Obituaries

David Sarnoff

David Sarnoff, Honorary Chairman of RCA Corp., died December 12, 1971, at his home in New York City at the age of 80. He was born February 27, 1891, in the small village of Uzlian near the city of Minsk, Russia, and was brought to the United States by his parents in 1900.

His father died in 1906 and to support his mother and three brothers and sisters young David left school and went to work. He was hired as an office boy at $5.50 a week at the Commercial Cable Company. By 1912 he had become a wireless operator for American Marconi and on the night of April 12, 1912, was on duty at the Marconi station on top of the Wanamaker store in New York when he picked up distress signals from the Titanic and promptly notified the authorities and the press. He remained on duty for 72 hours while he received a list of survivors from the rescue ship Carpathia and other messages about the disaster. President William Howard Taft ordered every other wireless station along the East Coast to maintain silence to prevent interference.

By 1917 he had become American Marconi's Commercial Manager. In 1919 when Radio Corporation of America was formed at the request of the U.S. government, he was named Commercial Manager of the new company. He became General Manager in 1921 and Vice-President the following year. As early as April 3, 1923, he foresaw the possibility of television as a parallel service of radio broadcasting. In a report, he wrote, "I believe that television, which is the technical name for seeing as well as hearing by radio, will come to pass in due course. . . . It may be that every broadcast receiver for home use will be equipped with a television adjunct by which the instrument will make it possible for those at home to see as well as hear what is going on at the broadcast station."

In 1926, General Sarnoff organized the National Broadcasting Company as a subsidiary of RCA. He was elected President of RCA in 1930 and in 1947 he was elected Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer. In 1966 he relinquished the post of Chief Executive Officer but continued to serve actively as Chairman. He retired December 31, 1969, at which time he was elected the company's first Honorary Chairman.

During World War II he served as special consultant on communications at General Dwight D. Eisenhower's SHAEF headquarters in Europe and was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in 1944. He was decorated by both the United States and French governments.

In 1950 the Radio Corporation of America offered the Society, and it gratefully accepted, an award to serve as a symbol of recognized achievement in the combined fields of television and theater television. This is the David Sarnoff Gold Medal first awarded in 1951.

Alfred E. Bruch

Alfred E. Bruch, President of Capital Film Laboratories of Washington, D.C., and North Miami, Fla., died suddenly December 13, 1971, while on a business trip to Miami. He was 52 years old.

A Fellow of the Society, Mr. Bruch was known as an authority in sound and film laboratory procedures. He was educated at Augusta Military Academy at Fort Defiance, Va., and at Washington and Lee University. His academic career was interrupted by World War II and he joined the U.S. Army in 1941. He served five years with the Signal Corps where he recorded sound for training films, film bulletins and special productions. The next three years he spent with Byron Motion Pictures in Washington, D.C., as head of the Sound Department. He helped form Capital Film Laboratories in 1950 and first acted as head of the Sound Department; in 1963 he became President and had been the Chief Executive Officer since then. During the 1950s he was a prominent figure in the national and international syndication of independent and network television news.

He joined the Society in 1943 and was made a Fellow in 1967. He was active in Society affairs and attended almost all of the Conferences during his years of membership.

Professional organizations other than the Society of which he was a member included the Association of Cinema Laboratories, of which he had been Secretary, and the Council on International Nontheatrical Events, of which he was Treasurer.

Evsey Michailovich Goldovsky

The Society is indebted to friends of Professor Goldovsky, V. I. Ushagina, Editor-in-Chief of Technika Kino i Televidenia, *V. G. Komar, Director of NIKFI and M. Z. Wysotsky, Deputy Technical Director of MOSFILM studios, for the following obituary.*

Evsey Michailovich Goldovsky, an eminent personality in the field of motion-picture science and industry, an honored scientist, a professor, and Doctor of Technical Sciences, died suddenly November 27, 1971. His name is closely associated with the formation and development of motion-picture science and technique. More than 50 years of his active life which was full of exuberant energy were dedicated to the service of Soviet motion pictures in researches and creative activities.

He was born on January 20, 1903, and commenced his working activity in 1921 at the Moscow Plant of Electrical Machine Construction. In 1923 he became involved in motion-picture activities and began working as a lecturer at the Moscow training school for film projectionists. In 1930 he became Chief Engineer at the first motion-picture studio for sound films in the USSR.

In 1932 he was in charge of the electrotechnical laboratory he created at the Scientific Research Cinephoto Institute (NIKFI). For many years he was Assistant Director of NIKFI, responsible for scientific work.

In addition to his scientific activities, Mr. Goldovsky carried on educational work. He was one of the initiators and founders of the motion-picture technique department at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) and he was its head until the last days of his life.

In his country, under the guidance and with the direct participation of Mr. Goldovsky, work was initiated for the elaboration of physical fundamentals for film production processes, sound recording, film projection and sound reproduction, the development of equipment and technological methods for these spheres of motion-picture production, elaboration of scientific problems of color and stereoscopic cinematography as well as of new motion-picture formats and types — wide-screen, panoramic and 60mm.

Mr. Goldovsky is the author of more than 300 published works including some 90 books. His published works are chiefly

distinctive for their high theoretical level combined with a clear and simple style understandable to the many readers engaged in all phases of motion-picture techniques as well as to film directors, cinematographers and sound engineers. Many of his books and articles have been translated into foreign languages and distributed abroad.

He had often represented his country as a delegate at various international congresses and conferences where he presented reports. He was an honored President of UNIATEC and had been awarded a Medal and Diploma by the international association Intercamera.

He had received several governmental awards of merit in recognition of his unique and outstanding contributions to Soviet motion pictures.

An eminent scientist of world renown and a man of kind heart, Evsey Michailovich Goldovsky will be sadly missed and will be always remembered by his colleagues and his many friends all over the world and by the many students who have benefitted from his knowledge and wisdom.

Walter J. Spiro

Walter J. Spiro died September 8, 1971, in Dallas, Tex. He was Comptroller and Office Manager of Producers Service, Inc., in Dallas. From 1958 until 1969 he served as Comptroller and Office Manager of Jamieson Film Co. At the time of his death he was a Manager of the Dallas/Fort Worth Section of the SMPTE.

books reviewed

Biograph Bulletins — 1896–1908

Compiled by Kemp R. Niver. Published (1971) by Locare Research Group. Distributed by Historical Films, Box 46505, Los Angeles, CA 90046. 464 pp. Illus. 8½ by 11 in. Price $20.

Students of American film history are greatly indebted to the author of this scholarly and attractive research work, the fourth of his books devoted to chronicling various aspects of the U.S. motion picture industry's past.

His new volume is concerned with what was probably the most important of the early studios, the American Mutoscope & Biograph Company. From a start in the manufacturing of cameras, projectors and the Mutoscope, a flip card viewing device, the firm, known popularly as The Biograph, turned to the production of films. The year was 1896, and in 1902 the company issued a catalog listing close to 2,500 subjects.

Mr. Niver's book is a remarkable collection of the material used by Biograph to advertise its films, which were sold outright to exhibitors. Prices varied. Some pictures fetched $5.00 for a 25-ft length, with 2 lengths being the average. Imported Méliès Star films commanded $12.00 a length, while a "Bargain List of Comedy 'Hit' Subjects" went for 10 cents a foot for pictures averaging 35 ft. By 1908, *The Outlaw*, a 677-ft subject "depicting the deeds of a modern 'Fra Diavolo'" was quoted at 14 cents a foot.

In order to sell to the exhibitors, Biograph issued regularly a number of handbills giving a brief synopsis of the plot, the picture's length and cost, its release date and, quite often, an illustration from the film. No cast or credits were included, since it was felt that it would not help sales. The film medium itself was such a novelty at the time that names of actors or directors—let alone technicians—were not a consideration.

Biograph Bulletins 1896–1908, a large-format volume ably edited by Bebe Bergsten, contains a nearly complete collection of these handbills, with only a dozen missing out of the 1370 issued. In addition, the book reproduces press comments of the period, sales letters and related data. A general index of names is provided. All films are listed separately, with the names of their cameramen, dates of photography and copyright, and their current availability from the publishers. There is also a cross-index of cameramen and their credits.

While no separate listing of directors or actors is included, Mr. Niver's excellent notes and marginal comments disclose such familiar names as D. W. Griffith, and cameramen "Billy" Bitzer, Wallace McCutcheon, Arthur Marvin and others who often doubled as directors. Casts included the Gish sisters, Mary Pickford, Lionel Barrymore and Linda Arvidson, D. W.'s first wife.—*George L. George*, Directors Guild of America, 110 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

The History of the British Film — 1918–1929

By Rachael Low. Published (1971) by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts., England. 544 pp. Illus. 6 by 9 in. Price £7.35.

After a 20-year lapse, Dr. Low has resumed her authoritative survey of British cinema. The three previous volumes, published between 1946 and 1950, covered the periods 1896–1906, 1906–1914, and 1914–1918. The first two were written in collaboration with Roger Manvell. The earlier works established Dr. Low's reputation as a highly competent researcher familiar with her subject, a reliable analyst and organizer of data, and a writer whose literary style combines lucidity with directness. These qualities make her new book an invaluable and definitive work on the subject.

The period covered in the present volume, 1918 to 1929, takes us from the end of World War I to the arrival of the commercial sound film in England. It touches, in turn, on all aspects of the British film industry — production, distribution, exhibition — and appraises its aesthetic qualities in theory and in practice.

Those were difficult years. In 1920, the Federation of British Industries sponsored a drive for desperately needed Government assistance. It came in 1927, as Parliament passed the Cinematograph Films Act, a protectionist statute that was to remain on the books for 40 years. However it did not prove to be of real help and the industry underwent, in 1929, a stringent reorganization.

Production is discussed in a lengthy section that examines the then prevailing techniques and available facilities. At the end of the war, there were 23 main studios with 87,000 ft² of floor space. During the 20's, some 200,000 ft² were either built or planned. The number of films produced fluctuated beteen a high of 145 in 1920 and a low of 37 in 1926, with an average of 96 a year.

That period also saw the separation between the functions of the producer, interested in the business end, and the director, in charge of all the creative aspects of filming. Thus Michael Balcon is cited as the producer who made possible the early work of director Alfred Hitchcock. Acting, editing, designing and writing were areas in which progress followed industrialization and the emergence of new artistic concepts.

Camera techniques are described, with Bell & Howell, Cinchro, Darling, Debrie, Moy, Pathé, Vinten and Williamson equipments noted as widely used. In 1921, a small electric motor was introduced for studio photography, replacing the time-honored hand-cranking, generally standardized at 60 ft/min. In this context, the book mentions a paper read in 1926 to the Society of Motion Picture Engineers concerning the projection speed of film and suggesting 90 to 95 ft/min for comedy and 80 to 85 ft for drama.

Other sections cover in extended and informative fashion color cinematography, animation, documentaries and newsreels. Throughout the book, the names of personalities who participated in the development of British film are cited and their contributions objectively assessed. Censorship, the educational film and the viewing public are also discussed. The book closes with a comprehensive bibliography, a general index, and a list of some 850 British films of the period and their essential production data.—*George L. George*, Directors Guild of America, 110 W. 57 St., New York, NY 10019.