder
the
petrified obesities of the
towns
appease their hunger with the
fatted
flesh of
europe

at last
at last
free !

o—to stamp out the
flagellant of labour
flogging himself with tragedising
o—to stamp out the tragedising of
the
ethics of labour
to honour
the decalogue of the
stomach

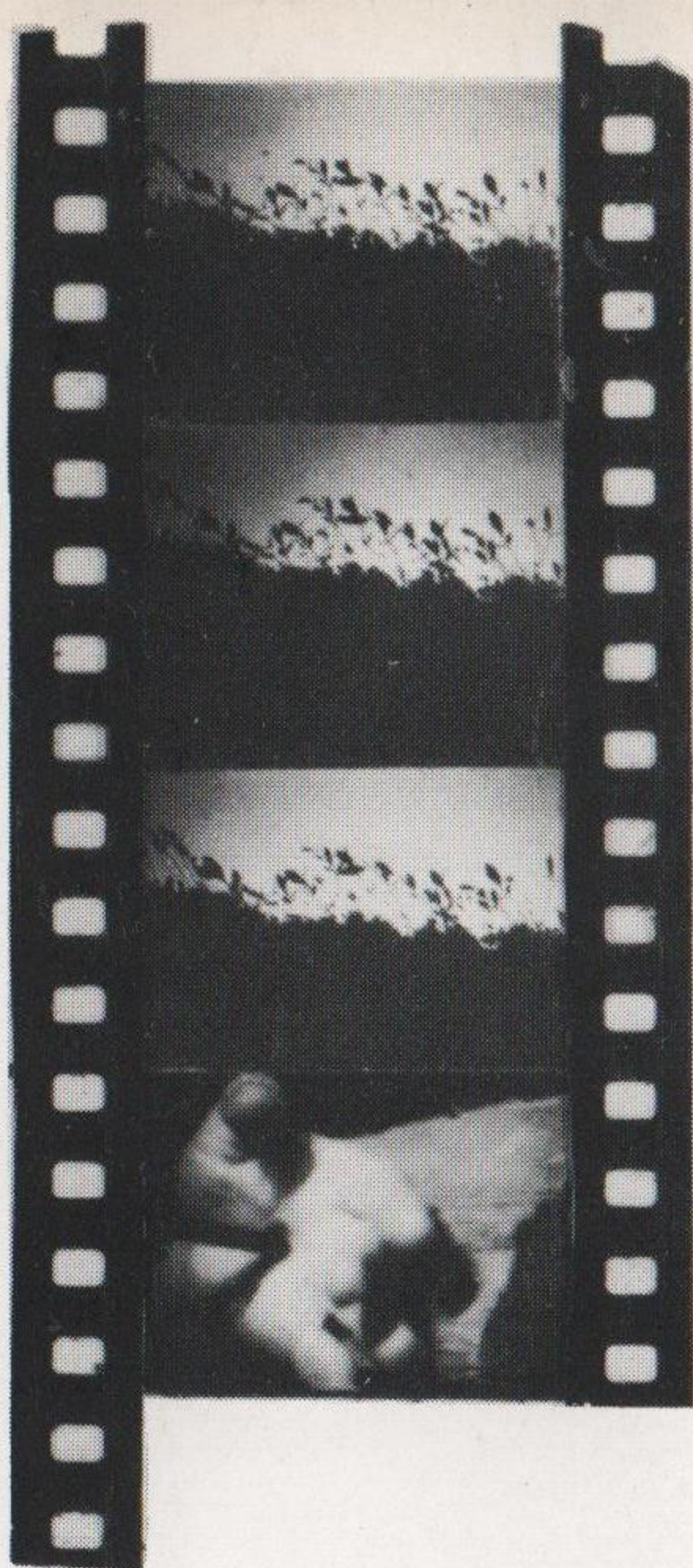
I am covered by a milliard lips
by an organised
proleteriat of cells a
revolt of gullets !

this throng of raging bacchantes
is one centimetre of my skin



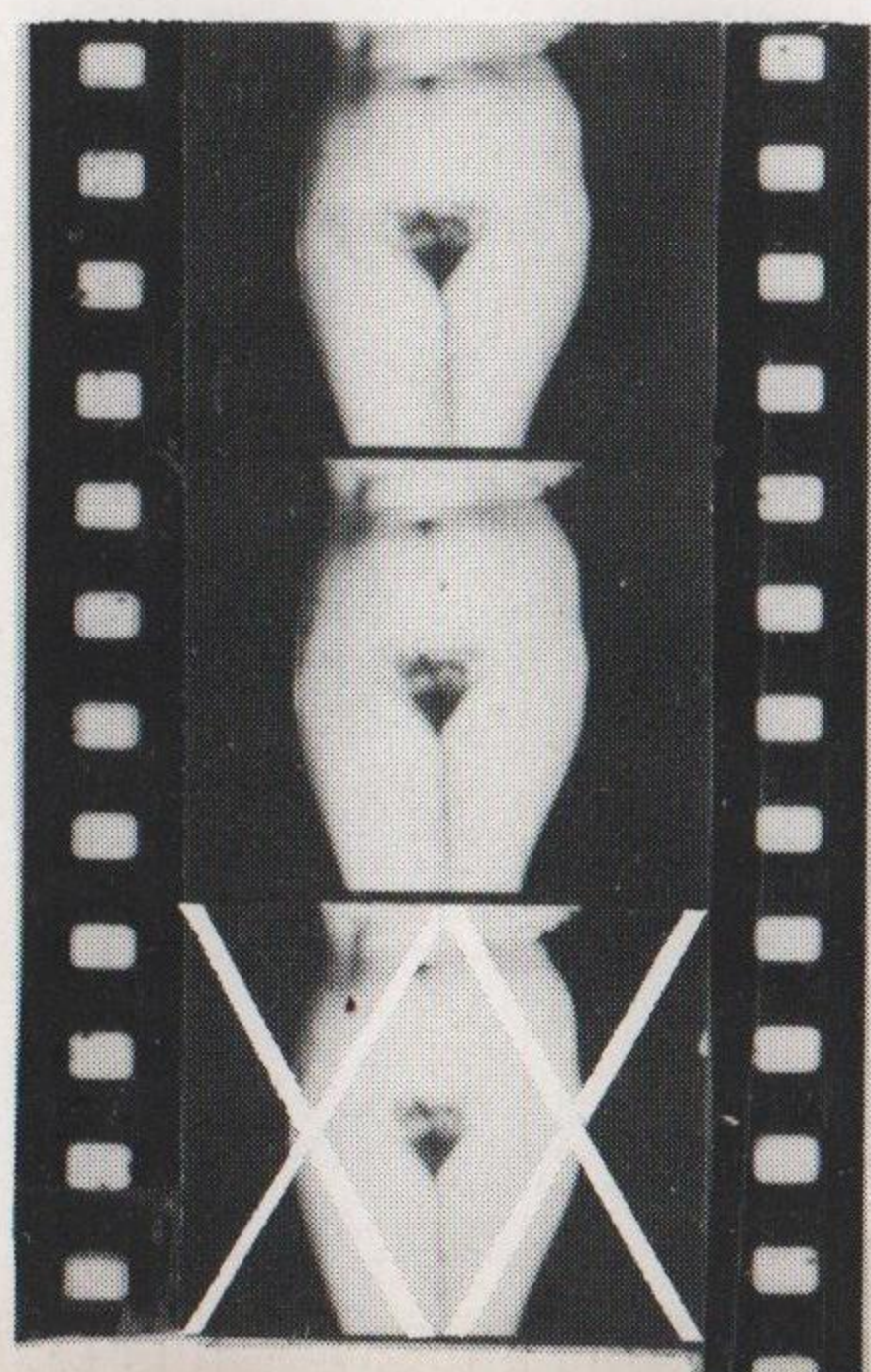
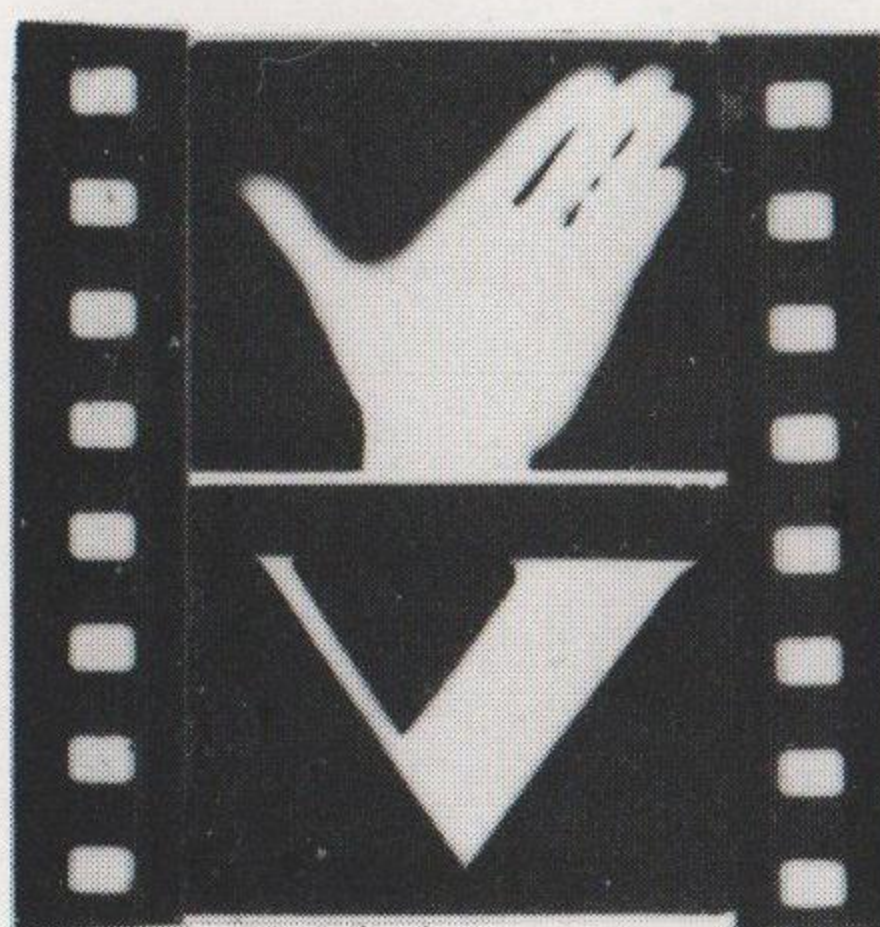
**this throng of raging bacchantes
— is one centimetre of my skin**

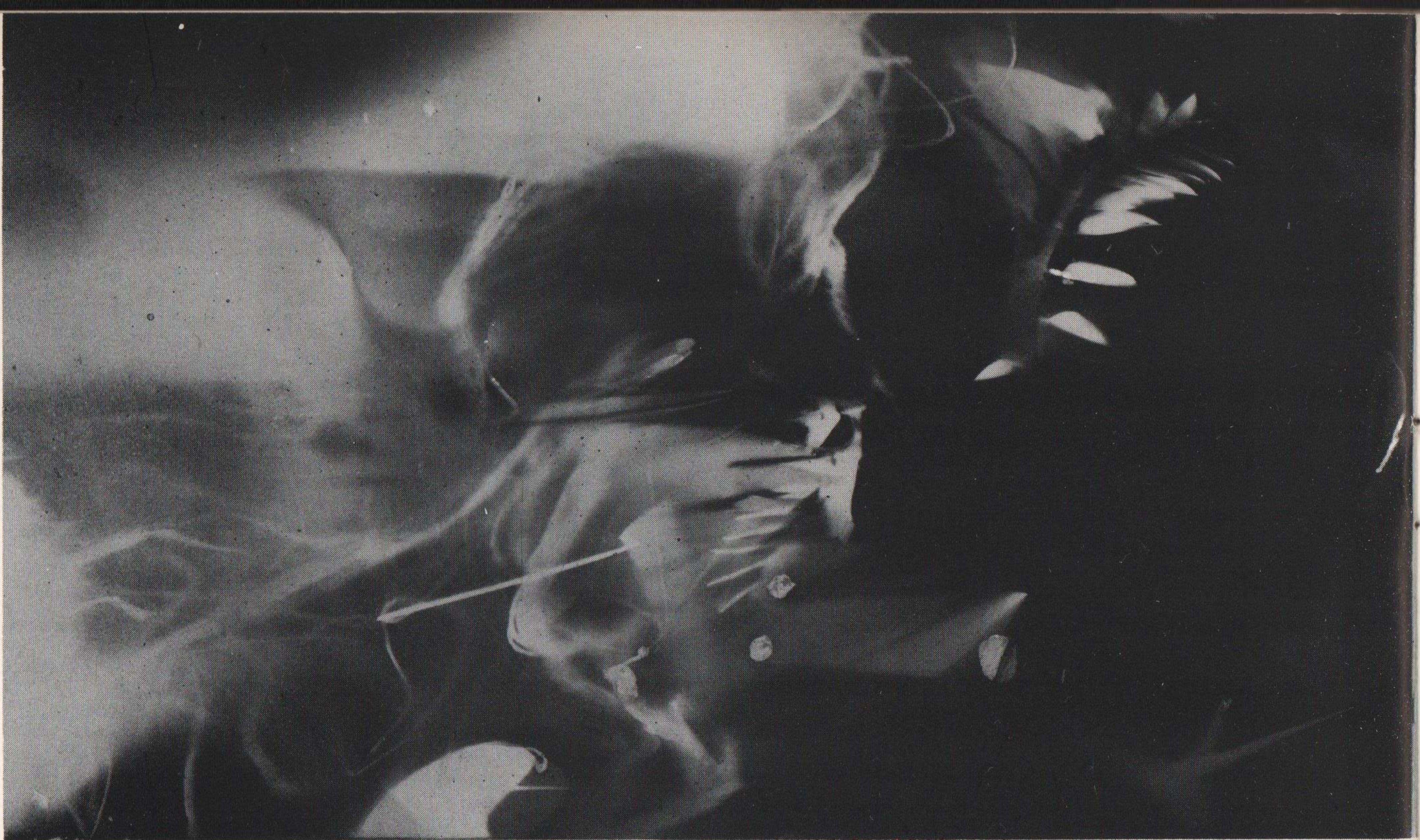




The story of Europa is incomplete without an account of the film Europa, made in Warsaw at the same time (1930/31) by Franciszka and Stefan Themerson.

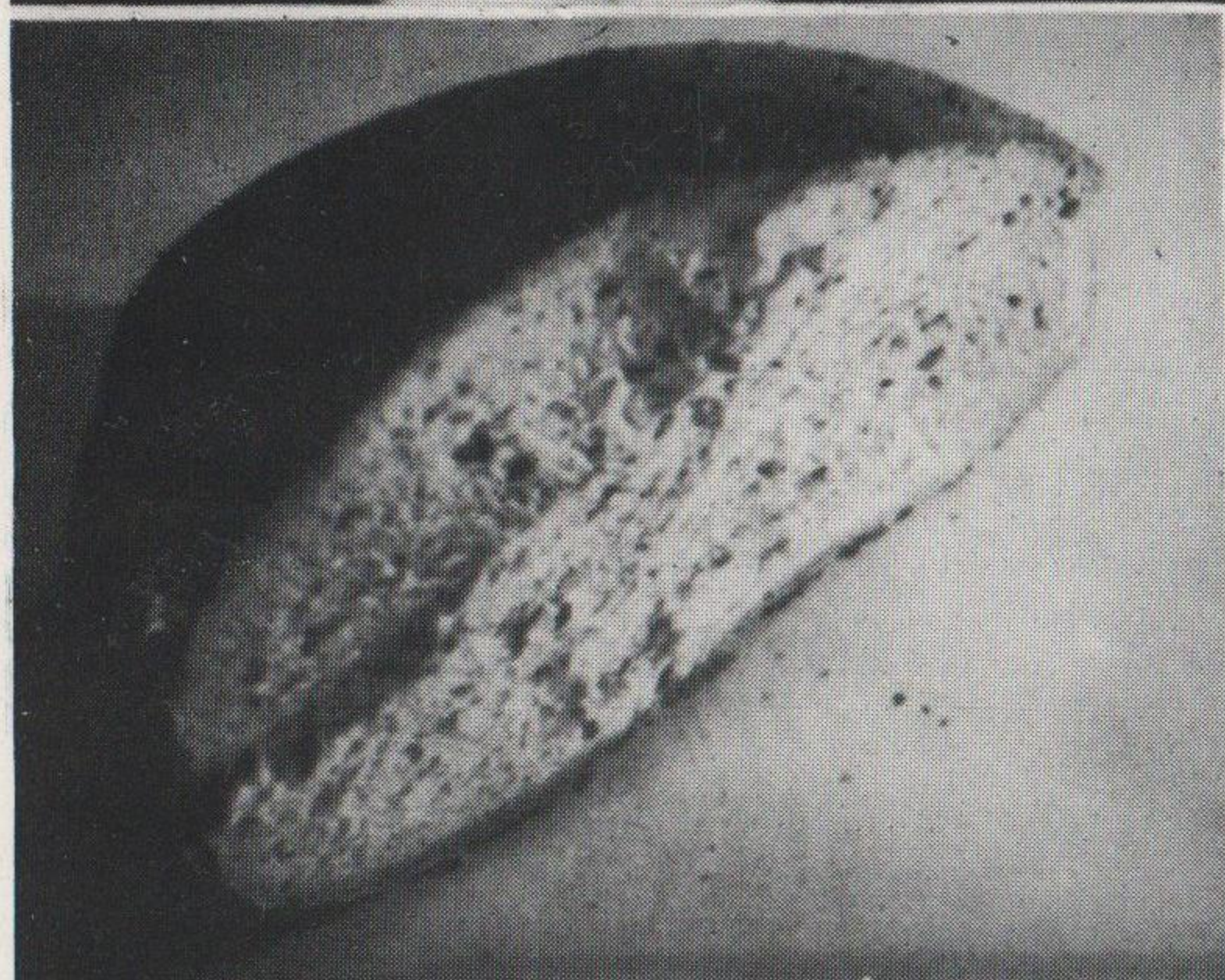
The film itself no longer exists—it disappeared during the war, but a few stills and montage materials have haphazardly survived thirty years of European discord. The contemporary press also makes it possible to reconstruct some information about the film.





the film opened with a series of photograms





It was immediately acclaimed as the first Polish experimental film: "At last the first Polish avantgarde film, something to which we have been looking forward, greeted—as one might expect, with shouts of adoration and thunderbolts of anger. It is a good thing that the wall of passivity has at last been broken, and that—in spite of the common view that Poland cannot afford a film-work of art, some people have come forward to try to move against the current. This moral consideration is perhaps the most important thing in *Europa* and should not be forgotten." (J. Toeplitz in *Kurier Polski*, 1933.)

"*Europa* earned the designation of the best work of our young avantgarde. In the context of our national film production *Europa* is indeed an extraordinary event, distinguished by its subject and by the artistry of its direction. The finest quality in *Europa* is the intense montage, the richly condensed short-cuts and metaphors, superbly conveying the anxious rhythm of today." (*Ilustrowana Republika*, 1933.)

"A new type of film in which abstract pictures are combined with realistic pictures into a composition which is the expression of our times. There is no story—but sequences of pictures which create an interestingly conceived unity." (*Slowo Polskie*, 1933.)

zespół praesens

Z^P

uprzejmie prosi

p.
o przybycie w niedzielę

dnia 22. I. 1933 r. o godz. 12

do kina adria-palace
przy ul. wierzbowej 7 w miejscu
na międzynarodowy
poranek nowego filmu.

pro- gram:

s ł o w o w s t ę p n e

nowe budownictwo — nowe mieszkanie

film hansa richtera o tem, jak mieszkamy
i jak moglibyśmy mieszkać.

symfonia przemysłowa — część pierwsza

film ioris a ivensa o maszynie.

jarmark wielkomiejski

reportaż wilfrieda basse z codziennej rze-
czywistości berlina.

architektura dnia dzisiejszego

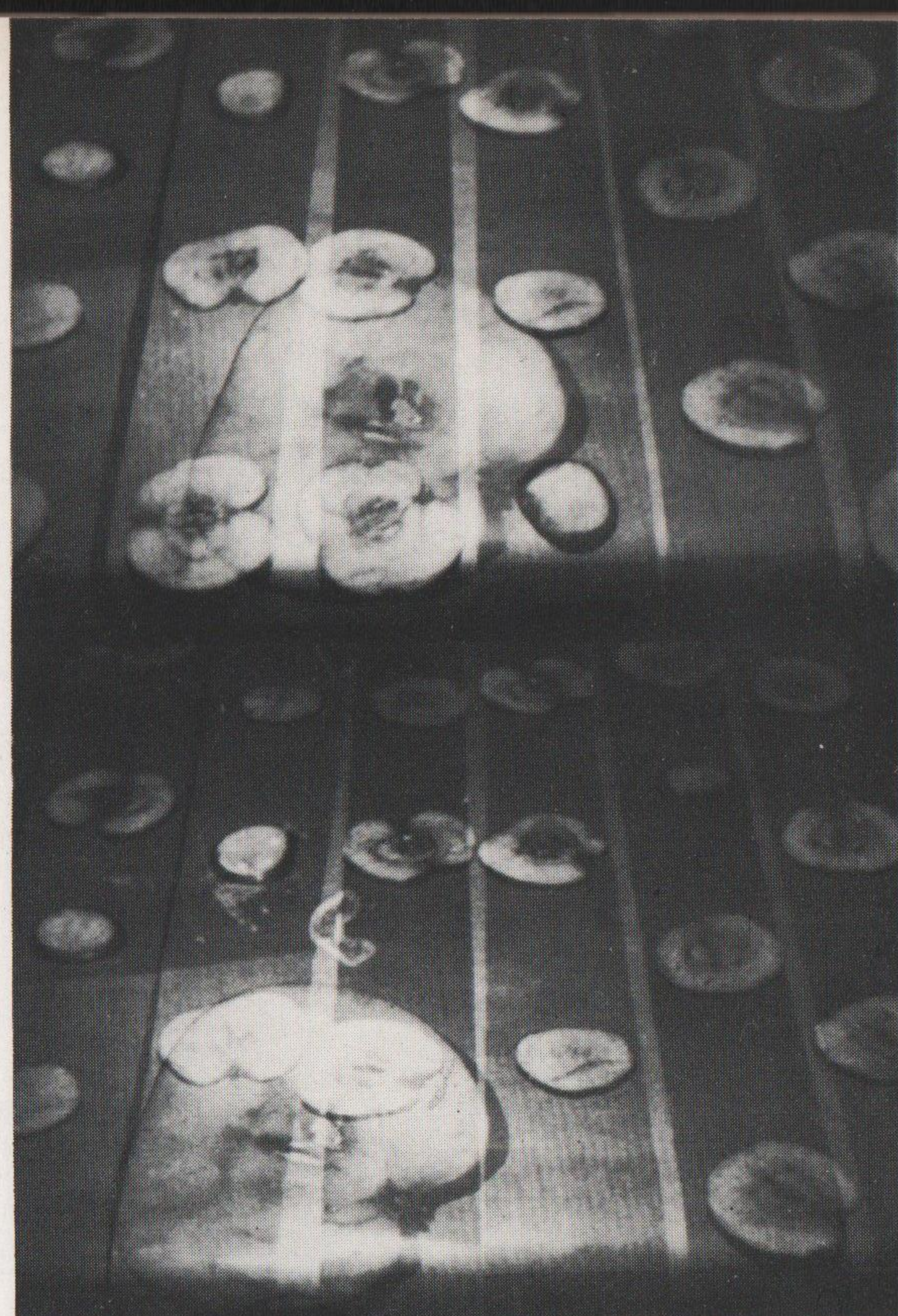
film p. chenala o budowach le corbusier'a.

e u r o p a

nowy film polski o chaosie naszych czasów,
zrealizowany na tle poematu anatola sterna
przez franciszkę i stefana themersonów.
produkcja filmstudio.

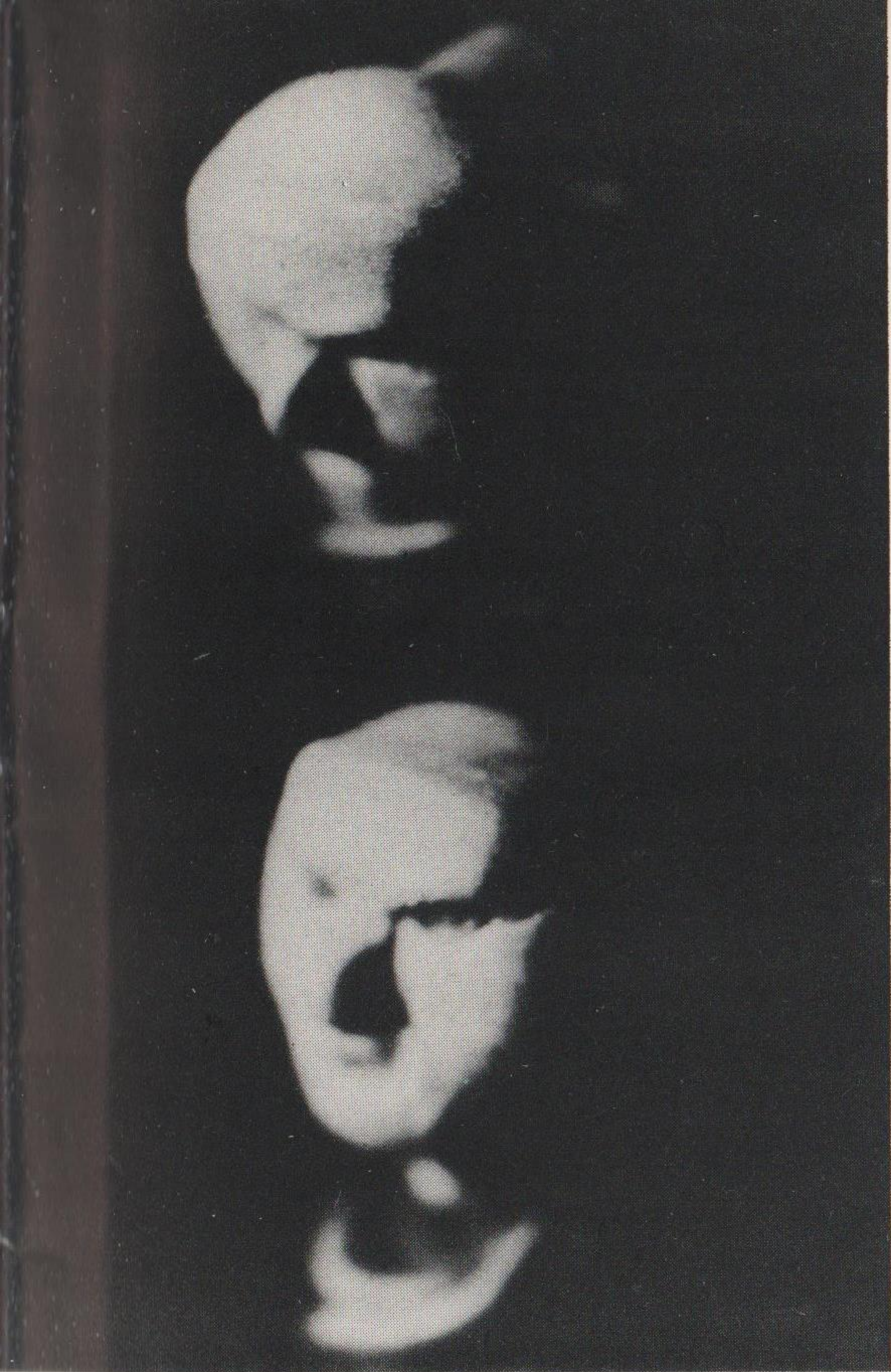
No. 397

zaproszenia otrzymać można w administracji wiadomości literackich, królewska nr. 13 l.p.s.



above:
Invitation to an international
matinée of new film, organized by
the group praesens, 22 Jan. 1933,
Warsaw. europa was preceded by
new architecture—new homes by hans
richter, industrial symphony—part one
by ioris ivens, the market by wilfried
basse, the architecture of today by
p. chenal & le corbusier





"*Europa* is a survey of various possibilities of contemporary film (film of photograms, of negatives, an abstract film—of typographical elements, cut-outs, close-ups, multiplications, unusual angles &c.). A number of excellent studies of people eating, biting, chewing; of beautiful female nudes. The magnificent symbol of a blade of grass growing out of a chink between the paving stones and exploding the rock surface of the road." (M. Wallis in *Droga*, 1932.)

The film of folly sequence (though these are not altogether sequences—not only because these stills represent but a fraction, but because the superimpositions and cross-cuttings constitute

a kind of anti-sequence, comparable to that of the poem—without being a literal interpretation of it. Stern noticed "the images derived from the poem, but they brought in also a series of their own metaphors, purely filmic. . . . Above all in the Themersons' film reigned protest—angry and desperate, against the conversion of human masses into cannon fodder or soulless automatons." His selection in the poem is complemented and extended, as in what is salvaged of this particular series—a multicoloured devil, a head (sculpted out of bread by a lunatic) menaced by barbed wire, a hand crucified, a radio speaker, a beating heart, etc.)

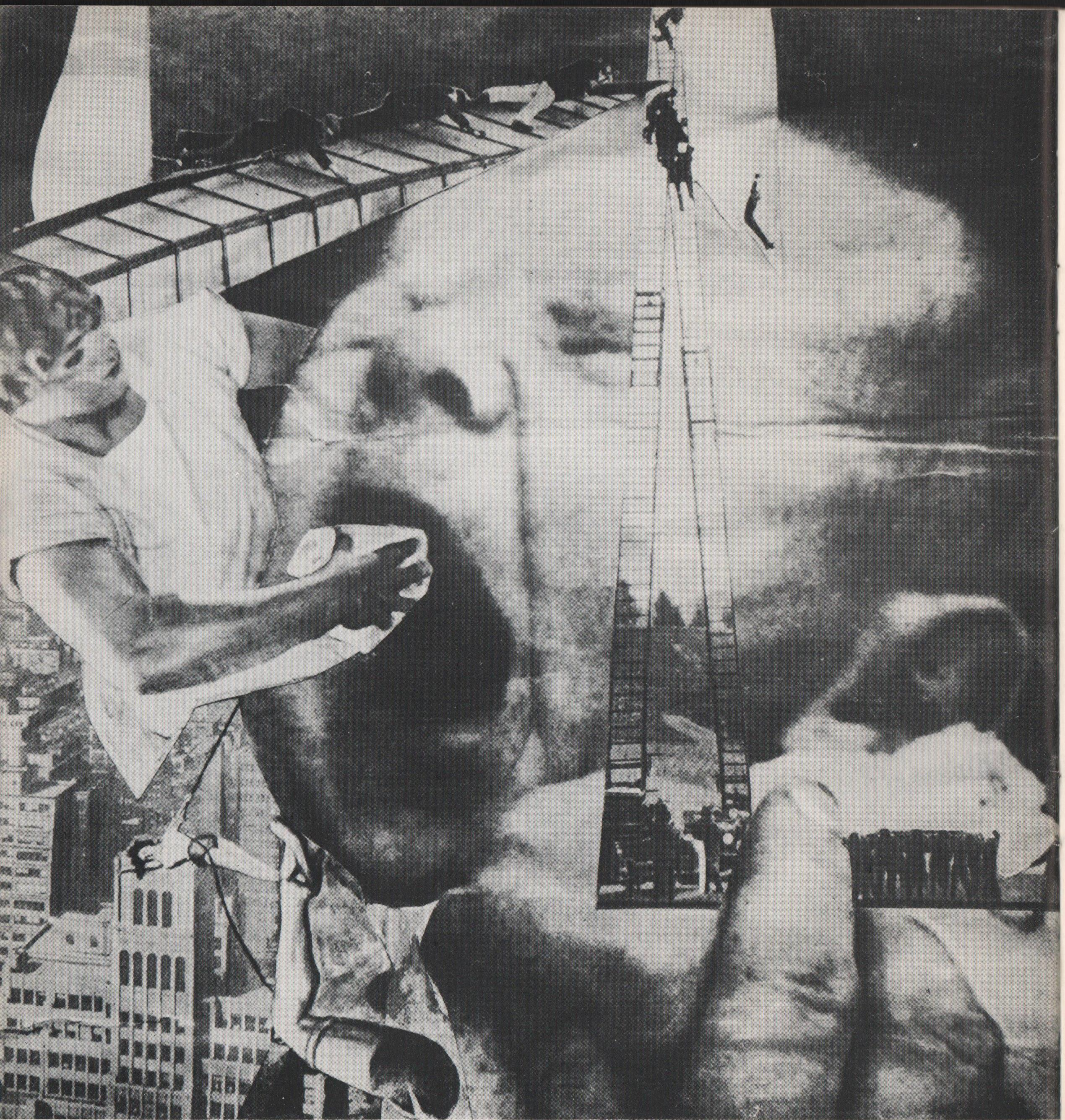
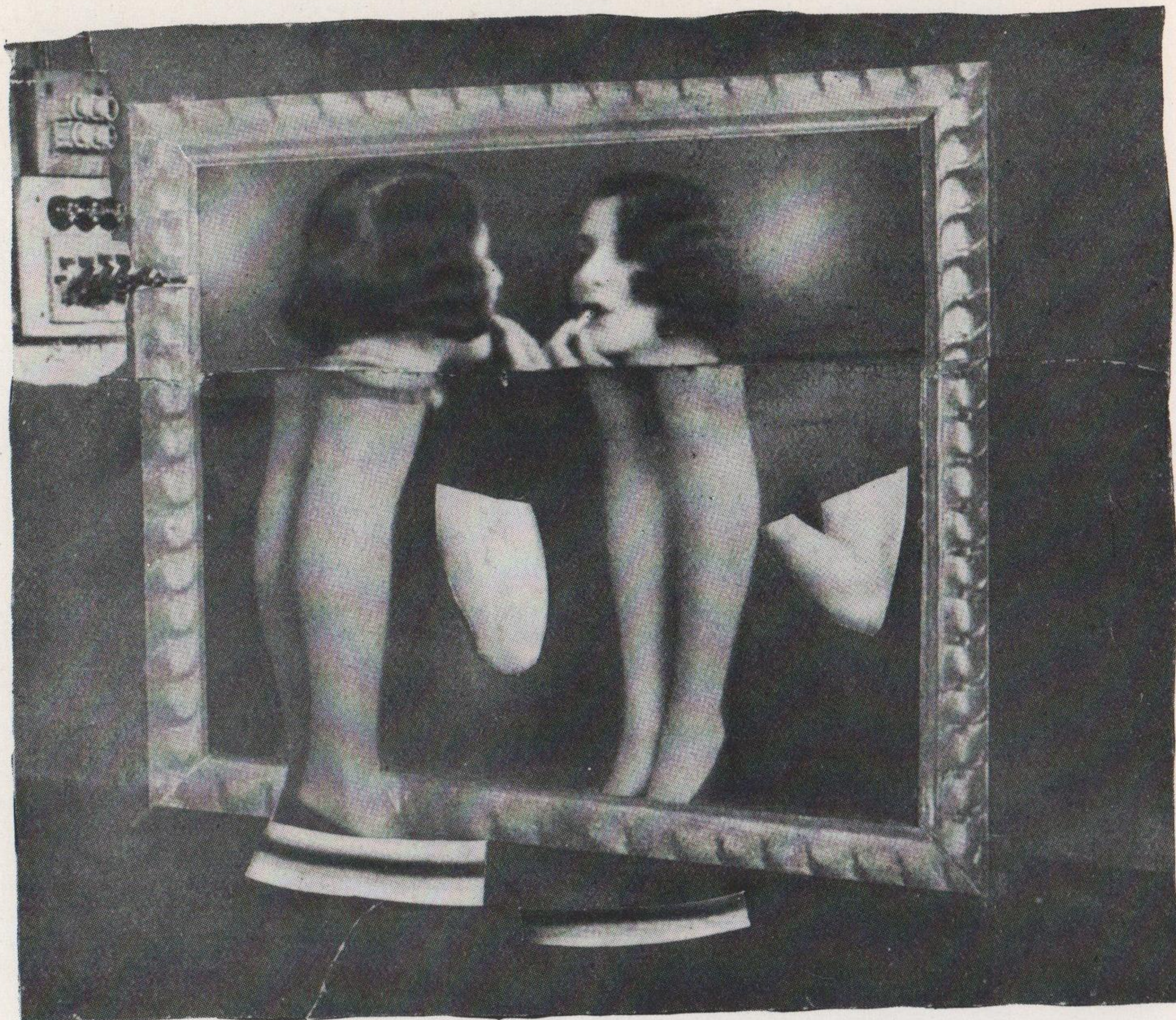
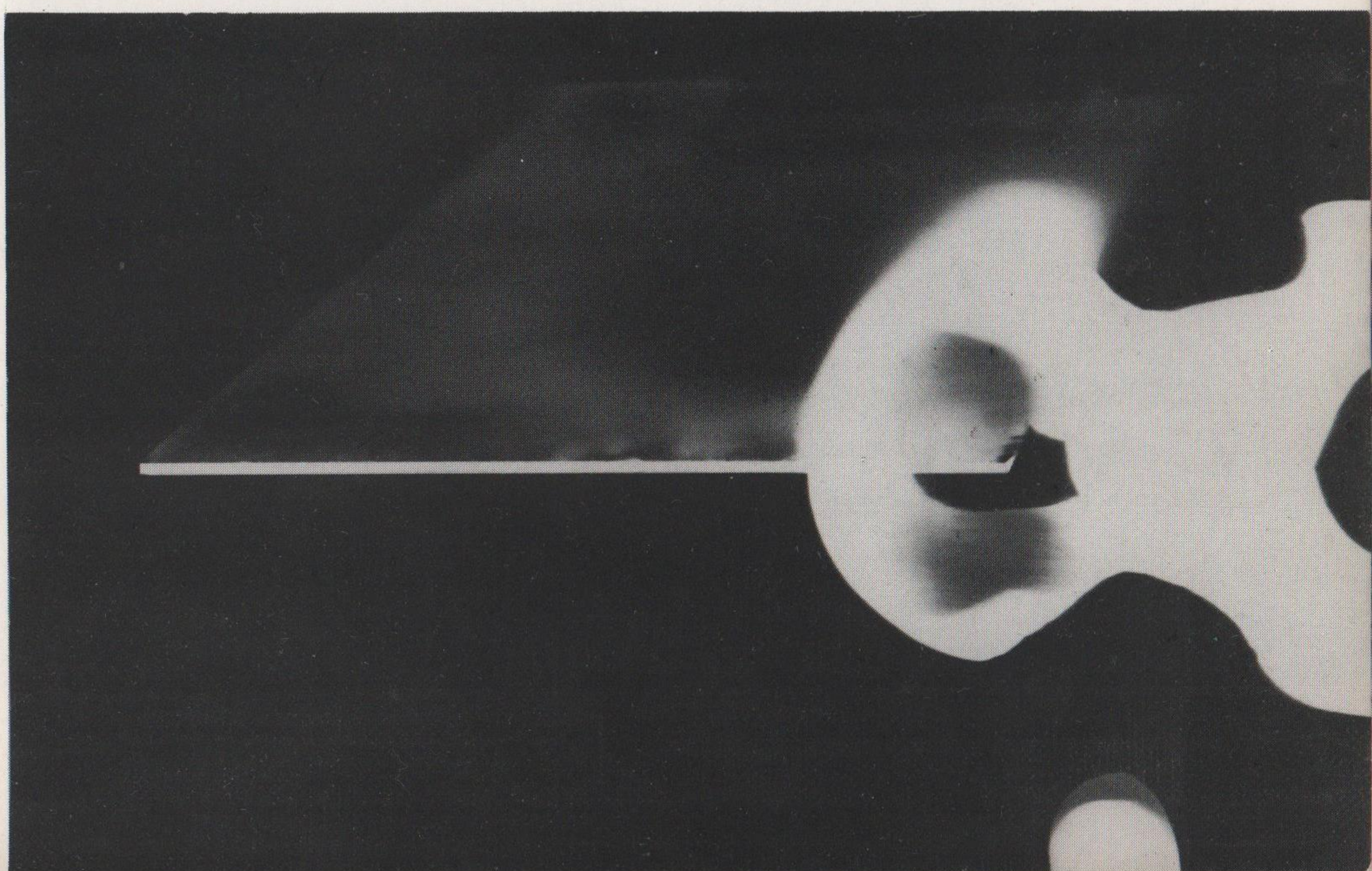


photo-collage by Stefan Themerson Warsaw 1931



these photograms and the photo-collages were used as studies for the film



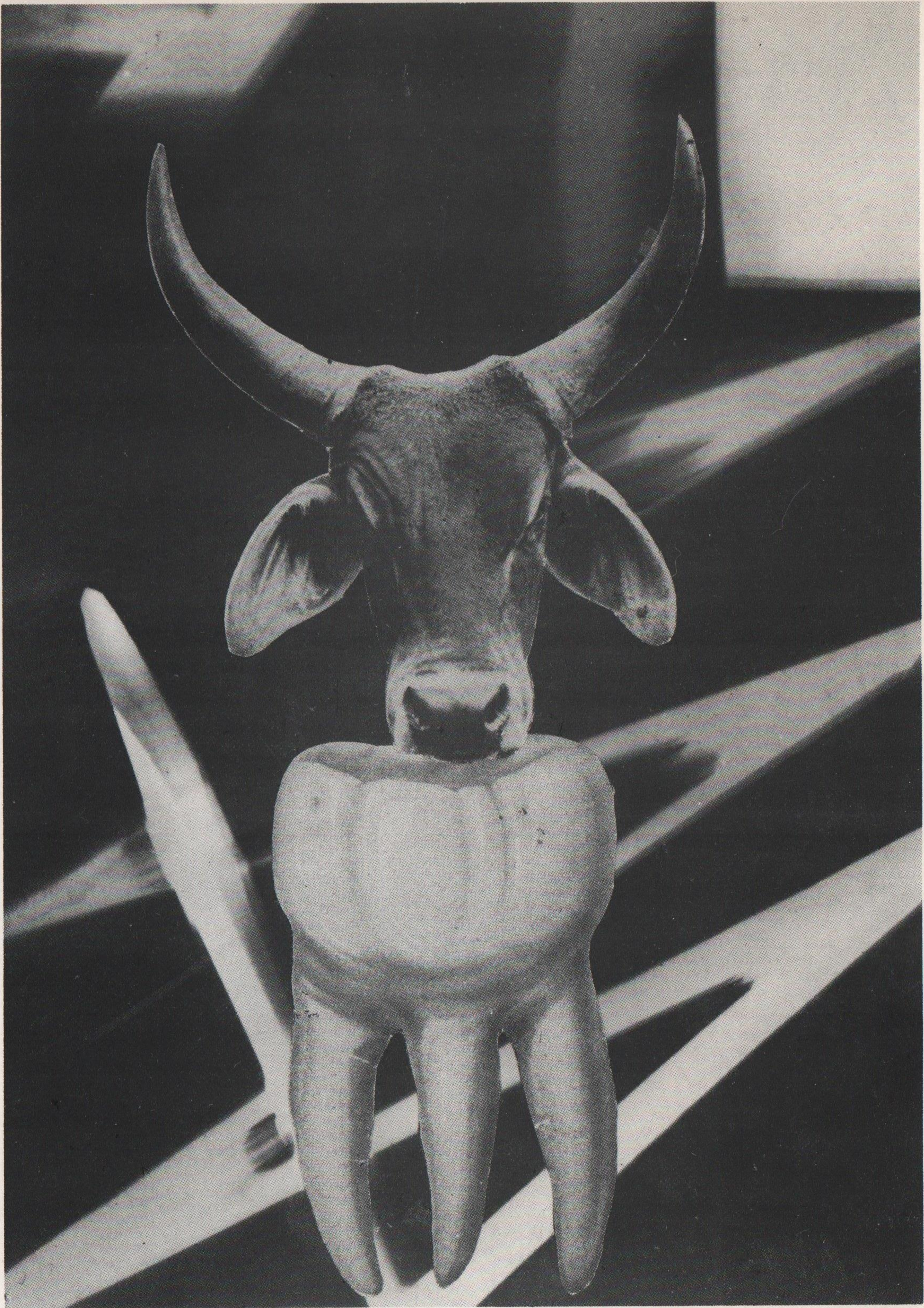
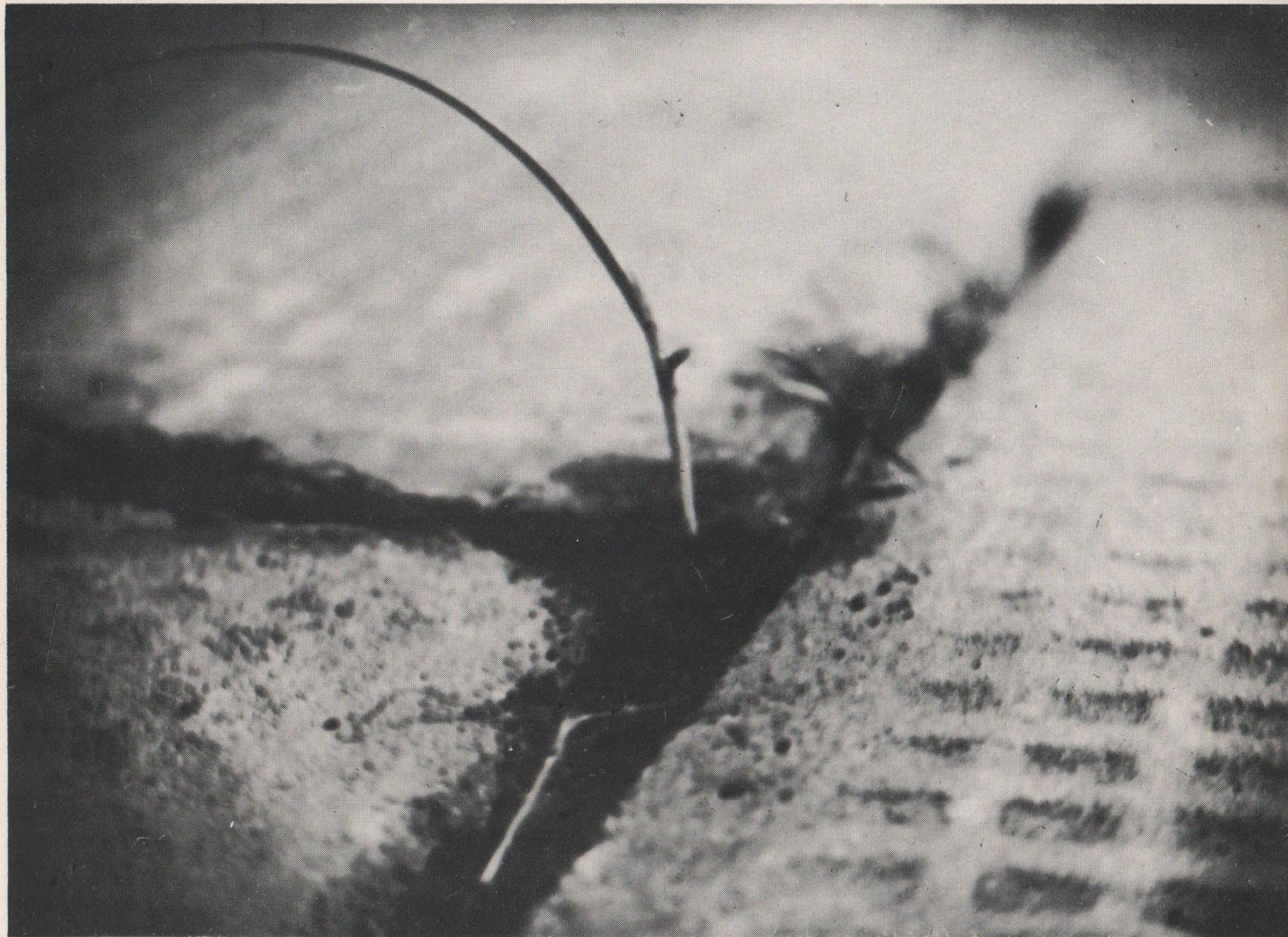


photo-collage by Stefan Themerson
Warsaw, 1931

"This film poem (*continued Stefania Zahorska in Literary News. l.c.*) bears a fresh approach—things are new because they are seen from an unexpected visual-motional point of view, the formulae of interpretation are new. Even the commonplace verbal symbols become fresh, corporeal, palpable thanks to the dynamism that visualizes them, through the plasticity and tangibility of vision. There is for example the moment of awakening. Between paving stones, dead slabs, submitting their rectangular existences to the soles and heels, between these stones of the pavement there are cracks, in the narrow cracks of soil there suddenly springs up a single blade of grass. The symbol is so simple—so old, and yet there is something completely unexpected in the fact that we see the shoots starting, stems growing before our very eyes, see the stones quiver, their edges lift, the pavement crack, life grow and shift apart the deadly rigidity of the square paving stones."

M.H.



This edition of *Europa*,
translated into English by S. T. & M. H.,
is a facsimile reproduction of one of the first Polish futurist poems.
Its application to Europe in the 1960s,
indicated in the new introduction by Michael Horovitz,
is endorsed by the unique representation of the art of the 'twenties—
in the typography and design
as well as the adventurous conception of the poem.

*“While we dawdle and quarrel
in search of fundamental answers,
all things yell:
‘give us new forms!’
. . . give us a new form of art—”*

was Mayakowsky's
Order to the Army of the Arts.

Anatol Stern yields not one centimetre to the decadence he describes,
but refers to an order which makes no distinction
between social and aesthetic commitment.