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ACTION: The STROBOFLASH II (illustrated above) has a flash duration of 1/1000 second. The photographer can stop action at this speed even though his camera only has a 1/200 shutter.

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**TWO AUTOMATIC LENSES FOR THE EXAKTA:
MODERN TESTS BIOTAR F/2, XENON F/1.9**

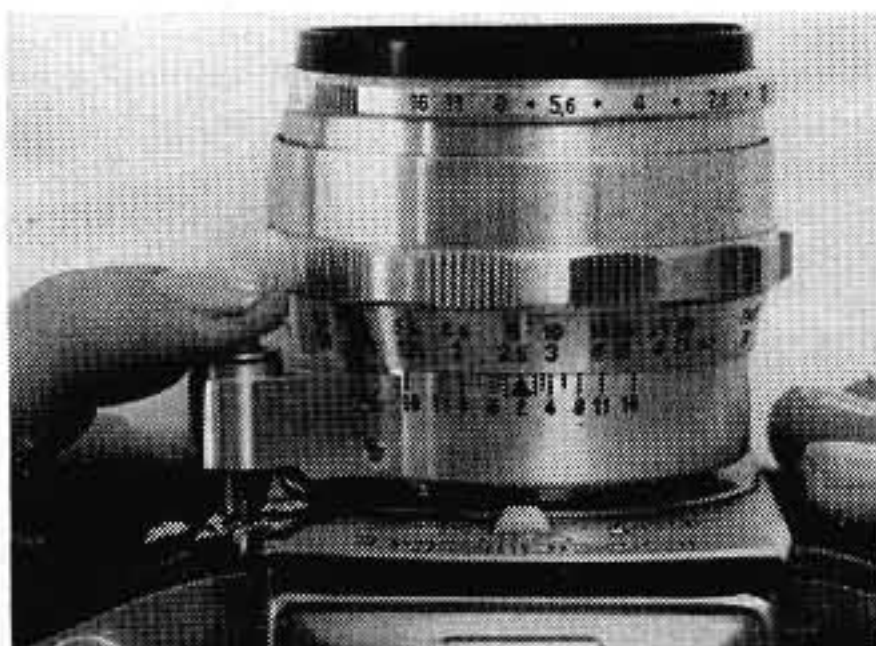


PHOTOS BY HAROLD FEINSTEIN

Zeiss 58mm Biotar (*on camera*) and Schneider 50mm Xenon (*beside it*) close to a predetermined stop when release button is pushed, just before shutter snaps.

In the great battles between the proponents of the 35mm rangefinder camera and the advocates of the eye-level reflex system, the reflex men have been bothered with one outstanding drawback. For maximum focusing efficiency, the eye-level reflex must be focused at maximum aperture and then closed manually to shooting aperture just before the shutter is released. This additional operation produces a distinct time lag between the point at which you decide to take a picture and the time you can actually press the shutter release.

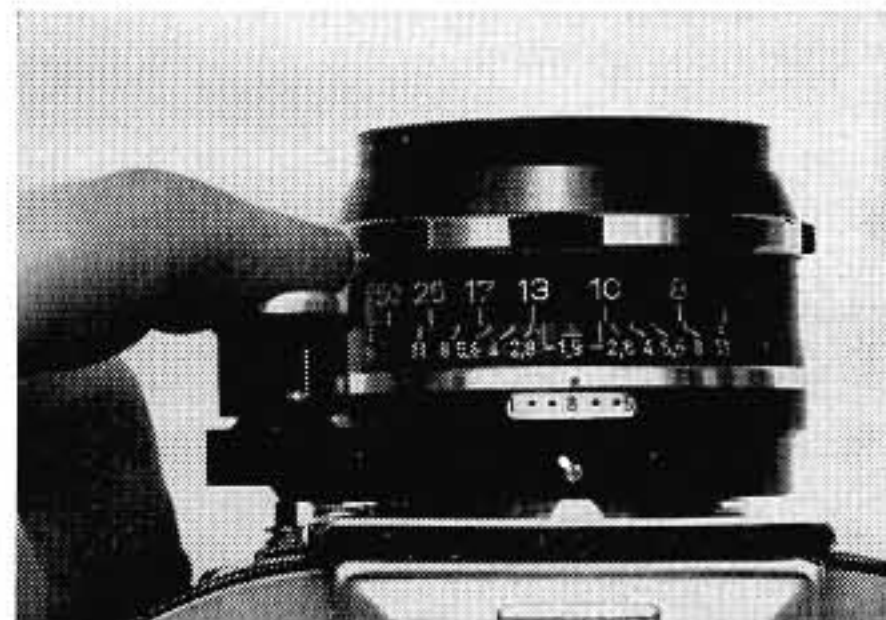
The two lenses shown above, a Carl Zeiss 58mm f/2 Biotar mounted on the Exakta, and a Schneider 50mm f/1.9 Xenon, next to it, have been designed to eliminate this difficulty with 35mm Exakta cameras. Both contain mechanisms which, when the shutter control button is pressed, automatically close down the lens diaphragm to a predetermined opening. With the Biotar, a



When you press release button on Carl Zeiss Biotar 58mm f/2 lens, diaphragm swiftly shuts the stop you want just before shutter is tripped for exposure.

spring mechanism swiftly closes the diaphragm. After exposure you open the diaphragm to f/2 again with a lever underneath the lens barrel.

When you press the release of the Xenon lens, however, your finger pres-



Schneider Xenon 50mm f/1.9 diaphragm shuts slowly as you press release, but opens when you remove finger pressure after exposure has been made.

sure alone closes the diaphragm slowly to the predetermined opening. This finger pressure also compresses a spring. When you take your finger from the release, this spring opens the lens diaphragm to the f/1.9 position again automatically. Both lenses speed up and simplify picture taking with the Exakta camera. The question is: which is the better system?

Frankly, it's pretty much a matter of individual opinion. On the Schneider lens, the compression of the spring as you are releasing the shutter does add a small amount of resistance to the shutter release. On the other hand, the Carl Zeiss Biotar, which adds no pressure, must be cocked between exposures. But

here are a few more facts which may help you decide between the two lenses:

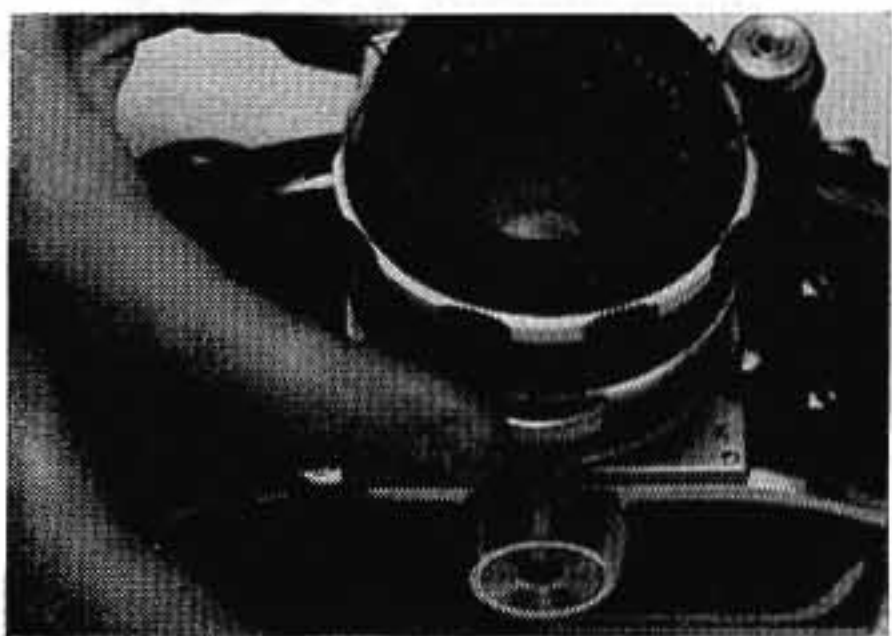
The Biotar can be focused as close as 18 inches. The Xenon focuses to 3½ ft. The Xenon focusing mount seems slightly smoother in operation and better finished—at least on the models tested. The Biotar is finished in chrome with black figures, the Xenon in black with white



Sweep lever underneath Zeiss Biotar barrel opens diaphragm to f/2 for focusing after each shot. Lens can be used manually by ignoring this lever.

figures. When using the Biotar for long exposures, you needn't keep your finger on the release. With the Xenon, the release must be kept pressed during the exposure or the lens diaphragm will open.

Both lenses gave markedly improved performances over former manual systems, especially when working outdoors in bright light conditions where you wish to focus wide open but shoot at small openings. Some users who tested both lenses liked one; some liked the other. But for fast operation, when you want to focus and shoot, when taking action pictures, the automatic features of both really prove their worth.



Lever underneath Schneider Xenon barrel sets selected lens opening. Opening appears in window atop barrel.

The two lenses were not tested for optical performance. But both the Xenon and Biotar are well-known designs which have been in production for considerable time. One interesting difference, however, is the disparity in focal lengths. The Biotar with its 58mm gives a slightly larger image than the 50mm Xenon.

The Biotar is, at present, only available with the Exakta VX at \$392. The Schneider Xenon can be purchased separately, however, for \$169.50.—H. K.

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