Norbert P. Franz

Hollywood
A Challenge for the Soviet Cinema

Four Essays

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Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Universitätsverlag Potsdam 2020
http://verlag.ub.uni-potsdam.de/

Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)331 977 2533 / Fax: -2292
Email: verlag@uni-potsdam.de

Layout and typesetting: text plus form, Dresden, Germany
Print: Schaltungsdienst Lange oHG, Berlin, Germany | www.sdl-online.de
Cover design: Kristin Schettler
Cover illustrations: stock.adobe.com: happyvector071 | ChonnieArtwork.
Film strip from left to right: Beloe solntse … | Shy People | Svoy sredi … | Runaway Train | Ninotchka | Split Cherry Tree | Stiliagi | Silk Stockings | Jet Pilot | Svoy sredi … | Beloe solntse …
Photo on the rear flap: Thomas Roese/University of Potsdam

ISBN 978-3-86956-490-6

Simultaneously published online on the publication server
of the University of Potsdam:
https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-46939
https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus4-469398

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About this Book

Through joint courses at Potsdam University with Peter Drexler, beginning with "Concepts of Montage at Griffith and Eisenstein" many years ago, I was made attentively aware of similarities and differences between Russian/Soviet and American cinema. This resulted in a research project on Russians who worked in the American film industry in the 20th century. In Los Angeles, I met some of them, but I mainly evaluated the materials that are archived in the Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills. Their staff was very helpful to me, and I am very grateful to them.

I already published some results of my research in 2011 in German. The essay "Hollywood – Moscow – Hollywood: Cirk, Ninotchka und andere"[1] has found its way back into the present volume, this time in English, translated by Dr. Bryan Herman (Albany).

This volume consists of four independent essays, which are centered in university courses. The discussions with the German and Russian students made it seem advisable to pay particular attention to the cultural differences and the differing points of view. As a German, I am looking with a Western European outlook at two foreign cinema cultures, and I am especially interested in the question of how one references the other. In this sense the presentation is not particularly balanced. The American perspective on Soviet cinema, and of possible influences of Soviet cinematic style on American cinema, are missing.

Films and literary works are referred to in the language of the original, with a translation added. Russian names and film titles are written in popular transcription for which the IMDb provided orientation, even if – as Oci ciornye shows – the use is not always consistent there. Since this spelling does not meet the

1 In: *Kulturelle Mobilitätsforschung: Themen – Theorien – Tendenzen,* hrsg. v. Norbert Franz und Rüdiger Kunow. Potsdam: Universitätsverlag, 2011. (= Mobilisierte Kulturen, Bd. 1) Also: https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-5541.

philological requirements in the notes, Russian titles were written there in Cyrillic letters. To be able to clearly identify them the official Russian names have also been added to the film titles in the Index, in Cyrillic letters, too.

I would especially like to thank Austin Brown for proofreading my essays.

"Hollywood" and "Moscow"

1 A HISTORICAL VIEW

The advent of the cinema occurred in France, where the Lumiére brothers showed a movie on December 28, 1895 and the viewers paid for it. The technology spread worldwide within just a few years. In the more industrialized countries, film companies rapidly developed the technology further. American film pioneers, led by Thomas Edison, bundled their patents and founded the *Motion Picture Patents Company* in 1908 in New York. It was a company that demanded the respect of usage rights. *Edison Trust* viewed film making simply as a "business", and so did the owners of the studios. The United States' Supreme Court supported this view when, in 1915, it declared that film was not primarily an art form: "the exhibition of moving pictures is a business, pure and simple, originated and conducted for profit […] not to be regarded, nor intended to be regarded […] as part of the press of the country, or as organs of public opinion."[1] This notion of film as a business meant that the products were not protected by the legally guaranteed freedom of the press. Local and regional authorities were able to raise objections to films that appeared morally questionable. It also established the dominance of the studio over the artists, directors and actors. Ambitious directors had to struggle with the producers if they wanted to make films according to their own aesthetic ideas.

Those who wanted to produce films cheaper than in New York, and get away from the tight rein of the Patents Company, went to the sunny and hard-to-reach Southwestern USA, where land and labor were cheap. From 1912 onwards, companies were founded that built large studios and produced movies. In order to maintain the greatest possible independence, the Hollywood studios in 1922 joined

1 In the case *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio,* 236 U.S. 230 from 1915 (Wikipedia sub voce: *Mutual Film Corp. v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*).

together to form a *Motion Picture Producers Association* (MPPA). The basic idea that the making of films was above all a business, remained unscathed when the focus of the American film industry moved to Hollywood.

Economically speaking, "Hollywood" was a complex system of competing companies, whose bosses had the market in mind. The audiences were then the real masters, and it was these abstract spectators with whom the studio bosses argued. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the dominance of the economy has damaged the aesthetic quality of the films. On the contrary, it promoted quality, but in a very special sense.

Whether a work of literature, music, painting, or film is perceived as aesthetically pleasing, depends on the currently dominant cultural trend. There are no timeless aesthetic standards, but the number of key cultural ideas is limited. The most suitable model for describing this is based on the basic communicative situation, for example, in the conjugation paradigm, "I'm talking to you about it (him, her)." Linguistics have made a triangle from it: "A transmitter communicates with a receiver objects/facts". This corresponds to the three language functions "expression", "appeal" and "presentation."[2] It is important that all three functions must always be available – albeit with different intensities. Usually one function dominates, and the other two take a back seat. The history of aesthetics shows that in different epochs different things were perceived as aesthetically pleasing, depending on which function (expression, appeal or presentation) dominated in congruence with the cultural trend.

The art of the European Middle Ages for example was shaped by the idea of depicting the unearthly world to uplift the viewer. The expressive function with which the artist expresses his personality was so far in the background that in many cases, history has forgotten the names. In the Renaissance, on the other hand, a different understanding of the artist dominated. He is now a creator, who characteristically shows his figures naked often. Expression dominates. The appellative aspect takes a back seat. This dominated in the Mannerism and the Baroque periods, when the artist wanted to impress and astonish the recipient.

In this, very simplified, model of varying dominance, appellative function has had the leading role in early American film. There is a concrete orientation towards the viewer. Anyone wishing to lure viewers into film projections, had to attract them, promising them entertainment at the highest possible level. The movies should not be boring either in content or in the way of storytelling, rather they had to be confirmed by the experience level and desires of the audience. Experience level as far as the audience has to recognize that the film affects them; desires then as dreams of untroubled happiness. The artist (director, actor) could only "express" himself as long as he did not question the motivations of achieving economic suc-

2 Cfr. Bühler, Karl. *Sprachtheorie: Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache.* Jena: Fischer, 1934.

cess with the film. American cinema developed this aesthetic of audience orientation to perfection, and as a result, Hollywood was called a dream factory.

2 BETWEEN GLOBALITY AND REGIONALITY

Wherever they were shown, the first films had the interest of the audience because the medium itself was a sensation. Also, the exotic content, photos from Europe, China, India, attracted the visitors. After a while, however, the curiosity for the unknown and the sensational, was no longer enough to draw audiences to the cinemas; moreover, there seemed to be a need for familiar people and places, substance and subjects. It is no coincidence that often the known is considered beautiful, and the recognition is considered a central aesthetic experience for the recipient.

By the early 1920s, cinema in the US had made its way from the nickelodeons of the suburbs to the city centers. At least in the larger cities cinema palaces emerged, similar to the opera houses, luxurious and expensively equipped. They offered several performances a day, the films sometimes in conjunction with shows. The migration to the centers of the cities was a visible sign that the film had also shed its underclass image and won the middle classes as spectators, whose values and desires had to be taken into account in the films.

Investors in the cinema theaters were often the studios who tried to bundle under their control the whole process from the idea to the script, to the making of the movie, to its distribution: the so-called studio system that existed until the 1960s. For the studios it was a Golden Age, which was finally put to an end by an anti-trust law (1948) and the competition of television.

Films have been shown in Russia since 1896. A production tailored specifically to the Russian audience did not develop until 1907. In 1908 only 8 films were made there, but by 1916 there were already 499 films.[3] The first film shot specifically for a Russian audience[4] showed a section of Don-Cossacks in their horseback maneuvers (1907), the first full feature film (Stenka Razin, 1908) illustrated a well-known folk song. In addition, the films transported the genre of the melodrama to the screen, which had already proven to be particularly successful in the folk theaters. The ever-increasing demand for films suggested that the film could also be used to influence, that it could propagate certain politically desired content and attitudes, such as in the First World War to promote the readiness to fight.

The October Revolution of 1917 and the following civil war worsened the working conditions for the Russian film studios so dramatically that many actors and

3 Гинзбург, Семен. *Кинематография дореволюционной России.* Москва: Аграф, ²2007, с. 188.

4 Initially, only European companies such as Pathé produced in the country, but these soon formed relatively independent branches, and then Russian production companies were added. The staff had been international since the beginning.

directors emigrated. However, many artists remained in Soviet Russia, others returned to the country after a few years abroad, especially when they welcomed, in principle, the transformation of political and economic conditions. Some artists were rather vague "leftists" and made their peace with the real Soviet policy during the 1920s. Others felt simply unwell outside of Russia. They came back, but tried to escape the ever-growing politicization. Mostly assumed as "fellow travelers" by the Soviet politicians, they were first allowed to work relatively freely. Aesthetically, these artists often felt connected to critical realism, the guiding principle of which was the denotation, the description of the world and society, whereby the artist's sympathy was often quite recognizable for the "humiliated and insulted", to quote a title of a Dostoevsky novel.

Others were committed to the idea of the avant-garde, bound to experimenting and crossing traditional genre and media boundaries. Their aesthetic ideal, which applies to all modernism, is a strong expressiveness. Since this was often combined with a left-wing political attitude, this was the common ground on which the artistic orientations coexisted in the 1920s.

In the context of the avant-garde, the early Soviet film emerged as a large field of experimentation that was open for young talents such as Vsevolod Pudovkin (born 1893), Dziga Vertov (born 1895), Sergei Eisenstein (born 1898) and others, however, operated in a field in which, the ideological direction of the films was determined by the politics. Politics made sure that the ideological direction of the films supported the Bolsheviks. Political measures not only consisted of preventive censorship, which was reintroduced immediately after the October Revolution; there were also interventions in the economic foundations of the film industry. After the Civil War and a short period of economic recovery the studios were either nationalized or (at least temporarily) pushed to the formation of cooperatives, but in artistic terms, the studios had relatively many design options.

Some theoreticians also speak of a Golden Age of cinema in Russia, referring to the years between 1921 and 1928, i.e. the period of relative liberal politics in connection with the "revolutionary drive of a new, young artistic class."[5] Toward the end of the 1920s the state intervened more in the development of the cinema.

The early cinema knew films with a relatively clear national (cultural) orientation as well as those that could be used internationally. In the national context movies were used to shape the cultural memory, with certain popularized perspectives on historical events. David W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation (1915) may apply as a particularly prominent example for the, quite manipulative, work on the common historical memory of the USA.

5 Nembach, Eberhard *Stalins Filmpolitik. Der Umbau der sowjetischen Filmindustrie 1929 bis 1938.* St. Augustin: Gardez!, 2001, p. 12.

The Soviet revolutionary films were similarly one-sided. The politicians of the Bolshevik Party saw films as a primary means of propaganda. The pictures should not only popularize the ideology, but also the actions of the Party, especially the October Revolution, which had to be historically justified and celebrated as an accomplishment. The famous phrase of Lenin "The film is for us the most important of the arts …" has been cited many times, but is only indirectly documented, and therein has a very close connection with the propagandistic function.[6]

In the US the tendency to deliberately influence by using film was less pronounced. The films were tailored to the lower and middle classes, and were mostly political only in the sense that they reinforced the political mainstream. At the center of their plots they had less the social problems of their time, much more often they served collective desires and hopes. These were well known by the people who were running the studios, because most of them were social climbers, immigrants of the first or second emigration, who – moreover members of the Jewish minority – had a special sensitivity for the collective dreams of a society.[7] In individual actors, even more in actresses, the desires were embodied. The audience wanted to see them again and again, so they became objects of identification, in short: "stars."

Usually, the interests and the dreams of the audiences were not limited to one cultural and social context, but common to many. As a rule, most of the stories told in the films also worked across the borders of the country of production. Films made in Hollywood were shown in Paris, Berlin or Petrograd; conversely, the Americans could also watch European films. In Russia, European productions dominated at first, while American productions were only distributed on a larger scale when the "Transatlantic" company organized the export and import. "The American films were successful with both viewers and filmmakers."[8] Protazanov's film Drama u telefona ([1914] "Drama on the Telephone") clearly showed the model: Griffith's The Lonely Villa (1909). The interest in American films continued even after the Revolution. From the cinema diary of Alisa Rozenbaum, who visited the *Parisiana cinema* on Nevskij Prospekt in Petrograd since the winter of 1922/23 and who rated the films according to the Russian school grade system (1 to 5 = "insufficient" to "very good"), it is known that she saw The Stranger (USA, 1920) in the winter of 1922 (rated 4+), in the summer of 1924 Forbidden Fruit (USA, 1922, rated 2), in March 1924 Danton (Germany, 1921, of which

6 Lenin is said to have said to Lunacharsky: "You must firmly remember that of all the arts, cinema is the most important for us." ["Вы должны твердо помнить, что из всех искусств для нас важнейшим является кино."] (Болтянский, Григорий М. *Ленин и кино.* Москва: Гос. Издат., 1925, стр. 16)

7 Cfr. Gabler, Neal *A Kingdom of Their Own. How the Jews Invented Hollywood.* New York: Crown, 1988.

8 Гинзбург, *Кинематография …,* loc. cit., p. 165. [американские фильмы пользовались успехом у зрителей и кинематографистов.]

Fig. 1: The Russian movie poster of FRÄULEIN RAFFKE

she rated 5–) and in June 1924 FRÄULEIN RAFFKE (Germany 1923, twice seen by her and with 5+ rating)[9] [Fig. 1].

Not only the films circulated, the production crews were international, too. Dmitry Buchowetzki (Буховецкий, 1885–1932), who was born in Russia, directed the above-mentioned UFA movie DANTON, Johnstone Craig wrote on the script, the role of Desmoulin was played by the Russian Osip Runich (Рунич, 1889–1947). Many of the Russians working in the European or American film studios had lost their livelihoods through Revolution and Civil War. Some had emigrated to Germany, where, for example Vladimir Nabokov made some money working as an extra in Babelsberg. Others left to go to Hollywood. Among them were stars of pre-revolutionary Russian cinema such as the actor Ivan Mozzhukhin, who tried to continue his career there. Also, actors from the theaters, who had until then, no film experience. Dancers used guest performances from their ensembles to set off for Hollywood. Harlow Robinson, who has reconstructed some of the biographies, suggests that several of them made respectable careers, which is due to the fact that they were generally better prepared than their peers.[10] As students of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, they sometimes opened drama schools and thus popularized the method of their teachers in the new environment.[11]

As in other cities of exile, the Russians of Hollywood tended to form a "colony"; i.e. to settle there, where people from their country already lived and to cultivate their contacts. The tendency to a certain isolation, however, was not typically nor specifically a Russian phenomenon. "National communities were a feature of Hollywood from the earliest days."[12] The Russians were distinguished from the other colonies (such as the English and French) by the fact that many of them came from the upper classes and were particularly popular as extras, when a confident appearance and the natural handling of upscale goods were demanded.

9 Rand, Ayn. *Russian Writings on Hollywood.* Los Angeles: Ayn Rand Institute, 1989.

10 Robinson, Harlow. *Russians in Hollywood – Hollywood's Russians. Biography of an Image.* Lebanon (NH): Univ. Press of New England, 2007, p. 22, 137 et al.

11 This continuity of the Russians' actors' schools into the Hollywood studios has been analyzed by Nusinova and Matich. Нусинова, Наталья "Русские в Америке (Киноэмиграция первой вольны)", *Киноведческие записки,* № 43 (1999), стр. 174–189. Нусинова, Наталья *Когда мы в Россию вернемся … Русское кинематографическое зарубежье 1918–1939.* Москва: НИИК., 2003. Матич, Ольга (2002) "Русские в Голливуде/Голливуд о Русских", *Новое литературное обозрение,* Vol. 54 (2002), № 2, pp. 403–48. Matich, Olga "The White Emigration goes Hollywood", *Russian Review,* Vol. 64 (2005), Issue 2, pp. 187–210.

12 Baxter, John. *The Hollywood Exiles.* London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1976, p. 129.

In 1922, the Russian community was already so large that they endeavored to consider building their own church. Indeed, a parish was established and a chapel built, the *Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Cathedral* (Свято-Богородицкий Русский Православный Собор). In 1929 it was followed by a second church *Holy Transfiguration* (Спасо-Преображенский Собор).

3 NEW FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

As in the Soviet Union, the situation in Hollywood in the second half of the 1920s changed fundamentally. The reason was not a state intervention, but the technical innovation of the film with sound, and the stronger emphasis on "moral values."

In the US, the film with sound was developed in the late 1920s for serial production. It made international circulation more difficult, and even at the time of production it turned out that not all successful actors had the voice or speech necessary for the new technique. They were simply taken less into consideration during the casting. The synchronization technique had not yet been developed. For foreigners, therefore, knowledge of the American language, and the ability to speak it without an accent, were prerequisites for a career. If one spoke (or speaks) with an accent, one was (and is) typecast as a "foreigner."

As Robinson has shown[13], at least in the 1930s to the 1960s, audiences were generally not assumed to be able to identify a particular accent (such as a Mexican or Russian) as such. Instead, there was a rather rough classification of "American", "British" and "foreign". Swedes like Ingrid Bergman and Greta Garbo played Russian women, the Russian Maria Ouspenskaya (Успенская, 1876–1949) "could easily play various nationalities: Russian, German, French, Austrian, Polish, American – even Indian […], gypsy […], and yes, even an Amazon […]."[14] And so on. The most famous Hollywood "Movie-Russian", Omar Sharif, who has played Doctor Zhivago, was a native Egyptian of Lebanese descent. The foreign accent was ambiguous. Only relatively later, the characterization by the accent was used more precisely. In the scenes that happen in Russia played by Russians, the actors speak in at least Russian phrases, and the corresponding dialogues were subtitled.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example, when he featured the Soviet policeman Ivan Danko in Red Heat in 1988, had to speak Russian in several scenes. He practiced this for several weeks. Incidentally, if he spoke English, it was with his own Styrian coloring, which could also be accepted by Americans as a Russian accent.

During and shortly after the Great Depression in 1929, the Americans' relationship to the social effectiveness of cinema changed. The dominance of business was limited. Not everything that promised profit was allowed to be produced. At

13 Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood,* loc. cit., p. 28.
14 Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood,* loc. cit., p. 82.

this point, a detailed list of what should not be shown was drawn up. It may have played a role here that the bosses of the studios were generally politically conservative, and wished that the films should at least not negatively influence the viewers in a moral sense. On the other hand, the system made it seem advisable to agree that competition for viewers should not go hand in hand with breaking moral taboos. Otherwise the producers would be afraid to upset and lose their regulars. As a result, in 1930 film directors co-opted the director of *The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc.* (MPPDA), Will H. Hays, to compose a code of conduct that AMPP- *(The Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc.)* and MPPDA-organized companies were obliged to respect. In this so-called Hays or *Motion Picture Production Code,* the following principles were defined:

1. No picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.[15]

The justification of these principles is explained later:

> Hence the MORAL IMPORTANCE of entertainment is something which has been universally recognized. It enters intimately into the lives of men and women and affects them closely; it occupies their minds and affections during leisure hours; and ultimately touches the whole of their lives. […][16]

This educational mission intensified the tendency toward genre cinema in Hollywood cinema. It preferred certain genres such as the melodrama or the adventure film and namely, excluded certain constructions of plots in which criminals escape unpunished. Such a film ending would violate the principles. Although there could be a conflict between human and natural law, a lawbreaker would have to be justified at least under the "natural law." The principles are usually followed by happy endings for the good protagonists, because the validity of norms can be well explained by the fact that those who observe them are rewarded.

This codex was superseded in 1968 by a system that determined the suitability of films for certain target audiences (children, adolescents, adults). The code was not a non-binding personal commitment, but rather a compulsory system with

15 The Production Code, p. 44–45.
16 The Production Code, p. 49.

standards. Within the system, all screenplays would be scrutinized in advance. However, in comparison to other countries it cannot be called real censorship.

* * *

Even in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, major changes occurred politically. Stalin had supplanted his rivals for the legacy of Lenin. In 1928, the economy was switched to a planned economy and agriculture was collectivized. Culturally, the Soviet citizens were to be sealed off against ideologically unreliable writers or directors and against influences from foreign countries. A decision of the Soviet government from 1928 stipulated that "by the end of the plan period, so many *Soviet in-house productions* have been shot that usually Soviet screens could also operate with Soviet films."[17]

The suppression of foreign competition went hand in hand with a more precise specification of what constitutes a "Soviet film." It was, as the Central Committee of the CPSU stated in a resolution of 1929, produced in the Soviet Union "under the supervision of the party", which "provided ideological content for the cinema productions" and fought resolutely against attempts, "to customize the Soviet cinema to the ideology of non-proletarian ranks." The fundamental task of the cinema was namely to be an effective tool of propaganda, but also supplying "cultivated leisure activities and the entertainment of the masses."[18]

Since literature was in fact still regarded as the most important medium of cultural and artistic production, the basic principles for the production of cultural goods were based on what was formulated primarily for literature, but – *mutatis mutandis* – claimed validity for all sectors of cultural or artistic production. The state educational function "to transform and educate the working masses in the spirit of socialism" was dominant. Life should be presented "truthfully," and not simply as "objective reality," but as "reality in its revolutionary development."[19] The party clearly stated what it meant.

Subordinated to these basic decisions regarding the function and the contents were the creative principles of "popularity" (vulgo: general understanding, avoidance of formal experiments) and of the "positive hero" thus offering a point of identification. After there had been relative liberality in aesthetic questions between 1921 and 1928, the entire cultural sector was now obliged to orientate itself to the recipient. He was supposed to be brought up and entertained. The represen-

17 Nembach, *Stalins Filmpolitik,* loc. cit. p. 13 – Highlighting in the original.

18 Nembach, *Stalins Filmpolitik,* loc. cit. p. 38.

19 Жданов, Николай "Речь секретаря цк вкп(б) А. А. Жданова", в кн.: Луппол, И. К. (изд.): *Первый всесоюзный съезд советских писателей, 1934. Стенографический отчет. Репринтное воспроизведение издания 1934 года.* Москва: Советский писатель, 1990, стр. 2–5. [стр. 4.: ее правдиво изобразить [жизнь] […] не просто как "объективную реальность", а изобразить действительность в ее революционном развитии.]

tation of a very specific kind of reality was somewhat subordinate, and the expressiveness was completely in the background. It is therefore not surprising that the artists of the avant-garde, whose ideal was expressivity, either had to adjust or stop (official) artistic production.

In the 1930s, the Soviet Union also rebuilt the film production and founded an organization that was restructured and renamed several times.[20] Between 1933 and 1938 Boris Shumiackii was in charge of it. In the early years, the constant remodeling of this organization and its the constant struggle with the central censorship authority *Glavrepertkom* (GRK) led to the number of finished films going from over 100 at the end of the 1920s to 35 in 1933. Therefore, the *Film Foreign Trade Authority* had to import a total of 27 films with sound in 1932 alone, with 21 coming from the USA.[21] The cinemas also liked to show them, as Soviet citizens went to the cinema more often when foreign movies were shown, making it easier to fulfill the plan.

4 THE TENDENCY TOWARDS GENRE CINEMA

Genres are not fixed but dynamically evolving structures. They form the framework for cultural communication, and provide clues as to how the information conveyed by text and/or image should be evaluated. There are many types of genres, from low-precision definitions determined only by one or two factors, to those that have relatively fixed shapes (formulas).

For example, there is a basic distinction between fiction and the reporting of facts. So, it is important for the spectator's sensibilities that he knows whether he is seeing a real killing on screen, or a staged one. In the fictional genres, a wide arc spans from those that are only minimally determined to those that are very clearly defined. From the general phrase "motion pictures" the viewer can actually only deduce that the action will be fictional, and from "comedy" all sorts of confusion, mostly scripted jokes, and finally a happy ending.

The American cinema had from the outset a relaxed relationship to genres. This has to do very fundamentally with the purpose of entertainment. If you want to attract a large audience, one can best rely on continuity, i.e. keep telling relatively the same but varying stories. The genre was the experiment in which the

20 First, the *All-Union's Organization of the Cinema Photo Industry* (Всесоюзное объединение кинофотопромышленности) was founded, which in 1933 was followed by the *Head Office for cinema photo industry at the Council of People's Commissars* (Главное управление кинофотопромышленности [ГУКФ] при СНК СССР) which in 1936 was transformed to the *Head office of cinema at the Art Committee of the Council of People's Commissars* (Главное управление кинематографии (ГУК) Комитета по делам искусств при СНК), which eventually became its own cinema ministry in 1946.

21 Nembach, *Stalins Filmpolitik,* loc. cit. p. 206.

producers could test which stories and actors promised further box office success and how these should be varied and evolved, i.e. improved. In this way, the genre system of Hollywood emerged in an evolutionary way, as a testing of possibilities within the context of experiences. In this sense, André Bazin spoke of the "genius of the system, the richness of its ever-vigorous tradition," a formulation that Thomas Schatz picked up and verified through his own research.[22]

An important factor in accessibility was the desired naturalness in the narrative. Particularly complex lines of action, unusual camera work, or the editing shouldn't make the viewer feel that he moves in an "artificial" world. The arrangement of this world should remain invisible for him. This is referred to as the "invisible style."

Even the cinema of the Soviet Union leaned toward a system of genres, but they usually did not call it that. The genre term was closely linked to strongly determined genres, moreover one spoke of films on "certain topics" or "with thematic characteristics."

The revolutionary film was considered something of that kind, with the subgenre of Lenin films, which was covered by many copies. In the respective five-year plans, such issues were underpinned with numbers, and the corresponding corpora showed clear genre characteristics. In addition, the aesthetic of socialist realism, with its educational mission – such as the demand for a positive hero and the dictum of "popularity" – strengthened the tendency towards the forming of genres. The notion that the director is first and foremost an artist and not a craftsman, however, did not allow an ingenuous discussion of the subjects.

5 HOLLYWOOD WITH RUSSIAN EYES

In the Soviet Union, the Hollywood films had many critics among the ideologues, but also admirers, especially in the ranks of ordinary viewers. There were many who were also fascinated by the Hollywood myth. An interesting example of this is the already mentioned Alisa Rozenbaum, who later took the pseudonym "Ayn Rand" and made a career in the USA. She was just 20 years old in 1925 when she published a 16-page booklet about the actress Pola Negri in the publishing house *Izdatel'stvo kino,*[23] A year later another 42-page publication Gollivud – amerikanskij kino-gorod ("Hollywood – the American Film City") followed.

22 Schatz, Thomas *The Genius of the System. Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. New York, NY: Holt, 1996.

23 Розенбаум, Алиса З. (1925) *Пола Негри.* Москва-Ленинград: Кино-издательство (Популярная киго-библиотека). [Reprint in: Rand, Ayn (1999) *Russian Writings on Hollywood,* ed. by Michael S. Berliner. Marina del Ray: Ayn Rand Inst.]

Fig. 2: The book cover of "Hollywood – the American Film City"

At the time of this publishing, the author was already in the USA. She was visiting relatives, and never returned to the Soviet Union. Rozenbaum-Rand conveys the fascination that Hollywood had for a passionate moviegoer in the first half of the 1920s. She approaches Hollywood enthusiastically, but not completely uncritically. In the introductory chapter she describes the international distribution as a blood circulation, where the heart is Hollywood:

> Its films flow like blood through the motion picture arteries of the earth.
> And there is a heart pushing this blood.
> There is a place in the hands of all the threads of these arteries:
> The movie town
> is Hollywood.
> The city is extraordinary, as are the films that are released.[24]

24 Розенбаум Алиса З. (1926) *Голливуд – Американский кино-город*. С предисловием Б. Филлипова. Москва-Ленинград: Кинопечать, стр. 7. [Reprint in: Rand, Ayn (1999) *Russian Writings on Hollywood,* ed. by Michael S. Berliner. Marina del Ray: Ayn Rand Inst.]
[Ее фильмы текут, как кровь, по киноартериям земли.
И есть сердце, толкающее эту кровь.
Есть место, держащее в руках все нити этих артерий:
Городкино
Голливуд.
Город необыкновенный, как и фильмы, которые оп выпускает.]

She does not conceal, but also does not criticize, the fact that a merciless cutthroat competition between actors and studios takes place in this center of life for worldwide cinema production.

The politicians and officials who were responsible for Soviet cinema showed particular interest in Hollywood. On the one hand, they saw an industry that was always state of the art and economically extremely successful. More importantly, they saw the production of films for which the audience flocked to the cinemas. It was obvious that they met the taste of the general public, not just of the cognoscenti. Nevertheless, they were often aesthetically demanding, and this combination of quality and acceptance by the masses was also desired for the Soviet Union.

6 OFFICIAL VISITORS FROM USSR

After the failure of "The Old and the New" (Staroye i novoye) and also to be artistically up to date, the then most famous Soviet director, Sergei Eisenstein traveled, in 1928 along with his assistant Aleksandrov to Berlin, London and Paris. In 1930, he continued his trip to the US. He was spoiled by his previous successes, so that his focus was not so much on getting to know other concepts in cinema, but on trying to realize at least one of his film projects abroad. He couldn't do that in Hollywood, even the film ¡Que viva Mexico! was not quite finished. Stalin finally ordered his director back in 1932, and from 1934 he taught again at the Moscow Film Institute.

In the 1940s Eisenstein systematized his impressions from the USA in a longer essay on "Dickens, Griffith and we" (Dikkens, Griffit i my). He describes Griffith's cinema as a combination of modern industrial America with its unexpected traditionalist features:

> In America, first of all and most of all, it is the abundance of that provincial, patriarchal, which is full of life and customs, morality and philosophy, ideological horizon and rules of life of the American middle strata.[25]

On the other hand, Russian cinema after the revolution had immediately shed the traditions of pre-revolutionary times and embarked on the journey to the new Soviet present:

25 Эйзенштейн, Сергей (б.г.) "Диккенс, Гриффит и мы." (http://www.fedy-diary.ru/html/052012/16052012-02a.html [В Америке прежде всего и больше всего поражает обилие того заштатного, провинциального, патриархального, чем проникнуты быт и нравы, мораль и философия, идейный горизонт и правила жизни американских средних слоев.]

> Young Soviet cinematography gained impressions of revolutionary reality, the first experience (Vertov), the first systematic attempts (Kuleshov), so that in the second half of the twenties, with an unprecedented explosion, they would appear as independent, adult, original art that immediately gained worldwide recognition.[26]

Griffith, whose montage Eisenstein repeatedly describes with praising words, remains with his artistic style of making films behind the Soviet ideology. Eisenstein considered the American director to be a child of his time and country. He looked at his society with open-ended categories, and accordingly his conception of montage/editing was dualistic. On the other hand, Eisenstein's montage is dialectical, as is his worldview in which it is rooted. That is why it is superior to the American one.

The head of the film department in the Soviet Ministry of Education, Boris Shumiatskii, was by no means as convinced of the basic superiority of Soviet cinema, which was as committed to montage theory as Eisenstein was. He traveled to Hollywood for several weeks in 1935 to be inspired there to build a strong Soviet film industry. He published his ideas in the booklet Kinematografiya millionov ("Film Art for Millions"), in which he suggested the establishment of a Soviet Hollywood in Crimea. Although this Hollywood was never built, Shumiatskii also took seriously the functional description of the cinema, which was publicly proclaimed around 1930, among other things to be a "means of cultivated leisure activities and the entertainment of the masses." Soviet cinema was to orientate itself on Hollywood's popular genres, and revise them for the Soviet needs. One of these popular genres was the American musical film.

Eisenstein refused to shoot a musical film, and that can be considered symptomatic of the genre contempt that was common amongst filmmakers. Hollywood had responded to the newly developed sound-film technique with a new genre – Soviet directors were writing a manifesto in which they talked about films with sound as a way to "perfect the editing (montage)." They did not want to tell new stories with exciting plots, but to continue their type of editing. Shumiatskii wanted a narrative cinema, as Hollywood had developed.

Boris Shumiatskii also contacted filmmakers in Hollywood, and invited them to visit the Soviet Union. Ernst Lubitsch was so curious that he accepted the invitation in 1937. He later produced the experience with the film Ninotchka,[27] which

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26 Эйзенштейн, "Диккенс, Гриффит …," loc. cit. [Молодая советская кинематография набиралась впечатлений революционной действительности, первого опыта (Вертов), первых систематизирующих попыток (Кулешов), чтобы во второй половине двадцатых годов невиданным взрывом предстать самостоятельным, взрослым, оригинальным искусством, сразу же завоевавшим себе всемирное признание.]

27 See "The Path from Hollywood to Moscow and back to Hollywood …" in this book.

was completed in 1939. Shumiatskii's biography, which was written by his grandnephew, also includes a photo of Shumiatskii with Charlie Chaplin.[28] Shumiatskii is said to have persuaded him to be a little more optimistic about the future of the working class, reflected in the Modern Times. As a result of the talks with Shumiatskii in 1938, Herbert Rappaport permanently moved to the SU, where he shot Professor Mamlok in 1938.

A few years later, nobody could travel from the Soviet Union to Hollywood. The Second World War happened, and then the Cold War stood in the way. The myth of Hollywood was not forgotten in Moscow, and was exemplified by Nikita Khrushchev when he visited the USA in 1959, interested in seeing Hollywood. He was greeted at 20th Century Fox by its former boss Spyros Skouras. Skouras also invited actresses and actors, and most came. Elisabeth Taylor, Marlon Brando, Gary Cooper and many others were there. Marilyn Monroe appeared in her "sexiest dress." One of the few who demonstratively stayed away from the spectacle was a cowboy actor named Ronald Reagan.

The fascination of Hollywood becomes clear in the first interviews given by Andrei Konchalovsky when he tried to gain a foothold there as a director in the early 1980s. Chris Chase of the *New York Times* reported from a conversation:

> If he's successful in the United States, he will be very proud, because he will be "the first Soviet director who accomplished something in this country," Mr. Konchalovsky said, adding, "The last one was Eisenstein in 1938, and he didn't succeed in Hollywood."[29]

Eisenstein was still the measure, only this time in a different sense.

7 THE DIFFERENCES FROM A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Since the 1970s, the Soviet Union has rid itself of some of its discontented people by approving their exit requests, or by forcing individuals to emigrate against their will. There have also been occasional spectacular cases where artists used travels to foreign countries to defect. In this way, for example, Mikhail Baryshnikov came to the USA, who, in addition to his ballet work, also appeared in films. Conversely, the actor Savely Kramarov left the Soviet Union with a Jewish contingent. The latter quickly found work in Hollywood, but often had to play Soviet officials, i.e. to embody the people whose country he had left behind. Other emigrants

28 Schumatsky (1999), Boris: *Silvester bei Stalin. Die Geschichte einer Familie.* Bodenheim: Philo-Verlag, 1999. p. 196.

29 Chase, Cris "Russian puts high hopes on 'Sibiriade'", *New York Times,* 10. Sept. 1982.

found their way to film as directors or actors in the United States in the situation of exile.

As travel restrictions for Soviet citizens were gradually lifted in the Perestroika years (1985–1991), other Soviet filmmakers tried to gain a foothold in the United States, or at least occasionally work for the American film industry.[30]

Andrei Konchalovsky has systematically reflected on the differences between the American and Soviet systems for making films, at least the way he saw it.

As early as 1975 he had pointed out the different audiences in a lecture at the ABC Entertainment Center. If only because of the relatively late spread of television in the Soviet Union, films there are still mostly considered a "window to the world," which is why viewers are looking less for entertainment than a "message." On the other hand, however, the filmmakers did not focus so much on the audience, at least not in such a way that they attached great importance to the financial success of the film.

> In the Soviet Union, films are produced without a constant eye on their commercial success. That may in part explain the slowness, the lack of suspense in a Western sense, that is sometimes found in our films. What is uppermost in the director's mind is expressing his own ideas and point of view.[31]

He admits that this situation is not ideal, especially since American action films such as The New Centurion (1972) and The Chase (1966) were shown with great success in the Soviet Union. New generations of filmmakers could no longer afford the luxury of relying entirely on their will to express themselves.

Nearly twenty years after his return to Russia from the United States, where he had lived and worked for about ten years, Konchalovsky gave a lecture in a masterclass for Russian screenwriters and directors. There he talked about his experiences in America and succinctly summarized the differences between American cinema and Soviet or Russian cinema. First, there is the role of the director:

> The director is in Russia (at least he was during the Soviet era) – a fighter, a sufferer, a dictator, an artist. He fights for the freedom of art, he suffers defeats. The more pressure, the more pronounced the feeling of your own importance. And in America I learned that nobody knew anything about me.[32]

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30 See Franz, Norbert "Mobile Menschen und bewegte Bilder." *Kulturelle Mobilitätsforschung.* Potsdam: Universitätsverlag, 2011, p. 53–70.

31 N.N. "Leisurely Peace In Soviet Studio May Be Good or Bad," *Variety* (Weekly), 7 May 1975.

32 Кончаловский, Андрей. *Девять глав о кнно и. т. д.* … Москва: Эксмо 2013, p. 106. [Режиссер в России (в советские времена во всяком случае) – борец, страдалец, диктатор, художник,

In the American system, the director is more of a craftsman who organizes the shooting. The producer who is responsible for the financing, oversees his work and gives him instructions if necessary. Accordingly, the name of the producer is placed much more prominently in the titles than that of the director. Then there are the actors, who – if they are considered stars – know that part of the audience goes to the cinema because of their involvement. They also limit any director's fantasies of omnipotence. Under these conditions, Konchalovsky calls any own style a luxury: "American cinema, which is very effective from the point of view of production, pays for it by the fact that only a few of its masters […] managed to preserve their poetic beginnings, the freedom of expression."[33]

The Soviet directors suffered for the luxury of cultivating their own style because of threatening measures by the authorities after filming was completed: with restrictions on the distribution or even the ban on their films.

> Directors in the USSR never considered money, budgets were decent for that time. You don't have a producer. Nobody. You shoot what you want so that then the picture … is forbidden. But you shot it.
>
> In Hollywood, this is impossible. In Hollywood, they say, if it does not fit, you will never shoot anything.[34]

For the present, he notes that commercial pressure in Hollywood has actually increased. Financial managers have been in charge since the late 1980s. "They only thought in numbers."[35] The production costs would have increased tenfold, from $ 6 million in the 1980s to at least $ 60 million. Every film would have to be planned as a financial success in every detail.

In addition, the audience had changed: the young people had little reading experience, but mostly a preference for video games.

> Therefore, all pictures are similar to video games. Now Hollywood almost no longer makes films about America. He makes exceptions for some leg-

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артист. Он борется за свободу творчества, его давят. Чем больше давление, тем сильнее его ощущение собственной значительности. А в Амертке я увидел, что никто обо мне ничего не знает.]

33 Кончаловский, *Девять глав …*, loc. cit., стр. 105. [Американский кинематограф, очень эффективный с точки зрения производственной, расплачивается за это тем, что только немногие его мастера, […] сумели сохранить свое поэтическое начало, свободу самовыражения.]

34 Кончаловский, *Девять глав …*, loc. cit., стр. 124. [Режиссеры в СССР никогда денег не считали, бюджеты были приличные для того времени. У тебя продюсера нет. Никаго нет. Снимаешь кого хочешь, чтобы потом картину … запретили. Но ты ее снял. В Голливуде это невозможно В Голливуде так говорится если не подходит ты уже никогда не снимешь ничего.]

35 Кончаловский, *Девять глав …*, loc. cit., стр. 123. [Они думали только в цифрах.]

> ends that occur in some kind of quasi-America, but these are films that do not reflect real life.[36]

The Russian audience had another kind of socialization.

> The intensity of feelings among the Russian nation prevails from a rational point of access. As for art, the quality is wonderful for him. Therefore, the viewer of our pictures is so emotional, so grateful. The Western viewer is different: he controls his emotions, his access is Cartesian, his attitude to art in a certain sense is Pirandellian, the elegance of form is valued no less and sometimes no more than the intensity of feeling.[37]

The national element has been lost to Hollywood over the past decades: "Hollywood is an international transnational company like Coca Cola, McDonald's, Pepsi and so on." Nevertheless, this film industry continues to function as an indicator of future-oriented developments. Konchalovsky imagines the cinema of the future to be globally networked.

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36 Кончаловский, *Девять глав …,* loc. cit., стр. 124. [Поэтому все картины похожи на видеоигры. Сейчас Голливуд практрчески больше не снимает фильмов про Америку. Он снимает некие легенды, которые происходят в какой то квази-Америке. Но это уже фильмы, которые не отражают действительной жизни.]

37 Кончаловский, *Девять глав …,* loc. cit., стр. 56. [Интенсивность чувств у российской нации превалирует нал походом рассудочным. Что касается исскуства, то для него качество замечательно: потому и зритель наших картин такой эмоциональный, такой благодарный. Западный зритель иной: он свои эмоции контролирует, его поход картезианский, отношение к искусству в известном смысле пиранделловское, изящество формы ценится не менее а подчас не больше чем интенсиврость чувства.]

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The Path from Hollywood to Moscow and Back to Hollywood: Cinema's History as a Relationship History in Tsirk, Ninotchka, and Other Films

INTRODUCTION

There exist plots or fabulas that one might call "primal" or "primitive," because their underlying patterns of behavior seem to correspond with the structure of a human instinct. Therefore, these plots are largely understandable independent of a specific culture or the degree of familiarity with it, which is generally called "education." For instance, an intruder disturbs the life of a given group or one man competes with another man over a woman. The cultural imprint can be found in the aspects that make up the basic framework of a concrete history, for example, if the sympathies get divided between the protagonists and a solution is offered. Because – as we may presume – the young Count Almaviva, who in Rossini's opera Il Barbiere di Sevilla (1816) takes away Rosina from the old Dr. Bartolo, is a likable man, the audience agrees and rejoices with him. The young man ultimately emerges as the victor in the competition over the woman. Stories like this are likely to attract the sympathy of the audience and lead to demonstrations of solidarity with the protagonist.

Because of the general comprehensibility of the conflict such primitive combinations are used in popular genres, such as opera in the 19th century or film in the 20th century. However, this raises some interesting scholarly questions about the nature of art. Is it only through a clever plot design that a work of art is able to move the spectators, who often are oriented to other values, toward behavioral change and sympathy? That is to say, can art manipulate or can it only strengthen

existing sentiments? This is controversial, but it is obvious that the rulers often fear this aspect of art and react with censorship.[1]

In the heydays of opera, pieces like Il Barbiere di Sevilla were present on the stage in all houses of the European and European-influenced countries. So too, film from its very beginnings was conceived as an international and intercultural medium. The above-mentioned title "the path from Hollywood (and Babelsberg) to Moscow and back to Hollywood" points out that the patterns of cultural practice (genres) were always and still are mobile. These patterns are mobile as the films themselves, and often as people move from one political system to another. None too surprisingly, *moving* pictures also tend to *move* beyond the national borders themselves. They are both structurally and with regards to content quite connected to ideas of mobility. While the organization of movie houses and, not infrequently, the censorship practices of different countries stood and stand in the way of a truly global circulation of films, it is generally true that movies target audiences beyond the borders of their country of production. As a rule, festivals are internationally organized or at least have a category "Best Foreign Film," like the "Oscars." Even from this perspective, it is less than ideal to tell a story of film and cinema in national terms, even if the movies sometimes were (and are) intended to strengthen national consciousness. However, even in such cases the foil for the commitment in nationalist patterns is the international one. The following object of analysis is a case-study. As we shall see, the Soviet Union reacted to the widespread pattern of the newly-created musical comedy films with model movie musicals, to which again Hollywood responded, and later Moscow responded back. Therefore what we have is a small chain-reaction.

1 GRIGORI ALEKSANDROV'S COMEDY Tsirk

The technology of sound film has made the musical film, which blossomed in the United States in the early '30s, possible. Musical films surpassed the shows of the theatres with increasingly exotic locations, professional performances, and always carefully-placed, catchy tunes with which the cinema enticed their audience.

Some years ago, Hans Gunther pointed out that the Soviet musical films were formed precisely at the time when Stalin had indirectly ordered the people "to live more happily."[2] On November 17, 1935 in front of the "Bestworkers" *(stakhanovtsy)* Stalin had proclaimed: "Life has become better, comrades, living has become more

1 For instance, Beaumarchais's second arrangement of the Figaro-story, La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro, was forbidden by Ludwig XVI for nearly six years (1778–1784).

2 Günther, Hans "Von Hollywood zu 'Volga-Volga': Zur Entstehung des hybriden Genres der sowjetischen Filmkomödie," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik,* H. 4 (2007). p. 435.

joyous,"[3] and this watchword was soon spread through all the papers and many posters in all the country. Even the head of the Cinema Department in the Ministry of Education, Bolshevik of the first generation, Boris Shumiatskii, was of the opinion that the Soviet Union should produce more cheerful, easily understandable, and entertaining films. The patterns dominated by *montage,* established by the schools of Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, or Dziga Vertov had seemed to him and others as an intellectual, almost as an elitist concept. In search of models for a Kinematografiya millionov ("Cinematography for Millions")[4], he looked not so much to the Soviet studios, as he did to Hollywood, where in 1935 he had paid a brief visit. The year 1935 marks a turning point in Soviet cinema "from *montage* to *sujet.*"[5] Boris Shumiackii coined the formula of "singing and laughing" for this popular program:

> For the proletarians neither the revolution nor the defense of our socialist homeland are tragedies. We always went singing and laughing into the fights, and we will do so in the future.[6]

Since 1935, the Soviet people had been singing and laughing, because life "had become happier," as Stalin put it. From 1933–1934, Sergei Eisenstein had not taken seriously the early symptoms of this change. Together with his former assistant Grigori Aleksandrov, he had been staying in Hollywood from 1930 to 1932, and after his return to Moscow, he was not willing to make a *sujet*-based musical film to entertain the masses.[7] Therefore Shumiatskii, who apparently did not like particularly Eisenstein,[8] commissioned Aleksandrov in 1934 with the production of a Soviet-style movie musical, which then was called *muzykal'naia kino-komediia* ("comedy musical film"). Aleksandrov got down to work; his first project, however, the film Vesyolye rebyata ("Merry Boys," premiere: December 25, 1934), did not receive the best reviews[9] – but Stalin liked it[10] and Shumiatskii praised it highly in his book. So most critics quickly understood that these films were quite politically desired, and from 1935, they complained – if at all – only about the realization, not the concept.

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3 Жизнь стало лучше, товарищи, жить стало веселее.
4 Shumiatskii, Boris *Kinematografiia millionov.* Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1935.
5 Schumatsky, Boris *Silvester bei Stalin. Die Geschichte einer Familie.* Bodenheim: Philo, 1999, p. 73.
6 Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia,* loc. cit., p. 240. [Ведь ни революция, ни защита социалистического отечества для пролетариата не являются трагедией. В бой мы всегда ходили и не раз пойдем еще в будущем с песней, а порой и со смехом.]
7 When he tried to film a movie on a completely "politically correct" theme (the Pavlik-Morozov-Story) entitled *Bezhin lug,* but this film could not be completed.
8 Cfr. Schumatsky, *Silvester bei Stalin,* loc. cit., p. 65.
9 Cfr. Günther, "Von Hollywood zu 'Volga-Volga'" loc. cit., p. 437.
10 Cfr. Schumatsky, *Silvester bei Stalin,* loc. cit., p. 61.

In the spring of 1936 Aleksandrov's second musical comedy film, Tsirk ("The Circus"), was presented in the cinemas. It was largely praised, for example by the Tur brothers, who on May 23, 1936 wrote in *Izvestiia:*

> This is a bright and cheerful film, filled with the spirit of our joyful and happy life. How very different this comedy is to the endless series of mindless foreign "comedies," full of vaudeville nonsense and pathos blows to the back of the head! *The Circus* is a clever comedy, addressed to the intellect and sense of the Soviet viewer.[11]

What is this "bright and cheerful film" about? The fair-skinned American actress Marion Dikson (Mary Dixon) is accosted in the US and even physically attacked, once it comes to light that she has a child with dark skin. When the Soviet polar pilot and circus performer Martynov falls in love with her and she with him during a guest performance in Moscow, she separates from her German (or at least German-born) impresario fon Kneishits (von Kneischitz). During a performance at the Moscow Circus, fon Kneishits tries to blackmail her with the supposed "racial shame" by presenting the child to a house full of circus spectators, but the Soviet citizens of different origins in attendance find the little black boy simply sweet. Fon Kneishits understands that he has lost his position and Marion Dikson officially joins the May Day parade.

The screenplay is based on the stage play Pod kupolom tsirka ("Under the Circus Big Top"), which Il'f, Petrov and Kataev had drafted and premiered on December 23, 1934.[12] According to one version, Aleksandrov surprised the authors Il'f and Petrov, as they returned from their extended trip to America, with the nearly completed film. In another version, the two authors (and probably still Isaak Babel[13]) also wrote the screenplay, but later they didn't agree over the ideological orientation of the film anymore.[14]

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11 Brat'ja Tur (= Leonid Davidovič Tubel'skij and Petr L'vovič Ryžej) "Cirk", *Izvestija,* May 23, 1936. [Это – светлыйи веселый фильм, проникнутый дыханиемнашей радостной и счастливой жизни. Как разительно отличается эта комедия от весконечной вереницу бездумных заграничных "комедий", полных водевильной чепухи и пафоса подзатыльников! "Цирк" – умная комедия, адресованная к интеллекту и чувству советского зрителя.]

12 Il'f, Il'ia, Evgenii Petrov, and Valentin Kataev *Pod kupolom tsirka.* http://lib.ttknet.ru/lat/IL F PETROV/ilf_sc.txt_Piece40.04.

13 Cfr. Saprykina, Ol'ga "'Tsirk' zazhigaet ogni", *Moskovskii komsomolets.* Apr. 1, 2007. (http://www.mk.ru/blogs/idmk/2007/04/01/Atmosphere/94989).

14 The authors of ISK put it this way: "The director turned to the musical Review […] and submitted it to a radical remodeling. During the setting of the film there arouse a conflict which let the writers refuse from authorship, and their names were removed from the credits." (Institut istorii iskusstv ministerstva kul'tury SSSR [ed.] *Istoriia sovetskogo kino, 1917–1967.* V chetyrekh tomakh. Moskva 1973). [Режиссер обратился к музикальному обозрению […] и при участки авто-

Il'f, Petrov and Kataev had written a satirical comedy in which they ridiculed amongst others the domination of ideology as it had become customary since 1928, the beginning of RAPP's dictatorship. Thus, at the very first appearance of the three clowns, they tell the circus' director that they had prepared a script of 40 pages full of ideology for the dog Brungil'da:

> Buka: Ideology in two words is impossible. Marx wrote three volumes, but we put it all in forty pages … Please, look, we have taken into account the specific nature of the dog. Here it is! *(Pulls the manuscript out of the hands of the director and reads).* "We destroy the old wor-r-r-r-r-ld." What's wrong with that? But listen to what's next: "We built up the new wor-r-r-r-ld."[15]

Also, the usual requirement that one must recognize the Soviet reality is ridiculed in the play. The ringmaster finds himself confronted with a notice in the newspaper:

> Director: Well, comrades, they seized me by the trunk. Please read the magazine page seventh line from the top *(A page of a newspaper appears on the screen.)* "In a time when the organized spectator goes to the circus to work out a number of topical issues in an entertaining form, they slip him a ballet, which is not composed of elderly working women, which is typical of our age, but of young and even beautiful (!) women. We must stop this unhealthy eroticism …"[16]

Compared with the positions of 1934, which are visible in the play, the film of 1937 is already a product of a new era: it abstains from all polemics against the revolutionary rigor of the late 1920s and places the new lifestyle of the 1930s as simply a given. Here, no one is fighting against the revolutionary asceticism, the battle has already been won. Yet, the basic ideological message of the film is basically the same as in the play: The new times are better and more joyful.

ров приступил к его радикальной переработке. В процессе постановки фильма произошел конфликт, в результате которого писатели отказались от авторства и сняли с титров свои имена.]

15 Бука. Идеологии в двух словах не бывает. Маркс написал три тома а мы уложили все это в сорок страниц. […] Пожалуйста, мы учли собачью специфику. Вот! *(Вырывает у директора рукопись и читает.)* "Разрушим старый мир р-р-р, р-р-р". Чем плохо? А еще вот: "Построим новый мир, р-р-р, р-р-р". (Il'f/Petrov, loc. cit.).

16 Директор. Ну, тоаврищи, меня взяли за хобот. Пожалуйста, читаете, седьмая строка сверху. *(На экране журнальная страница.)* "В то время как организованный зритель приходит в цирк, чтобы проработать в занимательной форме ряд актуальных вопросов, ему подсовывают балет, состоящий не из пожилых трудяхщийся женщин, типичных для нашей эпохи, а из молодых и даже красивых женщин (!). Надо покочить с этой нездоровой эротикой. […]" (Ibid.).

The film, however, has a complicated relationship to its genre. It is not simply an American Musical translated into Soviet relations, it styled itself as a vast improvement upon the original. The Soviets also saw surpassing the pattern coming from the west as the fulfillment of the genre-ideal, since in the Soviet film the entertainment arises from the political action instead of merely genre convention. Eisenstein had already claimed that the Soviet montage technique is superior to the US – because this technique was connected with the correct political attitude.[17] Analogously, Aleksandrov also exceeds the pattern he had found in Hollywood by politicizing it. He makes obvious that entertainment should not be an end in itself, but the precursor of policy, and that only under the right political conditions is serious entertainment possible, i.e. an entertainment that ceases to be merely entertainment. Thus, the reviewers wanted Tsirk to be regarded as a movie in a serious film genre:

> Casting aside the trivial, bourgeois-craftsmen scheme of art, their banal viewpoint, the Soviet artist was able to elevate the small personal tragedy of a circus *artiste* to real suffering and genuine humanity.[18]

Entertainment should not be the goal of a Soviet film, that is why the theory conceals the idea of outdoing the genre, but, in fact, it does not disappear, especially since the competition is so strongly present at the subject level. It finds expression, for example, in the Soviet circus *Polet v stratosferu* ("Flight into the stratosphere"), which is clearly superior to the earlier American number shown *Polet na lunu* ("Flight to the Moon"). The Soviets not only possess a bigger and more handsome cannon and a more ambitious flight goal, but also the American's solo dance is surpassed by the Soviet show with its collective elements, in which the star, so to speak, "steps from the I to the We". Hence, at first she sings alone, but later she sings as part of a chorus.

The first performance is multi-coded, because Marion Dikson is dancing in a black wig. Therefore, she does not dance as herself, but as a persona. We can read this as a sign that dance is alienating work in America. On the other hand, the dance clearly shows the state of Western music-comedy film: Marion Dik-

17 "Thus it was to be expected that our concept of montage had to be born from an entirely different 'image' of an understanding of phenomena which is opened to us by a world view both monistic and dialectic." (Eisenstein, Sergei *Film forum. Essays on film theory,* ed. and transl. by Jay Leyda. San Diego et al.: Harcourt, 1949, p. 235). Совершенно так же естественно, что наша концепция монтажа должна была родиться из совершенно иного "образа" понимания явлений, которое нам открыло мировоззрение монистическое и диалектическое. […] (Ėjzenštejn, Sergej "Dikkens Griffit i my", (http://www.fedy-diary.ru/html/052012/16052012-02a.html – Jan. 19, 2019).

18 Tur loc. cit. [Отбросив прочь тривиальную схему ремесленников мещанского исскуства, их пошлый угол зрения, советский художник сумел возвысить маленькую личную трагедию цирковой артистки до подлинных стастей и натоящей человечности.]

son cites the "attractive Lola" [fig. 1] from the first German movie musical, Der blaue Engel ("The Blue Angel"), directed by Josef von Sternberg in 1930. The scene photo where Marlene Dietrich is sitting cross-legged on a barrel became a short cipher for the entire movie [fig. 2].[19] While dancing Lyubov' Orlova playing Marion Dikson quotes this same pose. In addition, Marlene Dietrich in Morocco (1930) had played a woman caught between two men, the rich La Bessiere (Adolphe Monjou)[20] and the poor Tom Brown (Gary Cooper). It is certainly no coincidence that the role of Marion Dikson has the same initials as Marlene Dietrich: MD. This is an innovation of the screen adaptation, since in the play the heroine's name was Alina.

Fig. 1: TSIRK – Marion Dikson dancing

Fig. 2: DER BLAUE ENGEL

A clown also belongs to the American crew there, who plays a Charlie Chaplin-like character. In 1928, Chaplin had produced a silent film, The Circus, which also involved the competition of two men for one woman – in this instance, the step-daughter of the director. Thus, the references are diverse, but most importantly from the Soviet perspective, there are no fundamental differences between Babelsberg (Dietrich) and Hollywood (Chaplin), but only a single Western model, which is destined to be surpassed by the Soviet Union.[21]

As a Lola-quotation, Dikson must appear scantily-clothed (selling her sex appeal). However, at Martynov's side in the later Soviet circus number, she is allowed to wear a long dress (only the chorus girls remain scantily clothed). When

19 In the 1930s this pose was used on posters and other advertising material, mainly in the USA.

20 With his tiny moustache fon Kneishits quotes Monjou, but his hair and his appearance are a little Hitler-like.

21 The idea that the clown figure with the Chaplin mask refers to American cinema becomes still more plausible, if you consider that Shumiatskii visiting Hollywood had met Charles Chaplin personally. He says he had persuaded him to give the film Modern Times a more optimistic ending. (Šumatsky: *Silvester bei Stalin* …, loc. cit., p. 58/59. There also a photo on p. 169).

she marches with the others in the parade, she is wearing the same clothes as the others: a white, turtleneck sweater.

Fig. 3: TSIRK – Dikson and Martynov

The film-modeled structural competition between Soviet Russia and the capitalist West has the basic archetypal subject as its foundation: two men vying for one woman.[22] The starting positions of the characters are not equal. On the one hand, fon Kneishits, originally from the West, is indeed an unromantic, but proven, partner for Marion Dixon. On the other hand, her beloved Martynov has yet to put his professionalism as an artist to the test. They represent two men, two phenotypes, two characters, two worlds.[23] While fon Kneishits is dark-haired, thin[24] and neat, Martynov is blonde, naturally powerful and has a rather simple elegance. Fon Kneishits is devious and underhanded, Martynov is upright. Although America/Europe may have had a lead in terms of seduction, Soviet Russia still wins the race in the end. The blonde heroine recognizes her true partner in the blonde Soviet hero [fig. 3]. He is the partner for singing duets, working together, and having a shared future. Wooing the woman is charged with new meaning at a variety of different levels. She not only chooses the more robust partner, but also one that has a heart and a mind, and he is first and foremost a patriotic Soviet citizen. In addition, he is a hero, a polar pilot, one of those who had sheltered the crew of the research ship *Cheliuskin* from the Arctic ice in the spring of 1934. Naturally, he cannot be discouraged by an accident under the big top.

22 The aspects of the fairy tale have been shown by Taylor, Richard "'But Eastward, Look, the Land is Brighter.' Toward a Topography of Utopia in the Stalinist Musical" in Dobrenko, Evgeny and Eric Naiman (eds.) *The Landscape of Stalinism. The Art an Ideology of Soviet Space.* Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003, 201–218.

23 On the difference see Visani, Federica "La figura dell'Altro nelle commedie musicali di Grigorij Aleksandrov." *grisaldaonline. Portale di letteratura.* (http://www.griseldaonline.it/percorsi/visani.htm).

24 He must be inflated by his clown in order to expand to an imposing stature (TC 0:45:51 ff.).

As often happens in musicals and in the birds' kingdom, music plays a special role and the male with the better voice usually carries off the victory. In a room overlooking the Red Square for almost five minutes (TC 0:21:25 to 0:26:10), Marion and Martynov sing "The Song of the Great Soviet Homeland" at a polished, concert-grade, grand piano.[25] The song was composed by Isaac Dunaevskii, who received the Stalin Prize for it in 1941, and that song became a sort of unofficial anthem of the Soviet Union for years to come.

Like in the *opera buffa,* everyone finds their counterpart at the end, and the story ends in a big final chorus, where all hierarchical differences are lifted – an important function of the identical uniforms. In contrast to opera, however, the main chorus is explicitly political.

As Alexander Prokhorov, Beth Holgrem and Salys Rimgaila have shown in a 2007 issue of *Russian Review,*[26] the film builds certain political myths of the Stalin era, particularly the myth of the Soviet Union as a great family of nations.[27] In ascending rows of circus spectators we see many different Soviet people represented: men and women, young and old, civilians and service personnel. We also see different phenotypes and nationalities: blondes, brunettes and dark-haired people, Slavs, Caucasians and others that cannot be mapped so easily. Many of them take the dark-skinned child in their arms, and sing him a few verses of a lullaby.[28] In the theory of "socialism in one country," the family of Soviet peoples is a prototype and model for the future harmony of nations that will come after the world revolution. The Soviet Union already lives the way that one day everyone will live. That is why the Soviet family of nations can, in fact, fully integrate the seemingly strange child (or even a polka-dotted one, according to the circus director). As the Tur brothers emphasize in their review: "Our homeland is the mother of all working people of all nationalities and skin colors."[29]

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25 On the role of the music in Soviet entertainment culture see: Stadelmann, Matthias "'O, wie gut ist es, im sowjetischen Land zu leben' – Unterhaltungskultur als gesellschaftliches Integrationsmoment im stalinistischen System", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* 30 (2004), 74–93.

26 Prokhorov, Alexander "Revisioning Aleksandrov's *Circus:* Seventy Years of the Great Family", *Russian Review,* Vol. 66, Issue 1 (January 2007), 1–4. Holmgren, Beth "*The Blue Angel* and Blackface: Redeeming Entertainment in Aleksandrov's *Circus*", *Russian Review,* Volume 66, Issue 1 (January 2007), 5–22. Rimgaila, Salys "Art Deco Aesthetics in Grigorii Aleksandrov's *The Circus*", *Russian Review,* Volume 66, Issue 1 (January 2007), 23–35.

27 The myth of the great family of peoples was – among other reasons – so central, because on the one hand it flattered Stalin, the former Commissioner on Nationality affairs, on the other hand, apparently, the real conflicts among soviet nationalities could be appeased.

28 The artificiality of the ideological construction is shown by the fact that the actor and later chairman of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, Solomon Mikhoëls, who is singing some verses of the cradle in Yiddish with a partner, was cut from the film in 1948 (after the "accident", i.e. the murder of Mikhoëls).

29 Tur, loc.cit., p. 3. [мать трудящихся всех национальностей и цветой кожи.]

This film could also be seen as an international challenge. Tsirk was an implicit invitation to the Soviet people to laugh more, or at least it was promoted this way in the Soviet Union. It earned the "Best Film" award and 28 million viewers saw it in the year 1938 alone. Three years later, it won (along with Volga-Volga, also directed by Aleksandrov) a First-Class Stalin Prize award.

Soon Tsirk was also used for purposes of foreign policy. In the year 1937 the World's Fair was held in Paris, where the now Nazi-dominated Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union openly competed with each other. This was clearly visible in the opposing pavilions.[30] The country that thought itself to be better than any other country in the world should not only have the most beautiful and dynamic exhibition pavilion, it was even supposed to convince its audience with better films. During the exhibition, there were screenings in the cinemas of Paris – but apparently not with the success that the organizers desired. Soviet newspapers remained silent, the German ones on the second page reported

> […] mostly about the local failures of the Soviet films. They were watching the expansion of the Russians with their films, who wanted to rent a film theater on the Champs Elysees (Pigalle) and build ten new cinemas in the province, in which only Soviet films would be shown.[31] The 'German House' had a magnificent cinema with 240 seats, while the Russian cinema even had 400 seats. They were the two largest competitors of cinemas at the fair.[32]

One of the films shown there was Tsirk, which received an award.[33] In view of this, it seems quite probable that the closing scenes of the film were coordinated with Aleksandr Deineka's famous painting Znatnye liudi sovetskoi strany, AKA Stakhanovtsy ("The important people of the Soviet state", AKA "The Stakhanovits"). This picture as a fresco had characterized the end wall of the Soviet pavilion of 1937.[34] The similarities with the final scenes of Tsirk go down to the

30 The many higher "German House" was crowned by a huge eagle (Reichsadler), and the well-known sculpture Rabochii i kolkhoznitsa by Vera Muchina stood on the Soviet building. The two figures seem to run against the Reichsadler. (Cfr. Swift, Anthony "Soviet Socialism on Display at the Paris and New York World's Fairs, 1937 and 1939", in Czech, Hans-Jörg and Nikola Doll (eds.) *Kunst und Propaganda im Streit der Nationen 1930–1945.* Dresden: Sandstein, 2007, 182–190, here p. 183 and Zopf, Maria Christina *Die sowjetischen Pavillons der Weltausstellungen 1937 und 1939.* Hamburg: Diss. phil., 1993.).

31 In the newspaper *Licht – Bild – Bühne,* June 15 and July 2, 1937 (Bulgakowa's footnote).

32 Bulgakowa, Oksana "Film-Phantasien im Wettbewerb", in Antonova, Irina and Jörn Merkert (eds.) *Berlin – Moskau 1900–1950.* München: Prestel, 1995, 361–365, here p. 364.

33 Saprykina *Cirk,* loc. cit. claims – without proving it, however – that even Adolf Hitler liked the film.

34 Photo in: Swift, *Soviet Socialism,* loc. cit., p. 186.

details. At the current state of research, the only question that remains open is whether the oil painting of 1936 (preserved at the Art Museum of Perm') or a pilot study had influenced Aleksandrov's film or if Aleksandrov's film had influenced the painter.

Fig. 4: TSIRK – Parade

Fig. 5: Dejneka: STACHANOVTSY

2 ERNST LUBITSCH'S NINOTCHKA: THE HOLLYWOOD RESPONSE

Since the Soviet foreign policy had used the film TSIRK intensely as a medium of self-expression, one may assume with almost near certainty that Ernst Lubitsch, who in 1922 had emigrated from Berlin to the United States, knew the film. Even when he had said that the Hollywood studio replica of Paris was more beautiful than the real thing, it must be expected that he had noticed German and Soviet competition of films held in the real Paris too.[35] In addition, in the spring of 1937 after he had already spent a month in the Soviet Union on the invitation of Shumiatskii, and it is well known that as an official guest,[36] he had to see lots of movies. According to his wife's testimony, some of the Moscow impressions have been reflected directly in the film NINOTCHKA, which was made in 1939 Hollywood:

35 At least the song of the far motherland was so well known during the war years that in the USA the Soviet-friendly Hollywood productions of the early 1940s, THE BATTLE OF RUSSIA and MISSION TO MOSCOW, were able to cite the song as typically soviet (See Robinson, Harlow. *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians.* Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 2007, p. 125). Consequently, it is also in the film NORTH STAR (1943) with a new American text by Ira Gershwin to promote American-Soviet friendship during the war. I am grateful to Bryan Herman for this reference.

36 The Minister of Foreign Affairs Litvinov even took the Lubitschs to the May parade on the platform of honors. The director was only a few meters away from Stalin.

> In Moscow, Gustav and Ilse von Wangenheim[37] invited us for dinner in their apartment, which was split up as he later showed in NINOTCHKA.[38]

The screenplay, written by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder and Walter Reisch, was based on an idea of the Hungarian, Melchior Lengyel, who had emigrated from Germany in 1934.[39] The fact that the film in its final version actually responds to TSIRK can indirectly be demonstrated by its genesis.

In 1937, Lengyel had left the studio Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer a narrative of 33 pages. The story told of Nina Yakushova, the young leader of a Soviet Foreign Trade Commission leading negotiations in Paris, who grows intimately close to Leon D'Agoult, the French head of delegation. Through her rigorous insisting on the initial negotiating positions she had not managed to come to an agreement, even though she knows that she thereby is harming the man she loves. The failure of the negotiations even causes a government crisis in France. Returning to Moscow, she reaps no praise for her steadfastness, but rather as a punishment she is sent to Tbilisi. The highest ranks carefully delve into whether there is any way to repair the situation, and France sends a delegation with Leon D'Agoult to Moscow, where he complains that nothing can be done without Yakushova's expertise. Once she is involved again, the negotiations are successful, and Leon requests that Ninotchka become a "prize" for the successful completion of the talks. When the authorities give her to him, the two marry and take the train from the still icy Moscow to Paris where it is already springtime.

Here the Ninotchka of the first draft (still written as "Ninotshka") is simply believing in theories and is inexperienced, and also, most importantly, in love. When on the first night she goes with Leon to his apartment, she acts as if it was completely natural.

> The situation is extremely interesting – the exact opposition to the conventional situation. Usually it is the man's lust that demands swift satisfaction, and the woman who delays, prolongs, puts off things.… He wants to raise the adventure to the lofty stature of love … He wants Ninotshka to understand what love is.[40]

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37 The von Wangenheim family were political emigrants. The director, actor and screenwriter Gustav von Wangenheim had left Germany as a member of the DKP in the early 1930s, and worked among others in Moscow directing the film BORTSI (1935).

38 Quoted from Renk, Hertha-Elisabeth *Ernst Lubitsch.* Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992. p. 98 [In Moskau luden uns Gustav und Ilse von Wangenheim zum Essen in ihre Wohnung, die ganz so aufgeteilt war, wie er es dann in NINOTCHKA gezeigt hat.].

39 Lengyel (1880–1974) was able to sell some works to the studios through the mediation of Lubitsch, whom he knew from Berlin.

40 *Ninotshka. An Original Screenplay by Melchior Lengyel.* Copied in the Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer Script Department. August 5, 1937. Unpublished typescript in the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences (B 2325), Beverly Hills, CA. P. 9/10.

It is later said about this Ninotchka:

> Ninotshka starts to laugh. … And she tells him, with a shy embarrassment, that he is going to be the first man in her life.[41]

Still later Lengyel suggested introducing a certain Stephanie as a rival for Leon's favor (the prototype for the later Swana). Gottfried Reinhardt (1913–1994), the son of director Max Reinhardt, who in 1932 had remained in Hollywood, on 3 January 1938 presented some not so politically inoffensive improvements for the Moscow based scenes – the whole design of the story, however, remained largely apolitical, as Lengyel had emphasized in his foreword.[42]

> The subject of this story is completely non-political. …The story does not attempt to be more than a tender, amazing human comedy.[43]

The fact that this comedy was announced as completely apolitical still became a highly political rejection of the Soviet *way of life*. This can only be explained by the fact that from mid-1937 the filmmakers, and especially the director, knew more about the soviet ideological self-image and the everyday reality reflected in films like Tsirk, with its small and large intimidations (show trials).

The roles of the basic conflict in Tsirk are reversed in the finally realized version of Ninotchka: A Soviet activist is so impressed by the ideal and material achievements of the West that after returning to the Soviet Union, she no longer feels comfortable there and at the next occasion to travel she remains in the West. In his wooing of the woman, the man from the West does not have to compete with a concrete Soviet rival, but with the *sovetskii obraz zhizni* ("Soviet way of life"), which has labelled as negative everything that is available to him for his courtship: great emotions, dreams, privacy, luxury that flatters the feminine sensibilities… All that the Soviet activist thinks is decadent. In sum, the film tells the story how the Soviet values are gradually eroded and replaced.

The Soviet citizens Iranoff[44], Buljanoff and Kopalsky are charged to sell the jewels of the Russian imperial family in Paris. Count Leon d'Algout (sic, with a lowercase "d"[45]), a friend of the Russian Grand Duchess Swana who is living in

41 *Ninotshka. An Original Screen Story …,* loc. cit., p. 11.

42 And Charles Green jr confirmed in a report: "As the author indicates in a foreword, the international background has no political implication, it is used only as a motive for the plot." Unpublished typescript in the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences (B 2325), Beverly Hills, CA.

43 *Ninotshka. An Original Screen Story …,* loc. cit., p. 1.

44 The orthography of the names follows the script.

45 In the French aristocracy the families with large "D" are regarded as particularly distinguished (Elder nobility).

Paris, manages to thwart the sale and to corrupt the emissaries with the pleasant life of Paris. Moscow finally sends a special agent Nina (Ninotchka) Ivanovna Yakushova, with whom Leon falls seriously in love. Yakushova also falls in love with him, although only after a lengthy wooing, which makes Swana jealous again. Swana makes an agreement with her rival that she will not claim the jewels if Yakushova departs without ever seeing Leon again. Interestingly enough, it turns out that boys are a girl's best friend instead of diamonds. Yet, Nina cannot live in Moscow without thinking of Paris. When during a new stay abroad Iranoff, Buljanoff and Kopalsky are creating problems in Istanbul, Yakushova is sent after them again with a special order. In the meantime, however, Leon goes to meet her there. This time all four Soviet citizens remain abroad.

While the men are quickly diverted from the path of Soviet virtues with good food, champagne and nice cigarette girls[46], the heroine first has to discover her own feelings and learn to follow them before she can liberate herself from the ideological guidelines. Instead of concentrating exclusively on the jealousy story of the Swana-Leon-Ninotchka-triangle, the finalized film shifts the focus from wooing away the woman to a discussion of competing ways of life – an aspect that was entirely lacking in Lengyel's text.

Thus, despite the filmmaker's impression that it was not a political film, it was nonetheless in direct conflict with the Soviet Union. What the Soviet propaganda of the mid-30s had actually promoted as female role models is clearly distinguishable from what was *in vogue* in the 1920s. The 1930s' image of women was much more orientated toward earlier bourgeois values which had been denounced earlier, such as home and family, without neglecting, however, the state's expectation of productive labor. Ninotchka polemicizes – as Il'f and Petrov do in Pod kupolom tsirka – with concepts that are the past already in actual policies. In

Fig. 6: NINOTCHKA – Arrival

46 The scene is typical of Lubitsch: the camera is shooting from the hall when a girl leaves the room screaming. After a few moments she comes back with two female colleagues, and all three enter the room chatting. Since the camera remains outside, and the viewer has to interpret from the dialog alone.

her contempt for traditional forms of men's wooing to attract women, Yakushova better resembles the earlier activists from the mold of Aleksandra Kollontai than the ideal Soviet female citizens of the 1930s [fig. 6].

The comedy draws part of its effect from Ninotchka's initially grotesque identification with the reality of the Soviet show trials and the extorted confessions. Such dialogues as these have become famous:

> Buljanoff: How are things in Moscow?
> Ninotchka: The last mass trials were a great success. There are going to be fewer but better Russians. (TC 0:19:25)[47]

Or take the pun on the double meaning of the word "confess":

> Ninotchka: I feel happy, oh, I feel happy. No one can be so happy without being punished. I will be punished and I should be punished. Leon, I want to confess …
> Leon: I know, the Russian Soul …
> Ninotchka: No, everybody wants to confess … And if they don't confess, they make them confess. I am a traitor. When I kissed you, I betrayed a Russian ideal. I should be stood against a wall. (TC 1:08:20)[48]

These witty jabs are a black-humored rejection of the propaganda image of the Soviet Union as "the freest of all free countries" outlined in Tsirk. The refrain of the "Song of the Motherland" (Pesnia o Rodine) says:

Широка страна моя родная.	Wide is my native country (motherland-her?),
Много в ней лесов, полей и рек,	There are many forests, fields, and rivers in it
Я другой такой страны не знаю,	I know of no other country
Где так вольно дышит человек.	Where a person breathes so freely.

Especially the "free breathing" is not possible in Moscow, even in private life. Anna, a roommate in Ninotchka's room in a close communal apartment, said about another inhabitant:

47 See *Ninotchka. A Viking Filmbook*. Screenplay by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder, and Charles Reisch. (MGM Library of Filmscripts), New York, 1972, p. 24. The copy of the original script in the Margaret Herrick Library shows that this update was not included in the script until May 31, 1939.

48 My transcript (N.F.) of the published screenplay is a bit more laconic (*Ninotchka, A Viking Filmbook* …, loc. cit., p. 74/75).

> Anna: That Gurganov, you never know if he's on his way to the washroom or the Secret Police.[49]

Marion Dikson's integration into socialist society as demonstrated by her participation in a parade makes it necessary to show Ninotchka in a parade as well. Yet, in Ninotchka this has become an empty duty which she carries out with none of the joy that Marion Dikson possessed [fig. 7].

In Ninotchka, the idea of collectivity is present in the Trio of Iranoff, Buljanoff and Kopalsky. They always appear together and they always put their heads together to consult [fig. 8]. It is only in the closing scenes of the film when they have

Fig. 7: NINOTCHKA – Parade

Fig. 8: NINOTCHKA – collectivity

been emancipated from the Soviet context and open a restaurant that their group starts breaking apart as well. They do not need the collective anymore, which turns out to be nothing more than a compulsory socialist institution.

Initially Ninotchka is shown as a frigid Soviet citizen who despises luxury and is only interested in technical statistics. Lubitsch introduces the transformation of this special agent with his own famous touch. Scarcely having arrived in Paris, she sees something in a shop window:

> Ninotchka: What's that?
> Kopalsky: It's a hat, Comrade, a woman's hat.
> Ninotchka *(shakes her head)*: Tsk, tsk, tsk, how can such a civilisation survive which permits women to put things like that on their head. It won't be long now, Comrades. (TC 0:19:50)[50]

49 *Ninotchka, A Viking Filmbook* …, loc. cit., p. 98.
50 *Ninotchka, A Viking Filmbook,* … loc. cit., p. 25.

About 20 minutes later (TC 0:49:50), she closes the doors, takes the hat out of the closet, sits up and (benevolently!) looks at herself in the mirror [fig. 9].[51] In her

Fig. 9: NINOTCHKA – The new hat

opinion love, too, is merely a physiological matter – an obvious gibe of the theories of Aleksandra Kollontai. She considers flirtatious men, like Leon, obsolete:

> Ninotchka: We don't have men like you in my country.
> Leon: Thank you.
> Ninotchka: That is why I believe in the future of my country.[52]

Already at the train station she had rebuked the trio: "Don't make an issue of my womanhood." Later in Moscow, she is angry that her fellow citizens reproach her for her silk underwear, but in Paris she has experienced that love has to do with privacy and personality. In Lubitsch's film, emotional emancipation is a prerequisite for Ninotchka to become a person who is independent of ideological presuppositions. Whereas Aleksandrov lets his heroine Marion Dikson change to a different ideological front because in Moscow she has found a friendly environment for herself, her child, and the man she loves, in Ninotchka Lubitsch questions whether a real love is possible at all under the conditions of a lived ideology. Finally, Ninotchka does not change from the commercially-impoverished socialism to a lavish capitalism, but from an ideological dictatorship to a free self-determination of the private. Hence, she does not make the final transformation in Paris, but rather in Istanbul.

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51 Billy Wilder about the episode: "That's pure Lubitsch – total simplicity!" (Sidkov, Ed *On Sunset Boulevard: The Life and Times of Billy Wilder,* New York: Hyperion, 1998, p. 135). This scene did not enter the script until May 31, 1939.

52 The script simply says: "You are something we do not have in Russia" (*Ninotchka. A Viking Filmbook …,* loc. cit., p. 26/37).

Both films utilize stereotypes. On the one hand, this is due to the genre. Since a film comedy is built around jokes, it cannot develop differentiated characters. On the other hand, the stereotype is also a product of the ideological clash: racism stands against internationalism, individuality against collectivism. Both films denounce the value system of the respective ideological opponent and affirm their own. To win over the other's woman is a victory of one's own system. In addition, both films deny each other the ability to make a really good musical/a really good musical movie comedy. The dialogue that the films espouse is not a friendly one.

As the review by the Tur brothers showed, Tsirk was considered an exemplary response ("art") to the American musical film ("craft"). In Ninotchka, Lubitsch rejects the Aleksandrov (or Shumiatskii) model of a Soviet comedy (love, music, and laughter) as such. As the third stanza of the "Song of the Homeland" put it:

И никто на свете не умеет,	And no one in the world can
Лучше нас смеяться и любить …	laugh and love better than we can …

On the other hand, in Lubitsch's concept music belongs to individual freedom and intimacy. During Ninotchka's visits to Leon's apartment, each time he puts on a record (TC 0:31:20 and 0:54:31)[53]. In Moscow there is only the marching music to the parade. When Ninotchka wants to listen to the music on the radio in her apartment, she searches in vain for the few stations. Yet, she finds only speeches: "No music …" (TC 1:32:09). If she wants music with her guests, she has to sing herself while thinking of Paris (TC 1:34:56). There is no laughter at all in Moscow. In the beginning, Ninotchka is absolutely humorless and Leon tries to make her laugh by all means possible in a small restaurant. Only when he clumsily falls out of a chair does she laugh at the top of her voice, and this laughter (TC 0:46:55 – about a third of the way into the film) is the turning point for her character development. When, after a night of dancing, she happily and slightly tipsily lies in her bed, she even thinks she is able to make Lenin smile, whose picture is beside her bed, ([fig. 10] TC 1:13:45). Repression does not allow for a real musical comedy. The fact that Greta Garbo (since 1928 called "the divine"), who had been highly regarded as a star since 1927, played the leading role certainly was a contributing factor to the success of the film. Surely with ulterior motives to break her typecasting, she had expressed the wish to act under the direction of Lubitsch and she was indeed able to free herself from her image as an inaccessible tragic actor. The latter image had been so closely linked to her name that the mere announcement

53 Even in Lengyel's first version, Leon puts on Puccini's *La Bohème*.

of "Garbo laughs"[54] lured the audience into the cinemas. In 1939, she was nominated for an Oscar for the role of Ninotchka.

Fig. 10: NINOTCHKA – Smiling Lenin

3 THE HARDENING OF IDEOLOGY

With the end of the war, the former American and Soviet allies had become highly-armed opponents in a war which neither of the two sides dared to lead openly or directly, known as the "Cold War". This confrontation was more intense on the ideological level than the battlefield. Both countries firmly pledged their populations to their own values and their respective superiority in the global conflict. In this context in 1950, Josef von Sternberg varied the same love-triangle plot under these more severe conditions in a film by RKO-Studios called JET PILOT.

The action of the film begins when the Soviet pilot Anna Marladovna crosses the Bering Strait in a practice flight and lands in Alaska on a base of the US Air Force, where she asks for political asylum. Major Jim Shannon, a pilot himself, is commissioned to look after the attractive young woman and, if necessary, to seduce her to find out what her true motives are. The two find themselves falling for each other and respectively bond over their common passion for aviation. On a trip to the fashionable Palm Springs (California), Jim gives dresses to Anna as a gift, but when he receives the order to bring Anna back immediately so that she can be sent back as a spy, he makes a short detour via Yuma (Arizona), where he hurriedly marries her, since the wife of an American cannot be deported. Yet back on his base, he is forced to accept the evidence of Anna's espionage activity in the form of a voice recording. He suggests to his superior that he fly to Siberia with Anna as her husband, both to play the defector and to spy on the Soviets. In Sibe-

54 The announcement worked as a self-quotation. Garbo had her first role in a sound film in ANNA CHRISTIE (1930), which was advertised as "Garbo talks."

ria, Anna discovers that her husband is now spying, but she does not betray him. When she learns that he is being exchanged for captured Soviet agents, but he is to be poisoned before this because he had seen too much, Anna finally flees with him from Siberia to the United States again.

On the one hand, the film attracts attention to the flight scenes with the newly completed fighter jets of the day, which were recorded with such great technical perfection as had never been seen before in the cinema.[55] On the other hand, the hero comes alive through the tension between his espionage activity and the genuineness of his feelings for Anna. The audience knows that in the milieu of espionage, honesty is not a virtue, and hence the viewer cannot be sure until the final scenes that the protagonists really feel and think what they say. This ambiguity (both professional and/or private) has a certain charm. For example, Shannon's masculinity (played by John Wayne) leaves no clear interpretation: Is he also, as a private person, one for rather rude jokes[56] or is he merely fulfilling his role in the male-dominated world of the military? The symbolic order of the film provides a male-connoted superiority for America and its social and economic system, to which the female-embodied Soviet Union cannot help but subordinate itself. As long as both are still in military service, the chosen combination for Jet pilot leaves no distinction between the political system and private life, just as it is fruitfully rendered for the plot in Ninotchka. The Cold War is a war as well, that is why the differentiation remains perpetuated for the time after military service.

The Soviet Union, as shown in the film, is a fundamentally inhuman system, while the US is a place associated with freedom, although potentially for spies as well law-abiding citizens. Anna is ultimately convinced that the United States has the better political system because of the way in which suspected renegades are treated. The higher standard of living is an important part of this as well. American cigarettes, American coffee and foods all make up an unbeatable propaganda,[57] not to mention the wide selection of clothing. One of the accessories purchased is a hat which Anna puts on and looks at herself in the mirror, saying "It's per-

55 Because of this perfection, it took almost seven years to complete the shooting, which made the film kind of a film advertisement for the US Air Force.

56 One example: In the Hotel lobby in Palm Springs there are shopfronts with bikinis. Anna and Jim look at one of the Mannequins.
Anna: Capitalism has certain dangerous advantages.
Jim *(looking at the top of the bikini)*: One thing we have in common with the communists …
Anna: What's that?
Jim: We both believe in uplifting the masses …

57 When Jim in Siberia asks Anna what food is available in the evening, she answers him that it is the same as every evening …
Jim: Blintzes! [The Russian *Bliny,* more familiar to the American audiences under the Polish name – NF] How about a nice, big juicy steak?
The closing takes show the two again in Palm Springs with such a steak. Before the final kiss they first have to dab of the meat juice from the lips …

fectly silly, but I adore it!" This passage is an obvious homage to the hat scene in Ninotchka [fig. 11] and at the same time it is also one of the few self-ironic passages in the strongly-opinionated film. There are no comic trios of functionaries that ironically mock the collective individual, no comments on the role of music, no smiling Lenins, and similar elements that related the world of Ninotchka to Tsirk. Instead of the May Day parade, there is only one marching band, which passes through the Siberian garrison town with a march, of course.

Fig. 11: JET PILOT – Anna's new hat

Fig. 12: JET PILOT – the juicy steak

Work on the film began in 1949 but it only entered the cinemas in 1957, when this bitterest phase of the Cold War, which the film represents, had already been overtaken by the beginning of the "thaw".

4 THE SOFTENING OF THE IDEOLOGICAL FRONTS: BILLY WILDER'S ONE, TWO, THREE …

In 1961, Billy Wilder's film One, Two, Three …[58] entered the cinemas. The Thaw policy had already reached its climax, at least in the Soviet Union, as the GDR leaders built the Berlin Wall and set clear boundaries to contain the existing changes. Wilder resumed the basic conflict of Tsirk and Ninotchka and gave it a new twist by multiplying it and placing it in new contexts. The plot revolves around Otto Piffl, a young Communist from East Berlin, who deftly succeeds in impressing Scarlett Hazeltime, the daughter of an American director of Coca-Cola, who is just visiting West Berlin. She is so convinced by him and his ideals that she im-

58 The screenplay was based on a play published already in 1929 by Ferenc Molnar (1878–1952). Wilder and Diamond adapted the material to the conditions of their time by moving and updating the plot to divided Berlin just before the Wall was built (August 1961) with many allusions to modern events (such as the space expeditions, the Soviet policy of de-Stalinization, etc.).

mediately marries him and wants go with him to Moscow. MacNamara, the local branch manager of Coca-Cola, to whom the underaged Scarlett was entrusted, tries to get rid of the annoying Otto by making sure that he is arrested as an American spy in the Soviet-dominated eastern part of the city. Just when it seems he has prevented Otto's courtship of her, MacNamara learns that Scarlett is already expecting a child. He fetches Otto from Eastern police custody and incorporates him into the Western order instead. He is assisted in this by three Soviet citizens who have taken a look at a second young woman who is surrounded by men: Fraulein Ingeborg, McNamara's blonde secretary. As stipulated in appropriate clauses in her service contract, she must also be available to serve her boss after hours (e.g. to teach him the umlaut) and at the end of the film, she also accepts the offer to work for Mr. Perepetchikoff in the future, who has since denounced his Soviet post.

Comparing it with the background of Tsirk and Ninotchka, it is particularly noticeable that Wilder breaks up and questions the clear ideological messages, which also includes the genre ideal itself. Whereas Marion Dikson and Nina Yakusheva had struggled for a long time to decide whether they should go to the camp of the opposing ideology, such considerations are completely alien to Scarlett Hazeltime. She is portrayed as a delightful little idiot, who, after leaving the plane of a French airline in Berlin-Tempelhof, had agreed to become the prize in a lottery among the board officers. Later she sees her Otto as simply a man instead of the representative of an ideological camp. She willingly follows his political slogans without question, even giving away a mink coat to the cleaning lady of her host family, who from then on cleans the floors in mink, because "no woman should have two mink coats until every woman in the world has one" (TC 0:37:20). Scarlett simply does not understand the ideological divide that makes the Cold War a war. The motifs of the secretary Ingeborg are similarly one-dimensional: she is committed to nothing but a steady paycheck or the specific clauses of the employment contract for her various services. She is easily bought at the right price. Thus, she questions all the ideological motives or concerns that constitute a change of camp. She is part of an entire generation that, while retaining old habits, pretends to be from a new generation of democrats. After all, the Soviet Perepetchikoff has also gone into the West of Berlin less because of his political persuasion, but out of embarrassment in view of his failure – and of course because of Fräulein Ingeborg. It seems as if hardly anyone has "ideological" concerns to motivate changing their camp (or with whom they share their bed, for that matter) once the opposite sex waves money or other boons in their faces. Phyllis MacNamara is shown as the only lady with strong principles. She is upset about her husband's extramarital affairs und concludes without any ideology to leave her husband and return to the United States without him. At the end of the film, she calls the family council at least once before she joins her husband again.

Furthermore, One, Two Three … reassesses of the collective. While in Ninotchka the Soviet trio Iranoff, Buljanov, and Kopalsky, with exception of the last

scene, were always of one opinion (if they put their heads together long enough), Wilder differentiates this structure. The three "communist gentlemen" – as MacNamara's German assistant Schlemmer announces them (TC 0:08:55) – are more individualized and belong to different institutions: Mishkin is the only character without a specified department, but Perepetchikoff is "chairman of the trade commission" and Borodenko declares that he is from the "soft-drink secretariat" ([fig. 13] TC 0:09:13). In order to justify what they are doing, they make similar

Fig. 13: ONE, TWO, THREE … – collectivism

recondite reflections as the trio in NINOTCHKA. These consultations as "conferences" have their own special status in the film. When MacNamara wants to use the three to bring Piffl from the police station back to West Berlin, the "conference" grows into a "summit", during which Borodenko admits his real activity:

> BORODENKO: Comrades, I must warn you. I'm not really from soft-drink secretariat. I'm undercover agent, designed to watch you. *(He shows his badge)*
> MISHKIN: In that case I vote no. Deal is off.
> BORODENKO: But I vote yes.
> PEREPETCHIKOFF: Two out of three again. Deal is on. (0:56:59)

Less than three (film) minutes later, they have to hold another conference when they learn that Piffl has admitted to being an American spy. They fear repression in the Soviet Union:

> BORODENKO: Why should they find out in Moscow? I will not inform.
> MISHKIN: But if they do?
> BORODENKO: Then we just cross into West Berlin.

> Perepetchikoff: Easy for you to say. You are a bachelor. But if I defect, you know what they will do to my family? They will line them up against a wall und (sic?) shoot them. My wife and my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law and my brother-in-law … *(His face brightens)* Comrades, let's do it. (0:59:32)

It is precisely this married Perepetchikoff, who ultimately settles down to West Berlin and engages Ingeborg as a secretary – an escape ultimately based on "family" reasons.

However, the consultations in the three-man team are not purely a Soviet matter: When Phyllis MacNamara consults with her children on whether to take her father to Atlanta or not, she calls "Conference!" [fig. 14]. The need for discussion, at first connotated only negatively as collectivism, proves to be universal in the end.

Fig. 14: One, Two, Three… – "conference"

One, Two, Three… also tells us a great deal about Wilder's perceptions of fledgling attempts of democracy and the lingering presence of leader worship not only in Germany. By setting the action of his film in Berlin in the early 1960s, Wilder expands the spectrum of the ideological stereotypes, which eventually collide with one another. This not only includes socialism and the Western pathos of freedom, but also the remnants of National Socialism.

In the run-up to the XXII Party convention of CPSU (1962), socialism seemed to have changed. However, One, two, three … shows the new Soviet beginning under Khrushchev as nothing more than an ostensible one. In fact, the insidious portrait of Stalin still hides behind the picture of Khrushchev throughout the film [fig. 15]. As the mood heats up in the Grand-Hotel Potemkin[59] when Frau-

59 The name "Potemkin" itself tells us volumes about the actual sincerity of the program! Prince Potemkin's name during the reign of Catherine the Great is often associated with the project of "Potemkin Villages" in the newly-acquired Crimea in the 1780s, which were in fact nothing but facades constructed for triumphal parades of Catherine the Great through the territories, trying to project their future prosperity rather than their present state. Consequently, the phrase "Potemkin Village" has come to mean a false veneer that hides or obscures something underneath.

Fig. 15: ONE, TWO, THREE … – The change of the leader

lein Ingeborg dances on the table and the bald-headed (!) Borodenko beats the rhythm of the music with the shoe[60] (TC 0:58:10), the new portrait even falls out of the frame so that Stalin becomes visible again. The Fuhrer principle is still valid in the guise of the Soviet "Cult of Personality," although at least in Berlin the lower ranks do what they want.

Even with the Germans the new beginning is not really accomplished. At the beginning of the film (TC 0:03:30) during a panning shot, the voiceover from off-camera explains that West Berlin was "peaceful, prosperous and enjoyed all the blessings of democracy" – but then the camera stops in front of a Coca-Cola advertisement. Clearly the visible blessings are rather those of a consumer society instead of a strictly democratic one. However, certain habits from the years before 1945 are still present. For example, all the employees of the Coca-Cola office stand at attention as soon as the boss enters. Then, saying "sitzenmachen" (incorrect German for "sit down!") he asks them to sit down again as they get up several times in the film. As an answer to MacNamara's question, Schlemmer explains this behavior somewhat frivolously as democratic:

> MacNamara: […] They're in democracy now.
> Schlemmer: That's the trouble. Before, if I told them to sit, they would sit. Now, in the democracy they do what they want. What they want is to stand. (TC 0:05:13)

Officially, the memory of the past of the Nazi dictatorship is incomplete. Schlemmer states that he knew nothing, and when MacNamara poses question "And of course you never liked Adolf?" he unfalteringly asks, "Adolf who?" MacNamara for his

60 An allusion to Khrushchev's appearance at the UN Plenary Assembly on October 12, 1960, where he insulted the Filipino Lorenzo Sumulong while he was speaking and he disturbed the further speech by tapping his shoe on the delegation table. This led to the anecdote that Khrushchev had confirmed his words at the lectern by hitting the desk with his shoe.

part is not really interested in the past, unless he can use it to blackmail someone, as in the case of the reporter, Untermeier, from the *Tageblatt* (daily newspaper). Schlemmer had welcomed Untermeier as "Obersturmbannführer"[61].

The fact that Phyllis sometimes ironically calls her husband "mein Führer" in German shows that such categories are fluid throughout this film. The world is not black and white as the Cold War propaganda drew it or as the preceding series of films showed it. The film takes human weaknesses, collective values and beliefs seriously nowhere.

Democratic America also does not stick to its rules. Not only does it not honor primary virtues such as honesty, but it also does not honor secondary virtues such as diligence and efficiency. In the end, however, even this does not really work. The Hazeltimes, citizens of a country proud of its republican traditions, are frozen in awe of a supposedly genuine European aristocrat, and Otto, on the soil of his alleged ancestry, receives the representative office for Europe.

MacNamara, as an efficient manager, also relies on the values he can manipulate. He too, for career reasons, foists a completely inexperienced man upon his boss as a son-in-law. Ultimately, self-interest dominates in both countries. Again, the comedy works to reduce everything to a basic, instinct-compatible, behavioral pattern – this time that of self-interest.

While Ninotchka had reclaimed music and laughter as the symbols of a free society, One, two, three … instead uses music to characterize figures and situations, some of these songs are political (or even aesthetic) signs. For instance, Yankee Doodle Dandy played by the MacNamaras' cuckoo clock transforms into a symbol of Otto's doom in eastern Berlin. Meanwhile, in East Berlin they sing the *The Internationale* and at the police station Otto is tortured with the hit song *Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie …*, the great success of the year 1960.

On the other hand, the doctor, who diagnoses Scarlet's pregnancy, hums and trills apolitical melodies from Wagner's operas. Also, with Wagner's music playing in the background, MacNamara, when he wants to get Piffl back out of police custody, drives through the Brandenburg Gate and bribes the border guard with a six-pack of Coca-Cola. The *Saber Dance* from Aram Khachaturian's Ballet Gayaneh (1946), which is used as background music, also emphasizes the rapidity of the scenes rather than having a clear semantic function. This is also the same melody to which Ingeborg – first with flaming shish kebabs, later while gradually stripping off her clothes – dances on the table [fig. 16]. This transpires during the scene already cited, in which Borodenko hammers on the table with his shoe and the portrait of Stalin becomes visible behind that of Khrushchev. This episode begins rather leisurely when visitors from West Berlin enter the restaurant of the hotel *Potemkin* as a band, conducted by Friedrich Holländer, is playing. This cameo role

61 An officer of the "Schutzstaffel" (SS).

Fig. 16: ONE, TWO, THREE … – Ingeborg's table dance

of Holländer (1896–1976) was his last appearance on film. In a certain way this link brings the present study full circle, because this German-British composer had also written Marlene Dietrich's hit *Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt* ("I am Falling Head over Heels in Love") for The Blue Angel – one of the templates for Tsirk.

The band plays the 1923 hit *Yes, we have no bananas* written in the USA, which sets a sign at the sales stand of a Greek fruit dealer in Florida to music. Even if Holländer sings *Ausgerechnet Bananen* in German, the allusion to the absence of tropical fruits in the range of goods for sale under socialism is understandable even if the listener only knows the song in its English version.

5 … AND THE REWORKINGS CONTINUE …

The story of the woman being wooed away from the camp of the class enemy was far too successful on both sides of the conflict for it to be quietly filed away in the archives. In the end, you could make even more money with it, both at home and abroad. In America especially, the material was not left unused. After all, "if it was good, why not make it again?"[62] George S. Kaufman and Abe Burrows transformed the movie Ninotchka into the Broadway musical Silk stockings, with music by Cole Porter. The premiere took place on February 24, 1955 in New York (with Hildegard Knef in the role of Nina Yakusheva).

In the musical, American producer Steven Canfield has brought the Russian composer, Piotr Ilych Boroff, accompanied by three agents to Paris, where he works for him and eventually decides he does not want to go back to the Soviet Union. The three agents are corrupted by the good life, prompting the Soviet government to send comrade Yakushova. Although the film no longer has a Grand Princess to play the jealous lover, this character from the original film morphs into

62 Stuart J. Kobak: *Puttin' on the Ritz,* in: http://www.filmsondisc.com/Features/Puttin/putting.htm.

an American film star, Peggy Dayton, who consequently is the real reason why Piotr Ilyich has decided to stay in Paris.

In the film version of 1957, the writers changed the musical producer Canfield into a film producer and rewrote some of the music numbers, which consequently were included in later performances of the musical. Casting Fred Astaire (Canfield) and Cyd Charisse (Ninotchka) in the starring roles made it possible for the producer to re-focus his film. Accordingly, Silk Stockings was perceived more as an independent musical or even a dance film, rather than a remake to Lubitsch's film. Even the title change suggests that in the 1950s the sex appeal was more noticeable than in the film of the 1930s. For instance, it is not the extravagant hat that Ninotchka puts on as a symbol of her transformation in the locked hotel room as in the 1939 film. Instead, the Ninotchka of the dance film uncovers a pair of silk stockings from her hiding place under a pillow and likewise in other hiding places she digs up various luxurious clothes and accessories from the lingerie department. She then proceeds to change into them in front of the camera – dancing to waltz music throughout the room and hiding herself behind doors, chairs or curtains at certain decisive moments –, and she finishes in a high-slit white silk dress [fig. 17] and throws the black wool drawers of her commissioner existence into

Fig. 17: SILK STOCKINGS – Ninotchka's dance

a heap. In the year of production, such a dance number suggesting a striptease was considered to be very daring and has remained famous accordingly.[63] Consequently, it also represents a remarkable parallel to Fraulein Ingeborg's dance on the table in One, Two, Three …

In the Soviet Union, too, Tsirk continued to live on in the popular culture. In 1960, the composer Yuri (Georgi) Sergeevich Miliutin (1903–1968) premiered the operetta Tsirk zazhigaet ogni ("The Circus Ignites the Fires"). It revives the basic combination of music and light comedy as Tsirk, but weakens the ide-

63 Fans of the movie have put this scene on Youtube.

ological confrontation to the point of near unrecognizablity. In 1972, Ol'gerd Riskovich Vorontsov (born 1927), produced a television film under the same name based upon the operetta [fig. 18].

Fig. 18: TSIRK ZAZHIGAET OGNI

In a city by the sea, a Soviet and an Italian circus are giving performances, both of which have a lot of dancing. The struggling director of the Italian circus depends on an old-age pension, but hopes to change all of this when the wealthy Mortimer Skott begins to woo the director's daughter, Gloriia, a trapeze artist. The father tries to persuade Gloriia[64] to give in to Skott's advances, but she falls in love with Andrei Baklanov, the star of the Soviet circus. They are both honest with each other, but the jealous Skott engages a dubious count and his men, who are supposed to kidnap Andrei. Andrei, however, manages to escape and finishes his evening performance as a tight rope artist. After Gloriia follows him, the Soviet circus director offers her a contract. A potpourri of the circus numbers lay the groundwork for the finale as all the actors spread a large cloth with the coat of arms of the Union republics of the Soviet Union in the arena.

The basic combination from Tsirk is maintained (i.e. the Western woman enters the Soviet collective), but the ideological confrontation is softened. After all, in this story America and the Soviet Union no longer have to contend with each other, but instead an elderly Englishman, quite unsuccessfully, struggles to compete with a young, slender Soviet citizen for a young, slender Italian woman. Comedies operate with prescribed types, but, in this instance unlike other comedy stereotypes, it is not the Russian Lover who plays off the Latin Lover, since Skott, of course, is English. However, what remains from the time of Tsirk is the pathos of the final march and the related message of internationalism under the auspices of Soviet leadership.

64 Vorontsov chose the actress Galina Aleksandrovna Orlova for the role of Gloriia, who has at least the same family name as Liubov' Orlova, the star from Tsirk – whether a family relationship exists, could not be determined.

6 … AND BACK TO MOSCOW AGAIN

Since Perestroika, and especially since the end of the Soviet Union, dialogue between Hollywood and Moscow has been intensified, since in practice the only restriction on the exchange of movies is the region codes on DVDs. In Russia, a public debate has also opened up regarding the Stalin era, whose myths had been a frequent theme of unofficial culture for many years. In the 1990s, movies in the style of *Sots-Art* such as Serp i molot ("Hammer and Sickle") deconstructed a whole set of myths, but the myth of a color-blind Soviet Union, which can also integrate a dark-skinned child, was only taken up many years later in Valery Todorovskii's film Stilyagi ("Stiliagi"), which premiered on December 25, 2008.

Stilyagi takes place in 1955 Moscow and recounts the conflicts between members of the Komsomol and the "Stilyagi," i.e. those who value their individual style and wear their hair and dress in the fashion of jazz or the early rock'n' roll instead of the conventional clothing worn in the Soviet Union at the time. Mėls, the son of a worker, and a model student, falls under the spell of the Stilyagi when he becomes attracted to the beautiful Polina, the daughter of a strict teacher who is devoted to the party. As this happens, he alienates the local Komsomol, whose secretary Katia is in love with him. He picks up a plaid jacket, makes thick rubber soles to attach to the bottom of his sneakers, curls his hair and buys a used saxophone. Polina – in the Stilyagi scene called "Pol'za" – becomes his lover. When she becomes pregnant, she moves into the two rooms which Mėl's father and his two sons share in a communal apartment *(kommunalka).* After the baby is delivered, the inhabitants of the large communal apartment, most of them elderly women, arrive on the loading area of a truck to welcome mother and child. They are perplexed to discover that the child is dark-skinned.

The film does not give the audience a clear answer on the question of who the real father of the child is. Mėls plays a duet with a dark-skinned saxophone player, but that is the closest to an answer that the viewer receives. After much time passes, Pol'za and Mėl become reconciled in the final scene, when modern-day punks – the Stiljagi of the present – celebrate a great party on Tverskaia ulitsa. Among them, Pol'za and Mėl look like contemporaries oriented in the "retro style."

From the background of the traditions of the 1930s, it can be seen that (at least in the film) women's emancipation has actually arrived in modern Russian cinema, since the pattern of two male males wooing a female is no longer present. Instead, Katya, the brunette secretary of the Komsomol, competes for the rather average Mėls against the blond Pol'za, who shores up her luscious curls by hand during a Komsomol attack. Quite fittingly, this attack takes place on the site of a circus.

Stilyagi runs through the same political program of Tsirk, but its signs have now been inverted: It is not a bigoted bourgeoisie who is upset over the fact that a fair-skinned young woman has a child with dark skin. Instead, it is the com-

Fig. 19: STILYAGI – "our hero"

munist teacher, a representative of the Communist ideological system, who can not endure the "other," and who hesitates to accept her role as a grandmother. On the other hand, it is Mėl's father, a representative of the urban proletariat, who accepts the child immediately after just a split second of shock. He presents the infant to the occupants of the communal apartment with the words: "Наш … наш богатырь" ("Our … our hero"). Hence, while the representative of the common people in Russia is accepting of racial difference, the representative of the communist ideology itself is hostile to it, suggesting a disconnect between the Russian people and the Communist Party and a negation of the ideological message of Tsirk, while simultaneously embracing its message of racial inclusivity.

And just as the representatives of the different peoples of the Soviet Union circulate the child throughout the circus stands to welcome it, the infant also migrates through the hands of the Stilyagi until the mother puts an end to this. The rising stands of the Circus arena also have an analogy to the semicircular lecture theater used by Komsomol, in which Katia holds Mėl accountable. The positive space of Tsirk is thus negatively reflected here since instead of a communal spectacle, similar imagery attaches itself to a compulsory event symbolizing subservience to the Communist Party. Mėl stands out from the uniform blue of Komsomol members as the only one who is wearing colorful clothes, and he does not react to Katya's accusations by practicing the self-criticism as she expects, but instead he hands over his membership Komsomol card.

It soon becomes clear that this scene is ultimately about Stalinism. Katia accuses Mėl of attaching himself to a foreign lifestyle, the special disgrace of "kowtowing to the West" in the late Stalinist vernacular. She feels this is particularly shameful since his name itself is an anagram of *M*arx, *E*ngels, *L*enin and *S*talin. By shortening his Americanized name to "Mel," the character of Mėls unwittingly performs a symbolic De-Stalinization *avant la lettre*.

Above all the closing scene, the great gathering on the Tverskaya in the immediate vicinity of the Red Square, the place where the final marching scenes of Tsirk had been shot, questions the ideological program of this Stalinist template for communal celebration. Communication (and reconciliation between Mėl and Pol'za) can only take place individually, since at the big party the two are just one

Fig. 20: STILYAGI – Parade

couple among many. Furthermore, instead of marching in uniform clothing and within closed ranks, they all go about as civilians and dressed according to their own tastes.

Vasilii Todorovskii, linking his film to the discourse of TSIRK, claimed that he consciously wanted to make a musical film. In an interview with *Rossiiskaia gazeta* he said:

> I loved American musicals of the 30s–50s, the movies with Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. But in our cinema musicals were a rarity. A serious, systematic approach to this genre was only achieved in Gregory Alexandrov's VESOYLYE REBYATA, VESNA, and TSIRK.[65]

Since STILYAGI has a soundtrack consisting of only slightly reworked original songs from the 1950s, the film is not only iconographic but also a musical homage to Moscow's dream of America, which at that time Soviet authorities considered illegal. When Fred, a diplomat's son, has returned from the West, he tells Mėl that nobody in the USA dresses like the Stilyagi imagine in the West, but Mėl refuses to listen to this. The imagined West is not the real West, but it is a real part of Russia, in the same way that the dark-skinned child in 2008 is actually accepted as its own.

7 CONCLUSION

For a cinematic or literary series, even though the structural similarity of the individual parts can be described with little effort, their genetic dependence upon one another can only be demonstrated by a complete investigation of the contexts which helped to form them. There is much evidence that these films actually

65 Любил американские мюзиклы 30–50-хгодов, фильмы с Фредом Астером, с Джином Келли. Но в нашем кино мюзикл – редкость. Серьезный, системный подход к этому жанру был только у Григория Александрова с его "Веселыми ребятами," "Весной," "Цирком" (december 17, 2008; http://www.rg.ru/2008/12/17/stilyagi.html).

crossed their original national cinema boundaries, so that "American musical" + "German music film" logically yielded a chain of references between Tsirk, Ninotchka, One, Two, Three – Silk stockings. Whether Tsirk zazhigaet ogni is not only structurally but also genetically a part of this series, cannot be said at the present state of research. Nevertheless, this film is clearly an example of the migration of cultural communication patterns. As described above, Tsirk initially appeared with the claim that it had converted the Hollywood musical to the Soviet genre system. According to the official reading, the socialist, musical comedy film had emerged as a new genre. Tsirk zazhigaet ogni shows that this soviet genre – if one wants to consider it as a true mutation and not just a modification – had developed very clearly in the direction of a musical. Although the late-Soviet entertainment culture still had some state-pedagogical elements, the Stalinist ambition to reform the genres and assert that Soviet culture is superior to the Western world had long since faded as a goal. Tsirk zazhigaet ogni breathes the spirit of the late '60s/early '70s, evident from its hairstyles and clothing which could have easily appeared in a low-budget film from Germany or the United States. The style of filming also suggests a familiarity with other films in this same series. As in Silk stockings, the camera in Tsirk zazhigaet ogni always puts the legs of the protagonist at the center of attention. The leading actress constantly appears in shorts which accentuate her long legs, despite the fact that her shapely limbs only help to further the action during the dance scenes. This suggests that the Soviet special path of the musical entertainment film had already entered the main stream of genre development long before the end of the Soviet Union.

Stilyagi finally becomes reconciled with the genre and corrects Tsirk by depoliticizing its message: The integration of the child of another skin color is no longer political but rather a pre-political, humanitarian act. The correction, however, is also in principle recognizing that Stilyagi is a successor of Tsirk. So far this lineage has been central to the series of musical films in the east.

On the other hand, Jet Pilot and One, Two, Three … are not really music films. They are, although produced in Hollywood only a few years apart, politically very different developments in the construction of Ninotchka's plot. They can be thought of as extending branches of the same series.

* * *

The competition between Moscow and Hollywood is of course not limited to the corpus of films discussed here. There may be other corpora that span more than two films, but the normal case is the direct reaction of one film to another, specifically: a Soviet film to an American one.

In one way, this can happen "quietly," as in the case of How to Marry a Millionaire (1953). The Hollywood comedy about three girlfriends, that were young, financially insecure, fashion models, who pretend to be wealthy, was a great suc-

cess worldwide. They want to get to know the richest man possible. The fact that Marilyn Monroe, who was a star at the time, played the role of the naive Pola contributed to the success significantly. It is, however, her friend Schatze, performed by Lauren Bacall, who is able to actually marry a millionaire. She confessed her love to him when she believed he was just a simple gas station attendant. This constellation was taken up by director Vladimir Menshov in 1980, who also let the first part of the plot take place in the 1950s, but turned the material into a social film: Moskva slezam ne verit ("Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears"). Three friends from the province each try to find a good match in Moscow, and invite men to a luxurious apartment that belonged to an uncle. One of the three women marries a construction worker with whom, like the second part of the film, which takes place in 1978, shows she has a not very exciting, but lasting marriage, with three children. The second of the three friends married a well-known ice hockey player, who has become an alcoholic over the years. By 1978, they had been divorced for a long time. The third, had met a cameraman for television who inevitably leaves her, while she was expecting a child. As a single mother, however, she never lost sight of her career goal, and in the 1970s was the director of a company with 3,000 employees. As a successful woman, she has a hard time finding a partner. After a few problematic short-lived relationships, she finally succeeds. The problems of finding a suitable partner, especially in a "hard city" like Moscow, where crying is of no use, are presented on the level of sociological realism, so that the film creates a clearly different focus than the Hollywood comedy. In 1981 it received an Academy Award for best foreign film.

In the "loud" version, the press discusses the relationship of the new (Soviet) film to its (American) predecessor. A prominent example is the film adaptation of Lev Tolstoj's novel Vojna i mir ("War and Peace"). In 1956, a 208-minute version was produced as an American-Italian production, directed by King Vidor. Audrey Hepburn was seen as Natasha, Henry Fonda as Pierre Bezuchov. A good ten years later, the more than twice as long Soviet version was released, with Sergei Bondarchuk as the director. Natasha was played by Lyudmila Saveleva, the director took the role of Pierre for himself. He tried to achieve the greatest possible historical authenticity, and worked with thousands of extras. Different estimates circulated in the press over the budget.[66] In view of this, Western journalists speculated that the success of the Hollywood production had been regarded by the Soviets as a kind of national disgrace that the most widespread film adaptation of a Russian

66 Kilb, Andreas "Der Krieg als Filmproblem betrachtet. Acht Stunden sind kein Roman: Sergej Bondartschuks sowjetisches Tolstoi-Epos 'Krieg und Frieden'", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* September 19, 2006 (No. 219), p. 40: "A Hundred of millions, experts estimated. Two hundred and forty speculated western newspapers. Five hundred and sixty million in current currency [i.e. Euro – NF], estimates the 'Internet Movie Database'. What is certain is that 'Wojna i Mir' is the most expensive cinema production ever."

novel had not been done by a Russian director. He was therefore commissioned to realize the ultimate film adaptation: "a film to end all films, as far as this book was concerned."[67]

After the Russian cinema production had stabilized economically in the 1990s, opened up in terms of computer animation, and after the turn of the millennium, major productions also appeared again. Some examples would include history films or the film adaptations[68] of Lukyanov's fantasy novels. The author of the novel had already been described as a "Russian Tolkien", and the metaphor also extended to film. It was the "Russian answer to 'The Lord of the Rings'."[69] It at least resulted in Hollywood offering the opportunity to direct WANTED to the director Timur Bekmanbetov. He assumed:

> The Moscow–Hollywood relationship appears to be relaxed.

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35 mm – b/w – 94 Min.

TSIRK ZAZHIGAET OGNI (The Circus Ignites the fires). Made-for-TV movie. USSR: Sverdlovsksaia kinostudiia 1972. Direction: Ol'gerd Vorontsov. Music: Jurii Miliutin. Script: Iakov Ziskind. Camera: Gennadii Chereshko. Cast: Galina Orlova (Gloriia Rozetti), Aleksandr Goloborodko (Andrei), Vsevolod Abdulov (Kostia), Ėleonra Shashkova (Circus Director), et al.
Color – 74 Min.

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67 Kilb, "Der Krieg als Filmproblem", loc. cit. Up to the obituary, the topic of overbidding continues, see: Seidel, Hans-Dieter "Kino. Sergej Bondarčuk. Nachruf", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* October 22, 1994, (No. 246), p. 29.

68 See: Norris, Stephen M. *Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memory and Patriotism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

69 Holm, Kerstin "Moskau ist kein Ort für Helden. Die russische Antwort auf den 'Herrn der Ringe' Der Fantasy-Film 'Wächter der Nacht'", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* September 29, 2005 (No. 227), p. 38.

Jet pilot. USA: Universal, 1949–1957. Direction: Josef von Sternberg. Script: Jules Furthman. Camera: Winton C. Hoch. Cast: John Wayne (Col. Jim Shannon); Janet Leigh (Lt. Anna Marladovna Shannon/Olga Orlief); Jay C. Flippen (Maj. Gen. Black); Paul Fix (Maj. Rexford); Richard Rober (FBI Agent George Rivers); Roland Winters (Col. Sokolov); Hans Conried (Col. Matoff); Ivan Triesault (Gen. Langrad), et al.
Color – 112 Min.

Ninotchka. Motion picture. USA: Warner Brothers 1939. Direction: Ernst Lubitsch. Script: Charles Brackett/Billy Wilder/Walter Reisch based on an idea of Melchior Lengyel. Camera: Wilhelm H Daniels. Music: Werner R. Heyman. Cast: Greta Garbo (Nina Ivanovna Yakushova), Melvin Douglas (Graf Leon d'Algout), Bela Lugosi (Kommissar Razinin), Ina Claire (Grand Princess Swana), Sig Ruman (Iranoff), Felix Bressart (Buljanoff), Alexander Granach (Kopalski), Gregory Gaye (Hotel Servant Count Alexis Rakonin), Rolfe Sedan (Hotel Manager), Edwin Maxwell (Jeweler), Richard Carle (Gaston), et al.
b/w – 136 Min.

One, two, three … Motion picture. USA 1961. Direction: Billy Wilder. Script: Billy Wilder and L.A. Diamond based on the play by Ferenc Molnar. Camera: Daniel L. Fapp. Cast: James Cagney (McNamara), Horst Buchholz (Otto Piffl), Pamela Tiffin (Scarlett Hazeltime), Arlene Francis (Phyllis), Howard St. John (Mister Hazeltime), Hans Lothar (Schlemmer), Lilo Pulver (Fraulein Ingeborg), Karl Liefen (Fritz), Loui Bolton (Perepetchikoff), Peter Capell (Mishkin), Ralf Wolter (Boris Borodenko), Hubert von Meyerinck (Baron Waldemar von Droste-Schattenburg), Heinz Drache (Untermeier), et al.
b/w – 104 Min.

Silk stockings. Motion picture. USA. Direction: Rouben Mamoulian. Music: Cole Porter. Cast: Fred Astaire (Confield), Cyd Charisse (Ninotchka), Wim Sonneveld (Peter Illyich Boroff), Peter Lorre (Brankov), Jules Munshin (Bibinski), George Tobias (Markovitch), Janis Paige (Peggy Dayton) et al.
Color – 117 Min.

Stilyagi (Stiliagi). Motion picture. Russia, 2008. Direction: Valerii Todorovskii. Script: Iurii Korotkov. Camera: Roman Vas'ianov. Cast: Anton Shagin (Mėls), Oksana Akin'shina (Polina, "Pol'za"), Evgeniia Brik (Katia), Maksim Matveev (Fred), Ekaterina Volkova (Bėtsi), Igor' Voinarovskii (Bob), Konstantin Balkiriev (Dryn), Sergei Garmash (Mėls' Father), Irina Rozanova (Pol'za's Mother), et al.
Color – 142 Min.

The Circus. Motion picture. USA: Charles Chaplin Productions, 1928 (UA: Jan. 6, 1928). Direction and Script: Charles Chaplin. Cast: Al Ernest Garcia (Circus Owner), Merna Kennedy (his Step Daughter, a Circus Horserider), Harry Crocker (Rex, the Tightrope Walker), George Davis (the Magician), Henry Bergman (an Old Clown), Charles Chaplin (the Tramp), et al.
b/w – 71 Min.

Andrei Konchalovsky's American Decade

Andrei Konchalovsky lived in Hollywood for a little over ten years between 1980 and 1991, where he wanted to make films. In April 1983, when he had been there for more than three years, and still hadn't made any films, film journalist Susan Peters quoted him as saying, "I must make American movie. This is what I have decided."[1] The expression *American movie* raises questions that are of interest on the following pages: Is a movie American because it was shot in the USA? Is it one that Americans accept as "theirs" by going to the movies to see them? What other criteria can be used to define "American" or "Russian" films? What about the critique of films in the press? The criticism from a journalist is only a specific situation within the reception, but it nevertheless is sufficiently revealing to question the possibility of the acceptance of the industry outsider.

During the three years of his unsuccessful efforts, there were many obstacles, later also successes. How do you measure whether a Soviet director was successful in Hollywood? Is it that the producer has earned millions with his films, or that he earned millions himself? Doesn't recognition without payment count?

1 BIOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The brothers Andrei and Nikita Mikhalkov come from a family that was in many ways different from a normal Soviet family. It is no coincidence that Nikita's homepage contains a family tree, as is usually the case with noble families.[2] Both branches

1 Peters, Susan "A Famous Soviet Director Plants his Feet in Malibu and Casts an Eye on Hollywood", *People,* 1983, 11 Apr., p. 38.

2 The Wikipedia entry on Sergej Mikhalkov indicates that the family actually has ancestors from the noble families of the Golicyn and Uchtomskij. (https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Михалков_Сергей_Владимирович)

of the family had gained prestige and a certain level of prosperity through artistic (also scientific) activities. Petr Konchalovsky, the maternal grandfather, had been a well-known modernist painter, his father-in-law Ivan Surikov an important representative of realism. There were also writers and scientists in the family, and Petr's daughter Nataliya Konchalovskaya was a writer and translator. In 1936 she married Sergei Mikhalkov, who also came from a well-known and artistically very productive family and became a highly decorated author in the Soviet Union. He was primarily considered a children's author, but wrote also the text of the Soviet national anthem.[3] They had two sons Andrei (1937) and Nikita (1945).

Andrei first studied music at the Moscow Conservatory, but then changed branches and enrolled at the VGIK film school for the director's class, which he graduated in 1961.

Andrei changed his first name to *Andron* often in his youth, adding his mother's surname to Mikhalkov during his directing studies or replacing it. In his final thesis at VGIK "The Boy and the Dove" (Malchik i golub; 1961), he operated under Andrei Konchalovsky, in his first feature film "The First Teacher" (Pervyi uchitel; 1964) his name appeared as Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky. Later he almost exclusively called himself Konchalovsky.

Little is known about the reasons for this change of name. In retrospective from the 2000s, he portrays his father as a person who, due to his cautiousness and reluctance to get politically involved, had not had any difficulties in the difficult years of Stalin's rule. He mentions that the father was in contact with Stalin:

> it seems that Stalin did not even pay attention to father. He said hello, that's all. He didn't call him. But I think he liked that Mikhalkov did not protrude. [Father] had understood that climb was not necessary. Stalin understood people. In the years later, in the late 50s, father could not do without participating in political games, but in the Stalin era he preferred to be just a children's poet.[4]

3 Until the end of 1943, *The Internationale* was used in the Soviet Union when a national anthem was to be played. Or you sang the *Song of the Motherland* from the film Tsirk (see below). The anthem, which was introduced in 1944 and for which Sergei Mikhalkov had written the text, contained a praise of Stalin in the second verse: "We were raised by Stalin to be true to the people, / To labour and heroic deeds he inspired us! " (Нас вырастил Сталин – на верность народу, / На труд и на подвиги нас вдохновил!). So, after the XX. Party congress (1956) it could be used only in a version without text. In 1977 the anthem received a new text whose author was Mikhalkov again – as well as the poet of the national anthem of the Russian Federation, which was introduced in 2001.

4 Кончаловский. Андрей. *Низские истины. Сем лет спустя.* Москва: Эксмо 2007, стр. 30. [Вроде бы Сталин даже внимания не обратил на отца. Поздоровался, и все. К себе не подозвал. Но, думаю, ему понравилось, что Михалков не высовывается. Понимает, что лезть не надо. В людях Сталин разбирался. В годы более поздние, в конце 50-х, отец уже не обошелся без участия в политических играх, но во времена сталинские предпочитал быть просто детским поэтом.]

In the memoirs, he doesn't accuse the father of any wrongdoing. He mentions that there had been conflicts in the family, including scandals,[5] but does not say whether he changed the family name for political reasons. A look at the social climate suggests this, however: Konchalovsky's academic years coincided with the period of public distancing from Stalin. This period began on a Party congress in 1956 where Nikita Khrushchev spoke, behind closed doors, about Stalin's crimes, and it peaked on the XXII. Party congress in 1961. Similar to the 1968 movement in West Germany, a generation of "sons" accused the "fathers" of having failed. In this case, many young Soviet citizens, the so-called "sixties" *(shestidesyaniki),* accused their fathers' generation of having been involved in Stalin's crimes, if not directly, then at least they were complicit. They reacted with moral indignation. The extent to which Konchalovsky belonged to this 1960s generation became clear when he was intensely concerned with Stalinism in the United States. The director spoke only once about this subject to the American press. Deborah Kunk reports:

> It was partly to separate himself from his brother as a director, Konchalovsky suggests, that he adopted his mother's name. But there was another reason: "When I was young, I had a conflict with my father. He was quite orthodox politically, and I was in a kind of rebellion against it. I wanted to take my mother's name because I figured I didn't want anyone asking me: 'Are you Mikhalkov's son?' So, I took Konchalovsky. I offended deeply my father. I love him very much of course.[6]

The generation of the *shestidesyatniki* hoped that the Soviet system could be reformed and was accordingly disappointed when political processes began again under Leonid Brezhnev, who was initially considered liberal, and the military intervention in the CSSR in 1968. Against the background of these hopes, the 1970s appeared to them to be particularly leaden and gave rise to the desire to leave the Soviet Union. Konchalovsky also recalls that in 1968 he felt the desire to "leave the Soviet system"[7], whereupon the lawyer Konstantin Simis warned him of the law that he could live as a Soviet citizen abroad if he has family there. That was the way he tried to leave the Soviet Union without emigrating.

In the second volume of his memoirs, Konchalovsky writes how during his years at VGIK the longing for France was awakened by records with French chansons and movies such as Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" (À BOUT DE SOUFFLE; 1960). He remembers the Russian-born Frenchwoman Ella Kagan (after her mar-

5 Кончаловский. *Низкие* …, loc. cit., стр. 66. [Конфликты были. Были скандалы.]

6 Kunk, Deborah J. "'Runaway Train' carries a Russian to U.S. success. But he does go back to the U.S.S.R.", *L.A. Herald Examiner,* 1985, 9 Dec.

7 Кончаловский. *Низкие* …, loc. cit., стр. 234 [пробить советскую систему].

riage to Louis Aragon she had adopted the surname Triolet), who repeatedly visited Moscow in the 1960s: "She smelled of French perfume, she wore dresses from a couturier, she was from another world. […] I looked at them, not concealing envy. I also wanted to be a French communist."[8]

The love for France first took shape in Vivian, a nanny of a French diplomatic family in Moscow. She worked as a nanny then, and later as an interpreter. He married her in 1969, but had to wait almost ten years before he was allowed to travel to France with her in 1979. By then, he was already a successful and award-winning director. He admits in his memoirs that this was not easy – and at the time there were only two other Soviet citizens who officially lived abroad but did not belong to the diplomatic corps.

Konchalovsky did not last long in Paris. When the marriage with Vivian failed in 1980, he traveled to Hollywood to try what the great Sergei Eisenstein had not been able to do, which was to make at least one film there. Konchalovsky had already been in San Francisco and had met Americans at international festivals in the 1970s who suggested that he try his luck in Hollywood. He traveled there with a group of French filmmakers, but soon left the group to carry out his project independently. He previously had a production agreement through John Voight with Universal Pictures that allowed him to legally seek work in the United States.

When he stood on a piece of green lawn with a sandwich in hand under the Southern California sun in West Hollywood, he was sure – as he later wrote down: "This is my country. Here I will live. There was a feeling of freedom and space."[9]

However, he soon discovered that various obstacles were in the way of realizing this wish. At first, he was a nobody in Hollywood. In an interview in 1983 he suggested that Spielberg's fictional character E.T. and he had a lot in common. Everyone asked him where he came from.[10] The fact that he had successfully made films in the studios of Mosfilm and other Soviet companies and that he had received awards in Carlsbad (Karlovy vary) or Cannes did not really interest any of the important people in Hollywood. In addition, the American press had barely noticed him until 1979.[11] Above all, his country of origin, the Soviet Union, was a kind of

8 Кончаловский, Андрей. *Возвышающий обман.* Москва: Эксмо, 2013, стр. 101 [От нее пахло французскими духами, на ней были платья от дорогих кутюрье, она вообще была из другого мира. […] Я смотрел на них, не скрывая зависти. Мне тоже хотелось быть французским коммунистом].

9 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий* …, loc. cit., стр. 201. [Это моя страна. Здесь я буду жить. Было ощущение свободы and просранства.]

10 Peters, "A Famous Soviet Director …", loc. cit.: "E.T. and I are the same […] We are asked the same questions always: 'How did you get here? Where did you come from? What is it like from where you came?"

11 Yakovleva, Natalia "Moscow", *Hollywood Reporter,* 1971, 12 Apr.; Mott, Patrick "Film Via TV World Window for Siberians", *Hollywood Reporter,* 1975, 20 Mar.; N.N. "Leisurely Peace In Soviet Studio May Be Good or Bad", *Variety,* 1977, 7 May; N.N. "Six Top Soviet Directors", *Variety,* 1977, 24 Aug.; N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 1979, 5 Dec.

black box about which only little more was known of it other than that it had to be a gigantic prison. Many people in the West therefore did not believe that a Soviet law existed that allowed Soviet citizens to live abroad with a foreign spouse. The experiences of Europeans with the "Iron Curtain" suggested the complete opposite. Here people who wanted to leave socialism behind were shot at. The exceptions for children of the *nomenklatura* or other celebrities were unknown to the public – also in the Soviet Union. Anyone who was not a refugee but instead left with a valid Soviet passport, had to be a "politically well-connected" person, if not a spy or a member of the secret service KGB. Therefore, Simone Signoret in Paris for example refused to collaborate with Konchalovsky.[12]

So, he had to start from scratch and first learn the cultural rules that determine life in the USA and are also important in the film business. Born into the cultural elite of his country, Konchalovsky had internalized the Soviet society's personalism: almost anything is possible if you know the right people and have influential friends. A lot of time is spent maintaining these networks, and if you're famous yourself, others ask you for protection. "I was full of Soviet ideas about Hollywood. I am a famous director. I have many friends and acquaintances here. Now they will help me get a job."[13] Among his friends were the actors John Voigt, Jack Nicolson and Robert Duvall, who e.g. organized a screening of his award-winning film Sibiriada in an English subtitled version, where vodka and caviar were served.[14] On this occasion Konchalovsky also got to know Shirley MacLaine a little better. He already knew her brother Warren Beatty, and from then on, they were among his supporters. He even moved into the bungalow in Malibu with Shirley MacLaine for a while, but then tried to become as independent as possible. Robinson speculates: "eventually he found his financial and social dependence upon her oppressive, especially when he began to realize that her friends considered him nothing more than a 'star-fucker, a handsome, appealing Russian'."[15]

At that time, Konchalovsky was well over 40 years old. He did not think he had much time and tried to gain attention with interviews about himself and his previous films. The responses to this in the press ranged from amusement to contempt: Both the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* responded, but pointed to Konchalovsky's "strongly accented English" – another problem during his first

12 Simone refused to work with me (Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 163: "she was whispered that I was a KGB agent." [Симона работать со мной отказалось […] ей нашептали что я – агент КГБ.]

13 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 270. [Я был полон советских представлений о Голливуде. Я – известный режиссер. У меня здесь много друзей, знакомых. Сейчас они помогут мне устроиться с работой.]

14 Peters, "A Famous Soviet Director …", loc. cit.

15 Robinson, Harlow *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians: Biography of an Image.* Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press. 2007, p. 260.

years – and printed long verbatim quotes in slightly flawed English[16]. He hired an agency, but remained without work.

It took almost three years before he got the opportunity in 1982 to direct the short film Split Cherry Tree for the Phoenix Learning Group Inc., based on a short story by Jesse Stuart, first published in *Esquire* in 1939. It premiered in 1983 and made it onto the list of Oscar nominations in the "Short Film" section.

After that there was the possibility of working with Cannon Films Inc., founded in 1967. The cousins Menahem Golan and Yoran Globus took over this company in 1979 after it had run into financial difficulties. Cannon had previously mainly produced B-movies, and the new owners wanted to make the company a major studio. The action and adventure films continued to make money, and artistic films were also to expand the portfolio. The new owners made agreements with directors like John Cassavetes or Franco Zeffirelli to fund films like Love Streams (1984) or Otello (1986, the film version of the eponymous Verdi opera). Andrei Konchalovsky was also given the opportunity to implement a project.

For Cannon Films, he shot Maria's Lovers (1984), Runaway Train (1985), Duet For One (1986) and Shy People (1987), for Borman & Cady, Homer and Eddie (1989). With Paramount Tango and Cash was created (1989). In 1991 Konchalovsky, who was a regular visitor to Moscow, returned to the USSR to shoot Columbia Pictures The Inner Circle, later relocating to Moscow. The time spent abroad was just over eleven years, the time of productivity in Hollywood just over eight – on average a decade, his American decade.

2 A Split Cherry Tree

The *Learning Corporation of America (LCA),* for which Andrei Konchalovsky was commissioned in 1982 to direct the adaptation of Split Cherry Tree, produced educational and short films. It was founded in 1967 by William Deneen within the *Columbia Pictures Corporation*. It produced several films a year, which were mostly screened in schools.[17] The picture based on a 1939 short story by Jesse Stuart.

Stuart's story is narrated from the perspective of high school student David (Dave) Sexton, whom his father accompanies to school one morning. The boy and a couple of classmates attempt to catch a lizard for biology lessons, but in doing so damage a cherry tree for which a farmer wants to be compensated. Since Dave

16 Cf. Pollock, Dale "Taking A Meeting With Andrei Konchalvsky", *Los Angeles Times,* 1982, 30 Dec.; Chase, Chris "Russian puts high hopes on 'Sibiriade'", *New York Times,* 1982, 10 Sept.

17 When Columbia Pictures was in financial trouble in the early 1980s, it sold the LCA. After some ownership changes, William Deneen acquired it again and merged it in 1987 with Highgate Pictures to New World Pictures. These ceased to operate in 1990 (cf. "Learning Corporation of America" *Closinglogos.* Closing Logos Group, 6 Dec. 2018. Web. 20 July 2018. http://www.closinglogos.com/page/Learning+Corporation+of+America).

cannot afford the dollar he should pay, his teacher puts it up for him and in return tells Dave to work it off by cleaning the school two days in a row. The father, hearing about this, is upset and accompanies his son to school, where he accosts Professor Herbert. He even pulls out a revolver, but then agrees to have a conversation. He looks at the lessons, and allows Herbert to show him the world of microbes ("germs") under a microscope. After school, he helps his son to work off his cleaning debt and goes home with him, where he tells his wife about the experiences in school.

The story presents several conflicts, of which the one between the father and the teacher is central. Both are also representatives of settings that are geographically close (only six miles apart), but symbolically far apart. The father, Luster Sexton, stands for the world of farming, heavy physical labor, a rudimentary education, and rural America, while Professor Herbert stands for urban life, white collar work, and higher education. The difference is not only marked by the distance, but also by the weather. It is early spring, and the ground is frozen when Dave approaches his parents' house in the hills. He spends the warmer day at school, "down there." He knows that even in the hills "the sun would soon come out and melt the frost."[18]

The father is quick-tempered, while Professor Herbert is prudent. When the father leaves for school and takes his revolver, the mother warns: "Don't cause a lot o' trouble. You can be jailed fer a trick like that. You'll get th' Law atter you."[19] The son Dave stands between his father and his teacher. At first, he thinks he belongs to the world of the school: "I'll never be able to make him understand about the cherry tree." In the evening, when he sits in his room, he tells himself several times: "Pa wouldn't understand."[20] Also, he is sure his father wants to whip him. But it turns out another way: the father believes his son is treated unfairly, and the son does not know yet how strongly his father wants justice for him. Only in direct comparison with Professor Herbert does Dave recognize the qualities of his father. This is initially apparent through their external appearance. In the beginning Professor Herbert appears to Dave to be "a big man. He wore a grey suit of clothes. The suit matched his grey hair."[21] But in direct comparison to his father, Dave sees that the latter is even bigger: "Pa stood there, big, hard, brown-skinned, and mighty beside of Professor Herbert. I didn't know Pa was so much bigger and harder. […] I'd seen Professor Herbert. He'd always looked big before to me. He didn't look big standing beside of Pa."[22]

18 Stuart, Jesse "Split Cherry Tree", *Esquire,* Jan. 1939, pp. 52–53 and 99–100. Print. Here 52 and 53.
19 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.
20 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
21 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
22 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.

David also stands between the two men linguistically: between the educated English of his teacher and the vernacular speech of the father. In the first sentence of the story David uses a wrong verb form: "I says"[23]. Another example of the father's social dialect is when the son tells him that he broke off the branch during class time, he asks him: "Do they jist let you get out and gad over th' hillsides?"[24]

At school, David first sees the father as an outsider threatening and rebuking the teacher. He has old-fashioned ideas about learning. He asks his son: "Don't they teach you no books at that high school?"[25], and modern experimental sciences seem ridiculous to him. David is certain: "I could tell him we studied frogs, birds, snakes, lizards, flowers, insects. But Pa would not understand"[26] and in fact the father ridicules the lesson: "this is not no high school. It's a bug school, a lizard school, a snake school! It is not no school nohow!"[27] These reservations can be dispelled by Prof. Herbert though.

More unpleasant, however, is the father's suspicion that his son is disadvantaged because he comes from a poor family. He suspects the teacher, who is not from the area, to exploit the boy: "'Poor man's son, huh,' says Pa."[28] He explains that there is no essential difference between the poor and the rich: "A bullet will go in a professor same as it will any man. It will go in a rich man same as it will a poor man."[29] In order to make this argument clear, he takes the revolver to school.

Initially Prof. Herbert is intimidated by the weapon.[30] However, when he understands Mr. Sexton's intentions, he speaks of his own concern for justice: "The farmer charged us six dollars. […] Must I make five boys pay and let your boy off? He said he did not have the dollar and could not get it. So I put it up for him. I'm letting him work it out."[31] The father understands and puts away the revolver. Once the misunderstanding has been cleared up, the content and methods of teaching remain. Prof. Herbert does not just explain the rules[32], he also tries to talk about interesting things to stimulate Mr. Sexton's curiosity. When he mentions that the children on the field trip also put dry timothy grass in an incubator to raise some protozoa, the father knows from agriculture what an incubator is, but he does not know it in connection with protozoa.

23 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52: "'I don't mind staying after school,' I says to Professor Herbert."
24 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
25 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
26 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
27 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.
28 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.
29 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.
30 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53: "Professor Herbert's eyes got big behind his black-rimmed glasses when he saw Pa's gun. Color came into his pale cheeks."
31 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
32 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53: "I was only doing my duty […] and following the course of study."

> "You've heard of germs, Mr. Sexton, haven't you?" says Professor Herbert.
> "Jist call me Luster, if you don't mind," says Pa, very casual like.
> "All right, Luster, you've heard of germs, haven't you?"
> "Yes," says Pa, "but I don't believe in germs."[33]

With the help of a microscope, Prof. Herbert shows Luster Sexton the germs on his teeth. So now the father has learned about the existence of bacteria. He knows: "'Seein' is believin',' Pap allus told me."[34] But when he hears that the teacher wants to have a black snake dissected, he admonishes him: "I jist don't want to see you kill the black snake. I never kill one. They are good mousers and a lot o' help to us on the farm."[35] Hereby he addresses the aspect of environmental benefits, which the conventional biology lessons have not yet considered. Luster Sexton thus foregrounds the concept of an empirical and view-based biology teaching with respect to functionality in the ecosystem.

Modern biology, where students learn through experimentation, is one of the two core messages of this lucidly didactic short story. The other is the benefit of problem-solving through dialogue. Bringing the revolver to school is, of course, more than just the visualization of the farmer's argument for equality: it is a threat. He subsequently learns that the gun is out of place in a school. As he sits down at the low table to peer through the microscope, the handle of his weapon becomes visible. Prof. Herbert discreetly pulls Mr. Sexton's coat down, which makes him uneasy: "Pa's face gets a little red. He knows about his gun and he knows he doesn't have any use for it in high school."[36] Already on the way to school David had hoped the matter could be settled by his father talking to his teacher. He remembered the Lambert boys: "I didn't like them until I'd seen them and talked to them. After I went to school with them and talked to them, I liked them and we were friends."[37] One can assume that these two "messages" of the text were the reason that *Split Cherry Tree* was included in many anthologies and in 1982 intended for an educational film adaptation.

The crew directed by Andrey Konchalovsky made a short story of approximately 5500 words into a 24-minute short film. It essentially follows the sequence of events as presented in David's narrative. Even though it gives up the subjective point of view, David's feelings are still perceptible. A striking stylistic device is the repetition of shots with small but significant variations. A good example is the way to school and back. Each is shown as a combination of three takes. One of them shows the road. David runs along the road for the first time after his attempt to

33 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
34 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
35 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
36 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
37 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.

hitchhike has been unsuccessful [fig. 1] (TC 03:46). Early in the morning David walks, silently, a few steps behind his father [fig. 2] (TC 10:09), and on the way back the two of them walk side by side and talk to each other [fig. 3] (TC 22:19).

Fig. 1: SPLIT CHERRY TREE – Dave's way home

Fig. 2: SPLIT CHERRY TREE – Dave and Father on the way to school

Fig. 3: SPLIT CHERRY TREE – Father and son going home

In the conversation between the father and Professor Herbert, the two sit opposite each other at the teacher's table (TC 10:44 ff.). The revolver is on the table. This encounter is filmed in alternating over-the-shoulder shots, which indicate a symmetry of communication. This symmetry is interrupted when Mr. Sexton gets up and takes the revolver in both hands (TC 11:16). Prof. Herbert makes an attempt to rise [fig. 4] (TC 11:46), but remains seated and explains his educational principles. The film here makes use of a low angle shot to highlight a difference in power. Finally, the father sits down again and puts away the revolver. "At eye level" and "rising" as signs of social symmetry and asymmetry are coded here simply but very effectively.

Fig. 4: SPLIT CHERRY TREE – Professor Herbert

Even the school corridor is shown again and again from the same perspective, as for example when David cleans the floor. But when the hall is shown in conjunction with close-ups of David, it becomes clear that it is he who sees the hallway like this. He observes the other students eavesdropping on his father and the teacher. Then everyone is facing him at the transition from the corridor to

the stairs. By juxtaposing Dave and the other students, the film reveals a conflict that the short story did not feature. Here the students are rarely mentioned: once, when they gather in the schoolyard before the lesson starts, and later, when they wonder about David's father coming to school: "The students in geometry looked at Pa. They must have wondered what he was doing in school."[38] Later they notice that he is not eating with a fork: "He ate with his knife instead of his fork. A lot of the students felt sorry for me after they found out he was my father."[39] But they are impressed when the father explains how useful the black snakes are: "The students look at Pa. They seem to like him better after he said that."[40]

In the film, the students rather despise the rural life and habits of the farmer. They make fun of Mr. Sexton's big hands (TC 13:15) and acknowledge his defense of the snakes with a laugh. David seems to be the only farmer's son in class, the divide between life in the hills and life in the city is wider than in the short story. Accordingly, the optimism of resolving conflicts by talking to one another exists only in relation of father to son – not in society. David is teased, his notes are destroyed. Even though he cannot present these written records to Prof. Herbert, he still presents them orally with great success. This fulfils a dual function: First, it explains part of the classmates' rejection by their envy, because they are not such brilliant students as he is. Moreover, this scene makes it possible for the father to be proud of his son. David notices his father's satisfaction and is thus particularly motivated to physically rebuke the spokesman for the boys who laughs and imitates the father in the hallway: "He's my Pa" [fig. 5] (TC 20:39), he shouts

Fig. 5: SPLIT CHERRY TREE – Dave attacking the spokesman

and attacks the boy even though he is half a head bigger than he is. When he lets go of him and turns to go down the stairs, the other student kicks him in the back – the conflict cannot be resolved simply by talking. David learns to stand up for his family background, which distinguishes him from the others. The short story, on

38 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
39 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.
40 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 99.

the other hand, is about shame. The father believes that David does not want him to go to school because he is ashamed of him: "'Ashamed of your old Pap are you, Dave,' says Pa."[41] But when David understands that his father does not want to shoot the teacher, he says to himself: "I wasn't ashamed of Pa after I found out he wasn't going to shoot Professor Herbert."[42] The film aims at greater psychological credibility.

The role of the mother also changes in the film adaptation. The passage of the story where David considers running away from home is rendered in the form of a conversation in the film. David complains about his problems to his mother. She listens patiently and leaves him alone when he reacts negatively to her attempts to comfort him. By behaving like that, and by greeting the two with a smile in the evening after their school visit, Mrs. Sexton explicitly assumes the mother role for David, whereas she's just Sexton's wife in the story, taming him a little.

When Jesse Stuart's story was first printed in *Esquire* magazine in January 1939, it received a very brief summary under the title: "Pa aimed to visit school and larn the professor a bullet would make a hole in him the same as any man." This way the reception is immediately directed towards the issue of "firearms at school." This emphasis would still – or again – be topical today if you read the story with students in the classroom. The topic of "animal experimentation" has also gained in importance since the time of writing.

The film, in contrast, downplays the meaning of these two themes by seeking more realism with regard to psychological motivation. David is shown as a teenager. He is, as in the story, too old for punishment by whip (this also being a possible subject for teaching), but he is not too old to learn about responsibility, which Professor Herbert wants, as he explains to the father. He does not just give the boy the dollar, but lets him work it off, because "he is not too big to learn responsibility" (TC 11:54). The father uses the older concept of "honesty," according to which he wants to raise his son: "We don't want somethin' fer nothin'."[43] The link to the boy's age is made by the film, but not by the story. In addition, the film corrects the optimism of the story that conflicts can be resolved by talking. It shows that at least the social gap is not that easy to bridge, especially when envy about (academic) success is involved.

One can only speculate why Andrei Konchalovsky was commissioned to direct the short film. Was the work not lucrative or prestigious enough for other directors? Also records about who proposed the film for an Academy Award are nowhere to be found. After the presentation of the nominations in Santa Monica a correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times* made a thematic connection to Konchalovsky's debut film "The First Teacher" (Pervyi uchitel):

41 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 52.
42 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 53.
43 Stuart, "Split Cherry …", loc. cit, p. 100.

> […] 'The Split Cherry Tree' has been made from one of Jesse Stuart's heartfelt stories of Kentucky Mountain life. Russian-born director Andrei Konchalovsky's first film was about a rural teacher in Central Asia. This one is about a nervous, dedicated teacher in rural Kentucky, probably some years ago, who comes up against a raw-boned, uneducated farmer, resentful of the teacher's after-school punishment of the farmer's son. […].[44]

The film did not receive the award, but for Konchalovsky it was probably the film that opened the doors to other studios. In his memoir he does not mention the short list for the Oscar:

> By the time I had the chance to shoot in America, I had almost lost hope. Three years without work, the best thing to come along – shooting the short film "The Broken Cherry Tree" for an educational television program. And this was after twenty years in the business, four episodes of "Sibiriada", festival awards, a contract with the French, even if it did not materialize. But even such work seemed like a gift. I was happy that I was entrusted with the camera, that I was a director once again, that I could show everyone.[45]

Real satisfaction looks different. However, a broken cherry tree brought a father and his son closer together again, brought the father to school, and a Russian-Soviet director to a first and modest success in Hollywood.

3 Maria's Lovers

After having completed the short film and after its nomination for the Academy Award, Konchalovsky succeeded to convince the heads of Cannon Group[46] to entrust him with the artistic responsibility for a film. More precisely, to ensure the financing of one of his projects, and to organize the distribution.[47] Konchalovsky

44 Benson, Sheila "A Week of Short Films at the Monica", *Los Angeles Times,* 1983, 23 Mar. Print.

45 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 187–88 [К моменту, когда выпал шанс снимать в Америке, я почти потерял надежду. Три года без работы, самое большее, что удалось – снять короткометражку "Сломанное вишневое деревце" для образовательной телепрограммы. И это после двадцати лет в кино, четырех серий "Сибириады", фестивальных наград, контракта с французами, пусть он и лопнул. Но даже такая работа каказалась подарком. Я был счастлив, что мне доверили камеру, что я опять режиссер, что я могу доказать всем это.].

46 As the Cannon Group, acquired by the Israelis Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus in 1979, was to become a major studio not only in the field of B-movies and video, it was a reciprocal business.

47 MGM-UA took over the distribution of the film, according to press reports.

had a screenplay written with Gérard Brach[48], and he wanted to direct the picture. More importantly, he had a star, the then 22-year-old Nastassja Kinski, who had been in front of the camera since she was 13 years old. Since receiving the 1981 a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress for Tess in Roman Polanski's eponymous film, Hollywood had noticed Kinski, or "la Kinski" as she was called in Italy and France.[49] When the film was mostly done, Konchalovsky told the *Los Angeles Times* in an interview that he and Brach had actually intended for the story to occur in France, but then he spoke with Nastassja Kinski about it. She vehemently demanded the lead role, and because Cannon Group wanted a movie in and for the US, Paul Zindel and Marjorie David helped to rewrite the subject to occur in an American setting.[50] The previous deal was off.

The press acted in the usual way, first reporting on the deal and mentioning the stars, including Nastassja Kinski and Burt Lancaster[51]. The title change from *Maria's Lover* to *Maria's Lovers,* the beginning of the shooting in August 1983, the postproduction, and other steps towards the completion of the film were also communicated.

PLATONOV'S STORY

What is not seen from the credits in the film is that Konchalovsky had the idea for the story from the author Andrei Platonov. In the Soviet Union Konchalovsky's project would have been a high-risk, even dangerous matter, because in 1978, the director Aleksandr Sokurov had previous political problems already. His film was not only banned, it was directed to be destroyed. In France or in the US, Konchalovsky was safe from such political interference.

Andrei Platonov had difficulties already. Since Stalin had criticized his narrative "A Poor Peasant's Chronicle" (Впрок) in 1931, he had not been able to publish his works without problems. The 1936/7 story "The River Potudan" (Река Потудан) was published in the journal *Literaturnyj kritik* and reprinted in an anthology to which it gave the title – however, only in 5,000 copies, which was not even enough for all public libraries. Contemporary criticism found "false humanism" and "hallucinatory nonsense."[52] Abram Gurvich's review was devastating.

48 He does not seem to have made public at that moment that this script was based on the story of a Soviet writer, in any case it did not play a role in the reports about the film.

49 … especially since the film had been awarded three Oscars.

50 Mann, Roderic "Soviet Director: Bite Worse Than His Bark", *Los Angeles Times,* 4 Mar. 1984.

51 F.e.: McCarthy, Todd "Cannon Films, MGM-UA In A 'Lover's' Pact", *Daily Variety,* 22 June 1983; N.N. "Cannon Backing Russo Konchalovsky's 'Lover', With Kinsky, Lancaster", *Variety,* 29 June 1983.

52 See Günther, Hans *Andrej Platonov. Leben. Werk. Wirkung.* Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016, p. 105.

After Stalin's death, many of Platonov's texts became more accessible again, but some could reach the Russian reader only in the 1980s, in the perestroika period.

The Red Army soldier Nikita Firsov wanders back to his hometown after civil war and hard times. On the way he dreams, as he is sleeping on the roadside, a hairy animal would crawl into him, but leave him again. At home he finds his father, who welcomes his son awkwardly. Nikita finds work in the same company where his father works as a carpenter. Walking through the city, the son remembers that the father had wanted to marry a widowed teacher, and that she had a daughter named Lyubov, whom he worshiped from a distance. This Lyubov recognizes him in the city and speaks to him. She is now studying medicine and living in very poor conditions. The two like each other, but they keep their distance, since Lyubov wants to focus on finishing her exams. When Lyuba's girlfriend Zhenya, who has always taken care of her, dies of typhus, Nikita prepares a casket for Zhenya and takes care of Lyuba's diet. He too falls ill. Lyuba visits him and takes him to her apartment, where she takes care of him: "Why should you lie at home?"[53] After three weeks, he gets well, and the two wait for winter to pass, and for the exam in the spring. Then they want to get married. In February, Nikita leaves with a team of men from the city to work abroad. In time, his father builds a wardrobe for the bride and groom, which he delivers to Lyubov. He tells his son that he can marry now, and Nikita leaves immediately. The same day the young people register their marriage, but after that, in Lyubov's room "they did not know what to do."[54] They eat, go to bed, but do not consummate the marriage. Nikita is ashamed that he seems unable to do so and decides to drown himself in the river Potudan as soon as it thaws. However, that will not happen for a few weeks, so both try to hide their grief from the other while living together. Nikita builds wooden furniture and toys for children and makes small figures out of clay. In the end, he secretly leaves his wife. However, he doesn't go to the river, but to Kantemirovka, "where from a century ago there were big bazaars and there lived a wealthy people."[55]

In contrast, he lives there as a homeless person in the market, and works for the market guard who feeds him for it sparingly. He does not talk, and they consider him to be a mute. At the end of the summer, his father finds him there, telling him that Lyubov, after his departure, wanted to drown herself in the river. Nikita hurries home, finds Lyubov, "coveted her all," and his heart supplies him "with his blood for the miserable but necessary lust."[56]

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53 Платонов, Андрей. *Чевенгур. Котлован. Рассказы.* Москва: Эксмо, 2009, стр. 719. [Зачем тебе лома лежать?].

54 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 723 [не знали, чем им заняться].

55 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 729 [где спокон века были большие базары и жил зажиточный народ].

56 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 735 [Он пожелал ее всю […] своей кровью с бедным, но необходимым наслаждением.].

If one is looking at the main character, this is the story of a 25-year-old young man growing into his own life and role as a man. Although he has spent three years fighting and working in the army, he is still emotionally dependent. He has been guided from the outside over the years. He has simply done the work that has been assigned to him. After his assignment was over, he returns to his parents' house, "to live there as it was for the first time."[57] The narrator says that his sad expression reflected "of restrained kindness or of the usual sunkenness of the youth."[58] In the parental home, the backwardness of the youthfulness intensifies again, because there he still perceives the smell of his long-dead mother. The father welcomes him "in the shy speechlessness of his love for him."[59] This father himself is too uncertain and haphazard to help the son with more than just providing basic necessities. Recalling the teacher's remorseful daughter, whom he admired from a distance, Nikita joins in the shy adoration of younger days, so that the partnership that the two young people live within, is supported by mutual affection – but without physical passion. Both Nikita and Lyubov seem to have no desire for each other, but very high aspirations. Lyubov is studying medicine to help people and to "grasp what human existence was all about – was it serious or just fun?"[60] Nikita believes in the ideals of the revolution he fought for and is convinced it "remains forever, now it's a good time to give birth, […] Children will never be unhappy!"[61]

Their love is – in the terminology of antiquity – *philia* (φιλία), a "friendly affection", to which *agápe* (ἀγάπη), a "loving care", is added, it lacks the *eros* (ἔρως), the "desire". Nikita experiences the latter only at the end of the story and in a very sublimated form almost without delight. When he understands that and how much Lyubov, who wanted to drown herself, needs his closeness, care and tenderness, his blood gets excited: "Lyuba […] grabbed Nikita by the arms and pulled him to her. Nikita embraced Lyuba with that power that tries to fit the other, loved one inside his needy soul."[62] This not only makes him feel strong, but also makes it possible to have a role reversal. At this point, he takes care of his extremely sick wife as she had nursed him half a year before.

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57 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 704. [они шли теперь жить точно впервые].

58 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 705. [от сдержанной доброты характера либо от обычной сосредоточенности молодости.]

59 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 707. [в скромном недоумении своей любви к нему].

60 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 712. [и надо было понять, что же есть существование людей, это – серьезно или нарочно?]

61 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 725. [– Революция осталась навсегда, теперь рожать хорошо, […] Дети несчастными уж никогда не будут!]

62 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 735. [Люба […] схватила Никиту за руки и потянула его к себе. Никита обнял Любу с тою силою, которая пытается вместить другого, любимого человека внутрь своей нуждающейся души.]

There is no clue in the narration whether it is the idiosyncratic, love-focused love that makes Nikita unable to perform the marriage or the illness he has just overcome. After he left Lyubov, he has to return to his unnamed hometown a second and a third time, until he knows what he really wants there. The second time is just at the end of winter, and Nikita feels the approach of a new life in the spring[63], the third time he feels that the yearning for his wife drives him. In this narrative yearning is usually hindsight. The father remembers his three sons, of whom two have been killed, at night. "He began to think different thoughts, to imagine the forgotten, and his heart was tormented by longing for his lost sons, in sorrow for his dull past life."[64] Sometimes he also yearns for the teacher, with whom he has not maintained contact, because he had felt too intellectually inferior and outclassed. Later, he visits his son, who is nursed by Lyuba, and "he thought in secret that he himself could completely marry this girl, Luba, once he was ashamed of her mother, but somehow it was a shame to have enough wealth in the house to pamper and attract such a young girl to him."[65]

Nikita, too, first thinks of the past, but compares it to the present, for example, when he sees how poor the houses are that had seemed big to him as a child. The future is determined by the experience of the war: the combatants "felt within themselves the great universal hope, which now became the idea of their still small lives, which had no clear purpose and purpose before the civil war."[66] According to his name (Νικήτας – "the winner") Nikita has created a difficult goal of his own in a very intense way. The loss of the private ("small") perspective causes him problems. He has a distant happiness in mind, the great utopia, which will benefit future generations. He and Lyuba see this future already in the waters of the river Potudan:

> Nikita lay down on his stomach and looked down under the ice, where it was clear how the water was flowing quietly. Lyuba also settled next to him, and, touching each other, they observed a quiet stream of water and said

63 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 723: "[Nikita] liked to be in the gloomy light of the night on this unconscious early land, which had forgotten all those who died on it and did not know that she would give birth in the warmth of a new summer." [ему нравилось быть в сумрачном свете ночи на этой беспамятной ранней земле, забывшей всех умерших на ней и не знающей, что она родит в тепле нового лета.]

64 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 706. [он начинал думать разные мысли, воображать забытое, и сердце его мучилось в тоске по утраченным сыновьям, в печали по своей скучно прошедшей жизни.]

65 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 722. [Он думал втайне, что и сам бы мог вполне жениться на этой девушке Любе, раз на матери ее постеснялся, но стыдно как-то и нет в доме достатка, чтобы побаловать, привлечь к себе подобную молодую девицу.]

66 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 704. [почувствовали внутри себя великую всемирную надежду, которая сейчас стала идеей их пока еще небольшой жизни, не имевшей ясной цели и назначения до гражданской войны.]

> how happy the Potudan River is, because it goes into the sea and this water under the ice will flow past the shores of distant countries where flowers now grow birds are singing.[67]

These blooming, distant shores have little to do with their own life perspectives. To ponder the stream afterward is even dangerous, it distracts from a healthy life in the present. When Nikita falls ill, the fever carries him "in his current far away from all people and near objects". Lyuba gets into the river to drown herself in it, Nikita flees to another city to learn Lyuba's fate, that he too has to get involved in a private task.[68]

ALEKSANDR SOKUROV'S FILM ADAPTATION

In 1978 Aleksandr Sokurov filmed Platonov's narrative under the title "The Lonely Voice of Man" (Odinokiy golos cheloveka). However, the movie was not released until 1987, because it was confiscated before the final completion and was directed to be destroyed. The cinematographer Sergey Jurizditsky, however, exchanged the material, and stole it from the archive, so that in 1985, at the beginning of the perestroika era, the film still existed and could be discussed in the newly created conflict commission. As a result, nothing hindered the completion and showing of the film. The film received a Bronze Leopard in 1987 at the Festival of Locarno and a diploma at the Festival of Ontario.

Sokurov puts the focus of his film on the loneliness of the young people. The plot largely follows the narrative, but the film ends with the hasty return of Nikita from the neighboring city. The union of the spouses is not part of the film, putting the issue of impotence into the background. The overcoming of loneliness is in the foreground.

Lonely is not just Nikita's life in the city. The city itself is separated from the river, which stands for trade and change and on which a huge raft is on the way, on which men work in the same rhythm on a big wheel. Nikita also sees a similar working rhythm in his memory as he walks along a large house and looks into one of the windows. Workers with bare torso operate a machine. They do it like the people on the raft: together, but each one for themselves. But both are in b/w

67 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 721. [Никита ложился животом и смотрел вниз под лед, где видно было, как тихо текла вода. Люба тоже устраивалась рядом с ним, и, касаясь друг друга, они наблюдали укромный поток воды и говорили, насколько счастлива река Потудань, потому что она уходит в море и эта вода подо льдом будет течь мимо берегов далеких стран, в которых сейчас растут цветы и поют птицы.]

68 Платонов, *Чевенгур* …, loc. cit., стр. 719. [Сильный жар уносил его в своем течении вдаль ото всех людей и ближних предметов.]

filmed remembrances of a time in which there was still common ground. Now, after the war, in the city, the rooms are empty and rundown.

Initially Nikita is close to his father; he sleeps in the same room. Then he moves to Lyubov, and the two separate themselves from the rest of the world. They meet each other in the otherwise deserted nature, walk a narrow path under trees and stop in front of Lyuba's garden gate. In several takes it is shown how Lyuba awkwardly opens the padlock, which then closes the two off from the rest of the city. In the rooms of the house, both stay at a distance from one another, sometimes only to see each other indirectly in the mirror.

Unlike the narrative, Lyuba gives her memories a lot of space. One can see her leaf through a photo album, whose pictures, the audience also looks at for a long time. She seems to be referring to her childhood in which she met Nikita, but that does not work seamlessly, because both should now behave like adults with each other. The close proximity does not work for them in the beginning.

When she sleeps, Lyuba, as described by Platonov, covers her eyes with her thick braid. In pre-modern Russia this was the sign for the unmarried young woman (after the wedding they covered their hair with a headscarf). Nikita, looking at the sleeping Lyuba, looks at this cultural indicator behind which the person is hidden. He makes several attempts, as in the narrative, to really approach Lyuba. The film ends with images of Nikita, whether he can unite with his wife, or whether he is still distracted by his distant ideals, the audience must wonder.

ANDREI KONCHALOVSKY'S VERSION

Andrei Konchalovsky's film sets the scene among Serbian immigrants in Pennsylvania. It is the year 1946, i.e. one year after the end of World War II. The G.I. Ivan Bibic had to cope with terrible circumstances in Japanese captivity and is just arriving in his native town, to visit his father. Following that, he rushes to Maria Bosic, his girlfriend since childhood. In the meantime, she has been courted by Captain Al Griselli, who is in love with her and proposes. Maria finally chooses Ivan, and marries him. Ivan proves to be unable to engage sexually with his wife, which does not happen when he is with other women.

Since he cannot talk to her about it, he withdraws from her, but continues to love her anyway. Maria does not give in to Al's courtship as he wants to take her to Detroit, and also tries to stay loyal to Ivan. However, Ivan goes to another city, gets a job in a slaughterhouse and gets a new girlfriend. When the musician Clarence Butts arrives in the city, after several attempts, he succeeds in charming Maria. She finally lets him into her room, but immediately after sex, she makes him leave.

Maria gets pregnant and drives to Ivan, who sends her away.

Later, in a pub where Ivan and his colleagues sit with their girlfriends, Clarence tells about his experience with the married woman, who was still a virgin and how she immediately put him out the door. The colleagues can imagine that this was Ivan's wife. Ivan gets angry, beats Clarence up and, once again pushed by his father, goes to Maria. He confesses to like the child. The film ends with the intention of Ivan and Maria to give birth to their own child: "We are making our own baby now."

In Konchalovsky's movie, it is clearly a psychological problem that bothers Ivan: The experiences in captivity have disturbed him, he has not been able to process them despite the psychological care provided by the army. At the beginning and at the end of the film there are flashbacks to therapy. There is no question of a physical illness, because Ivan can interact with other women, such as Mrs. Wynic, but not with his own wife.

The written story's Nikita becomes Ivan, that is "Everybody". The situation of a returning soldier of the victorious army is exchanged for captivity and internment camp experience. Even more obvious are the implications of changing the name of the female protagonist. When Lyubov ("Love") becomes Maria, a dimension of religious meaning opens up to the virgin Mother of God, the saint, whom the devout worshiper can turn to in times of need, and worship. After having slept with Mrs. Wynic, Ivan tells her about the horrors of captivity and that he had clung to his memories of Maria at that time (TC 0:17:14). As a result, he seems to have celebrated her so much that later she can not be an object of sensual desire. During a motorcycle trip in the fields, he gives her golden earrings in the form of crosses (TC 0:25:40), later they marry in a church.

The religious subtext is much clearer than in Platonov's story. Only when Maria "sinned" with the musician, does Ivan no longer see her as the distant object of his worship, but as a normal woman, and his wife.

In addition to the name change, the film also makes a change in the cast of characters, which was reinforced by the casting. John Savage plays Ivan as a simple man who does not fully understand what is going on with himself. The movie adds a rival for Maria's attention, whose role as elegant and attractive Capitan Griselli is played by Vincent Spano. The Captain refuses to marry Rosie as long as he is in love with Maria. Even Ivan's father, played by Robert Mitchum, is physically present but a bit shy. In this movie version of the story, he is set as a rival for Maria. He still feels young and strong, and gives Maria a copy of a chest of drawers he had already built for her mother. Maria sits next to him on the sofa, and he explains: "You need a good man. […] You are too good for him" (TC 0:32:35) – by which he means his son. He, too, recognizes Maria as a venerable beauty, which does not prevent him from attempting to approach her. He puts his hand on her knee and kisses her on the mouth. Maria looks at him in disbelief. She has chosen Ivan. The fourth man in the circle of Maria's lovers, more precisely: men who are trying to win favor with Maria, is the musician Clarence Butts, played by Keith Carradine.

He has sunglasses, that sometimes are carried by his dog, which finally he gives to Ivan. Clarence brings a breath of a larger world into the small provincial town. He stands for a restless, slightly disreputable life. By giving Ivan the sunglasses, he gives Ivan the opportunity to hide. While telling Mrs. Wynic that he cannot make love to Maria, she takes off his glasses, shows him his relationship with Maria: "She lives in your dreams" (TC 0:51:12) and goes to bed with him one more time. Mrs. Wynic as a competitor against Maria for Ivan, stands for a confident sexuality. She drives a red car, dances to Rock'n'Roll with young men, and occasionally meets with Ivan's father, who calls her "a real woman" (TC 0:11:50). She remains independent. The role is played by a mature Anita Morris (* 1943), who represents a slightly turned-up complementary figure to Maria. This Maria is embodied by Nastassja Kinski (* 1961). She is the main character of the film.

At that time, "la Kinski" was one of the most photographed women in the world. Accordingly, the camera often does close-ups, and the dialogue draws the viewer's attention particularly to their eyes. When Ivan's father learns that he has just seen Maria, he remembers: "My God, what eyes her mother had. […] Every time I looked into these eyes I felt pain. Like you could see everything lousy I'd ever done in my life" (TC 0:11:07–12). In the field where Ivan gives Maria the earrings, he thinks they have changed compared to before, but the eyes have remained the same: "Same eyes" (TC 0:26:55). Ivan's father states when he kisses Maria gently: "Oh, my God, those eyes." (TC 0:34:05). Finally, Clarence writes a whole song for Maria in which he sings her eyes: "I never felt my heart, / until I looked into your eyes / …" (TC 1:16:31 ff.). He also ascribes the qualities of a saint to Maria, who can get a man on the right path ("I let a life of crime / and then I looked into your eyes"), but that doesn't stop him from coveting Maria and seducing her into adultery.

These "purifying" eyes, which move the men for the better, stand in a strange contrast to scenes that make Maria appear erotically desirable. When Ivan's father brings her the chest of drawers, she is cleaning the floor and wearing a thin dress, through which the back light shows her sparse underwear and the contours of her slim body. Later you see her again, rolling on her bed in desire for Ivan.

Platonov's narration tells of a hairy field animal that, without a meaning, identifiable through the text's structure, encounters and crawls into Nikita in his dreams, but also leaves him. In Konchalovsky's film this motif becomes a rat, which stands for the cruel horrors of the camp. It first appears in Ivan's memory, who tells Mrs. Wynic about the camp, where he had to witness a rat eating human flesh: "I see a rat […] it's dragging its feet and leaving a trail of blood. […] Its belly is full. […] And I know what it had for dinner" (TC 0:17:27). Ivan covers these memories with the thoughts of Maria. The rat is also associated with Maria when it is mentioned for the second time. After the wedding, Ivan and Maria suffer separately from the situation. While Maria longs for him half-naked in silk stockings on the bed, Ivan is in the shed where he sees a rat. When he leaves the city on an open freight

wagon the next day, he sees a rat approaching his feet again (TC 1:02:00 ff.). He kicks it, and puts on the sunglasses. The third time he meets the rat is when he has heard from Clarence in the strange city that he was in bed with his wife. This time the rat gets on Ivan's bed. It leaves a trail of blood and crawls into his mouth. Ivan manages to spit her out and kill her (TC 1:36:00). Then he wakes up and meets his father, who brings him back to Maria. Compared to the narrative, the rat in the film is much more integrated into the plot, it stands for Ivan's trauma and the exaggeration of Mary. By killing the rat, he overcomes his inability to deal with his psychological trauma.

At this point, Ivan's rivals ware chased away: Al went to another city, Clarence was knocked down by Ivan, and his father feels old and weak. "I'm dying," he says. Ivan's position as Maria's husband and father is no longer threatened. Like Nikita in Platonov's story, he ended up arriving emotionally in his city. "I'm home, Maria," he says in the final sequence when he is lying on the bed with Maria. It was his wish to arrive be home already in the therapy talks that are shot in black and white and can be seen at the beginning and end of the film.

The movie premiered on May 14, 1984 and was soon selected to become the American contribution to the Venice Festival in August of the same year. There it opened the Biennale[69] and was welcomed benevolently.[70] In the fall and winter of 1984/85, it then went to the American cinemas.

AMERICAN FILM CRITICISM

Directly after the premiere, *Daily Variety* had determined that the film was "not an arty item and could be appreciated by general audiences, not only the cognoscenti"[71] – how a good Hollywood movie is imagined, capable of profitability while still sufficiently intellectually demanding. F. X. Feeney, the film critic at *L.A. Weekly,* also confirmed Konchalovsky had "a sincere wish to connect with a mass audience." But the film is unique in its demands on the viewer and "has no parallel that I know of in American film. Maria's Lovers is an intimate drama that follows two people to bed […]. The subject is impotence […] and Konchalovsky never flinches from the anguish he asks us to witness." The sex scenes "have an astonishing directness, they're almost too painful to watch." In the scene between Father and Maria, Feeney finds "a weirdly funny, horny innocence."[72]

69 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 21 Aug. 1984; N.N. "A First for Konchalovsky", *New York Times,* 24. Aug. 1984; N.N. "Cannon Film for Venice", *Hollywood Reporter,* 21 Aug. 1984.

70 Lane, John Francis "'Maria's Lovers' gets warm reception at Venice, Italian release is set", *Screen International,* 1 Sep. 1984.

71 Cart. "Maria's Lovers", *Variety* (Daily), 18 May 1984 and *Variety* (Weekly), 23 May 1984.

72 Feeney, F. X. "Breaking the Eroticism Barrier. An Appreciation of *Maria's Lovers*", *L.A. Weekly,* 15–21 Feb. 1985, p. 25–26.

Maria's role was not entirely successful for the critic. He thinks Konchalovsky "idealizes Maria almost as much as her poor husband does," but he also calls Maria's Lovers "supremely interesting, a compelling drama pursued with visceral honesty." He also finds appreciative words for the fact that Konchalovsky uses recordings from John Huston's documentary Let There Be Light for the introductory black-and-white scenes of the therapy sessions. Shot in 1945, the film could only be released in cinemas in 1982 because the military authorities had resisted a public screening for so long.

Many other critics also viewed the film as successful overall. Allan Wendy from *UCLA Daily Bruin* begins his review with the sentence: "The small-town American story of *Maria's Lovers* is exquisite, painful, and romantic." He promises the reader that his name will also be added "to the growing list of 'Maria's Lovers.'"[73] Dan Salitt from *Reader* is ready to award four out of five points for the film. The drawing of the characters f.e. is "authentic", it goes "beyond the usual ethos of impersonation that Hollywood generally brings to unfamiliar subcultures."[74]

Other reviews are much more reserved with the praise. The reviewer from *Time Out* calls the film a "strange fable about sexuality" and psychologizes the conflicts as forms of a gender conflict.[75]

This is portrayed as a discrepancy between the scenes, which are usually described as effective, and the story. The acting of the protagonist is also criticized.

> […] Mr. Konchalovsky manages to make something lyrical and moving out of these characters and the Pennsylvania river town where they live. But 'Maria's Lovers' makes me feel the way I sometimes do after talking with a gorgeous but vague person: "Gosh I liked looking at him. But what did he say?"[76]

Or:

> […] "Maria's Lovers" is also one of the best-looking bad movies in months (the cinematographer is Juan Ruiz Anchia), and the uglier flourishes of Savage's savage acting clash with the gorgeous scenery.[77]

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73 Wendy, Allen "This Russian jewel will add your name to the growing list of 'Maria's Lovers'", *UCLA Daily Bruin,* 1 Mar. 1985.

74 Sallitt, Dan "The Virtues and Vices of *Maria's Lovers*", *Reader,* 8 Feb 1985.

75 Ryans, Tony "Russian Salad", *Time Out,* 29 Nov. 1984: "Kinski is the film's given, a child-woman-mother-figure anchored in a rather stolid male conception of the 'mystery' of female sexuality. The film's focus is on the emotional, psychological and physical disabilities of the men."

76 Salamon, Julie "A Temporary Epidemic of Good Taste", *Wall Street Journal,* 31 Jan. 1985.

77 Chute, David "'Maria's' scenic charms include La Kinski", *Los Angeles Herald Examiner,* 25 Jan. 1985.

Still others discover fundamental shortcomings. The reviewer of the *Chicago Tribune* said that after the film he had come to appreciate the film The Deer Hunter (which was also showed at the time)[78], the *Playboy* reviewer said that when Konchalovsky has come from Russia with love to conquer the hearts of Hollywood, he still had a long way to go[79], and the reviewer from *Village Voice* calls the whole film "merely a stiff."[80]

A reviewer accuses the director of having made a stylistic pastiche:

> It may, I suppose, come down to the simple fact that this is Russian-born director Andrei Konchalovsky's first film in English. Instead of making a stunning film about redemption in America, he's made a parody of a foreign film. Viewed as a bad comedy, it may work, […].[81]

Incidentally, almost all critics noted that Konchalovsky was a Soviet director.

THE STRANGENESS FACTOR

Above all, the fact that Konchalovsky did not come to the USA as a refugee, but as a Soviet citizen who could return, seemed worth noting. And that this was his first "American" film. Sometimes something like admiration resonates: "Konchalovsky is perhaps the first Russian director to have made a main-line Yank film with name performers"[82]. Or they derive the expectation of a new perspective:

> Maria' Lovers is unique, the first American film by Soviet director Andrei Konchalovsky (Siberiade) – a man who is himself a singular phenomenon in that he is still a Soviet citizen in good standing. He's not a refugee; he has no political axe to grind. So, what does he have to say to the Americans?[83]

Kevin Thomas admits Konchalovsky that he has used this new perspective of the outsider fruitfully when he says Konchalovsky brought "a fresh, liberating perspective and universality to a quintessentially American experience."[84] (By this he probably means the debate about the psychological damage of soldiers involved in the war, which was conducted earlier in the US than in other countries).

78 Siskel, Gene "'Maria's Lovers' is a best confusing affair at best", *Chicago Tribune,* 18 Mar. 1985.
79 N.N. Untitled, *Playboy,* 18 Apr. 1985.
80 Harvey, Stephen "The Horniest Years of Our Lives", *Village Voice,* 5 Feb. 1985.
81 Shindler, Merrill "Maria's Lovers. A Carnal Carnival", *Los Angeles Magazine,* Feb. 1985.
82 Shindler, "Maria's Lovers …", loc. cit.
83 Feeney, F. X. "Maria's Lovers", *Los Angeles Weekly,* 25 Jan. 1985.
84 Thomas, Kevin "'Maria's Lovers' courts Americana", *Los Angeles Times,* 25 Jan. 1985.

Other critics saw "the strangeness" rather on the stylistic and production level. They discovered "a distinctly Slavic feeling, an all-American setting and an Israeli production company" in the film.[85] Marjorie Bilbow goes even further in *Screen International:*

> […] In the wide open spaces and bleak industrial towns of Pennsylvania Konchalovsky has contrived a Slav world that would not seem alien if transplanted to the Russian steppes. It is a world of simple reactions to complex situations, and Konchalovsky directs with a sensitive awareness of the layers of emotion which lie beneath his characters' surface obstinacies.[86]

Konchalovsky had led this way in the interviews. Tony Rayns quotes him as follows: "If you think this all sounds very Russian, you're right. The story originated in Andrei Platonov, a Russian writer of the 1930s […] Our story is basically the same as his original: it's about the body losing all its forces to the spirit."[87] In conversation with Anthony Fabian-Reinstein, Konchalovsky talks about the script being "Americanised" with the help of two writers: "This just proves that any story can be international – like *Romeo and Juliet* or *Crime and Punishment*."[88] It is not entirely clear whether this is an assertion to justify the use of a "Russian" material for a Hollywood film, or whether he actually believed that one could adapt any material to a different cultural context by transposing it into another setting.

Those who were looking for the "national cultural" stamp usually found something different than that subject. In conversation with Fabian-Reinstein, Konchalovsky points to the old distinction between characters and plot[89]: "As a film maker, you can either tell a story, or reveal a character. Those are two different approaches. Some directors convey their attitudes toward character – their love, their empathy. Others concentrate more on story. I enjoy character."[90]

Nevertheless, Floyd Byers understands Konchalovsky's characteristic way of building a plot. In a long article in *L.A. Weekly* he describes his collaboration with the Soviet director inter alia on the screenplay of Maria's Lovers and reports

85 Maslin, Janet "Screen: 'Maria's Lovers'", *The New York Times,* 13 Jan. 1985.

86 Bilbow, Marjorie "Maria's Lovers", *Screen International,* 24 Nov. 1984.

87 Ryans, "Russian Salad", loc. cit. Floyd Byers, who had worked on the script for Maria's Lovers, then asks why Platonov is not at least mentioned in the credits. (Byers, Floyd "A Cosmonaut in Hollywood. A collaborator of Andrei Konchalovsky (Maria's Lovers) describes the wonderous ways the Russian director winds his way through Tinseltown", *L.A. Weekly,* 1–7 Feb. 1985, Vol. 7, No. 10, p. 16–21).

88 Fabian-Reinstein, "Konchalovsky …", loc. cit., p. 27.

89 "Tragedy is not a representation of people, but of actions, of life, of happiness and unhappiness: because happiness is action and the goal of tragedy is an action, not a condition. Humans, however, have a certain personality in regard to the characters; in relation to the actions they are happy or the opposite." (Aristoteles, *Poetika,* chap. 6).

90 Fabian-Reinstein, "Konchalovsky …", loc. cit., p. 27.

what he noticed when comparing the cinema cultures or Konchalovsky's individual style with American customs. "For Andrei a movie can never have enough action (emotion); too much passion is impossible on the screen." If the emotions arise from the action, dialogues and images are of secondary importance, but links between storylines are important. Byers wonders how a man who has such clear ideas about making his films, could want to shoot in Hollywood, where they are used to other aesthetics: "Why had he come here? To try to teach Americans […] the Soviet ruling class line?"[91]

While certain sequences of action are typical of Konchalovsky's style for Byers, for Feeney it is the images, the special way of camera work when heaven and earth are shown. In this sense, Maria's Lovers achieved "a distinctly Russian result":

> Russian cameramen tend to use a lens size that has a binocular (flattening) effect on the landscapes they take in (think of Tarkovsky's films). And whereas American cinematographers like to fit a lot of sky into a frame, keeping the horizon sharp and low, Russians tend to concentrate on earth, with the sky a blue ribbon peeking in from the top now and then.
>
> Konchalovsky does this less than his countrymen, but the effect is explicit enough in *Maria's Lovers* that you may feel he's made Pennsylvania look like Russia. What he's done in actuality is bring a very strong, foreign-born eye to American soil. The effect is unprecedented in terms of Soviets coming to America – other foreigners have filmed here, but none have offered such a visibly different view.[92]

In whatever way the difference between Konchalovsky's individual style and "typical" Hollywood cinema was interpreted, it was clear, to both director and film critic, that it existed. Konchalovsky decided: "I would like to do more films in the US. And I would like to direct them in American style."[93]

He tells Rayns in November 1984: "There's an old Hollywood rule: sign your new deal before your last film is released!"[94] According to this rule, he negotiated, before Maria's Lovers was finished and released in the cinemas, the next project that had been again approved by Cannon.

91 Byers, "A Cosmonaut in Hollywood", loc. cit., p. 18.
92 Feeney, "Maria's Lovers", loc. cit., p. 26.
93 Barron, "Konchalovsky shoot …", loc. cit.
94 Ryans, "Russian Salad", loc. cit.

4 Runaway Train

Already in 1966, *Film Daily* had put the headline: "Korosawa's First U.A. Pic for Levine-San" and told that the planned film of the world-famous Akira Kurosawa would be called "Runaway Train" and was "a fictionalized version of a true incident which occurred between Syracuse and Rochester on the New York Central Railroad".[95] The project did not materialize. In 1981, apparently, there was a second attempt to make a film out of Kurosawa's design, also the filming location Canada was already selected.[96] Two years later, the press reported that Konchalovsky was scheduled as a director. Francis Coppola had made contact between the Japanese and the Russian, the Pulitzer-winning writer Paul Zindel has rewritten the script by Kurosawa. In this way the $ 8–9 million project had "in[ternationa]l flavor"[97]. Apart from Zindel, Edward Bunker and the Serbian Đjorđje Milićević appear as scriptwriters in the opening credits of the film, so Kurosawa's share of the script is hard to determine.[98] The director remains very vague in his memoirs: "All the main points in the script are like Kurosawa had them, I just added some new lines to dramatize the conflict even more."[99] The script remained associated with Kurosawa's name, obviously as a kind of mark of quality and legitimacy.

By the time filming could begin, it was spring 1985, and it was supposed to be released at Christmastime.[100]

The Story

Ranken, warden of a maximum-security prison in Alaska, is proud of the strict rules that prevail in his institution. Inmate Oscar Manheim, known as Manny, fights in court that Ranken must transfer him from the security wing to a different ward, and he uses this situation immediately to escape. He is followed by the prisoner Buck. It's deep winter, and the two are boarding a freight train, whose driver dies of a heart attack, so that the train, whose braking system also fails, rages without a driver through the icy landscape.

95 N.N. "Korosawa's First U.A. Pic for Levine-San", *Film Daily,* 1 July 1966. Also *Variety* had a short notice: N.N. "Japanese Director On Embassy 'Train'", *Variety,* 1 July 1966.

96 Austin, John "Cambridge Group will invest $ 40 mil in 12 pictures a year", *Hollywood Reporter,* 3 March 1981. Similar also N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 4 Mar. 1981.

97 Loynd, Ray "In'l flavour for planned $ 8–9 Mil 'Runaway Train'", *Variety* (Daily), 19 July 1983.

98 The revised draw of the script from 15 Feb., 1985 "by Djordje Milicevic and Edward Bunker form a script by Akira Kurosawa" – Zindel is not mentioned – is available in the script collection of the Margaret Herrick Library at Beverly Hills.

99 Кончаловский. *Низкие …,* loc. cit., стр. 205. [Все главное в сценарии было у Куросавы, я просто добавил какие-то новые линии, чтобы еще более драматизировать конфликт.]

100 Barron, Frank "Cannon's 'Runaway Train' sets a Christmas date for release", *Screen International,* 25 May 1985.

In addition to the two escapees, the young worker Sara is on the train. The prison guards and their warden want to catch the escapees, and to do this Ranken even lowers himself down on a rope from the helicopter on the moving train. In the meantime, the railway control succeeds in steering the train onto a dead track. Manny disengages the locomotive from the rest of the train, which slows down. The locomotive, where Manny is forced into a fight with Ranken is racing toward a disused factory, but Buck and Sara in the train have a chance to survive.

The elaboration of Kurosawa's scripts provides a lot of action and woodcut-like characters. Above all, the two main opponents, the escapees and the prison warden are designed as extreme types. In an interview, Ranken characterizes his most prominent prisoner in this way: "A man, yes, but this is an animal. He broke out twice. He's a killer who doesn't care about your life, my life … or even his own life."[101]

He portrays himself and his role in prison to the prisoners in this way: "I'll tell you where you assholes stand. First comes God, then the warden, then my guards, then the dog in the kennel – and finally you pieces of human waste. Useless to your selves and everybody else."[102] This Ranken is often shown from a lower camera angle, i.e. when he marches with his guards to Manny's isolation cell [Fig. 6], while the song of the *Yellow Rose of Texas* is played. It adds an additional military flavor.

Manny, on the other hand, is portrayed as a tough city gangster who has an iron will. When Ranken comes to see him, he is currently training push-ups and then poses under a fully scribbled cell wall [Fig. 7]. At the wall is written: "Tri-

Fig. 6: RUNAWAY TRAIN – Warden Ranken and guards

Fig. 7: RUNAWAY TRAIN – Manny in his isolation cell

umph over all." Inside the prison Manny is an idol for many prisoners. When the journalist Sue Majors asks Ranken if he can explain this worship, he answers: "Because they are mostly animals just like he is. They wanna do whatever they want,

101 *Script,* loc. cit., p. 4.
102 *Script,* loc. cit., p. 10.

no holds barred …" (TC 0:05:24).[103] During their riot the convicts cry: "Manny for president." The film builds on the hierarchy that the director had named (God – director – guards …), a competing counter-hierarchy with Manny at the top. He is admired for his resistance against the warden's regime.

Manny's role as a symbol of resistance is rooted in his masculinity. When his companion Buck later gets stuck on the locomotive and says: "Man, I tried. It's impossible," Manny only says: "Everything is possible for a man."[104] Already in the cell, when Ranken threatened him, he had responded with "Whatever does not kill me, makes me stronger." Manny seems to have only one friend in the prison. Jonah, who is beaten by the guards after he has killed the man who tried to kill Manny. Before his escape Manny comes to the infirmary to see Jonah and to ask him if he would accompany him. Jonah is not able, and both say goodbye to each other with a minimum of words: "Have fun." "You, too." (TC 0:16:21). The script had stipulated that Jonah gives him the advice to escape: "If he kills you, he'll break the last trace of pride in some of the lops around here." Both have tears in their eyes.[105] In the film Manny has no tears, no weakness, no mercy.

Similarly characterized is Ranken. The warden not only fears to lose the control over his prison, as he has the same instincts as Manny. Looking at him, Manny sees his reflection: "You do what you have to do and I'll do what I have to do. What happens happens" (TC 0:08:32). Ranken understands why Manny has to escape and reacts with the understanding, and the will to hunt and kill him. Seeing Manny's escape route Ranken says: "He did it, the son of a bitch, he did it. OK.!" And looking to heaven: "God, don't kill them, let me do it." (TC 0:25:32). He knows where to find Manny because "this guy is doin' the same thing I would do." (TC 0:41:02). Not only Manny considers his escape "fun", but also Ranken enters the helicopter which brings him to the train, with the words: "Let's have some fun" (TC 0:49:12). It is a great match to be played to the end. The boxing match was the overture, which had introduced the topic.

In this lethal conflict between two strong males Buck's role is limited to embodying the other convicts who usually are shown as an anonymous crowd. Also, the guards are hardly personalized. Buck represents the "normal" prisoner who has become criminal because he dreamt of easy money – commented on by Manny with: "bullshit" (TC 0:44:31). Manny is impressed by Buck only when he is committed to Sara and threatens to kill his partner. Manny cleverly restrains his anger, also when he believes he is "at war with the world and everybody in it" (TC 0:38:21). When Sara calls him an animal, he answers: "No, worse. A human."

103 The script had scheduled: "RANKEN (v[oice] o[ver]): They idolize violence … And he's the most violent among them." (Loc. cit. p. 6)
104 *Script,* loc. cit., p. 114.
105 *Script,* loc. cit., p. 17.

The final sequence of the picture picks up this thought and quotes two lines from Shakespeare's Richard III: "No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity / But I know none, and therefore am no beast", where the human is correlated not to pity but to consciousness.

The cold of the climate and the unfriendliness of the landscape correspond with the main characters' emotions. In this context the train is more than just a mode of transport. When it comes out of the cold, it is introduced like a supernatural being, stronger than even Manny and Ranken and unstoppable. Like fate it runs its way on rails to an unknown destination. Their fight against each other is essentially a fight for commanding this machine. Both are leaders with the will to command the other one. At the end the locomotive cannot be controlled, it destroys itself and the two men.

A third group besides the convicts and the guards are the technicians in the control area who try to stop the train with the means of technology. They press buttons, discuss and phone, but they do not succeed and are only able to direct the train to a dead track. They don't even know why the train has got out of control: "Some things can't be explained" (TC 1:27:30).

Scenes of their efforts are mounted in parallel to scenes on the train which highlights the extreme intensity of the latter which creates the tension a good action picture needs.

The great final clash is not shown; it takes place in the mind of the audience.

CRITICISM

Most critics praised the film. F. X. Feeney does not, except for a compliment on cinematic history. He finds "a lot to recommend it […] Konchalovsky's visual sense evokes D. W. Griffith – a great primal eye for the actions that reveal emotions. Each shot is powerfully composed."[106] The critic of *Daily News* observes: "Train is on the right track" and proposes different ways to read it: "as an escape from totalitarism or mankind battling over petty gripes on a train out of control – or simply as a terrific train movie."[107] David Chute from *L.A. Examiner* considers

> it […] a smashingly effective action picture. And it isn't *just* a roller-coaster ride. The rinsing progression of incidents is exceedingly well orchestrated, and there's a very clear, almost old-fashioned adventure-story feeling for the mechanics of train engines and brakes and couplings, for the nuts and

106 Feeney, F. X. "Runaway Train", *L.A. Weekly,* 29 Nov. 1985.
107 Honeycutt, Kirk "'Train is on the right track", *Daily News,* 6 Dec. 1985.

> bolts behind the thrills and chills. It's a sly, smart movie in a generally dump genre – a visceral action film with a metaphor up its sleeve […].[108]

Louis Chunivic from *Hollywood reporter* was worried about whether many audiences can accept the movie: "[…] Existentialism 101-trained critics may love this stark, cold vision of the Loner against Man and Nature […] But audiences will be divided by everything from Voight's stylized acting to the picture's implausible ending, and a significant audience will be repelled by the bloody and realistic violence."[109] David Denby means:

> The sight of the black train plowing through the snow at high speed is undeniably beautiful and exciting; the howling winds, the biting, wet discomfort, the virtually black-and-white colour scheme of the Far North – all of this is powerfully sustained as thriller atmosphere. […] This terrible movie has a savage intensity that often seems mad: Konchalovsky has a marvelous control of imagery but not in common sense. Who knows how to read his obsession with imprisonment and escape, his nightmare of wind and snow?[110]

The critics were in agreement that Runaway Train was not just an action picture, but there was no consensus that it was a plus or a minus to the film. Manny's stylization as a Nietzschean rebel was described as "existentialism", to which some critics responded gruffly. Not surprisingly they write for newspapers, whose readers are considered to be intellectually demanding. The reviewer of *Washington Post* identified one of Manny's sentences as Nietzsche's quote[111], but that did not make him more gracious – on the contrary: Manny "knows his Nietzsche. Or at least the Brooklyn translation of it. 'What dizzint kill me makes me stronguh,' he says." He concludes: "'Runaway Train' isn't just bad – it's *bodaciously* bad, grotesquely overblown, lurid in its emotion, big ideas on its brain. And anyone with a taste for camp will have a glorious good time."[112] The reviewer of *Daily Bruin,* the UCLA newspaper, said Academy Award winner Voight was fighting with his text and – regarding the Nietzsche's quote – "is forced to utter such shlock lines". However, he lays the blame for this load of "existentialism" in the film, not as much on the director, as on the scriptwriters: "Kurosawa's vision has been swallowed by a committee, and spit back out in an unrecognizable form, resulting in an over-

108 Chute, David "Save up those E tickets for a 'Runaway Train' ride", *L.A. Harald-Examiner,* 6 Dec. 1985.

109 Chunivic, Louis "'Runaway Train'", *Hollywood reporter,* 6 Dec. 1985.

110 Denby, David Untitled, *New York,* 20 Jan. 1986.

111 Nietzsche, Friedrich "Aus der Kriegsschule des Lebens. – Was mich nicht umbringt, macht mich stärker", in *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert,* Kap. 1; Satz 8.

112 Attanasio, Paul "'Train': Loco Motion", *Washington Post,* 20 Jan. 1986.

bearing pretentious and laughable dialogue."[113] He praises the helmer for skillfully generating tension, but criticizes him for claiming to give the film a deeper meaning: "Russian director Andrei Konchalovsky […] tries to instill their quest with deeper significance. He seems bent on driving home his parallel vision of a society out of control, and neither the script nor the actors fare well under the weight of his noble intentions."[114]

Those who thought they had to warn that the general public would not like the film were wrong. The film was a success, even at the box office, of the $ 8 to $ 9 million in production costs, nearly 2 million were re-released on the first weekend, for a total of about 40 million. The director not only became a millionaire[115] but also famous, and all possibilities seemed to be open to him. John Voight and Eric Robert were awarded a Golden Globe for their performance, the film was in competition in Cannes. However, it was not nominated for the Academy Award, for which, according to Konchalovsky, was because the film was produced by Cannon. The company was not loved in Hollywood. "If Runaway Train hadn't been produced by Cannon, it would have been a blockbuster, a film with box office records,"[116] he wrote.

Konchalovsky also reports that many of his Moscow friends, including his brother, called the film "typically American" as a result of his "Americanization". He finds, and there he is in agreement with the critics of the Americans, the pitiless philosophy of the film is un-American: "Such a philosophy is foreign to American cinema."[117] Whether the narrative style may seem American, he does not investigate this question. In any case, the film fits well into the many other prison and escape films that were made in Hollywood, just think of films like Cool Hand Luke (1967) with Paul Newman or Escape from Alcatraz (1979) starring Clint Eastwood. This genre does not exist in the Soviet tradition, for obvious reasons.

113 Wisehart, David "'Runaway Train' jumps the track of believability", *UCLA Daily Bruin,* 18 Feb. 1986.

114 Wisehart, "'Runaway Train' …", loc. cit.

115 In 1985, Konchalovsky recalls, Menachem Golan on a plane used a napkin to calculate that he was now a millionaire: "A Soviet director – and suddenly a millionaire" [Советский режиссер – и вдруг миллионер; Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 219]. A few years earlier he had to smuggle caviar to get some money, after Maria's Lovers he could also make commercials.

116 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 214 [Если бы "Поезд-беглец" выпускался не "Кэнноном", по успеху это был бы блокбастер, фильм, побивающий кассовые рекорды.].

117 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 213. [типично американский […] американизаци[я] […] Такая философия чужда американскому кино.

5 Duet For One

In 1973, the world-famous British cellist Jaqueline du Prè withdrew from the musical public because of multiple sclerosis. At this time she was only 28 years old, but since her concert debut in 1962 she had been considered "England's greatest cello talent."[118] She played on a Stradivari instrument and in 1967 had married the conductor Daniel Barenboim, who was three years older. The two were considered a perfect couple, and the public was aware of her illness. The fact that her husband lived with another woman, who after a few years gave birth to two children, was not reported by the British press. Barenboim later said in an interview that "the media were very thoughtful" and he suspected "it was because everyone wanted to protect Jackie."[119] It was only after Jackie's (Jaqueline's) death in 1987 that the conductor married his second wife Elena Bashkirova.

Within these circumstances, the play Duet For One, which premiered in 1980, had to be understood as an alienated, but obvious key piece to the fate of du Prè.

THE PLAY

The psychiatrist Dr. Alfred Feldmann tries to advise violinist Stephanie Abrahams, who is suffering from multiple sclerosis, to cope with the changes in her life that the disease has caused. The play consists of two acts, each of which is divided into three sessions. The sessions take place every two weeks. However, there is a longer break only between the third and fourth, because Mrs. Abrahams is very upset after an argument with the psychiatrist. She is a very self-confident personality, also astute and ironic, who only turns to a psychiatrist because her husband urged her to do so. The sessions become a fight for influence and self-preservation, and only in the last session the patient can be convinced that Dr. Feldmann is serious about his offer of help. He wants his patient to leave the path of fear of loss and despair, as this leads to suicide. He refuses to surrender, and therefore combats the situation as an adversary:

> Madame, you are close to killing yourself. Yes. […] And you think you know this, but the unconscious forces against which we struggle are actually pushing you far harder and closer than you are aware. And do you think I shall sit back and allow this enemy to triumph? No![120]

118 Morin, Antonia "Daniel Barenboim heiratet Jacqueline du Pré (= Was heute geschah – 15. Juni 1967)", *Bayerischer Rundfunk – Klassik,* 14. 06. 2016 [https://www.br-klassik.de/themen/klassik-entdecken/was-heute-geschah-barenboim-du-pre-hochzeit-100.html].

119 Shelden, Michael "'My affair? I don't think Jackie knew'" [Interview with Daniel Barenboim], *The Telegraph,* 15 July 2004.

120 Kempinski, Tom. *Duet for One:* A Play. London: Samuel French, 2009, p. 42.

She accepts the help, and agrees to fight against the self-destructive forces. That also means getting involved in an analysis of their deepest motivations which, however, are no longer part of the play. This only shows the difficult path to consent.

The psychiatrist's confrontation with his initially unwilling, sometimes aggressive patient is a verbal one, and is carried out with a wide range of styles. The doctor usually carefully and cautiously formulates sentences: "Then perhaps you would consider, and I ask you only to consider this as a possibility, hypothetically, for the moment."[121]

Mrs. Andersen, on the other hand, bitingly and ironically questions the meaningfulness of his analysis and fends off questions about deeper motives. He persistently tries to get her to talk about herself. At the beginning of the second act, the argument climaxed: Mrs. Andersen insulted her psychiatrist unfairly ("Mind your own fucking business"[122]), calls him "Dr. Frankenstein", mimics his German accent ("vat do you sink, hmm?"[123]) and assumes that he only wants to take money from her. Only as Dr. Feldmann seems to become really angry, and talks about his professional ethics, she gains trust in him, and gets involved in his therapy.

It is helpful that Dr. Feldmann understands something about music. So far, this has been the meaning of life for Stephanie:

> Music, Dr. Feldmann, is the purest expression of humanity that there is. […] It's itself. A piece of music which expresses pain or sorrow, or loneliness, it sounds nothing like what a lonely man says or does. Magic. You see, there's no God, you know, dr. Feldmann, but I know, where they got the idea; they got it from music. It is a kind of heaven.[124]

She believes it is the actual loss, no longer being able to play the violin, no longer experiencing this divine music intensively in the performance and to pass it on to an audience, not so much the loss of social contacts. Dr. Feldmann finally elicits from her that this apotheosis of music also represents an escape from the ordinary world with its suffering and grief, into which Stephanie must now go again. She can only survive if she stops building her own music-world in which she can eliminate the suffering.

Duet For One was played with great success in Great Britain after its premier in February 1980. It came to Broadway in 1981 and also generated interest for the film.

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121 Kempinski, *Duet,* loc. cit., p. 21.
122 Kempinski, *Duet,* loc. cit., p. 31.
123 Kempinski, *Duet,* loc. cit., p. 32.
124 Kempinski, *Duet,* loc. cit., p. 28/29.

THE MOVIE DUET FOR ONE

The Cannon Group secured the rights to the piece and took the first steps to realize the filming project. In 1983 the first references to the planned film appeared in the press. Newspapers wrote that Fay Dunaway was slated to star in the Golan Globe production, directed by her husband Terry O'Neill.[125] Two years later, it was said that Julie Andrews "is set to star in Cannon's film", directed by "young Russian Andrey Konchalovsky".[126] *Daily News* asked Faye Dunaway on December 12, 1985, who stated that there were artistic differences: "'This project is very fragile and special,' Dunaway said. 'It needs a certain sensitivity and needed to be nurtured properly. All Canon seems to want is a shoot-'en-all, all action, exploitation movies. […] They talk the language of the commercial cinema.'"[127] While one faction of journalists put forward arguments in favor of Julie Andrews, others remained interested in the fact that Faye Dunaway had been replaced.[128] Filming was announced for February 1986 in London.[129] It was announced shortly afterwards that Andrei Konchalovsky had signed his contract[130] and that Alan Bates[131] and Max von Sydow[132] would star in the film. Likewise, Julie Andrews took violin exercises[133] instructed by Peter Daniel.[134] Also, that Catheryn Harrison was in the role of Penny Rex Harrison's granddaughter.[135] After all, the actual start of the shoot[136] and the end of the shoot[137] was worth mentioning to the newspapers.

The production company then tried to keep media interest in the film alive when it announced that it was considering changing the title. It would now be called "Heart of the Tree"[138] or "Gift of the Heart".[139] When it came to the cinemas in winter 1986, it had the old name DUET FOR ONE again.

125 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 3 March 1983 and N.N. Untitled, *Box Office,* Nov. 1983.
126 Noble, Peter "In Confidence", *Screen International,* 23 Nov. 1985.
127 N.N. "Runaway Dunaway", *Daily News,* 12 Dec. 1985. How closely the piece remained connected to du Prè can also be seen from the fact that Dunaway characterizes it as "the story of a cellist [sic!] crippled by multiple sclerosis."
128 N.N. "Duet For Whom?", *Hollywood Reporter,* 10 Jan. 1986 and N.N. "Andrews to replace Dunaway in Duet", *Screen International,* 18 Jan. 1986. The "creative differences" were cited in quotation marks.
129 N.N. "Julie Andrew Stars In Cannon's 'Duet'", *Variety* (Daily), 8 Jan. 1986.
130 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 13 Feb. 1986.
131 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 20 Jan. 1986.
132 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 14 Feb. 1986.
133 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 5 Feb. 1986.
134 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 5 Mar. 1986.
135 N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 21 Mar. 1986.
136 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 18 Feb. 1986.
137 N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 10 Apr. 1986 and N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 15 Apr. 1986.
138 N.N. Untitled, *Screen International,* 22 Mar. 1986.
139 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 18 Apr. 1986.

Duet For One is a two-person play in the theatrical version, which talks about other people. It speaks a little more in detail about Stephanie's husband David Liebermann, and her parents, but very few names are mentioned. For the film, it was decided to let other characters act as actors. The scenes in Dr. Feldman's practice reduced to four, alternating with scenes in various rooms in the elegant villa of the musician couple, one scene in the Albert Hall, one in the VIP area of the airport, and others – not least with two scenes in the great outdoors.

Stephanie remains the central figure. She bears the Nordic family name Andersen. Her psychiatrist is not Alfred, but Louis and is anglicized to "Feldman". With the addition of more people, the focus shifts from the extent to which Stephanie is ready to deal with her inner life to the social relationships that are put to the test by the disease. The experience of loss is central.

In the theatrical version, it was just the loss of not being able to make music anymore, there is a whole series of loss experiences in the film. When Stephanie's grandfather, who had given her her first violin, died in a house fire, she was left with a photograph, the memory of him, and the music. When her ability to make music is lost, she is left with the records and video recordings of her concerts. She cannot compensate for these losses.

Her favorite student and concert partner Constantine leaves her, he also gives up his career as a concert violinist in order to earn money with entertainment in the USA. The loss was doubled. She not only loses a partner, but also a talented student. Stephanie advises him to distance himself from the effort of practicing, so he would not be prepared to play her Guernieri violin: "You want too much too fast" (TC 0:40:00). In the play there are no favorite students, for students as a whole Stephanie has only ridicule: "Bloody untalented bastards coming into my house scratching their violins, sounding like a fucking bitch in heat, the pair of them."[140]

In the film, she gradually loses her husband, who is overwhelmed with her situation. He does not reject her, but he seeks emotionally and physically the closeness of his assistant Penny who accompanies him on a long tour of Asia. Before that, Stephanie asked him to fire Penny, which David refused. There is a quarrel between the two, under the big tree, which once played an important role in their relationship. She accuses him of having made a career out of her fame and living with her money: "I was famous, you were nothing." He states that if she dies, he has to live on: "I'm normal, I'm not crippled" (TC 0:49:45). When the husband leaves halfway through the film, Stephanie still gives his assistant good advice.

Stephanie, who was left behind in London, immediately finds a new lover in an antiques dealer. He assures her in bed that she is not crippled, but she realizes that he is only interested in her property, not in her as a person. Nevertheless, as a

140 Kempinski, *Duet,* loc. cit., p. 33.

farewell, she gives him her valuable violin, knowing that it will ultimately compensate him for his efforts in bed.

Finally, she also loses her musician friend and accompanist, the pianist Leonid Lefimov, who likes to read the newspaper and smoke filterless cigarettes. He dies and is buried, but appears twice in Stephanie's imagination.

Her manager Sonya Randvich also leaves Stephanie. She is outraged when she hears that Stephanie has given away her valuable violins. When she leaves, Anya, the maid, sits on the stairs and cries. She stays with Stephanie who had experienced her illness for the first time in Anya's presence. The maid helped her clean the house, and saved her when Stephanie tried to kill herself with pills. Anya addresses Stephanie with "signora" and has a kind of guardian angel function with her. She is also the only person who is shown praying in the film. The psychiatrist sees the meaning of life in life itself, while Stephanie understands this in music. In the same words as in the play, she says to him: "I can't believe there is a God, but I know where they got the idea from … they got it from music."

The progressing disease is a process of loneliness and a goodbye to people and music. The memories and the objects that trigger them remain. The memories are ambivalent. They allow her to experience the music again, but they also show her the painful difference between her previous successes and her current life. The photos of appearances in front of prominent heads of state (Queen Elisabeth, President Kennedy) are the first to be taken down and packed in boxes. In the last session with Dr. Feldman, the doctor addresses the subject of immortality through art, to which Stephanie does not really respond. As the last five minutes of the film show, she finds a life of peace. It's a year later, Stephanie's birthday again. She goes for a walk outdoors with her psychiatrist, her husband, and Penny after lunch. They pass the big tree and Stephanie explains: "David's tree." But David answers: "Our tree." And to Penny: "I used to take my girlfriends there all the time" (TC 1:40:56 ff.). While the others go back into the house, the manager has already arrived with two young people. They dance to the same ragtime *The Entertainer* that Lefimov had started a year earlier, while Stephanie stays outside. However, she is not drawn to the water, where she sees the deceased Lefimov jumping, but instead goes to the tree. The film ends with this picture of Stephanie under the bare autumnal tree. She seems reconciled with her husband and his new love. She's friends with her psychiatrist, and still socially integrated. However, she's no longer in the middle of the hustle and bustle. She prefers life to death in her autumnal reduced form, and the tree that reminds her of youth, rather than the water of forgetfulness.

The displayed time indication *One Year Later* (TC 1:38:43) gives the impression that Stephanie's birthday, when she has the first dropout on her left hand while playing the violin in private, is specifically highlighted among the other scenes, because of the parallelism to the end of the film. In fact, the time structure is chronological, so the *One Year Later* refers to the last session with Dr. Feldman.

The fact that the viewer cannot always classify the scenes clearly depends on the narrative's perspective. In the first quarter of the film there is a four-minute dream sequence, which is only resolved later. Stephanie dreams that her fingers will fail during the performance when she makes an appearance in Albert Hall. Her husband helps her off the stage in a wheelchair, her duet partner Constantine continues to play and winks at her. Later, when she has taken the pills to take her life, she sees the deceased Lefimov in her room, talks to him, but finally refuses to accompany him into death. In fact, Anya saves her. With this appearance Lefimov is also prepared for his last appearance on the river.

THE REACTION OF THE PRESS

When the film came to the cinemas in the Christmas season in 1986, it was accompanied, as usual, by Production Information from the Cannon Publicity Department. It said that Julie Andrews not only received violin lessons, but also obtained specialist advice on the disease from a clinic specializing in multiple sclerosis. This resulted in a convincing depiction of a disease that leads slowly to death, "brilliantly and unflinchingly distilled for screen by director Andrey Konchalovsky," and accordingly the critic of the *Hollywood reporter* found: "'Duet for One' is a wise and vigorous glimpse into mortality."[141] The criticism was similar in the *Reader.*[142]

The writer Laura Mitchell who claims to be medically educated and trained repudiates the film's ability to capture the everyday life of a person afflicted with the disease. She writes that she watched the film with "with mounting anger and frustration."[143] Similarly, most critics highlighted the things they didn't like. Deborah J. Kunk from the *L.A. Herald Examiner* was disturbed by the lack of realism in the story and the script. "The story-line bashes reality in a number of ways […] The script […] seems unpolished and bloated. The resulting movie feels interminably long."[144]

Other critics interpret the lack of realism functionally: as an attempt to work with symbols and metaphors. "It stretches too far for metaphor and meaning," said the critic of *Variety,* and when the director Konchalovsky "shoots for big statements the film degenerates into saccharine platitudes." The protagonist has lost her sense of purpose. It was also said that the film hasn't "a clue where to go […] and gets into philosophical deep water." It shows a life in which everything gets

141 Byrge, Duane "'Duet for One'", *Hollywood Reporter,* 24 Dec. 1986.
142 N.N. Untitled, *Reader,* 2 Jan. 1987.
143 Mitchell, Laura R. "Clarifying a few Facts about MS, 'Duet for One'", *Los Angeles Times,* 8 Feb. 1987.
144 Kunk, Deborah J. "Julie Andrews fiddles as 'Duet' burns", *L.A. Herald-Examiner,* 25 Dec. 1986.

out of control, and "the film coda, one year later, is a feeble attempt at tying it all together."[145]

Screen International's critic was also dissatisfied with the script. The result of the many rewrites "is a straightforward, generally uninspired, linear narrative with an odd, disconcerting dream sequence – […] This is soap opera, pure and simple."[146]

Also, in *New York Times* Janet Maslin had problems with the script which she found "disingenuous" and "needlessly coy." Mrs. Andrews' performance "is often better than the material." The later developments of the story "are terrifically tidy, as the story's ending. They do little to alleviate the essential talkiness of the material." The symbols are too boldly used and too obvious in their meaning, "too many of Stephanie's thoughts are made visible by degrees like the […] tree. The tree is made to take on more weight than his branches can easily bear."[147]

Richard Corliss was also not very happy with the tree: "She [Stephanie] sees them happy and united and goes off to die by her favorite tree. *Duet for One* died long before."[148] Katherine Dieckmann can't believe "that Andrews and Bates call their favorite tree 'he'", and she ends her review with the words: "God knows everyone tries very, very hard to make the most of this mess. But *Duet for One* is mainly an unremitting stream of false notes."[149] Andrei Konchalovsky contributed the keyword "Chekhov" to the discussion when, in conversation with Marjorie Bilbow, he described the final draft of the script as "a Kempinski play with a Chekhovian flavor"[150] and later admitted that the revisions have made it "less Kempinski and more Chekhovian." He also spoke about the "Chekhovian manner of acting, as in this picture [where] the phrase is basically a way to hide something else … playing against the text."[151] Writing for *Los Angeles Times* Kevin Thomas found that "Konchalovsky's high-toned approach is fitting for Chekhov, but 'Duet for One' (rated R for sex, nudity and language) is closer to Olive Higgins Prouty."[152]

British newspapers had a particularly critical view of the film and even the idea to make it. The matter was considered "theirs". In January 1986 Peter Waymark, writing for *The Times,* was surprised, that the production company should be Cannon (not readily associated "with a delicate chamber piece"), that Julie Andrews

145 Jagr. "Duet for One", *Variety* (Daily), 24 Dec. 1986 and – somewhat in more detail – *Variety* (Weekly), 31 Dec. 1986.
146 QSF "Duet for One", *Screen International,* 31 Jan. 1987.
147 Maslin, Janet "Film 'Duet for One'", *New York Times,* 13 Feb. 1987.
148 Corliss, Richard "Don't Put Your Drama Onscreen", *Time,* 2 Mar. 1987.
149 Dieckmann, Katherine "Strung Out", *Village Voice,* 24 Feb. 1987.
150 Bilbow, Marjorie "Interest in Duet launch, Julie Andrews to star", *Screen International,* 22 Feb. 1986.
151 Bilbow, Marjorie "Konchalovsky & Andrews, flattering duet for two", *Screen International,* 3 May 1986.
152 Thomas, Kevin "'Duet for One': A Four-Hankie Drama of the Past", *Los Angeles Times,* 25 Dec. 1986.

"should be playing the violinist" and that "the director of this very British subject should be a Russian."[153] When the film was in the cinemas Adam Mars-Jones explained in *The Independent* (London):

> the new film from the previously talented Andrey Konchalovsky opens up Tom Kempinski's play in the same way, that cows are 'opened up' to make hamburgers. A modest but effective play has been minced and adulterated. A piece of chamber music has been arranged for an ensemble of kazoos.[154]

Most critics mention or at least acknowledge that some aspects or scenes of the film were successful. Kevin Thomas finds "the final movements" "affecting", the reviewer of the *Los Angeles Magazine* means "there are moments when the darned thing comes close to redeeming itself."[155] For Kris Turnquist it is director Konchalovsky's "lumpish" approach which "rescues the film from kitschville and gives it a grave earnestness that makes the familiar elements seem felt."[156] Consistently good reviews were given to Julie Andrew's performance, in 1987 she was proposed for the Golden Globe for the role of Stephanie.

One thing seems to be particularly unacceptable to the critics is the effort of the film to give the images, dialogues and scenes a deeper meaning. For example, the tree doesn't exist for what it is, but to point beyond itself. No further conclusions are drawn from it. It is simply classified as bad.

Concerning Konchalovsky's special position among the directors of Hollywood, after his third "American" film, only the British newspapers got into the citizenship and presented the director's biography[157], the American newspapers picked up the relation to the production industry. At the end of January 1986, *Variety* reported a three-year contract between Cannon and Konchalovsky allowing him independent production: "Under terms of the agreement, Konchalovsky will direct as well as develop and produce films with other directors exclusively for Cannon during a three-year period."[158] Konchalovsky explained his motive for signing the contract to Marjorie Bilbow as a mutual need: "Cannon needs pictures that will be considered quality. I need someone who gives me a certain amount of freedom for a limited amount of money. I am not seeking ultimate power, or to make blockbusters."[159]

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153 Waymark, Peter "Duet for the former Miss Wonderful", *The Times,* 5 Jan. 1986.
154 Mars-Jones, Adam "Table manners", *The Independent,* 5 Mar. 1987.
155 N.N. "Duet for One. Sex and Violins", *Los Angeles Magazine,* Feb. 1987.
156 Turnquist, Kris "Duet for One", *Boxoffice,* Mar. 1987.
157 He tells for example, the *Times* correspondent also about plans to make a film in Great Britain about a naval battle in the Second World War and talks about the Rachmaninoff project, which has already been mentioned several times.
158 N.N. "Konchalovsky Signs Cannon Prod's Deal", *Variety* (Daily), 28 Jan. 1986.
159 Bilbow, "Konchalovsky & Andrews …", loc. cit.

The shootings of Duet for One had not yet begun, when he was developing his next project, Shy people, which he was also to direct.

6 Shy people

Andrei Konchalovsky's fourth film for the Cannon Group is not based on a narrative, a play or an unfamiliar sketch like the previous films. The plot of Shy people, from the initial concepts to the drafting of the script, was developed by Konchalovsky and Gérard Brach. Later, Marjorie Davis was added to the writing team.

It was particularly interesting for the press who would play in the movie. In the spring of 1986, Jill Clayburgh's name was cited in the newspapers, and a year later, *Variety* drew attention to the film. The film was included in the program at the 40th Cannes Film Festival (May 7–19, 1987). Barbara Hershey won the award for best actress Shy people at this festival. The lead was nominated for the Palme d'or.

The movie

The movie tells the story of two women from the Sullivan family. Diana, a successful journalist and photographer, is living with her adolescent daughter Grace in New York. She wants to report on families whose branches evolve differently in different places, and takes her own family as an example. Therefore, she travels with her daughter, whom she wants to take away from drugs, to relatives who live in the bayous of Louisiana. Her father's brother had moved there. When they arrive at the outpost of the wilderness, nobody wants to take them by boat to the Sullivans. The Ranger says, the Sullivans are "shy", without explaining it more exactly. However, he brings the New Yorkers up the river, where they meet Jake, whom the Ranger suspects of looting other people's fish traps. Finally arriving at the Sullivans, Diana and her daughter get to know Ruth and her sons. They live in an old-fashioned house in the swamp, in a very traditional way without electricity and modern means of communication. Ruth had married the widowed Joe Sullivan at the age of 12, who is said to have disappeared 15 years ago. She claims to still meet him. A portrait of Joe is hanging in the living room. His place at the head of the dining table remains free at every meal. The sons are very strictly educated by Ruth who refers to the father.

Paul, the youngest son, is mentally handicapped; Tommy, the second youngest, is kept in a barred-up barn because of disobedience; and Mark, the oldest, helps his mother. He and his wife Candy live with the others in the big house. Candy is still quite young and pregnant.

A fourth brother, Mike, does not live with the family. Ruth has erased him from the family memory: nobody talks about him and his face is blackened on the photos in the album.

When Mark says that someone has plundered his crab traps, Diana reports on the Ranger's encounter with Jake on the river. Mark sets out to search for the culprit, but gets a blow to the head at dawn. Ruth must give him stitches without anesthetic. Diana persuades Ruth to drive with her to the next town to file a complaint against Jake at the sheriff's. The two women set out the next morning by motorboat and take Candy, who wants to have a TV. The sheriff says he lacks the evidence to do anything about Jake, so Ruth sets off on her own. While Diana and Candy buy the TV, Ruth enters a topless bar where Jake is hanging out. She questions him, takes out a revolver and shoots him in the right hand. Then she smashes the bottles at the bar. When the policemen arrive, the owner of the bar explains that he does not want to file a complaint against Ruth, because she is his mother. She and Jake are arrested by the police, but she is soon free again. Diana, who joined in, hears Michel's version of the family relations. Finally, the three women drive home again. The narrative of the events in the city is repeatedly interrupted by the presentation of what is happening in the house with the younger generation: Grace grabs her cocaine and crawls through the bars to join Tommy in the shed. The two do some of the cocaine, and have fun in the straw. Mark uses the absence of his mother and his wife to drink whiskey. When Paul tells him about Tommy and Grace, he also wants some cocaine. He arrogantly follows Grace, who returns to the house to fill up honey or syrup from the large supply. He grabs Grace, who crying, gets away and escapes with a paddle boat on the river. Mark calls out to her, but she only realizes later that the boat has a leak. She escapes into a hollow tree stump. When the women have returned from the city, Diana looks for Grace. She takes the motorboat and drives away, seemingly aimlessly. After ramming a tree stump she falls out of the boat, which continues on without her. Diana manages to get back into the boat. A man who is difficult to see in the fog seems to help. Diana finds Grace and takes her on board. In parallel, Ruth listens to Mark's version of the events. She asks Mark to teach his brother that he must treat his mother with respect. Mark does this with an iron bar.

When Diana returns, Ruth tells her how Joe mistreated her and little Paul, but also that he saved the whole family during the flood. "And you go home and write this." (TC 1:41:17). Diana is impressed.

As she flies back with Grace, Ruth sits down to dinner with her sons and daughter-in-law. Michel comes to them wordlessly, takes a plate, sweeps the newly purchased TV off the table and sits down on Joe's place. Ruth allows everyone to be free to go, but no one leaves. She stands behind Mike and in front of the portrait and speaks of Joe. When Grace wants to snort cocaine in the plane's lavatory, Diana follows her. She slaps her daughter, flushes the cocaine, and tells her that from now on she will take better care of her. The camera shows the two hugging

each other and swings to the full moon above the clouds, and the verses 15 and 16 from the third chapter of St. John's Apocalypse.

The biblical quotation lets one look for a religious subtext for the film, of which only small traces are recognizable. The Sullivan family living in the wild had built a church, but it burned down. The family prays before the meal, and Candy wears a cross around her neck. Also, Grace attends a Trinity School, although she is obviously not used to praying.

While Diana bears the name of a pagan deity, Ruth's name is reminiscent of the corresponding Old Testament book that shows a daughter-in-law who is devoted to her new family. However, this does not result in a coherent subtext. In Ruth's family, spirituality is part of a natural lifestyle that rejects education and comfort as unnecessary. Nature is constantly present in the swamp. It is beautiful, with the pelicans, kites and egrets, but sometimes a bit scary. The treacherous waters with the creepers, snakes, and crocodiles [Fig. 8]. It is also unpleasant and agitating,

Fig. 8: SHY PEOPLE – Alligator in the swamps

with all of the mosquitoes. Nature provides crabs and turtles to be trapped and eaten. The water that makes life possible can also destroy it in a flood. A fog is beautiful, but also scary. The same applies to the full moon, which romantically celebrates the meeting of Grace and Tommy, but also stands majestically above the fog.

The city is alienated from nature. While the bayous are flat and wide, the urban canyons of Manhattan are narrow and deep, noisy, and full of traffic, while the swamps almost only know the sounds of Nature. In the small town where the three women are traveling, an alligator has been caught and bound [Fig. 9]. It stands for

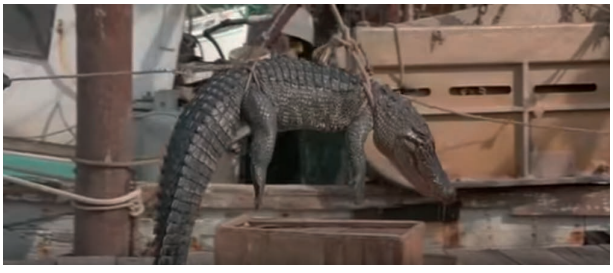

Fig. 9: SHY PEOPLE – Bound alligator in town

the taming of nature. The town is the frontier to civilization, where there are already rules of law that the sheriff is bound to ("I can understand, but the rules …" TC 1:04:30), and not just the survival of the fittest.

The Sullivans' lives in the marshes are closely linked to the deceased Joe, who almost like man alive determines the behavior of his family members. The attachment to Joe is described by Ruth as being very real. When Diana does not understand how Ruth thinks she meets him, she replies, "I do not believe. I know." (TC 1:26:40). And she later provides a rational explanation: "You see what you want to see." (TC 1:41:43) Especially in nature, the apparitions can deceive. The appearance doesn't give assurance, however the feeling does.

Two women, and two ways of life are alien to each other, but in the end they have come closer together. The film summarizes this in the image of the hands, with one embracing the other. The nails characterize the women [Fig. 10]. Ruth ap-

Fig. 10: SHY PEOPLE – The women's hands

proaches Diana, the journalist who lives to enlighten people with her texts. Ruth tells a story she needs to get off her chest. It is the story of her suffering under Joe: "I wanna tell you, how I hated him. […] I was the one who lived in Joe's hell. Me and my Pauly, my Pauly who' he spoiled." (TC 1:37:58). But this openness quickly has a limit, because Diana is said to write that Joe has saved the family, and nothing more.

Diana too learns from Ruth. After her visit to the south she does not only provide maternal help to her daughter, as she did before ("Honey, you know, you can always talk to me" – TC 0:08:14), but becomes also rather palpable. The biblical condemnation of the lukewarm emotion shown at the end of the film criticizes Diana's overly available parenting, and the Western way of life, too, which has lost its intensity.

Both branches of the family are without fathers. While Diana's husband is not even mentioned, Joe is absent but present. One type of presence is very Russian: as an icon. Diana finds the picture intriguing, and Ruth explains that it does not just show him, it *is* him, "He's Joe. He wanted it made that way" (TC 0:23:44). Shown is a strict looking man with hat *en face* [fig. 11]. His thick mustache is striking,

which immediately makes you think of Stalin, especially as he was often called in American media "Uncle Joe". President Roosevelt and Churchill often called him that. The portrait is quite similar to the picture Nikolai Larionov painted of Stalin [fig. 12].

Fig. 11: SHY PEOPLE – Joe's picture

Fig. 12: Nikolaj Larionov: Stalin

This reference to Stalin opens up the understanding of the film as a political allegory: The Soviet Union did not really overcome Stalinism because (since 1966) there is no open public dispute about the crimes, concerning the suffering and destruction. Only the merits in the Second World War ("flood") are mentioned. Although the *Father of the peoples* is dead but present in the system, and anyone who does not want to perform the ritual adulation of the leader is imprisoned as Tom was. When asked what had happened with her eldest son, Ruth cites a phrase often used after the Russian revolution: "You're with us, or you're against us."[160] The former church burned down. Mother Russia hates Stalin, but still loves him. She despises and fears the urban life, which means not only comfort and news, but also sin and drugs. At the very end of the film comes Michel (Mikhail Gorbačev, secretary-general since March 1986) and sits down on Joe's chair. Whether another life will come with him remains open.

The US does not really understand the Soviet Union because they lack the experience of totalitarianism and the American way of life has moved away from nature. One no longer lives by feeling, but by rules and laws. Joe has chosen the way outside the law, that of outlaws. Another sign of protest against the urban-

160 Серов, В. В. *Энциклопедичекский словарь крылатых слов и вырпжений.* Москва: Локид Пресс, 2005, стр. 379: Кто не с нами, тот против нас. In contrast to Mark 9.40: "Whoever is not against us is for us."

American lifestyle is the flag of the Confederate States, which Pauly puts on his shoulder twice.

Shy people was to be seen in May 1987 at the Cannes Film Festival and should have premiered at the turn of the year, but did not come to the cinemas. This unusual situation was the topic of a number of newspapers stories and small reports. *L.A. Herald Examiner* wondered about the long wait and pointed to Barbara Hershey's award in Cannes on November 12, 1987[161]. Similary *Hollywood Reporter* on Nov. 30.[162]

Cannon had initially specialized in production and left the entire distribution to another company. By the mid-1980s, the company then tested the model to sell distribution rights, while the films had yet to be completed.[163] In the case of Shy people, the negotiations dragged on.

On March 4, 1988, Charles Kipps in *Variety* quoted Konchalovsky, who said that things at Cannon had gone wrong when negotiating with distributors about distributing the film. "Cannon can't get the right theaters. They have made a lot of strategic mistakes."[164] The premiere was finally announced for June 17, 1988.[165] Since the film was shown only in relatively few cinemas, there were also relatively few reviews.

In a prominent place, namely in the *New York Times,* Vincent Canby wrote his criticism under the headline: "Black Sheep in a Family", which may mean several things at once. Canby initially is bothered with the plot, "an adventure that can't be easily believed, even when seen." The picture contains a "fair share of howlers. Yet these are less the result of dim incompetence than of an approach to film making that is intensely, crazily European." But he does not further substantiate this "European" description. He criticizes the dialogue and claims the film has a lack of familiarity with real American conditions. "American audiences will laugh at what they see to be its clumsiness." Canby certainly sees the lines of conflict between cultures, but thinks they "are too obvious to be especially interesting to Americans." As he reads the conflict as intra-American, the Stalin similarity disturbs: "Uncle Joe Sullivan, you see, is (are you ready?) Uncle Joe Stalin."[166] The family tyrant is a Stalin, and not an interpretation of Stalin.

For Roger Ebert, who wrote for *Chicago Sun Times,* "*Shy People* is one of the great visionary films of recent years, a film that shakes off the petty distractions of safe Hollywood entertainments and develops a large vision. It is about revenge and hatred, about mothers and sons, about loneliness. It suggests that family ties

161 N.N. Untitled, *L.A. Hearld Examiner,* 12 Nov. 1987.
162 Byrge, Duane "Shy people", *Hollywood Reporter,* 30 Nov. 1987.
163 Later, Cannon then bought its own cinema chains not only in the US, but also in Europe.
164 Kipps, Charles "Cannon Films Shoots Self In Distri'n Foot with 'People'", *Variety,* 4 Mar. 1988.
165 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 8 June 1988.
166 Canby, Vincent "The Brothers Konchalovsky-Mikhalkov", *The New York Times,* 24 May 1987.

are the most important bonds in the world."[167] What Canby sees as weaknesses are strengths of the film for Ebert. This includes the foreign director's view of American images: "Because he is an outsider, he is not so self-conscious about using American images that an American director might be frightened away from." He sees the atmosphere of the South brilliantly captured in a sequence: "Most extraordinary of all, there are spooky, quiet moments in which the mosquitoes' drone in the sleepy heat of midday, while the two women pore over old photograph albums." And he literally raves about the big panorama shot through Manhattan, which begins the movie.

Ebert didn't see the allegory of Russia and America. He credited the film with more awards, but could have prevented unfortunate circumstances: "Here is a great film that slipped through the cracks of an idiotic distribution deal and has failed to open in most parts of the country."

When Andrei Konchalovsky published the second part of his memoirs in 2012 he said that while working on Sibiriada, in 1979, he had had the idea to make a film about two families, "one is based on the principles of freedom, the other on duty and love."[168] The first idea was, to base it on two European families, one from Scandinavia, one from Greece – but then they decided to settle the families in the United States, in New York and in Louisiana. During a visit to Louisiana he had felt "in all the madness of the south. Heat. All wet. Intensified sensuality. Blues. Dixieland. […] In many ways it was a continuation of Sibiriada in the world of Louisiana forests and swamps. The same pantheism, the metaphysics of nature are spread; man feels only as a particle of this world."[169] That was why New York and Louisiana could become metaphors: "Two government devices – Russia and America. The New-York family is a model of the USA, where family members respect, but do not love each other. And the family from Louisiana is a model of Russia, where people do not respect each other, but love and hate."[170] In this way, the late Konchalovsky defuses his earlier criticism of Russia, which has not really repaired its past, and hides the cruelty of history under praise of salvation. He made a film on the interrelations of love and freedom, as they are realized in different cultures, "on the need for mutual tolerance. Democracy is first and foremost tol-

167 https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/shy-people-1988 (15.01. 2019).

168 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 219. [одна основана на принципах свободы, другая – на долге и любви.]

169 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 220 [Во всем безумство юга. Жага. Все влажные. Чувственность обострена. Блюз. Диксиленд. это было во многом продолжение "Сибириады" в мире луизианских лесов и болот разлит такой же пантеизм, метафизика природы, человек так же ощущает себя лишь частоцнй этого мира.]

170 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 220 [Двух государственных устройств – России и Америки. Нью-йоркская семья – модель США, где члены семьи друг друга уважают, но не любят. А семья из Луизианы – модель России, где люди друг друга не уважают, но любят и ненавидят.]

erance. Tolerance, I think, is a concept alien to Russia. Patience *(terpenie),* yes! Tolerance *(terpimost')* not …"[171] He shows in the film, but conceals in the interpretation that the "Russian" way of strong feelings (of love and hate) urges those who choose him, to retire to the swamps and lead the life of an outlaw. He emphasizes, however, that one has to decide, but the choice is not always in favor of democracy: "I will utter a seditious, in the opinion of many, thought: a totalitarian regime in some cases is preferable to democracy – in any case, for immature individuals in an immature society. All these paradoxes are alien to Americans."[172]

Whatever he wanted to express in his movie, did not reach the audiences. He admits that "maybe" he overloaded the picture with symbols, and forced thoughts which were important to him, into a family story.[173]

7 Homer and Eddie

The production company Borman & Cady made Konchalovsky the offer in early 1988 to direct one of their films. On January 15, 1988, *Variety* announced that Whoopi Goldberg and Jim Belushi had been asked to participate in a film whose original story had two male lead roles. Therefore, the title had been changed to *Homer and Eddie,* Pat Cirillo was writing the script and Andrei Konchalovsky was directing.[174] *Hollywood Reporter* added two weeks later that the filming location was Oregon and a shooting day was estimated to cost $50,000.[175] *Variety* added shortly thereafter that in Oregon thousands of extras would be needed for a parade.[176]

Just released from the contract with Cannon, Konchalovsky was able to start shooting straight away. After completing the filming, the post-production dragged on for many months. It was not until the end of December 1988 that a news release arrived, with a premiere of the film expected in the spring of 1989[177]. There seemed to have been bottlenecks in the final financing of the film.[178] In fact, it was

171 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 220. [о необходимости взваимой терпимости. Демократия – это прежде всего терпимость. Терпимость, думаю, чуждое России понятие. Терпение – да! Терпимость – нет …]

172 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 222. [Выскажу крамольную, по мнению многиж, мысль: тоталитарный режим в каких-то случаях предпочительней демократии – во всяком случае, для незрелых индивидов в незрелом обществе. Все эти парадоксы американцам чужды.]

173 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 222 [Может я слишком перестиволизировал картину, может, загнал важные для себя мысли в слишком семейную историю].

174 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 15 Jan. 1988.

175 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 29 Jan. 1988.

176 N.N. "'Homer & Eddie' To Slip Oregonians Some $50,000 A Day", *Variety* (Daily), 2 Feb. 1988 and *Variety* (Weekly), 24 Feb. 1988.

177 Grove, Martin "Hollywood Report", *Hollywood Reporter,* 28 Dec. 1988.

178 N.N Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 16 Aug. 1989.

not until mid-August 1989 that the film was presented to the public in France at the *Festival du cinéma américain de Deauville* (Normandy).[179] On September 16, it was shown at the Film Festival of San Sebastian (Spain) in a 99-minute version.

Homer Lanza makes his way to Oregon by hitchhiking with a suitcase from a small town in Arizona. The two men in the first car, who pick him up, rob and abandon him, so that he has to walk to the next gas station. When he tries to steal some snacks in the shop, he is caught, but is let go. The next morning, he wakes up at the nearby junkyard in a car in which also Edwina Cervi, called Eddie, the owner of the car, has spent the night. In this old car ("a wreck? It's a Lincoln") the two travel from Arizona via Nevada to Oregon. The first stop is Oakland, California to see Eddie's family. Then they go to Oregon to Homer's parents. When Eddie pulls out a revolver at the cash register of a shop, she is shot and dies in Homer's arms.

The picture starts as a road-movie. There's a brief exposition, which introduces Homer's interest in baseball. The books he reads are centered around this sport. Later, it is learned that he got hit by a baseball on his head as a child and is somewhat mentally slower since then. Homer also introduces himself to Eddie with a baseball term: "Homer like your baseball home run, and Lanza like the famous singer Mario Lanza" (TC 0:13:14). He has a strong attachment to his family, although they had sent him far away because of his disability. Now that he has learned that his father has cancer, he wants to see him again.

The film runs nine minutes, until he meets his companion Eddie, with whom he travels the next forty minutes to reach Oakland and other ten minutes to Oregon city. When asked about their job, Eddie answers that she is a "Christian Scientist", belongs to the religious movement founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), what initially suggests a religious activist – but it turns out the she has a difficult relationship with religion.

The chain of travel-episodes is regularly rhythmic: Sequences in the car alternate with stops. While driving, Homer and Eddie are mostly seen in the front seats of the car talking to each other. However, the car is also shown from the outside, with the lengthening roads and vast landscape suggesting freedom and adventure [Fig. 13] (TC 0:18:40). The stops always show new features of the protagonists. The first time the two travelers stop for breakfast at a pizzeria, where Eddie stands out by insulting other guests. She also leaves without paying the bill, which is the first clue about her criminal tendencies. In the pizzeria Homer tells the story of his accident, which meant that he was "not so smart" (TC 0:14:35). The second stop is at a public restroom where Homer is meticulously brushing his teeth and Eddie, as a jet flies over them, has an apocalyptic vision and bangs her head against the mirror. The third stop is a shabby brothel, where Eddie pays for Homer to be with

179 N.N Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 15 Aug. 1989.

Fig. 13: HOMER AND EDDY – On the road

her cousin Esther. In order to pay the $ 30, she still has to rob the nearby gas station. The next stop is a hotel room in the mountains, where the two talk about an end-times sermon about God and religion on television. Eddie shares that she has a tumor in her head, and she'll soon die. At the next stop Eddie steals some money again. They repair the car and spray it a haphazard purple. Upon reaching the city limits of Oakland, the narrative of the seemingly aimless travel is completed.

This is followed by a stay in the city (about 10 minutes), where Eddie first searches for her mother in a bar named *Crazy Joe's* and then finds her in the cemetery at night. The date for her mother's death is already engraved there: June 18, 1989 [Fig. 14]. Homer tries to cheer up the distressed Eddie by dancing with her

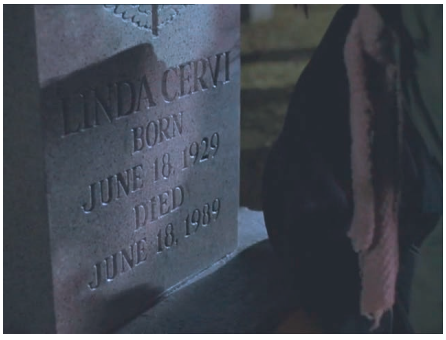

Fig. 14: HOMER AND EDDIE – Mother's tombstone

at the harbor to the music of the car radio on the jetty. On the way to Oregon, the two stop at a gas station (TC 0:59:55), which is robbed by Eddie who also shoots the cashier. Homer, who sees the murder, reproaches her and wants Eddie to ask God for forgiveness. She agrees to confess with a priest. However, the priest asks Eddie to surrender to the police, so she runs away. When the two enter Homer's town, Eddie sees a man dressed like Jesus carrying a cross. In the town Homer visits his father's house, where the housekeeper informs him that his father is being

buried. When the two travelers reach the cemetery chapel, Homer kneels at the open casket, briefly talks to his mother and leaves. In the evening Homer and Eddie seem to have fun in a *Hofbräuhaus,* where Homer meets old acquaintances and forges plans of life. Eddie withdraws discreetly. When she wants to buy Aspirin in a shop, she searches in the pockets for change, showing her revolver. The cashier puts money in her hand, but when she turns around on the way out, he shoots her. Homer, who is wondering where Eddie is, runs out to find her. She falls down at the side of the road, where she dies. The young man who is carrying the cross over his shoulder walks by. A brief reopening of the dance scene in the harbor concludes the film.

It is a journey into childhood, which turns out to be a journey to death. Death is present in many different forms. Edwina who wants to drive away from her terminal diagnosis. She murders, and commits robberies, but she does not feel responsible for them: "Homer, that was the tumor" (TC 1:02:53). When she meets her mother in the cemetery, the mother is about to commit suicide with a bottle of poison. Homer, on the other hand, is the one who has no relation to death at all. When he cries after visiting the cemetery hall, it is the result of the feeling that he was not well received by his parents because he is mentally handicapped. He says good bye to his father with "See you, Dad!" (TC 1:21:29) and a sign of the cross. Eddie, on the other hand, dies in Homer's hometown. She was apparently secretly looking for her sudden death, since she ran away from the care of a clinic and takes her chances on the country roads.

In this context, the dead horse in the ditch is functional as they enter the city of Oakland. Unclear, however, is the symbol of the cross-bearer who is walking through the city. The theological interpretation of Jesus' death at the cross is far too complex to be tied to the quite woodcut-like discussions on theodicy and guilt. Neither the question of the meaning of suffering is discussed, nor the question of a vicarious death ("scapegoat" function). Through the encounter with the cross-bearer Eddie, who has a contentious attitude toward God and religion, has the opportunity to say before her death: "I've seen Jesus."[180] Homer does not see the cross bearer at all. For him religion means the existence of an order of values including a code of conduct, rites, and support. Here, too, he remained a child.

James Belushi plays Homer as quite incapable and helpless (e.g. with a waddle walk), characteristically as completely innocent. This includes a certain emotional indifference. Whoopi Goldberg's Edwina is correspondingly reckless and volcanic, but also vulnerable and affectionate.

The brothel visit shows that Homer has no developed sense of sexuality, which is why in the relationship with Eddie the sensual-sexual component is completely absent. In addition, the episode also gives an indication of the situation, Eddie

180 Incidentally, the figure also appears as "Jesus" in the credits.

comes from. This is only hinted at. In the relationship of Homer and Eddie, she is the dominant part, which finds a beautiful expression in the photo in front of the brothel, where both show their faces over a wall with painted bodies [Fig. 15]: Eddie appears as a man, and Homer as a woman. He is shy and unsuccessfully pro-

Fig. 15: HOMER AND EDDIE – The photo in front of the brothel

tested with "But I am the boy" (TC 0:32:04). He also refers to Eddie as "he" while she pays for him at the brothel to become "a man".

The lack of clarity in the gender roles corresponds to the fact that there are no living fathers in the film. Eddie's father is not mentioned at all. Homer's father has just died. The gender question remains in the background, as do the forces that bind the two main characters together. Is it a kind of solidarity between social outsiders? Is it the desire for closeness of children left alone, an alliance, or sheer despair?

The first reviews came after the film festivals in September 1989. A certain Besa presented the film in *Variety*. He calls the film in the first paragraph a "downer from beginning to end" and says: "The image of two underprivileged people in a cruel world is rather too pat to be convincing, and it ends in a predictable way." This is not due to the acting of the two main actors, but rather "the script gets bogged in religious arguments and dubious symbolism."[181]

Elvis Mitchell became more aggressive with the criticism in *L.A. Weekly* after the film was officially launched in cinemas: "This may be among the weirdest bad movies ever made."[182] The *Los Angeles Times* reviewer claims: "I suppose a great movie could be made from this premise. Given the right combination of talents, a great movie could probably be made from any premise. Not this time, though. The story is booby-trapped, and the film makers leave no trap untripped."[183]

181 Besa "Homer and Eddie", *Variety* (Daily), 19 Sep. 1989 and *Variety* (Weekly), 4 Oct. 1989.
182 Mitchell, Elvis "Homer and Eddie", *L.A. Weekly,* 2 Feb. 1990 and once more 9 Feb. 1990.
183 Rainer, Peter "An Oddball Odyssey in 'Homer and Eddie'", *Los Angeles Times,* 9 Feb. 1990.

Janet Maslin, the reviewer of the *New York Times,* sees opportunities that have been wasted, for example in the complex character of Eddie, which remains so superficial in the story written by Patrick Cirillo that one finally gets tired of the character. The director also has his share:

> "Homer an Eddie" is the second recent "and" film […] to be directed by Andrei Konchalovsky, who continues to display no great affinity for the genre. This time, Mr. Konchalovsky's distinctive touches letting the camera fade into and out of two-shots for no particular reason, incorporating a gallery of grotesques as extras and breaking up the action with loud and ill-chosen songs on the sound-track, several of them performed by Richie Havens.[184]

Henry Sheehan, on the other hand, notes some positive sides to the film. In *Hollywood Reporter* he calls it "a fairly tough-minded and cool contemplation of the dangers and pitfalls of freedom." Although he sometimes sees the actors beyond the limits of credibility, he also sees "moments of brilliance" and means in the last paragraph: "Konchalovsky is pursuing his favorite theme, the contradictory urges to boundless freedom on the one hand and obligation-laden love on the other."[185]

In November, the film got into the press again because the production company King's Road asked Skouras Pictures for money that apparently had not been paid in the final stages of production.[186] By the end of the year, it had been settled.

Konchalovsky does not remember the funding in the memoirs, but rather the difficulties in content. He was interested in the script with its curiosities. He found there "a lot of humor" and wanted to "try it out in the genre of black comedy." With its "mystical finale" this is a story of "two homeless people in the big world … orphans of society, poor in spirit. One believer, the other atheist. There is something about the heroes in [Federico] Fellini's 'La strada' and [Nikolay] Leskov's 'Enchanted Pilgrim'."[187]

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184 Maslin, Janet "On the Road With a Homicidal Whoopi Goldberg", *New York Times,* 9 Feb. 1990.

185 Sheehan, Henry "Homer and Eddie", *Hollywood Reporter,* 9 Feb. 1990.

186 Lieberman, Jane "King Road Files Suit Vs. Skouras", *Variety,* 21 Nov. 1990. Lieberman, Jane: "Skouras Pays, Kings Drops Suite In Settlement", *Variety* (Daily), 10 Dec. 1990. N.N. "Skouras sued for money from 'Homer'", *Variety,* 26 Nov. 1990. N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 21 Dec. 1990. The fact that such aspects were worthy of news to the press is a logical consequence of the idea that film production is primarily an industrial activity. Both the public and the business world are interested in news about the financial behavior of the players.

187 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 232. [масса юмора […] попробовать себя в жанре "черной комедии […] мистический финал […] Двое бездомных в огромном мире … Сироты общества, нищие духом. Один верующий, другой атеист. Что-то есть в них и от героев феллиниевской "Дороги", и от "Очарованного странника" Лескова.]

But then – he admits – he made a lot of mistakes. For example, to cast Whoopi Goldberg as Eddie. She is an excellent actress, but not an Eddie, not a murderer, who poses a danger. As a result, the religious subtext did not come out correctly.

> The script was about how an epileptic with attacks of uncontrollable rage believes in God, looking for a way to him. But the attack begins, and God is forgotten. Of course, this has to be performed by the actor from whom the danger comes.[188]

The film also lacks the necessary poetry. Not as a poetic cinematic piece, but as "darkness of verse", something unspoken that encourages further thinking. "American cinema does not recognize this,"[189] and so it did not become an "American film" that was very well received.

8 Tango and Cash

In 1988 first news about a Guber-Peters-Company movie project "The Setup" appeared in the press: the professional boxer Mike Tyson was to appear in the feature,[190] but half a year later Silvester Stallone and Patrick Swayze were named as the protagonists.[191] In March 1989 the producers told *New York Times* that their new picture was "an action adventure film set in Los Angeles […] with a kind of comedic overtone,"[192] and it became public that Andrei Konchalovsky was to direct the picture[193], and *Variety* pointed out that "Soviet born Konchalovsky has made five previous pictures in the U.S., but this will be his first for one of the majors."[194] Guber-Peters-Company produced the picture for Warner Bros, and the reference to the "major studios" should probably indicate that the production conditions there can be more difficult for a director.

These announcements were followed by the usual information such as the beginning of filming and the locations.[195] Alluding to possible conflicts between the

188 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 232. [Сценарий был о том, как эпилептик с приступами неконтролируемой ярости верит в Бога, ищет пути к нему. Но начинается приступ, и Бог забыт. Конечно, это должен был играть актер, от которого исходит опасность.]

189 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 232. [темнота стиха […] Американский кинематограф подобного не признает.]

190 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 15 Aug. 1988.

191 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 30 Jan. 1989 and N.N. Untitled, *Los Angeles Times,* 12 Feb. 1989.

192 De Palma "'Batman' and more", *New York Times,* 24 Mar. 1989.

193 N.N. "'Setup' collars Stallone, Russell", *Hollywood Reporter,* 11 Apr. 1989.

194 N.N. "Stallone, Russell To Star in 'Setup'", *Variety,* 11 Apr. 1989.

195 N.N. "Stallone in Setup with Kurt Russell", *Screen International,* 22 Apr. 1989 and N.N. "Stallone, Russell for 'Setup' Ohio-bound", *Variety,* 14 June 1989.

director and his stars, one newspaper wrote that he "locks horns with Sylvester Stallone"[196], who was usually associated with the role of Rambo. Asked about this image Stallone defended his films: "Rambo III may have gotten scathing reviews, but it came in 11th at the [1988] box office."[197]

It was apparently Sylvester Stallone who prevailed when the movie got a new name: Tango and Cash. "That old tag was just too close to Sly's upcoming *Look Up*", and Stallone felt mature enough for an "And"-picture.[198] The shooting had already begun on June 12, but only at the end of June,[199] the cast of the female lead was known. First it should be Daphne Ashbrook, then she was surprisingly replaced by Teri Hatcher.[200] She wasn't the only one. The director of photography was exchanged several times. In an interview Steven Poster declared, that he was "the fourth cameraman in a parade of cameramen [in this] movie that will never end."[201] Director Andrei Konchalovsky too was replaced by Albert Magnoli at the end of August. "Warner Bros. vice president of publicity and promotion Charlotte Gee cited 'creative differences with the studio,' as a reason."[202] *Los Angeles Times* clarified that Konchalovsky was not fired, but "released from his contract at his request […]. According to Konchalovsky's agent, Martin Baum, the director was asked by the producers 'to accelerate' the shooting schedule of the movie for release by Warner Bros. in December, and Konchalovsky chose to drop out of the project rather than accede to script changes."[203] The shooting was finished October 20, 1989, and when the film was released, Albert Magnoli's name was not credited.

The schedule of the production company was met, the picture was released on December 22 in the cinemas.

THE PICTURE

Raymond Tango and Gabriel Cash are Lieutenants of the Los Angeles Police Department and so successful in the fight against organized crime that the criminals want to get rid of them. While Mr. Quan and Mr. Lopez, who control the western and eastern part of the city, just want to kill them, the even more powerful Mr. Perret has other plans. He does not want to turn the heroes into martyrs and sets

196 N.N. Untitled (Cinefile), *Los Angeles Times,* 19 Mar. 1989.
197 Broeske, Pat H. "Sylvester Stallone", *Los Angeles Times,* 18 June 1989.
198 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 28 June 1989 quotes Stallone: "Ten years ago, I wasn't comfortable enough with myself to share the screen with another star. Now I can."
199 N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 30 June 1989 and N.N. Untitled, *Los Angeles Times,* 2 July 1989.
200 N.N. Untitled, *People,* 4 Sep. 1989.
201 N.N. "Poster boy", *L.A. Herald-Examiner,* 20 Oct. 1989.
202 N.N. "Konchalovsky Replaced By Magnoli On 'Tango'", *Variety,* 28 Aug. 1989.
203 N.N. "For the Record", *Los Angeles Times,* 7 Sep. 1989.

a trap for them. In fact, the two are arrested and sentenced to 18 months in prison. There, prisoners who are in jail because of Tango and Cash try to get their revenge, but the two are able to break out and prove their innocence. With the help of Owen, who is working in the Department of Research and Development of the Police, they arm themselves with weapons and an armored car and destroy the weapons factory and the headquarters of the criminals. In the end they are reinstated with honors.

Tango and Cash is an action picture that contains the genre's usual sequences: wild chases, on foot and by car, interrogation, intimidation, threats, beatings, shootings, explosions that leave many dead. Also, the places of action are the usual ones: roads in the countryside and in the city, nicely furnished and neglected apartments, vacant houses, fire escape, large and small offices, parking garages, factory buildings, a courtroom, a nightclub, and a prison inside and out. From time to time you can see a few skyscrapers that stand in the city, which is identified by signs (such as "Los Angeles Police Department"). The result is a film with exciting scenes, but with no really surprising twists. The images are genre-typical lit with the right background noises.

The plot actually only provides the standard situations in which the action heroes have to prove themselves. Newspaper reports comment on many of the action sequences and mostly indicate the need for action that motivates the next scenes. So, the viewer is kept up to date on the course of the trial by means of headlines.

As usual in an adventure film, there are the good and the bad, helpers on both sides and many extras. The bad guys, in typical form, have a hierarchy, up to the top of which the positive heroes do their work along the storyline, so, the boss is the last to be overtaken. The bad guys depict the ethnic diversity of American society. At the top is a man with the French-sounding name Yves Perret, and he has a henchman called Requin (French for 'shark') who wears a ponytail. On the rung below Perret are a Latino (Lopez) and an Asian (Quan), for whom a nameless gunman works, who is also Chinese. They are all male. There are female figures, however they are only in the group of helpers. There are also other immigrant groups, but it's striking how few African Americans are in the film.

Tension arises from the fact that it is unclear for a while whether the helpers are actually helpers and not working for the other side. Whether the prison guard Matt Sokowski really wants to help or, as Tango feared, was bribed by the criminals. Cutting and editing are also used to generate tension: plot lines mounted in parallel run towards a collision. Pursuits alternate between the chasers and chased, where it is open whether the ones being pursued are caught or escape. As the title suggests, two of the good guys are at the center of the story. They are ambitious policemen who think they are the best, but learn to work together under the pressure of circumstances. They find out that they can only persevere together. They are similar to one another. After the argument with which they want to make Requin talk, they call their role-play "Bad cop – worse cop." In their appearance, how-

ever, they are designed according to the principle of the greatest possible diversity. Raymond Tango wears a blue-gray three-piece with a tie, gold-rimmed glasses [Fig. 16] and reads the stock market prices in the newspaper. He is dark-haired,

Fig. 16: TANGO AND CASH – The break with Rambo

cleanly styled and shaved and speaks well, and is sometimes ironic. He looks very serious, even conservative, and he for example cares for his younger sister Katherine as a big brother. At least there are no indicators that there was a dash of irony in the elder brother's warning words. Cash, on the other hand, is more relaxed. He has long blonde hair, his T-shirts are cheap, his shoes are sporty. His language is sometimes coarse, when he comments on the situation: "This whole thing … f***ing sucks" (TC 0:28:11). Tango and Cash are similar not only in their ambition to be the best policeman in Los Angeles. They both drive convertibles. Tango has a Cadillac Allanté, and Cash has a Corvette C1 from 1962.[204] Both are somewhat the same height and build.

It certainly had an influence on the creation of the Tango character that Sylvester Stallone was typecast as Rambo after his third RAMBO film (1988), a taciturn lonely exceptionally aggressive fighter. The smart lieutenant, Tango, is extremely different from the role of Rambo. In the opening sequence in which Tango stops a truck loaded with drugs, there is an "intertextual" reference to the Rambo films. The provincial police officers, on whose territory Tango is moving, find no drugs in the truck (TC 0: 03: 42–0.03: 57):

> SHERIFF *(to Tango)*: We checked the whole truck. There's nothing in it. You are out of your neighborhood, city boy! I want your badge and weapon! I want your ass! Who do … you think you are?
> POLICEMAN *(standing on the truck)*: He thinks he's Rambo.
> TANGO: Rambo … is a pussy.

204 See https://www.imcdb.org/m98439.html (08. 02. 2019).

Later there are more direct and indirect allusions to films. In prison, for example, Tango responds to the call of the prisoner Face "Bring them to me" with "I loved you in *Conan the Barbarian*" (TC 0:33:03), alluding to the film from 1982.[205] Annoyed by Cash, Tango calls him "Elephant man" (TC 1:09:27) from the film of the same name from 1980. The indirect allusions include the entire Research & Development department in which Owen works. It is modeled on department Q from the 007 films. The weapon hidden in a stuffed dog, praised as "home protection", explodes (TC 0:57:50). During a wild ride, Tango asks Cash where he learned to drive, and replies: "Steve Wonder", quoting politically incorrect jokes circulating in the 1980s that the musician Steve Wonder (who went blind shortly after birth) drives his tour bus himself.

A quote of a special kind is the short scene in which Savely Kramarov plays a Russian car owner, whose car is confiscated by Cash and jammed in a parking garage during the chase. The Russian shouts at Cash: "You crazy cop! What did you do with my car? I believe in perestroika" and shows his T-shirt with the image of Gorbachov. After leaving the Soviet Union, Kramarov had played gangsters like the hijacker Boris in Moscow on the Hudson (1984) or a Soviet embassy official in Red Heat (1988). Here he could play a Russian without being one of the bad guys. Cash responds with: "Welcome to America."

The final image, which calls on Moscow and Mosfil'm, finally appears as an iconic and at the same time ironic quotation.

Fig. 17: TANGO AND CASH – Final image

Fig. 18: Mosfil'm

These quotes are among the humorous elements that soften the genre of the action movie a bit. On the one hand, comic scenes play with the elements of the popular genres. This, for example, when Cash escapes from the dance club with Tango's attractive sister Katherine (Kiki). A somewhat inexperienced policeman

205 … in which Arnold Schwarzenegger and not Robert Z'Dar had played the main role.

is enchanted by Katherine and then does not recognize that Cash is disguised as a woman[206] [Fig. 19]. In this series of rather feeble-minded jokes is also the scene

Fig. 19: TANGO AND CASH – Cash in disguise

when Katherine massages Cash on the sofa and Tango misinterprets the moan. Some jokes are macabre, like Tango's comment when he sticks a grenade in Requin's pants: "My contribution to birth control" (TC 1:15:21).

However, the entire film does not maintain the ironic distance to the action genre. The comedic elements are too different to label the film an action comedy as a whole. In any case, one joke is subtle: the closing newspaper page, which, in addition to the triumphant officers back on the force, shows another article whose headline reads: "Ask Not What the Critics Say!"

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID …

In late autumn 1989, *The Los Angeles Times* devoted a larger article to the arguments about the unfinished film. It is less about the "artistic" differences between the producer and the film set than about the disputes between the studios in the background with the Peters-Guber-Company, which therefore wanted to finish the film faster than originally intended. Sony had just offered to take over Peters-Guber quickly, but Warner Bros. did not want to release the company from its contract. The newspaper quotes a "veteran member" of the TANGO AND CASH crew who reported: "This was the worst-organized, most poorly prepared film I've ever been on in my life. From the first day we started, no one knew what the hell anyone was doing."[207] In this article, Andrei Konchalovsky is called a "highly regarded" director. Concerning his departure, there are different versions of the story. Sylvester

206 Kurt Russell received the 1990 Razzie Award for Worst Supporting Actress for this appearance.
207 Broeske, Pat H. "Stallone Film Caught in Sony-Warner Battle", *Los Angeles Times,* 1 Nov. 1989.

Stallone spoke in a letter to the newspaper with "in glowing terms" about him and the entire production: "This is the most fun I've ever had on a movie. I'll be sorry when this film is over."[208]

When it comes to working on the film, a lot apparently revolved around Sylvester Stallone. He wanted Randy Feldman to work as a screenwriter, and Feldman was hired. The studio initially made other decisions without him.

> The Soviet-born Konchalovsky, best known as a director of psychological character studies ("Shy People"), wasn't an obvious choice for the action drama. But his one American hit – "Runaway Train" – inspired Warner executives to tap him for "Tango and Cash" and Guber-Peters approved.[209]

Something similar to Runaway Train was expected from him. Konchalovsky did not consider it a blow to his career that Magnoli replaced him at the end. He was already taking care of his next project: The Inner Circle.

When the film was released in the cinemas, it received a devastating criticism in the same *Los Angeles Times:* "A Buddy Film Gone Bad." In the critics' terminology a Buddy film usually is a film about a rough friendship between men when different types learn to rely on each other. But this time the strangest combination is that of the actor Sylvester Stallone with the director Andrei Konchalovsky. No "special glasnost" resulted from this combination, but "however gaudy its credits, it is one more – and one of the worst written – in an endless line of clenched-up, crashed-out, buddy-buddy L.A. cop star vehicles." That's why there are so many explosions, people shoot at each other and there is "a quota of phallic gags." The critic recalls that Konchalovsky himself once listed criteria for the quality of films: good films are not predictable but logical, mediocre films are predictable and logical, bad films are predictable but illogical. He can't imagine what the director may have liked about this predictable and illogical film. It was "a waste of talent and energy on all levels: unworthy of Konchalovsky, unworthy also of Stallone, Russell and every superior technical-credit on the film."[210]

The *New York Times* reviewer said that Sylvester Stallone had a good sense that he had also gotten involved in a buddy film, but that it was just that, it was a bad choice. "Mr. Stallone wearing three-piece suits and glasses is an excessively ambitious attempt to make the break with Rambo."[211] Elvis Mitchell even sees Stallone's career weakening.[212] Russell L. is disturbed in *L.B. Press-Telegram* about the unimaginative plot: "Tango & Cash seems long even for a relatively short action

208 Broeske, "Stallone Film …", loc. cit.
209 Broeske, "Stallone Film …", loc. cit.
210 Broeske, "Stallone Film …", loc. cit.
211 Maslin, Janet "Stallone And Russell As Buddies", *New York Times,* 22 Dec. 1989.
212 Mitchell, Elvis "Tango and Cash", *L.A. Weekly,* 29 Dec. 1989.

movie. It uses every hackneyed, predictable, wretched cliché in the throwaway-cop-flick handbook."[213] Maitland McDonagh views Tango and Cash in a similar way as a film that runs according to a plan, that is "formula screen fiction at its purest,"[214] in which the dramatic composition leaves a lot to be desired. There is a whole kaleidoscope of scenes, but nothing that holds them together internally. No real film came out. "It's an obnoxious, two-dimensional pinball game with lots of noise and flashing lights and metallic surfaces pretending to be a movie […] It's the kind of thing that gives film genre a bad name."[215] In *Variety,* the reviewer ponders the function of the humorous elements in the film. "The thinking seems to be if you're going to be ridiculous you might as well go at it full throttle, and director Konchalovsky does just that."[216] However, the camera work and editing are excellent.

The day after the premiere, the *Hollywood Reporter*'s reviewer had already considered what the teenage boys queuing up to the cinema could see: "A souped-up adolescent fantasy of power and revenge, the film offers a series of pyrotechnic action sequences laced together with light-hearted character horseplay and dream-like hallucinations of action, punishment, bondage and vengeance."[217] Immature content for immature boys. *Reader*'s reviewer also draws on the semi-strong demeanor of the heroes who vie for the larger genitalia (penile jousting): "This tale of two boyish cops on the trail of a punitive crime lord is straight out of the junior-high locker room, a twenty-fine million-dollar fantasy of male pubescent fear and adolescent power."[218] Unlike in other buddy films, the adult perspective is completely missing in this film. Everything remains in the imagination of thirteen-year-olds. The reviewer quotes the scene full of mockery when the two police officers discuss whether Cash may "date" Tango's sister Kiki. "Is that what forty-year-old detectives do with girls? No, of course not. It is what teenage boys do with girls, particularly with girls named Kiki."[219]

Konchalovsky probably has what it takes, but the stars certainly were not able to participate. "The ostensible humor here is of the macho one-liner variety, and much of it falls flat."[220]

This kind of criticism, however, falls to those responsible in the studio. An article in *Hollywood Reporter* quotes a Warner Bros. executive with the arguments of success:

213 Smith, Russell "Taking simplistic look at 'Tango and Cash'", *L.B. Press-Telegram.* 24 Dec. 1989.
214 McDonagh, Maitland "Tango and Cash", *The Film Journal,* Jan. 1990.
215 McDonagh, "Tango …", loc. cit.
216 Bril. "Tango and Cash", *Variety* (Weekly), 27 Dec. 1989.
217 Sheeman, Henry "'Tango &Cash", *Hollywood Reporter,* 22 Dec. 1989.
218 Sheeman, Henry "Penile Jousting. Stallone and Russell, Two Cops Who Fight Evil in Swaddling Clothes", *Reader,* 12 Jan. 1990.
219 Sheeman, "Penile Jousting", loc. cit.
220 Sheeman, "Penile Jousting", loc. cit.

> This is going to be an important and successful movie around the world. It is working not only with the core audience of Sylvester Stallone, bur because of the fun aspect of the movie, the relationship and the fact that Sly changed his persona but kept in action, we found that women were really responding. Yet we maintained the core audience.[221]

After five weekends, the film had grossed $44.7 million, almost double the production cost, and the reference to international demand was soon confirmed.[222] In July 1990, *Hollywood Reporter* reported on product piracy in Egypt under the title "'Tango' and illegal cash"[223] – an indication of international success, too.

9 The Inner Circle

In 1989, the political changes in the Soviet Union known as *perestoika* ("remodeling") were at a point where the traditional Soviet system had already lost many of its characteristics. It seemed as if a return to a strictly authoritarian regime was hardly possible. Diverse opinions could be expressed publicly and incorporated into political processes *(glasnost),* and tabooed aspects of history became public. The censorship had largely been withdrawn after the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in April 1986, and literary and film works that had long been banned were released piece by piece. In the area of the cinema for example, a "conflict commission" was set up in 1986, and examined some 200 previously banned films, but didn't find one to continue banning.

This situation appeared to Konchalovsky, as he remembers in his memoirs, ripe for proposing an explosive topic that should be filmed in Russia and with Soviet support. The project with the working title "The Projectionist" was about the price of seduction and adaptation within Stalinism, exemplified by the life of Stalin's personal film projectionist, whom the director had met at Goskino[224] in the 1960s.[225] The stories of Ivan Ganshin seemed worth filming early on, but it was only during the progressing perestroika that it became worthwhile to make a script that Konchalovsky wrote with Anatoli Usov which was offered to Columbia Pictures. The first details came out at the end of 1988. Tom Hulce and Lolita Davydovych were in negotiation for the leading roles, and it is also worth noting

221 Grove, Martin "Hollywood Report", *Hollywood Reporter,* 12 Jan. 1990.
222 Levy, Shawn "Tango and Cash", *Boxoffice,* Mar. 1990.
223 N.N. "Egypt. 'Tango' and illegal cash", *Hollywood Reporter,* 17 July 1990.
224 Государственный комитет по кинематографии СССР, State Committee of the USSR for Cinematography, which, after the authority had changed names and organization several times, was still given the name valid until 1924 for the sake of simplicity. Goskino controlled the entire film industry in the country, but also approved every single film.
225 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 274.

that a Western film team was allowed to shoot in the Kremlin for the first time. Also, notable was that the project "presumably could not have been filmed there pre-*glasnost.*"[226] In April 1989 it was reported[227] that the Italian production company Numero Uno Prods. participated in the project. At the end of 1989, the press wrote about it as The Inner Circle for the first time[228], and Konchalovsky explained how he envisioned the project with his compatriots:

> the director said that, contrary to most East-West co-productions, almost the entire cast and crew will be Soviet. Only cameras, editing tables and other technical gear will be imported for the shoot – for good reasons, according to Konchalovsky.[229]

Nevertheless, it was speculated whether Robert de Niro or Al Pacino would not assume the role of Stalin[230] – no alternatives were discussed for Hulce or Dvydovych.[231] Neither for Bob Hosking in the role of the head of the intelligence agency Beria.[232] When filming began in Moscow in August 1990, it was apparently so unusual that nearly every detail was publicly mentioned.[233]

After filming was completed, the press became interested in which companies marketed the film where[234] and which festival it and other Stalin films should be shown at.[235] When it was shown at the Berlinale, Konchalovsky presented not only the movie but Aleksandr Ganchin, too, the real projectionist who was 83 at that time.[236]

226 N.N. "Stalin's Projectionist", *Hollywood Reporter,* 28 Dec. 1988. N.N. "Konchalovsky Pic To Rol In August", *Variety,* 12 Mar. 1990.
227 N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 28 Apr. 1989.
228 Broeske, Pat H. "Homeward Bound", *Los Angeles Times,* 31 Dec. 1989.
229 Voland, John "Konchalovsky back to U.S.S.R.", *Hollywood Reporter,* 13 Mar. 1990.
230 Osborne, Robert "Rambling Reporter", *Hollywood Reporter,* 19 Mar. 1990.
231 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 10 Aug. 1990.
232 N.N. Untitled, *Variety* (Daily), 31 Aug. 1990.
233 N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 13 Aug. 1990. N.N. Untitled, *Variety,* 23 Aug. 1990. Noble, Peter: Untitled, *Screen International,* 10 Nov. 1990. N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 23 Aug. 1990.
234 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 13 Feb. 1991. N.N. "Col Tri-Star Italia gets Bonivento pics", *Hollywood Reporter,* 10 July 1991.
235 Holloway, Ron "Films on Stalin prepared to tackle festival circuit", *Hollywood Reporter,* 23 Apr. 1991.
236 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 21 Feb. 1992.

THE STORY

The film's story begins after brief references to the setting: it is during World War II, at the KGB's Moscow headquarters.[237] The political explosiveness of the subject "film screening" is briefly hinted at. A film is shown in the NKVD club. This film pauses briefly. The image being projected shows Stalin burning. Everyone expects terrible things. But it continues with scenes from the wedding of the projectionist Ivan Sanshin with his partner Anastasia. The families from the neighboring rooms of the communal apartment are partying, and one night, the roommate and member of the military, Aron Gubelman, is picked up by the secret police. At dawn, Ivan is also picked up by a car. He was afraid that he would be held accountable for destroying a film of Stalin, but he had been picked up because a new projectionist was needed for Stalin's personal cinema. He agrees. When he returned home, he found Gubelman's daughter Katya, who he reported to the police. His wife took pity on the girl and wanted to adopt her. The next day he shows a film to Stalin and some of his followers, and is introduced personally to Stalin. Ivan's wife Anastasia applies to be a childcare worker in the children's home where Katya Gubelman has been taken. There she has to deny knowing Katya. Meanwhile, Ivan shows that he can also use a demonstration device that is prone to malfunctions; he is appointed an officer and receives more living space and consumer goods.

In the next episodes of the film, Anastasia continues to visit Katya in the home, and experiences how the brainwashing of the teachers show the first effects on the girl. Ivan, who has now been working in his new profession for five months, speaks to his wife about it for the first time. He makes it clear to her that he will not make a written request to Stalin for Katya. Katya is now nine years old, and still has her red hair bow, which she pulls out from time to time. She looks at herself reflected in a glazed Stalin picture. Anastasia tells her that she won't be able to be adopted. She is upset, and doesn't want to have a relationship with her parents anymore.

The next scenes take place three years later. Ivan learns from the NKVD that Anastasia is still visiting Katya. He angrily accuses her, but also tells her that Stalin hasn't been active in weeks after the German attack, and that the German troops are now close to Moscow. The government has to be evacuated, and they are both supposed to come along, but separately. Anastasia is assigned to Beria as a waitress. Beria creates a situation where he can get Anastasia drunk to seduce her.

When Stalin travels back to the partly bombed Moscow, Ivan accompanies him. At home, he meets the old professor who is still living in the communal

237 This term used in the film is historically incorrect since the secret service was still part of the Ministry of the Interior (NKVD) at that time.

apartment. He tells him how kind-hearted Anastasia was. Anastasia comes home months later. She is pregnant, and wants to leave Ivan to live in a mother's home. Ivan persuades her to stay with him, even if the two have become strangers to each other. On her birthday, Anastasia calls Stalin a Satan and says she wants to eat mothballs. While Ivan and the professor are discussing Stalin being likened to Satan, Anastasia hangs herself in the room next door. In her suicide note, she asks Ivan to bring Katya a jacket.

Ten years later, Stalin asks Ivan about his family in his dream. Ivan lies, and says that they are happy. Stalin tells him that he sees through the lie. Ivan then admits that the NKVD paid for Anastasia's funeral. Stalin had saved the country and defeated Germany, and now it is going forward with socialism, but Ivan feels nothing since his wife is dead.

One evening Katya Gubelman, who is now 17 years old, stands at the door of the apartment. Ivan does not want to let her in at first, but then he does and learns that Katya still adores Stalin. Ivan talks about Anastasia, and Katya is happy to hear that she thought about her until the end. She plans to go to Siberia to work there. Ivan gives her money, and a warm hat and has to leave quickly. When he comes back, Katya is gone, but has left presents.

On March 5, 1953, the radio reports that Stalin had died, and what preparations were planned for a public funeral. When Ivan takes to the street, he is caught in a huge crowd und tries to help steer the masses. Katya is also in the crowd and is almost crushed. Ivan saves her and convinces her to stay with him. There is a scene inserted to report that more than 1,500 people actually died on this day due to the hysterical crowd.

At the very beginning of the film, the viewer learns: "This film is based on a true story." This applies both to the general, commonly known history, and above all to Ivan Ganshin's biography, according to which the film character Sanshin is designed. The end credits show the information concerning Beria's execution and: "Ivan is alive and lives in Moscow." On the other hand, in the credits, about Katya it is said that there are still many Katyas. She is thus identified as a type, as an illustration for the victims of the injustice committed by the state. The anchoring of the fictional history in the documentary is also guaranteed visually through historical film recordings, such as that from the installation of the sculpture "Worker and peasant" (Rabochii i kolkhoznitsa, 1937) and by showing the year and location. When Ivan takes the subway, takes from a train in sepia are very briefly installed (TC 0:25:44, 1:33:52, etc.). The film claims a different kind of truth than was customary in Soviet art around 1935. Socialist realism called for the "truthful" and historically concrete representation "of reality in its revolutionary development," and the latter was defined by the party. This form of the desired truth is dismantled in the film and confronted by the truth of the film's plot. The scenes from the propaganda film about the equipment with gas masks claim that the army and civilian population are well prepared for an emergency. The his-

torically necessary developmental steps had been taken, but everyone knew that the preparation was indeed very poor. The propaganda film, obviously against its intention, makes another truth clear: the gas masks are a sign of the dictatorship,[238] they make people indistinguishable, make them appear like a large heap of insects. After all, you can hide your face behind the gas mask. For example, the newlyweds and the policeman at the wedding evening banquet.

The topic of the film is not limited to a documentary status and to the reinterpretation of the propaganda film. It is often present in the film. The Stalin period arises for example from quotations from representative films, texts and melodies. The Soviet films "Tractor Drivers" (Traktoristy, 1939) and "Circus" (Tsirk, 1936) belong to the film range from which Stalin selects, as do other foreign productions: Western films, those by Charlie Chaplin and The Great Waltz. Stalin watches the Chaplin film while he lets Voroshilov wait in front of the projection room. To the "Song of the Motherland", which the film Tsirk had popularized, the children dance in the orphanage around a boy who is supposed to embody Pavlik Morozov's heroism. From films such as "The Vow" (Pitsi [Klyatva]; 1945), the Soviet population knew that the public grief appropriate for a Soviet leader was associated with Pyotr Tchaikovsky's Pathetique – accordingly, it sounds from the loudspeakers in the final scenes.

However, the film is only one aspect of the larger complex "image", which in an originally Orthodox culture is much more linked to representation than in the Western tradition. The image is linked to what is depicted via the category of "similarity". Whoever worships the icon worships the depicted. The many Stalin pictures and statues are therefore signs of a real presence. When the policeman kisses Voroshilov's picture on his wedding night, he behaves like a believer who venerates the corresponding icon. Allowing the image of Stalin to be scorched in the projector can therefore be interpreted as disrespect.

The saint depicted on the icon is a role model to be emulated. It is therefore no coincidence that Katya Gubelman looks at herself in the glass of a Stalin picture and finally renounces her parents.

Since films usually translate the public and private life into their respective places, the totalitarian access to the personality can be shown as the destruction of the private sphere. In the communal apartment *(komunalka),* even the bedroom is no longer a safe retreat, since you never know who is listening and who is passing something on to the surveillance state. Here the closet becomes a symbol of the intimate, into which Ivan drags his wife when he wants to speak to her undisturbed (for example TC 1:14:55). Shortly thereafter, he confesses that he loves Stalin more than he loves her. As a result, Ivan also puts the Stalin bust, which he had saved

238 Nikita Mikhalkov will later take on the gas mask sign in *Burnt by the Sun* (Utomlennye solntsem) and expand it even further.

from a bomb attack, in the closet. There Anastasia discovers it a year later, and no longer believes Ivan's promise to help her and the child. Ivan revealed Soviet society's last possible retreat for the private.

On the other hand, what Ivan experiences in the Kremlin, in the "inner circle", is secret. He is not allowed to say anything to his wife about it, not even in the closet. He can not even say that he belongs to the inner circle. The change in the film title from "Projectionist" to "Inner Circle" makes it clear that this exchange of the public and the intimate is the real theme of the film. Those belonging to the inner circle have appropriated everything. They enjoy the luxury of privileges, however for the simple residents of the communal apartment there is meat mainly for viewing, in the from cows, which are on their "cattle drive" road (скотопрогонная) to the meat factory.

The communal apartment not only has the function of showing the dissolution of the private sphere, but it is also a microcosm of Soviet society. In addition to Ivan and Anastasia, a couple of policemen who visibly embody the state power live there, and are very concerned with their own interests. Furthermore, a grumpy older woman, who says she had better times, and an old professor who lives in seclusion. He tries to explain the political system, at a crucially dramatic moment, to Ivan, and finally the Gubelman family. Aron Gubelman is in the military, he was on a mission abroad. As a Jew, he is suspected of "cosmopolitanism", i.e. not being sufficiently patriotic, but he seems to be completely loyal to Stalin and Marshal Voroshilov. He makes a toast to Stalin, he has a portrait of Voroshilov in his room. That does not prevent him from falling victim to a "cleansing". It is hinted that because of his origin and contacts abroad, he is labeled an "enemy of the people." Since the policeman hopes for more living space in the *komunalka,* the viewer suspects that he is behind the denunciation. The professor's role is to interpret Anastasia's fantasies:

> Anastasia: […] I know. I told everything. Satan is in the Kremlin. He has his left hand all crippled and the toes of his left foot all grown together like a hoof. That's why he wears those soft boots. And likes to trawl alone … in the flowers.

The frightened Ivan brings his wife to her room and puts her in bed.

> Anastasia: Look, what a great moon.

She still thinks of Katya, and Ivan returns to the professor, where he tries to excuse Anastasia's behavior with obfuscation.

> Professor: Maybe she's crazy, but what she says is truth. He's Satan.
> Ivan *(whispering)*: What?

> Professor: It takes Satan to mesmerize the whole nation to a point where they voluntarily blind and deafen themselves. […] *(turned to Ivan)* Mark my words. If it were not for such good and naive and trusting Ivans as you are there would have never been trials, murder, devils.

The idea that Stalin was the cause of all the misfortune in the country was relatively widespread, and the association of his person with the moon was not uncommon. They knew about his preference for night work at the desk and compared his scarred, rather round face with the patchy moon surface.

THE REVIEWS

The film has received acclaimed reviews throughout. It was called an important film, which stands out from the rather shallow competition due to its serious topic among the new releases. However, Jeff Menell noted, "its target audience is limited in size and its, sometimes sterile, treatment of a dark period in Russian history limits its effectiveness."[239] The actors did a good job, but the director was unable to build a basic tension that lasted throughout the film. The director well known from Runaway train "this time takes us on a fascinating trip that derails almost completely about two thirds of the way through and never archives the dramatic climax for which it so ambitiously strived."[240] The reviewer from *Variety,* too, does not consider the film to be sufficiently structured, it is "too muddled and misconceived", the author of the script was not successful "to integrate the diverse sides of the tale and to give it a proper dramatic arc."[241] This review also praises certain aspects, for example by emphasizing that the film "makes the cult of personality around Stalin palpably felt." The fact that Anastasia is seduced by Beria is also a clear sign with which "Konchalovsky literally makes his point that communist totalitarism made citizens not only dupes, not only slaves, but prostitutes."[242] In the *Los Angeles Times* Kenneth Turan also considers the topic very important and that the focus on personality cult is well chosen, but like the others, he regrets the fact that the suspense does not hold for the whole film. As the son of the author of the Soviet national anthem, who has been living in the West for ten years, Konchalovsky is actually on firm ground on the subject, "when it recreates the paranoid world of Stalinist reality 'The Inner Circle', like its protagonist goes awkward and uncertain when emotion of more genuine sort need to be portrayed."[243] In her

239 Menell, Jeff "The Inner Circle", *Hollywood Reporter,* 23 Dec. 1991.
240 Menell, "The Inner … ", loc. cit.
241 McCarthy, Todd "The Inner Circle", *Variety* (Daily), 23 Dec. 1991.
242 McCarthy, "The Inner …", loc. cit.
243 Turan, Kennath "Konchalovsky's Worm's-Eye View of the Brutal Stalin Years", *Los Angeles Times.* 25 Dec. 1991.

short review, Ella Taylor from *L.A. Weekly* calls the film "deeply felt but sadly bungled", which, among other things, makes her certain that individual characters "speak English with Disneyfied accents which has the unfortunate effect of making a serious film about the corrupting power of political devotion sound like a Monty Python skit."[244] The film would be good if it showed the miserable everyday life under Stalin's rule, but unfortunately you also learn nothing about Stalin's taste of films from Hollywood and what that says about him. Marjorie Baumgarten also does not have knowledge about Stalin's film taste, she says, "we really get to know a little more about Stalin and his advisors than we already did; we don't even get much of a feel for what kinds of movies they liked to watch." She also thinks the idea of letting the Russians speak English uncriticized is problematic. These are

> ridiculous Hollywood-Russian accents […]. They sound as though they're trapped inside some cartoon comedy instead of a romantic/political tragedy. I mean, it really didn't help my understanding of anything to hear Stalin's cronies regularly delivering lines like "Who za fock iz going to show za movie?"[245]

Other reviewers praise individual scenes or locations. One thinks the sequence in which Ivan is supposed to demonstrate a new projector and immediately identifies its weakness is particularly meaningful. The supervisor, who had earlier been so confident, becomes panicked. That shows the whole "insidiousness of the system". He finds the film as a whole "engrossing, potent and revelatory saga."[246] Also, Julie Salamon from the *Wall Street Journal* has enjoyed the film. The film owes a large part of its fascination to the documentary style. For example, the different locations have an effect: the dreary apartment, the shiny Kremlin halls and the decorative underground stations. The main characters did a good job, and the idea of experiencing the totalitarian system from the perspective of a naive person who assumed the best gave rise to an "absurdist parable."[247] Stefan Holden interprets the film as "a study of prolonged political naivete and its unhappy consequences. […] Yet the film's odd shift from wryness to pathos works to its advantage. One never feels manipulated,"[248] he says. Andy Klein is also impressed by the film, he considers it a particularly successful anti-Stalin film, even if "Konchalovsky, as usual, skids into weird realms of surrealism and soap opera by the end" – the film as a whole is "never less than fascinating."[249]

244 Taylor, Ella "The Inner Circle", *L.A. Weekly,* 27 Dec. 1991.
245 Baumgarten, Marjorie "The Inner Circle", *The Austin Chronicle,* 4 Oct. 1992.
246 Klady, Leonard "The Inner Circle", *Screen International,* 10 Jan. 1992.
247 Salamon, Julie "Film: Ivan Everyman's View of Stalin", *Wall Street Journal,* 2 Jan. 1992.
248 Holden, Stephen "Comedy, pathos mix well in 'Inner Circle'", *New York Times,* 25 Dec. 1991.
249 Klein, Andy "The Inner Circle", *Reader,* 27 Dec. 1991.

In addition, there are also directly negative criticisms, which relate primarily to the focus of the film. The "hard" mechanisms of the dictatorship were neglected, without it the film projectionist's individual life story was "of insufficient interest otherwise."[250] David Mermelstein writes about the movie "it may well be [Konchalovsky's] worst [work]. A sappy and superficial recounting of life under the iron boot of Uncle Joe Stalin."[251] J. Hoberman considers the entire plot structure to be inadequate[252] and it is a "perverse" imposition that a film on this topic should be released during the Christmas season. Andy Marx also criticized Columbia Pictures, however, for the fact that the current political events, including the end of the Soviet Union, are so strongly included in the marketing of the film. He sarcastically suggests writing a musical about the KGB soon.[253] David Ansen makes a completely different connection to the present. Even if the failed film gets watered down towards the end, "Konchalovsky has hold of a great subject here; what he's saying about the Russian character illuminates a dark past, and gives little comfort for the future."[254]

THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

It is often mentioned that Konchalovsky was particularly likely to try to bring a Russian topic to his American audience. Some think that since he has been in the West you can feel "his capacity to translate Russian dramatic forms into American entertainments."[255] Others point out that while he tried, his films did not always reconcile the two worlds. "Also in the best of them something was off, as though the director never managed to find a way to merge his native culture and his adopted one."[256] One problem is probably that even in times of political change, the American interest in Russian or Soviet topics is limited. So, some reviewers foretell gloom immediately at first glance, concerning its economic chances of success.[257]

The director himself was aware that he faced an impossible task with regard to the audiences. After all, The Inner Circle was an international film that was supposed to be shown not only in the USA but also in Europe and the Soviet Union,

250 Kauffmann, Stanley, "On Films", *The New Republic,* 3 Feb. 1992.
251 Mermelstein, David "His Own Private Gulag", *Village View,* 27 Dec.–2 Jan. 1992.
252 Hoberman, J. "Film", *Village Voice,* 24 Dec. 1991: "Blow up the parent-child relationship to gargantuan proportions, add abuse to the equation […], and you have the story of Andrei Konchalovsky's Inner Circle."
253 Marx, Andy "Next, a Musical About the KGB", *Los Angeles Times,* 5 Jan. 1992.
254 Ansen, David "Consider the Alternatives. Bored with Hollywood? Try something international", *Newsweek,* 6 Jan. 1992.
255 Rosenbaum, Jonathan "The Inner Circle", *Chicago Reader,* 30 Jan. 1992.
256 Salamon, Julie "Film: Ivan Everyman's … Loc. cit.
257 Menell, Jeff "The Inner Circle", *Hollywood Reporter,* 23 Dec. 1991.

or its successor states. The historical knowledge about the years 1937 to 1953 in the Soviet Union alone was very different. For example, the reviews repeatedly mentioned Beria was the head of the KGB. Indeed, the history of the political police of the Soviet Union with its many names is complicated, but it was called the KGB only after Stalin's and Beria's death, but which American reader would have had the right associations reading "People's Commissariat (or after 1946: Ministry) for Internal Affairs"? Knowledge of totalitarian government practices and their prerequisites was even more diverse than historical knowledge.

Almost at the same time as the film, a book[258] was published by Konchalovsky and the screenwriter and cinema journalist Aleksandr Lipkov. It introduces the historical background, and in which the director comments on his film. He writes:

> But after ten years of life in Amerika I've become more aware of the problem of mutual misinterpretation. Americans fail to understand Russians to about the same degree that Russians fail to understand Americans. […] Russians and Americans have very different mentalities. […] Many Americans thought that the communist system was shaky, and that as soon as it fell, everything would be all right. But in many ways the system was a product of the people's mentality. And it's important to understand this.[259]

In countries where the population itself had to experience a dictatorship, there is little need to explain, in England, the United States or Sweden the dictatorship is only known from Orwell's books. That's why he decided "to make the film in a language that would be comprehensible", that is the language of emotions. This is a fundamental matter for him: "I am moved to make films by the belief that it is possible to use unfamiliar subject matter to provoke familiar, intelligent emotions."[260] As for The Inner Circle, he tried "to create a powerful metaphor through direct means", which is a concession to non-Russian viewers. In Russia "an artist is not generally considered serious unless he employs a very convoluted symbolism."[261] Unlike in America, he could not give the film a main hero that the viewer can love.

Konchalovsky does not deepen this problem of the different aesthetic conventions in the book, he addresses the Russian target audience. He wants to make him think about "whether the sources of Stalinism are to be found inside themselves. […] The sooner the Russian people acknowledge their responsibility for

258 Konchalovsky, Andrei/Lipkov, Alexander. *The Inner Circle: An Inside View of Soviet Life Under Stalin,* translated and edited by Jamey Gambrell. New York: Newmarket Press, 1991. pp. 142. [dt.: Kontschalowsky, Andrej/Lipkow, Alexander. *Der Innere Kreis.* Bergisch Gladbach: Bastei Lübbe, 1992].

259 Konchalovsky/Lipkov, *The Inner …,* loc. cit., p. 264–265.

260 Konchalovsky/Lipkov, *The Inner …,* loc. cit.

261 Konchalovsky/Lipkov, *The Inner …,* loc. cit., p. 141.

Stalinism, the sooner they will free themselves from it." He refers to the Germans who have assumed their historical guilt for Hitlerism.

> The Russian people need to experience the bitterness of the loss they have suffered, the loss of their culture, their religion, their class structure – the middleclass was completely wiped out, for instance. But it's crucial that the people acknowledge this, the nation as a whole, not just the upper echelons of society.[262]

This aspect is left out of the American reviews – understandably, because the review is trying to mediate between the film and the American reader. Writing about another target audience would therefore lead to being sidelined. This leaves one aspect underexposed: Konchalovsky as "shestidesjatnik", as a representative of the generation that in the late 1950s and 1960s distanced itself from the generation of the fathers who accused them of having made Stalin and Stalinism possible. The change of name to the mother's family had been a sign. But nobody remembered that in 1992.

10 END RESULT

If you look at Konchalovsky's American decade as a whole, there are some aspects that can be generalized with regard to the encounter of different cinematic cultures. Other aspects are specific. They concern Konchalovsky's origin from the Soviet Union.

INTEREST IN THE PERSON

As a Soviet citizen, Konchalovsky initially encountered political reservations, because many could not imagine that he was not an agent of a foreign government. More than other foreign artists in Hollywood, he had to market himself. It was not just about the attention of those responsible for the film, it also had to become a trademark for cineastes and other viewers. At the end he was considered a natural part of Hollywood.

After he became relatively well known through Runaway Train, longer articles about him appeared in various magazines from late 1986, which made the readers familiar with his biography, his body of work, and his views. His status as a Soviet citizen living abroad is always emphasized, but Konchalovsky pointed

262 Konchalovsky/Lipkov, *The Inner …*, loc. cit., p. 142.

out that the Soviet officials no longer regarded him as one of theirs, or even as a figurehead. He provides the picture of "a piece of cake that's been dropped on the floor"[263]. He is so embarrassing for the Soviet authorities, and one does not talk about it. He was always allowed to apply for a visa to visit Moscow, but he was no longer a public figure. His SIBIRIADA was taken out of general circulation.

Information about his family was an integral part of these articles: "He comes from an extraordinary family"[264] or, when it comes to both brothers meeting in Cannes[265]: "These boys come from an aristocratic Russian family"[266], respectively: "Both brothers have the manner of aristocrats."[267]

Another topic journalists liked to talk about was his previous collaboration with Andrei Tarkovsky, who had announced at a well-known press conference in Milan in July 1984 that he would not return to the Soviet Union. Konchalovsky said that after a period of fruitful cooperation, each of the two made his own way and developed his own style. "He went in the direction of [Robert] Bresson, […] while I stayed with our earlier idols, Kurosawa and Bergman."[268]

SUCCESS

At the beginning, Konchalovsky's little-developed knowledge of English seemed to have been a real obstacle to his career. Even with a good knowledge of English, a career in Hollywood was only possible when the foreign director understood how Hollywood works. Konchalovsky's Soviet background was, as indicated above, not helpful here: "I was raised in a Soviet way: made a career, which means for life."[269] That was different in Hollywood. A discontented producer was able to fire a famous director. Although European film production should ultimately reach the viewer's understanding, acceptance among the audience often conflicts with other goals. Goals such as the director's will to design, or during Soviet times: the mandate of politics. In the European tradition, the director has a relatively strong po-

263 Canby, Vincent "The Brothers Konchalovsky-Mikhalkov", *The New York Times,* 24 May 1987. Jaehne, Karen "The Brothers M-K", *Film Comment,* issue 10, pp. 66–68, here p. 66.

264 Wilmington, Michael "Eminent Émigré: The unpredictable but logical Andrei Konchalovsky". *L.A. Style.* Dec. 1986. p. 75

265 In May 1987, the Mikhalkov brothers competed for the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival (which, however, the Frenchman Maurice Pialat received). Nikita launched his film OCI CIORNIE ("Dark Eyes") and Andrei Konchalovsky SHY PEOPLE. The jury did not want to disappoint either of them: Nikita's leading actor Marcello Mastroianni received the award for best actor, Barbara Hershey for her role in SHY PEOPLE as best actress.

266 Jaehne, "The Brothers M-K", loc. cit. p 66.

267 Canby, "The Brothers …", loc. cit.

268 Wilmington, "Eminent Émigré", loc. cit. p. 75.

269 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …,* loc. cit., стр. 218. [Я был воспитан по-советски: сделал карьеру, значит, на всю жизнь.]

sition because his will is taken seriously. His position in Hollywood, conversely is rather weak. That is why the criticism of his films do not usually make him responsible for the entire film. In Hollywood, the will of the producer rules.

In view of this, it is only logical that, apart from the McCarthy era, the "Hollywood system" traditionally integrates foreign filmmakers without great ideological reservations as long as they meet the professional standards. They come as film professionals, not as artists.

After more than three years in waiting, Konchalovsky was able to work as a director and was already economically successful with his second film. One aspect of the success was that he had "belonged" ever since. This is to be seen that the press continued to be interested in him when Konchalovsky returned to Moscow in the 1990s. In 1992, it was reported that there were negotiations taking place between a Hollywood production company and Konchalovsky, who was in discussion as a director for a film project The Northmen.[270] It was similar, a year later, to the relatively developed film project The Royal Way, in which Konchalovsky finally canceled, in order to shoot a sequel to "Asya's Happiness" (Asino schaste; 1967) in Russia.[271] In 1994, with the movie, "Asya and the Henn With the Golden Egg" (Kurochka Ryaba) Konchalovsky took part in the Cannes festival. The *Hollywood Reporter* wrote an article, especially since Nikita Michalkov, the younger brother, took part in the competition with "Burnt by the Sun" (Utomlennye solntsem).[272] There was speculation again about the rivalry between the two brothers when Nikita presented his "The Barber of Siberia" (Sibirskiy tsiryulnik) in 1999 in Cannes, and Andrei showcased the first volume of his memoirs.[273]

Other projects appeared worth mentioning, also. In 1995, *Screen International* reported on Konchalovsky's plans to set up his own studio,[274] and of course on directing for television. Especially since he had been awarded an Emmy for The Odyssey. On this occasion, the scripts of the last few years, the works for the theater, and the film "House of Fools" (Dom durakov) were also discussed.

270 Honeycutt, Kirk "Konchalovsky leads 'Northmen'", *Hollywood Reporter,* 12 Aug. 1992. N.N. "Viking Shooter", *Screen International,* 28 Aug. 1992. Frook, John Evan "Milius to direct MC's 'Northmen'", *Variety,* 13 Mar. 1993.

271 N.N. Untitled, *Hollywood Reporter,* 30 Apr. 1993.

272 Holloway, Ron "Sibling rivalry resumes through competing pics", *Hollywood Reporter,* 13 May 1994.

273 Daganskaia, Patricia "Two Brothers, at War and Peace", *Los Angeles Times,* 20 June 1999.

274 Franklin, Anna "Mosfilm, Konchalovsky plans digital post-production studio", *Screen International,* 10 Feb. 1995.

AESTHETICS

The professionalism that foreigners who want to work in Hollywood are required to have is that they can make films that can be sold in the United States. The USA remained, at least in the 1980s, the central point of reference. In order for films to reach this target audience, the aesthetics must not deviate too far from the industry standards. Certain deviations are tolerated. The aesthetics of the Hollywood mainstream develop slowly, but not by leaps and bounds. An exception to this are the artistic films, which have their own audiences in the specialized urban cinemas. All other films must somehow be accessible within American traditions.

In this sense, Konchalovsky sees his American years as an important apprenticeship in which he had changed his style. "After working in the USA, the method of my directorial work has changed and I think for the better."[275] It is the type of linear storytelling that he had discovered for himself. The appreciation of clarity and intelligibility, which one should not simply denounce as "dramaturgical primitivity". He already spoke of "American style" in 1984, in which he wanted to make his films in the USA.[276]

The American film journalists, however, did not spare criticism because they often still thought Konchalovsky's style was too "European". The criticisms clung to symbols, or the tendency to want to provide certain images, dialogues and sequences to achieve a deeper meaning. A critic, for example, mentions the tree from Duet For One, not for what it meant, but that it only had the function of pointing beyond itself. The critics do not draw any further conclusions from the motivation. They simply classify the imagery as poor quality.

Konchalovsky, on the other hand, simply interprets American cinema as different. He does not qualify one as being generally better or worse than the other. Sergei Eisenstein had, at least in his public statements, declared Soviet cinema superior to American cinema, out of political considerations. Konchalovsky not only sees his American experiences positively from a narrative point of view, he also finds practical aspects of work that have convinced him. He believes in these aspects, and recommends them to his compatriots. For example, he emphasizes the paramount role of discipline in work. The American crews were made up of professionals. This professionalism is essential if you want to work internationally. That is why he recommends his compatriots to gain international experience during their training.

275 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 105. [После опыта работы в США метод моей режиссерской работы изменился и думаю в лучшую сторону.]
276 Barron, Frank, "Konchalovsky shoot wraps on 'Lovers'", *Screen International,* 12 May 1984.

> It would be useful to send five or six of our English-speaking directors, and especially screenwriters, to study in America. They may live there for a year, getting an internship at the American Film Institute, in these times.[277]

The fact that he specifically mentions knowledge of English may be related to his own experience.

Not only the way of telling stories in the medium of the film is shaped by the national cultural tradition and has to be considered and possibly adapted when working in the US or abroad. The stories themselves sometimes seem to have a certain national cultural touch, not easily transferable to another culture. The subject of Platonov's Reka Potudan in a film for the United States only seems to work if certain aspects becomes clearer, such as the question of the cause of impotence. In a conversation with Tony Ryans, Konchalovsky said: "Our story is basically the same as his [Platonov's] original: it's about the body losing all its forces to the spirit."[278]

In Platonov's story, however, an immature idealism, possibly also typhoid fever, hinder the hero from consummating the marriage. Although communist idealism can be understood in the tradition of Russian spirituality. Konchalovsky's hero is traumatized within modern psychology, and his impotence relates only to his own wife. Nikita with a Mrs. Wynic in bed would be unthinkable in Platonov's story. To "Americanize" this story only works as an interpretation that intervenes deeply in the original structure, even if Konchalovsky is certain: "any story can be international."[279]

The national-cultural embedding of a story in Shy People becomes even clearer. Konchalovsky wants to juxtapose Russian and American society by showing two relatives from New York, who meet a family in Louisiana. What might be possible in a sociological essay does not work in a feature film. Since the basic assumption on which the narrative is based, namely that the premodern traits of Russian society can be shown in the residents of bayous, cannot be conveyed in the narrative. For American viewers, the residents of the bayous are just as American as the New Yorkers, or the farmers in the Midwest, or the industrial workers in the North. The intra-American differences are different from those in between freedom and strong emotions.

277 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 66. [Полезно было бы пять-шесть наших режиссеров, и в особенности сценаристов, говорящих по-англиски, послать поучиться в Америку. Пожили там годик, прощли стажировку в американском киноинституте, в сутях.]

278 Rayns, Tony "Russian salad", *Time Out,* 29 Nov.–5 Dec. 1984.

279 Fabian-Reinstein, Anthony "Konchalovsky: The film director who just wants to talk about art", *UCLA Daily Bruin,* 15 Apr. 1985, p. 27.

In addition to the way of telling a story and the story itself, there are elements of a culture that are difficult to grasp, such as religious characteristics, humor, or an attitude about life.

In the 1970s, Konchalovsky was asked whether he wanted to become a member of the Communist Party. He asked back if the Party needed a man who believed in God. In 1985, while in conversation with Fabian-Reinstein, he characterized himself as a "religious person"[280]. Therefore, he has a personal approach to religion. However, the ideas of religion in the USA are very different from those in the circles of Moscow intellectuals. In Homer and Eddie, for example, the topic does not take on a proper contour. Especially since in the USA or Western Europe, a man who disguises himself as Jesus and walks with a cross through the streets is perceived as a curiosity rather than as a religious sign.

The problem of humor in Tango and Cash had already been mentioned above. It remains unknown exactly how much influence Konchalovsky had on the film, which according to his memoirs was completely dominated by the producer Jon Peters. The director wanted to make Homer and Eddie a "black comedy"[281], but the film became tragically melancholic rather than humorous.

Then there is the "attitude about life". It is a feeling difficult to describe. In his memoirs, Konchalovsky says that Duet For One, when he saw the film again much later, seemed to him to be a little British: "Although, perhaps, too Russian in temperament. The British behave differently."[282] Julie Andrews wanted to buy the film, re-assemble it and underlay it with different, more sentimental music. At the time, he unfortunately rejected that. This could have turned it into a commercial success.

There were many stumbling blocks on the way to success abroad.

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Color – 107 min.

280 Fabian-Reinstein, "Konchalovsky,„", loc. cit., p. 21.
281 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 232.
282 Кончаловский, *Возвышающий …*, loc. cit., стр. 218. [Хотя, пожалуй, излишне русская по темпераменту. Англичане себя ведут иначе.]

Awards: Golden Globes 1987: Julie Andrews nominee Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama.

Homer and Eddie (Гомер и Эдди). Motion pictures. USA: Kings Road Enter., 1989. Direction: Andrei Konchalovsky. Script: Patrick Cirillo. Cinematography: Lajos Koltai. Music: Eduard Artemev. Cast: James Belushi (Homer Lanza), Whoopi Goldberg (Edwina Cervi), Anne Ramsey (Edna), Beah Richards (Linda Cervi), Barbara Pilavin (Mrs. Lanza) and others.
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b/w – 102 min.
Awards: Jussi Award 1973: Andrei Konchalovsky winner Best Foreign Director. Venice Film Festival 1966: Natalya Arinbasarova winner Best actress Volpi Cup, Andrei Konchalovsky nominee Golden Lion.

Runaway Train (Поезд-беглец). Motion pictures. USA: Cannon, 1985. Direction: Andrei Konchalovsky. Cinematography: Alan Hume. Music: Trevor Jones. Cast: Jon Voight (Manny), Eric Roberts (Buck), Rebecca De Mornay (Sara), Kyle T. Heffner (Frank Barstow), John P. Ryan (Ranken) and others.
Color – 111 min.
Awards: Academy Award ("Oscar") 1986: Jon Voight nominee Best Actor in a Leading Role, Eric Roberts nominee Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Henry Richardson Best Film Editing. Golden Globes 1986: Jon Voight winner Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama. Picture nominee Best Motion Picture – Drama. Eric Roberts Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture. Cannes Film Festival 1986: Andrey Konchalovskiy nominee Palme d'or.

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Color – 111 min.
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Color – 275 min.
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The Eastern

The Western is the oldest genre of American cinema. The 12-minute film The Great Train Robbery, which Edwin S. Porter presented in 1903, contains – although filmed in New Jersey – many elements that are later considered typical of the Western genre: a railroad robbery, the bandits' escape by train and on horseback, being pursued by the sheriff, and the shootout in which all bandits perish. [fig. 1] The actors wear cowboy hats and shoot with pistols, the scene in which Justus Barnes fired towards the camera became famous [fig. 2].

Fig. 1: THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY – The Shootout

Fig. 2: THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY – Justus Barnes

A little earlier than in cinema, the Western had celebrated success in literature, from which the material sometimes was derived. When the cinema had become the dominant medium of the Western and many screenplays were used, the film premiere usually followed close behind.

Unlike the detective story, the Western is not based on a plot of origin. The crime story basically tells the same story over and over again: the circumstances of

a crime are clarified and the culprit is identified. Everything can be a crime scene, almost all types of people can be involved. They are operational for the plot. That is why it is functional to focus on victims, investigators, witnesses, suspects, etc. The classic Western does not have such clear functions, because what connects the genre is not *one* story, not even a very abstract one. Instead, the Western, as the name suggests, is characterized by the West of the United States as a place of action and by men of light skin tone as protagonists, at least the classic Western before the debates about political correctness. Darker skin tones (Latinos, indigenous people) are typical of the opponents, who are later depicted also as victims of an aggressive land grab. Broken Arrow (1950) is a very early example, but it has only become a trend since the 1960s, f.e. Little Big Man (1970). At that time, the cinema as "New Hollywood" designed new perspectives on minorities in society. However, women and children in the Western were almost never the main actors. They remained objects.

The action of the Western takes place ideally in the second half of the 19th century, at least in the time before the advent of the automobile. The means of transportation is the horse, sometimes the train.

Different stories can be told in changing combinations: Settlers come to the country and prevail against the resistance of indigenous peoples and nature. Law and order take the place of chaos and injustice (in extreme cases: one individual against many bandits), cattle breeding and grazing rights are negotiated, civilization standards are introduced (the railway is built) and connects the West with the East, dangerous transports are carried out, etc.[1] The American Civil War (1861–1865) as such is rarely an issue, but it does result in the constellation of former combatants on the opposing side. There are more wars with Mexico.

In her study *West of Everything,* Jane Tompkins examines several elements of the Western, three of which are of particular interest here, because they seem to be the elements that made it possible to transfer the genre into the Soviet genre system and thus create the Eastern. The three are "women and the language of men", "landscape" and "horses". On the topic of the gender question, Tompkins points out that the Western, as the dominant trend, has replaced literature that has so far been dominated by women, which often dealt with family constellations, urban lifestyle and moral behavior. The Western, on the other hand, tells stories of tough lonely men, whose conflicts are life and death and live outside the cities. Morality and religion are less important. The Western is basically non-religious, the biblical command "Thou shalt not kill" is mentioned quite often, but usually overridden

1 Grob and Kiefer highlight the following two stories: the conquest of the country in the west as a fight against the Indians and the taking of the country and civilization (Grob, Norbert/Kiefer, Bernd (eds.) *Filmgenres. Western.* Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003, p. 12).

in a sense of a self-defense. The Western hero has a clear idea of what a man must do: "because there is something, a man can't run away from."[2]

It is striking that the genre is flourishing at the very moment that technical development has already overtaken the western lifestyle. So, the Western has a clear nostalgic aspect when, in the beginning of the age of automobiles, urbanization and advancing industrialization, it idealizes an adventurous and risky, but nature-loving and free life on horseback on the prairies and in the forests of the West.

By telling, in many variations, of the conquest of the West as a common and heroic task of the Americans who had previously fought each other in the civil war, the Western is building on the unifying national myth. André Bazin therefore speaks of Western as "American cinema par excellence" and calls it "purest cinema".[3] This is not only because the filming locations are often set, but because the epic qualities of cinema in this genre come into their own. The epic tells of the gathering of order, and Bazin sees the Soviet revolutionary film as structurally related to the Western because its myths are analogous:

> The Soviet Revolution, like the conquest of the West, was a historical event that marked the birth of order and culture. Both brought up the myths necessary for historical confirmation, both had to reinvent morality and rediscover the principle of the law at the living source […] which brings order into chaos and separates heaven and earth.[4]

From this point of view, the creation of an Eastern is not only the adoption of stylistic elements that are effective for the public, but also the acknowledgment of the similarity of the function.

In the mid-1960s, European directors took up the Western's style potential and created the so-called Eurowestern, also known as the "Italowestern", because most of the films were shot by Italian directors. These Westerns cultivated violence[5], the heroes are more anti-heroes from a civic point of view, for whom their idea or their own advancement is more important than law and justice, or they are gamblers who simply want to win without being driven by a deeper meaning

2 Tompkins, Jane *West of Everything.* New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992, p. 13. It is a quote from the film Stagecoach (1939), Ringo describes his intention to settle accounts with the Plummer brothers who have killed his father.

3 Bazin, André "Der Western oder: Das amerikanische Kino par excellence (1953)", in Rebhandl, Bert (Hg.): *Western. Genre und Geschichte.* Wien: Zsolnay, 2007, p. 41.

4 Bazin, "Der Western…", p. 50.

5 This violence is usually justified by the fact that it is directed against personal or public injustice. This means that the Italo-Western is often close to the Eastern, which represents the Revolution as a victory over injustice. In Giù la testa (1971) Sergio Leone quotes a Mao Tse-tung sentence of the year 1927: "A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so temperate, kind, courteous. A revolution is an act of violence."

(e.g. Il mio nome é Nessuno, 1973). The new European approach was also carefully scrutinized in the USSR, most importantly within the aesthetics, which tends towards great opera utilizing overwhelming cinematography of grandiose landscapes in combination with close ups.

1 THE SOVIET VIEW

Westerns were certainly among the films that were imported from the USA to Russia and the Soviet Union in the 1910s and 1920s. In any case, when Lev Kuleshov presented his comedy film "The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks" (Neobychainye priklyucheniya mistera Vesta v strane bolshevikov) he could be sure that the Soviet audience knew what a cowboy was. The American millionaire West hires one of these (with a large hat, fur vest and revolver) when he visits the Soviet Union out of curiosity. The cowboy is eager to protect Mister West, but he is no match for the Soviet crooks who want to fool visitors from the United States into a misrepresented Soviet Union. The role, that required many stunts, was played by Boris Barnet who was very well known at the time [fig. 3, 4].

Fig. 3: NEOBYCHAINYE PRIKLJUCHENIJA … – The cowboy over the roofs of Moscow

Fig. 4: NEOBYCHAINYE PRIKLJUCHENIJA … – The cowboy in the streets

It was not outside the realm of possibility to tell stories of the establishment of Soviet power in the early 1920s with elements of the Western, following the observation that the cinema audience appreciated action-packed Western films. The civil war was over, but local warlords and their troops still resisted subordination to central Bolshevik power. After some initial difficulties, more and more Soviet films emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, which told the subject of the revolution, as prescribed in the planned economy, in such a way that viewers recognized the structures of the Western. This way they created the genre of "Eastern".

Sergey Lavrentiev, who has written the only dissertation on the "Red Western" as he calls the Eastern, summarizes the characteristics of the genre in one essay. "While in US Westerns, new people come to new land, struggling and constituting the new American nation, in the Red Westerns the new people kill the old people, struggling and constituting the new Soviet nation."[6]

"Eastern" – the name not only referred to the Soviet Union situated in Eastern Europe and behind it, preferred landscapes of the genre were also the sparsely populated expanses of the south and east with their steppes and deserts and the inaccessible mountain regions of Central Asia. The heroes are communists who usually work in the Cheka, Feliks Dzerzhinsky's "Extraordinary All-Russian Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Sabotage" – the origin of KGB. Their opponents are local warlords with their troops, which often include scattered White Guards. Similarly, to the Western, there is a lot of riding and shooting. There is friendship, betrayal, and the victorious hero is often rewarded with the love of a beautiful woman.

In the reality of the 1920s, the local rulers and not the Communists often had the support of the population, but in the fiction of the films the latter could not simply assume the role of the Indians from the Western. The Soviet Union saw itself as the fatherland of all working people, in which the People who were previously oppressed by tsarist imperialism could now develop freely, at least that's how ideology wanted it. The opponents of the Communists could therefore only be "feudalistic groups" that did not represent the entire population of the region. Often one speaks of them undifferentiated as "Basmachi", although only in Turkestan a Muslim-influenced insurgent organization called itself with this name. The Soviets usually devalued their opponents as "bandits".

The construction of opponent's character was tricky, but the implementation of action scenes with horses borrowed from the Western were available. Heroes, like their adversaries, rode horses or rode on wagons. Automobiles were very rare. The farm (ranch), at least in the early Western, with livestock farming and mounted shepherds (cowboys) does not exist in the Eastern. Peasants – if they weren't exactly poor – were considered politically unreliable, or opponents of the Soviet power ("kulaks") since their collectivization in 1928.

The Eastern included not only scenes that are reminiscent of the Western, but also the Western form of escalating conflict between the hero and his opponent, which ultimately shoot at each other. While the Western conceded the same chances in the duel between hero and opponent (at least theoretically), the Eastern will sometimes have a shooting that remembers an execution of the opponent at the end of the film. This can be seen in the movie Sedmaya pulya ("The Seventh Bullet").

6 Lavrentiev, Sergey "Red Westerns", in Klein, Thomas/Ritzer, Ivo/Schulze, Peter W. (eds.) *Crossing Frontiers. Intercultural Perspectives on the Western.* Marburg: Schüren, 2012, p. 113.

It took several decades until the censors let the directors use the action-elements of the Western to help shape the revolution. The development of the genre was hampered not only by the ideology of the multinational state in which all nations live peacefully with one another, but also by the seriousness of the subject of "Revolution". In the Eastern, a certain structural relationship between the USA and the USSR is also evident – at least in the Cold War, another reason why the genre remained suspicious.

2 THE FIRST TRIES

As early as 1925, Georgian Ivan Perestiani ventured into a feature film that integrated typical Western elements: Krasnye dyavolyata ("Red Little Devils"). The plot was based on the book of the same name by Pavel Blyachin from 1922, who also contributed to the screenplay. It was a children's book that was turned into a film for young people, the "most successful Soviet work of the silent film era of those years."[7]

Dunya and her brother Misha lose their father, the train driver, while a gang of Makhno's anarchists are attacking the train. They swear on his death to avenge the crime and to pursue Makhno. In a city they meet Tom Dzhekson, a dark-skinned American sailor of their age who is actually a circus artist and now accompanies them. The three make their way to Budyonny's First Equestrian Army and are allowed to serve there as scouts. In the fight with the bandits, they fulfill the legacy and personally arrest Makhno.

When the film was made, the Leninist-Stalinist interpretation of the Russian civil war had not yet prevailed, according to which there was basically only one politically motivated military opponent: the whites. All other opponents of the Reds were only considered bandits. The anarchist leader Makhno largely disappeared from the culture's collective memory after 1928. In 1924, while filming, the historical memory was still fresh. Conversely, Semyon Budyonny, who remained a hero throughout the Soviet decades, was remembered even though his army was a myth.

The Western aspects are rather rare but cannot be overlooked: there is riding as a common form of transportation, but there is also the steam train. The train was of great value to the military. The action takes place in the somewhat exotic southern world for Central Russia, the main actors are children who read with enthusiasm: Misha reads James Fenimore Cooper's The Pathfinder, Dunya reads Ethel Voynich's The Gadfly, a novel that played during the independence movement in northern Italy, the reading for Russian romantic revolutionaries par

7 Schwartz, Matthias. *Expeditionen in andere Welten. Sowjetische Abenteuerliteratur und Science Fiction von der Oktoberrevolution bis zum Ende der Stalinzeit.* Köln u.a.: Böhlau, 2014, p. 100.

excellence.[8] On the word board [fig. 5] one reads "The Pathfinder, the story by Fenimore Cooper, is Mishka's favorite hero."[9] In the end, the young "red devils" manage to bring Makhno, tied up and packed in a sack, to Budyonny, who is giving a speech to his people but is happy to be interrupted (TC 1:21:39 – [fig. 6]).

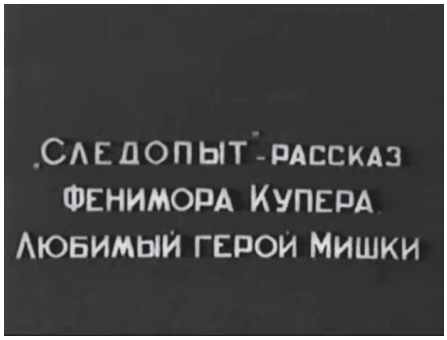

Fig. 5: KRASNYE DYAVOLYATA – The reference to Fenimore Cooper

Fig. 6: KRASNYE DYAVOLYATA – Makhno in the bag

By the end of the 1920s, at least three other films followed, which continued Krasnye dyavolyata and formed a series with this film, which, however, lacked the Western elements. They tell adventure stories from the emigrant milieu: Savur mogila ("The Savur Tomb"), Shirvanskaias danashauli ("The crime of Shirvanskaya"), Sasdjeli ("The Punishment") and Ilan-Dili.[10]

Since literature was still undisputedly the leading medium of culture in the mid-1920s, the debates about the justification of simplistic, Soviet "adventure genres" of great feelings were conducted there. The most heavily discussed genre was the "Red Pinkerton" (socialist crime fiction). In view of the fact that an action-packed, emotion-emphasizing literature for adults was not uncontroversial, the focus on children's and young people's books (and films) appears in addition to the alleged agitation of the young audience as a move into a protected space. For children and adolescents, the view of revolution and civil war as exciting and romantic adventures seemed appropriate, especially when they are advertised as "funny". The producers of such films avoided the accusation of a lack of seriousness.

During the 1930s, especially during the World War II, and the immediate post-war period, Soviet films with too clear Western elements were out of the question. Sergey Lavrentiev often emphasizes that Stalin not only liked Westerns but also wanted them. However, the films from the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s mentioned

8 See Ramm, Benjamin "The Irish Novel that seduced the USSR", BBC, 25 Jan. 2017. http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20170119-the-irish-novel-that-seduced-the-ussr.

9 TC 0:l2:17. [следопыт – рассказ фенимора купер любимый герой Мишки]

10 Schwartz, *Expeditionen in andere Welten,* loc. cit, p. 100.

by Lavrentiev have little to do more with Westerns than the horses used. This includes Smelye lyudi ("Courageous Men") from 1950.

It wasn't until the 1960s that the relationship with America and the Western also relaxed a little as part of the politics of "thaw". In 1962 the SU bought a license for the film The Magnificent Seven. This movie celebrated real triumphs. It was shown in stadiums because the demand was so great, but was soon taken out of circulation. The success was probably uniquely strange for those responsible for the cinema.[11]

Shortly after the war, another Western classic had found its way into Soviet cinemas and initiated an Eastern: John Ford's Stagecoach from 1939 [Fig. 7].

Fig. 7: STAGECOACH – The landscape

Dilizhans (Дилижанс), as the film was later called, had come to the country as spoils of war and was shown in an abbreviated form under the title *Puteshestvie budet opasnym* ("The trip will be dangerous"). Stagecoach's opening credits only mention Ernest Haycox's story The Stage to Lordsburg (1937), but obviously Guy de Maupassant's story Boule de Suif (1880, "Tallow Ball") also inspired the film. In this story a cross-section of French society rides in an overland carriage during the Prussian-French war. The double standards of the "fine" society are to be seen when everyone in the stagecoach tries influence a prostitute to let go of her patriotism and to sleep with the Prussian officer who keeps the carriage blocked. When she finally does, everyone reproaches her morally. This socio-critical aspect has been significantly weakened in Stagecoach. The "fine society" is also present in the carriage,[12] but above all in the city from which the blonde Dallas, the implied prostitute, is literally pushed out. On the way, however, Dallas successively wins the respect of her fellow travelers, so that they advise her to con-

11 Лаврентьев, Сергей. *Красный вестерн.* Москва: Алгоритм, 2009, стр. 80 f.

12 For example, by the loud-mouthed banker Gatewood, who stole his own bank but raves about the benefits of the banks for the economy and says: "What our country needs is a dealer for president" (TC 0:34:50). Already in 1939!

sider Ringo's marriage plans. This young, brave but sensitive man directs her into a shared future at the very end of the movie. He has no prejudices. From the beginning he had called Dallas "ma'am" and treated her politely. Ringo (played by John Wayne) is the manliest of the men who travel in the carriage. Before he drives the woman to his farm, he shoots the three Plummer brothers to avenge his father and brother, because he "knows what a man has to do." Already on the way through the desert he had proved to be a good shot who shot many Indians off their horses. The cavalry comes to the aid of the carriage and drives out the Indians. In addition to the tensions among travelers and the impending love story, the threat and ultimately attacks by the Apaches are a central topic of STAGECOACH.

After the end of the Second World War, Soviet film production almost came to a standstill because the ministry and directors feared Stalin's interference. When a new political leadership prepared a new beginning after his death in March 1953, the number of films to be produced was significantly increased as part of a seven-year plan. On the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1957, Simeon Samsonov released the film OGNENNYE VYORSTY ("Miles of Fire").

A crowded train is on its way to a southern city when a check shows that White Guards are blocking the route. Chekist Savragin wants to try to get through on the country roads and is given two horse-drawn carriages equipped with MG, in which a doctor of medicine, a nurse and an actor, a white guard (who pretends to be a veterinary), the two coachmen and Savragin can be accommodated. The Soviet society is symbolically represented with work (Katya and the coachmen), science and art. There is no woman of dubious lifestyle – Katya, the nurse, is shy and innocent, but while endangered she is a capable helper for the central hero. She takes the reins in her hand after the coachman's death [fig. 8]. At the end of the film, she and Savragin are a couple.

Fig. 8: OGNENNYE VYORSTY – Chased by White Guards

Bekleminshev's role as a traitor quickly becomes clear to the viewer, waiting for when he commits his sabotage. In fact, when the travelers spend the night on a farm, Bekleminshev murdered the young coachman, shot the three horses of one

coach and flees with the others. Although the farmer keeps his three horses hidden, Savragin is able to find them, and get them. When he drives towards the city, the car is attacked twice by white riders, thanks to their machine gun, Savragin and his companions manage to escape the enemy. In front of the city, the Chekist meets his people: mounted Reds who help him to arrest the conspiratorial whites.

These riders take the place of the cavalry that the stagecoach comes to rescue. As in the American film, there are victims of the shootout: the player Hatcock dies, the whiskey seller is wounded. The actor and the older coachman die in Ognennye vyorsty. As a representative of the working class, the coachman had a keen sense that Bekleminshev could be the spy, but the alleged veterinary can dismiss the suspicion. The farmers are shown as sneaky and selfish because they want to keep their horses instead of making them available to the Chekist. The story eventually leads to the death of Bekleminshev in a shoot-out.

The social types behave as the ideology provides: there is no quarrel among the representatives of Soviet society in the carriage, as it did not exist in the projected reality of the Soviet Union. The socio-critical part of the Stagecoach story has now been completely scratched out, however there still remains an exciting carriage ride with raids by enemy riders, who are made aware of the carriage by a spy, and in Stagecoach by the Indian wife of the Latino innkeeper at the second post station. Ognennye vyorsty is an excitingly told, albeit politically highly affirmative Eastern, whose similarity to Stagecoach was covered by corresponding accompanying texts:

> The film "Miles of Fire" resurrects on the screen the heroic past of the Soviet state; it talks about how in the fiery years of the Civil War, more and more new fighters, the sons of the people, stood up to defend the conquest of the October Revolution…[13]

After that there was no Soviet Eastern for almost ten years. Films from the countries of the socialist camp played an important role in the fact that it did come back afterward, and in large numbers. The Czechoslovakian Western parody Limonádový Joe aneb Koňská opera ("Lemonade Joe or the Horse Opera"), which was filmed under the direction of Oldřich Lipský and was released in 1964, became popular throughout the Eastern Bloc, and even shown in the USA. The hero is abstaining from the genre-typical whiskey, and he manages to free a small town from bandits who of course are all drunk. As early as 1963, the West Germans had continued the writing success of the German writer Karl May (1842–1912)

13 Лаврентьев, *Красный вестерн,* loc. cit., стр. 61. [Кинофильм "Огненные версты" воскрешает на экране героическое прощлое Советского государства; он рассказывает о том, как в огненные годы Гражданской войны на защиту завоевании Октябрьской революции вставали все новые и новые бойцы лучие сыны народа …]

and made a film with German-Yugoslavian co-production, about the fictional Apache chief Winnetou. The entire Winnetou trilogy was created under the direction of Herbert Reinl, and until 1968 a total of 11 Karl May films were made as in-house productions in Yugoslavia. Winnetou had a French face, his friend Old Shatterhand was performed by Lex Barker, so that there was a connection to the USA via casting. In the GDR DEFA did not want to be inferior to this. There a total of 16 films were made on Indian topics, starting in 1966 with Die Söhne der grossen Bärin ("The Sons of Great Bear"). It was followed in 1967 by a Fenimore Cooper film adaptation of Chingachgook, die grosse Schlange ("Chingachgook, the Great Snake"), 1968 – a co-production with the USSR – Spur des Falken ("Trail of the Falcon"). Gojko Mikić always played the respective chief, the plot was always politically correct in the sense of an anti-imperial struggle against the white invaders. These and other films from the socialist camp had shown that the Western did not have to convey the usual American perspective per se, but was open to new meanings.

Some of these productions were shown in the Soviet Union[14] and were apparently so successful that directors felt encouraged to continue experimenting with the Western in the USSR as well. This was because of the increasing need for films, exciting films included. They wanted to produce an "ideologically correct" Western in the Soviet Union – as "our response to American imperialists."[15] However, this time also, as a precaution, the efforts to establish the new genre in the Soviet cinema started with a youth film, which was later continued.

The film Neulovimye mstiteli ("The Elusive Revengers") from 1966 marks the beginning of a continuous development of the genre, even if Neulovimye mstiteli is aimed at young people and takes up the characters of the "Red Little Devils". The film extends the trio from Jasha, Valeri and Danko to a quartet by adding the girl Kseniya (Ksenka).

The events of the film take place in May 1920. It is the Kherson region in Ukraine. A department of Ataman Burnash robs civilians and oppresses the rural population. Since the department's leader, Sidor Lyuty ("the cruel Sidor") shot their father, Danko and Ksanka have been orphans. They team up with former high school student Valeri and Jashka Cygan (Jashka Gypsy) and vow to avenge the father by fighting Burnash and his gang. Makhno is forgotten. They start a sort

14 In 1968 Old Shatterhand (1964) was dubbed as Виннету – вождь апачей. Old Surehand (1965) under the title Верная рука – друг индейцев. The same applies to the DEFA production *Chingachgook, the big snake* that came to the Soviet cinemas as Чингачгук – Большой Змей. 1970 followed the *Trace of the Falcon* as След Сокола. (see. N.N. "Spisok zarubežnych fil'mov v prokate SSSR s 1955 po 1991 gg.", *fenixclub,* 28 Nov. 2010. http://fenixclub.com/index.php?showtopic=119228).

15 At Lavrentiev in quotation marks – a citation from an official text (Lavrentiev, "Red Westerns", loc. cit., p. 115).

of guerrilla war against the bandits, return the stolen cattle to the farmers, inflict damage on the bandits and capture some of them. When the son of a Cossack friend of the Ataman is killed in an attack on a carriage, Danko takes his place and infiltrates the Burnash's camp. He is discovered and fears being tortured. He is released at the last minute by his friends. The four escape the bandits by train, crossing a burning bridge and kill several bandits, including Sidor Lyuty. At the end of the film, S. M. Budyonny personally speaks with them and enlists them in the ranks of the Red Army.

The beginning of the movie offers a lot of settings that are similar to a Western. There is no saloon, but there is a stage with a jingle [fig. 9], riders in formation, (TC 0:14:01 and 0:14:58 – [fig. 10]), cattle etc. The wild pursuit of a carriage (TC 0:46:23) and among riders (TC 1:05:38) also belong to it. And a special opening scene with four riders in front of a huge red rising sun. This film also had at least two episodes, which claim to tell the beginning of the Communist youth organization Komsomol.

Fig. 9: NEULOVIMYE … – The rural jingle

Fig. 10: NEULOVIMYE … – Sidor Lyuty and his men

3 BELOE SOLNTSE PUSTYNI

In 1969 BELOE SOLNCE PUSTYNI ("White Sun of the Desert") appeared as a slightly ironic Eastern. Unlike the "Youth"-Eastern, this film, designed for adults, tells the story of the defense of Soviet power in Central Asia, where a demobilized Red Army soldier is fighting "bandits".

The film was created in 1969 by Lenfilm under the direction of Vladimir Motyl, the script was written by Valentin Ezhov and Rustam Ibragimbekov. It was not until 1997 that the film, which Boris Elcin apparently liked, was awarded the State Prize of the Russian Federation.

The Red Army soldier Sukhov is on his way home somewhere in the south in a desert area when the commander of a small group entrusts him with the task of escorting the harem women of Abdulla, who is fighting against the Reds, to the Pedzhent fortress by the sea. The task is not easy because Suchov first of all, has to teach the women that the Soviet power has freed them.

Sukhov freed not only the women, but also Sayid who was buried in the sand, who from now on helps him by unexpectedly showing up to support him. His colleague Petrukha made friends with the customs officer Vereshchagin, whom Sukhov would like to win over to the cause of the Reds. This is a bit difficult, but succeeds after Vereshchagin first had thrown dynamite at Sukhov. However, he reacts casually and lights a cigarette on the fuse [fig. 11].

Fig. 11: BELOE SOLNTSE … – Sukhov lighting a cigarette

Shooting skills are shown and finally a decisive battle happens when Abdulla wants to smoke out Sukhov, who had withdrawn with the women into an empty tank. Of course, the good side wins, and at the end of the film Sukhov can continue the march home that he started with.

In order not to gather the Central Asians on the side of his opponents, the Russian Sukhov needs the good Sayid at his side, and both fight Abdullah. This has – at least in uniform – a former White soldier among his people. Abdulla [fig. 12] as the enemy of the Soviet power is drawn negatively accordingly. Without hesitation, he kills one of his women and stabs Petrukha with the bayonet. His gang is similarly cruel.

Since Sukhov has the task of accompanying seven harem women, the gender aspect plays an important role in the movie. The equal rights of men and women guaranteed by the Soviet power are made clear in BELOE SOLNTSE PUSTYNI by Sukhov treating the harem women formally as equal citizens – but he sets the tone.

Fig. 12: BELOE SOLNTSE … – Abdulla

He wants to teach them that they are free now. Sukhov repeatedly stresses that he is not their new husband and master and praises the impact of the Russian revolution on the situation of women:

> Harem woman: Don't be scared. This is our master. […] You are our new husband […]
> Sukhov: Comrades women, the revolution has set you free. You have no master now. Just call me Comrade Sukhov. […] You will be free to work and each will have a separate husband.[16]

A red sign with a hammer and sickle calls the women's shelter "The first hostel of the free wives of the east."[17] The same ideology underlines the saying on the red banner in front of the women's room: "Down with prejudice. The woman is human, too."[18]

In this way the film is actually not addressing the Orientals, but the Russians, who, in a two-liner recorded in the 19th century by the proverb collector Dal, claim that women are not human: "A chicken is not a bird, / a woman is not a human being."[19] Despite Sukhov's statements, his image of women is no less old-fashioned and patriarchal than that of the Orient. Secretly he also dreams of having a harem himself or being able to take the harem ladies home with him. One of them sews in his dream, another milks a cow, and yet another sits on a spinning wheel. In this scene the harem ladies are no longer completely veiled. They wear

16 TC 0:27:00 [Harem woman: Не бойтесь. Это наш господин. […] Ты нащ новый муж […] Sukhov: Товарищи женщины, революция освободила вас. У вас нет теперь господина. Называйте меня просто товарищ Сухов. […] Вы будете свободны трудиться и у каждой будет отдельный муж.]
17 TC 0:25:57 [Первое общежитие свободных жен востока]
18 TC 0:27:52 [Долой предрассудки женщина тоже человек]
19 Курица не птица, / баба не человек.

the same head scarves as Sukhov's wife and pose with him in front of the camera (TC 0:45:42 [fig. 13]). They are integrated into his living space. He is much more "oriental" than it appears at the beginning.

Fig. 13: BELOE SOLNTSE … – Sukhov's harem dream

Another aspect that somewhat weakens the characteristics of the Eastern is poetry. When Sukhov is walking alone, he formulates letters to his wife, which contain the stylistic features of a typical Russian townspeople. "His expression in the imaginary correspondence to his wife is upscale and extremely gallant, which indicates a good education."[20] He is not a simple hero, but rather a sensitive intellectual.

When the customs officer Vereshchagin appears, he is often accompanied by a song by the well-known songwriter Bulat Okudzhava:

Ваше благородие, госпожа разлука, / мне с тобою холодно, вот какая штука. / Письмецо в конверте погоди – не рви … / Не везёт мне в смерти, повезёт в любви.	Your Honor, Madam Separation, / I'm cold with you, that's the thing. / Wait a little letter in an envelope – do not tear … / if it is not bringing me death, it will bring me love.
Ваше благородие госпожа удача, / для кого ты добрая, а кому иначе. / Девять граммов в сердце постой – не зови … / Не везёт мне в смерти, повезёт в любви.	Your Honor Madam Success / for some you are kind, and to others otherwise. / Wait nine grams in your heart – don't call … / if it is not bringing me death, it will bring me love.

20 Davydov, Alexander "Weiße Sonne der Wüste", *Negativ,* 21 May 2012 [http://www.negativ-film.de/weise-sonne-der-wuste/].

Ваше благородие госпожа чужбина, / жарко обнимала ты, да мало любила. / В шёлковые сети постой – не лови … / Не везёт мне в смерти, повезёт в любви.	Your Honor Madam Outland, / you embraced hotly, but loved little. / Wait in the silk nets – don't catch … / … / if it is not bringing me death, it will bring me love.
Ваше благородие госпожа победа, / значит, моя песенка до конца не спета! / Перестаньте, черти, клясться на крови … / Не везёт мне в смерти, повезёт в любви.	Your Honor Madam Victory, / then my song is not completely sung! / devils, stop swearing blood … / if it is not bringing me death, it will bring me love.

Fate is a woman who, as a precaution, is addressed with the salutation of the upper class, which was common in the Tsarist era. She encounters the man as separation, distance, victory and success. Happiness – as verse two suggests – is unevenly distributed. It is not benevolent to Vereshchagin. He is killed in the explosion of the boat with which the gang could have escaped. Sukhov, on the other hand, has a chance of seeing his wife again.

The "serious" theme of life and death introduced by the Okudzhava-chanson is taken away by a fourth aspect: the fairytale that is not only related to the Orient. This aspect includes f.e. the three old men [fig. 14] who sit on the fortress wall, drink tea and smoke – on a box of dynamite, which Sukhov confiscates.

Beloe solntse pustyni became a "box office hit" that, with 34 million viewers was among the ten most visited films in 1970."[21]

Fig. 14: BELOE SOLNTSE … – Three old men

21 Binder, Eva/Engel, Christine *Eisensteins Erben: der sowjetische Film vom Tauwetter zur Perestrojka (1953–1991).* Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck, 2002, p. 162.

4 THE FILM STUDIOS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The Soviet republics of the Middle East, such as Tadzhikistan, had already had their own film studios in the 1930s, but these had a hard time competing with giants like Mosfilm. Since many young directors had completed their training in the 1960s, some of them gave way to the periphery. Andrei Konchalovsky also shot his first feature-length film, Pervyi uchitel ("The First Teacher"; 1965) at the Kyrgyzstan Film Studio. It was based on the eponymous novel by the young Kyrgyz successful author Chingiz Aitmatov – a fact that also promised the film a certain success. But the relatively free work in Kyrgyzstan, on the outskirts of the Soviet Union, had its price. The movie had to be shot in black and white.

Another possibility for the studios to draw attention to themselves was to make exciting films, with clear elements borrowed from the Western. These told how the Revolution was created in their area.

Parallel to Beloe solntse pustyni, Suchabat Khamidov directed Vstrecha u staroy mecheti ("Meeting at the Old Mosque") at Tadzhikfilm in 1969. It was a black and white picture which premiered in Moscow.

The story takes place in a small town in Central Asia, which is surrounded by high snow-capped mountains. It's around 1930, and has been a long time since the end of the civil war, but society is still unstable. Bandits are causing trouble; a uniformed man has a leading position in their group. He is a former White. The groups of bandits have a political background. The emir, who was brought down, had hidden gold in the old mosque, and the Basmachi are trying to get it. This is prevented by the local Bolsheviks, who manage to eliminate the whole gang.

Local representative of the order is Gusev, whose wife Masha is about to leave him. He loves to party and is involved with bribery. In a light uniform shirt with clear dark stubble, he looks quite adapted to the provincial life, in which men with a beard still shape the street scene. When Gusev is celebrating his birthday, his old friend Issat Karimov comes to town with a white shirt and a clean shave. He is a hero of the civil war and has lived in Moscow for the past few years. He will now run the school. Karimov is warned by a singer that the coming night will be dangerous because of a "black wind" coming from the mountains.

Karimov understands that more than 30 Basmachi are coming, and he gathers people he trusts in a billiard room, where they decide to attack the bandits. They are only eight people, so theoretically each one of them has to fight against four. The billiard marker encourages them by pointing out that in billiards it is not a special feat to set four others in motion with one ball. They could count on him too. Finally, Masha, Gusev's wife, comes and joins the group. The bandits are injured in a large shootout with subsequent chase scenes.

This also requires victims on the side of the attackers. Gusev, as well as some of the others, does not survive. Here, in these action scenes (TC 1: 05: 00 ff.), the film has many analogies to the Western. The characters in the film don't shoot with a

Colt, but with a Mauser. They wear turbans and simple hats instead of a cowboy hat, but otherwise it's similar. Especially to the old b/w Westerns.

The movie also has self-referential aspects, insofar as photo and cinema are made subjects of attention. There is a photographer who is pushed around by his energetic wife, who calls him a coward. However, he is involved in the fighting, and takes a lot of photos of the heroes.

There is also a cinema in the town, the projectionist of which is showing Novyj Vavilon ("The New Babylon"), a silent film directed by Grigori Kozincev and Leonid Trauberg in 1929. It is about the Paris Commune in 1871. The Basmachi send a murderer, who hidden under a burqa, wants to stab the projectionist. He manages to escape into the screening room, where he inserts a revolutionary film, apparently Eisenstein's Oktyabr ("October"). The murderer subsequently is trapped in the screening room, and has to watch the film as a punishment. In the end, the Basmachi storm the cinema on horseback, but the projectionist is able to create confusion with film scenes of bombs and shots. One of the bandits manages to shoot him in his screening room. He dies saying, "I'm dying for the revolution."[22]

There are pictures of the great (Petrograd) Revolution (which are nearly all fictional). Thanks to the photographer and film studio, there are also pictures of the small, local revolution, which is no less dangerous and also requires heroism.

The heroes are ethnically mixed. One is light blonde, like Masha, but the leader is a local, who however stands for the new Soviet Central Asia. At the end he is standing, still in a white shirt and carefully shaved, on the balcony of a house. He maintains his position of oversight.

The music for this film comes from Eduard Artemev, who had become internationally known for his work on Tarkovsky's films with his experimental music studio.

In the Kazakh studio in 1970 the movie Konets atamana ("The End of the Ataman") was completed as a two-part film. Directed by Shaken Ajmanov, Andrei Konchalovsky and Eduard Tropinin wrote the script. Andrei Tarkovsky is also said to have worked on it.

Lavrentiev also counts this film as Eastern, although there is very little evidence of it. It tells the story of the Kazakh Chadyarov, who works for the Cheka in his home country but is deployed in the neighboring area. His colleagues endow him with a false legend, lock him up and let him escape across the border. Beyond the great river, the neighboring area is located in China ("Uyghuria") and Siberia, which is controlled by the Cossack troops. These are led by Ataman Dutov, a warlord who is one of the regional powers in the Orenburg area. British units are also active there. After initially being distrusted, Chadyarov manages to sneak into the

22 [Умираю за революцию.]

Ataman, especially since he knows how to give his legend special credibility as a descendant of nobles. Above all, Chadyarov has to convince the priest Otets Iona, who works as a kind of spy chief for Dutov, of his alleged loyalty. The secret mission threatens to fail through a traitor from within their own ranks and Chadyarov fears being recognized, but he finally manages to shoot the Ataman and his officer on watch. This happens after almost exactly two hours of the 2:18:52 long film. The hero is slightly wounded, and can flee through the mountains on horseback. There are a few images and impressions reminiscent of the Westerns. The wild landscape, however, is not the hero's goal. In the last scene, his wife hurries towards him.

There are many interior shots in this film with richly decorated carvings on doors and cupboards. An opium cave, restaurants, an opulent meal, service rooms and dusty streets are also shown. The hero comes from a more rural area and returns to it, but the urban-rural contrast is not that of the Western. There are hardly any action elements either.

Over the years, the story of Chekist Chadyarov has been continued to a tetralogy that is set in the espionage style. In 1977 it was followed by Transsibirski Ekspress ("Trans-Siberian Express"), in 1989 Manchzhurski variant ("The Manchu version"), and 2009 Kto vy, gospodin Ka? ("Who are you, Mr. Ka?").

In 1972, Kirgizfil'm also produced a movie that was set in the 1920s. The flowering poppy plants in the first scenes already show its subject: the fight for drugs. But the red soon also stands for the blood that will be lost. The screenplay for the film Alye maki Issyk-Kulya ("The red poppy on Issyk-Kul'") is based on the story of Kontrbandisty Tyan-Shanya ("The Smugglers of Tjan-Shan"). The film reached more than 11 million viewers. It was a remarkable success for a production of a peripheral studio.

Kokorev, head of a camp of the Soviet border troops, is waging a losing battle against two smuggling gangs who illegally process the poppies of the mountain meadows into opium. When a small group is lured into a trap during an operation in the snow-covered mountains, and down to their leader Karabalta, Kokorev makes a convincing argument to the loyalist Bolshevik. Karabalta sets out to play the smugglers against one another, with the help of his wife Kempir. A gang surrenders to the border troops. With Bajzak, the leader of the other group, Karabalta fights a traditional duel on a steep mountain path. Everyone tries to tear the other off his horse without weapons. Karabalta wins the battle. He actually has some traits of a western hero. He is essentially on his own when he wanders in the mountains with his wife. He is tall and strong. He escalates the conflict to a duel, in which he finally is victorious.

The two-part Dauriya produced by Lenfil'm in 1971 tells of the life of a larger group of Cossacks who lived on the eve of the First World War beyond Lake Baikal (Забайкалье). Here too, there are social conflicts in the foothills, particularly in European Russia. With the many horses [fig. 15], some shootings, beatings and

Fig. 15: DAURIYA – Horsemen

chases, the film contains elements reminiscent of the Western, but does not have its basic conflict.

In 1972, Uzbekfilm produced the feature film SEDMAYA PULYA ("The Seventh Bullet"), directed by Ali Khamraev. The main actor was again Suymenkul Chokmorov, who plays Maksumov, the commander of a police *(miliciya)* department. The script was written by Andrei Konchalovsky and Fridrikh Gorenshteyn.

When Maksumov comes back after a short period of absence, he finds his command devastated. Some of his people are dead, others have been tortured, and others have fled. He recognizes the work of Khayrulla, a leader of Basmachi. Maksumov loads his 6-shot revolver, and sticks a seventh bullet into the sweatband on his peaked cap before setting out to confront Khayrulla. He meets a group of five Basmachi who are traveling with Khayrulla's young wife Ayugul. Maksumov lets himself get captured by them. On the way, the Basmachi are stopped in a village by the shepherd Izmail, who desperately wants to capture Maksumov, because he believes that he killed his older brother (shootout TC 0:35:10). Khayrulla, Maksumov and Ayugul manage to escape in a dray, but are followed by several horsemen, and are brought back to the village. There Izmail's mother realizes that Maksumov is not her other son's murderer. So, there is no need for revenge. As if to apologize, Izmail joins Maksumov. Two men from his police unit watch Maksumov's abduction to the village and ride with him and Ayugul, who also meet up with them. After 45 minutes of the film, Maksumov is back in the courtyard of his command and has gathered around a dozen men. Khayrulla comes over, hands over the money he previously took, and thanks Maksumov for saving his wife. Maksumov gives a speech to the men about the Red Miliciya, which are serving for the sake of the cause, not for payment. When he shoots a traitor, Khayrulla intervenes. He chases Maksumov from his commander's yard with weapons. In the night there is an argument between Khayrulla's people, who partly leave. The next day, Izmail, who sneaks into the building, comes to the rescue of Maksumov, while Khayrulla announces the death to the chief of police in the dungeon. Khayrulla's wife pulls a pistol, but she is overwhelmed. Izmail passes a revolver through the barred window to Maksumov, who uses it to clear his way. There is a big shootout where Maksumov and Izmail can flee. In front of them Khayrulla

rides with Ayugul, who Maksumov is now pursuing. Both men fall off their horses and chase each other on foot. Ayugul and another woman are waiting for their already wounded husband on the river bank while Maksumov takes out the seventh bullet and shoots Khayrulla. Then he takes care of Ayugul, who is also wounded, while men from his unit appear on the other bank of the river. Together they ride under the red flag. Maksumov has his authority again.

The film is very rich in scenes that also characterize the classic Western. The action horseback riding, chases, shootouts, and killings. The basic idea is also very similar to a classic Western plot. The new order of the Bolsheviks is used to enforce the law, and as a result clashing with the Basmachi. The fact that the new order is the one that connects local traditions with overarching *pravda,* practical judicial issues have been the subject of several debates. Unlike in many other Eastern movies, it is not simply the task of replacing the previous power with that of the Bolsheviks. It is also the responsibility of its moral superiority, which is also expressed by Maksumov's police force being both socialists and Muslims. However, these would be Muslims, other than the ones that are the fanatical followers of Khayrulla. It is also important to see that it is an order that was not ethnic Russians. All characters are Middle Asians who adopt the new order. The chief of police Maksumov plays a central role in this. He is not only the ideological center, he is designed as a real Western hero. A tough, lonely man who consistently drives his opponent into the shootout. It is a conflict of man against man. Characterized by the final shot being more of an execution than an end of a duel.

The main actor Suymenkul Chokmorov was awarded the title "Honored Artist of the Kyrgyz SSR" in 1975, but his fame remained regionally limited. This applies to the Central Asian Eastern as a whole.

5 Svoy sredi chuzhikh, ...

In 1974 Nikita Mikhalkov, Andrei Konchalovsky's younger brother, finished his debut film, for which he had written the screenplay in the Eastern genre. It was a Mosfilm production that shifted the interest in the genre from the periphery of the country back to the center. The somewhat cumbersome title is: Svoy sredi chuzhikh, chuzhoy sredi svoikh (acc. "Our man among strangers, a stranger among ours") and refers to the more complex social warfare after the end of the civil war, when the concepts of "us" and "them", or of good and bad had to be redefined. This was especially important when half a million rubles was involved.

A group of five friends has survived the civil war and cheerfully celebrates the victory. Now they have to do their jobs at Cheka in civilian life, which in addition to routine also includes securing transportation for some valuables. The gold and precious items are to be brought secretly north by train. The area is dangerous because of the bandit Brylov and his gang. Chekist Yegor Shilov is chosen to guard

the transport, although there are colleagues of his who are concerned. In fact, the train is attacked by the white officer Lemke and three of his men. Several people are killed, and most of the valuables disappear. It becomes clear that a train employee has helped the bandits by giving Shilov drugs.

Brylov, a former Cossack officer *(Esaul),* was not involved in the robbery of the transport of valuables. He lets his people raid another train, whose passengers are robbed. Lemke and his people are also on the train, and they suggest to Brylov to join him. He agrees, especially since he hears later about the 500,000 rubles, and has Captain Lemke watched.

The Chekists meanwhile arrest Shilov, and interrogate him. He does not want, or cannot remember anything. Shilov is irritated that none of his former friends trust him. When he is brought into the city by car, he escapes. He remembers the train employee, he finds him and interrogates him. Then Shilov shows up to confront Brylov to ask him about the half a million. Brylov takes him to his camp. The two want to know more about Lemke, who is silent.

The Chekists interrogate the railway worker and expect him to identify the whites. In addition, they must suspect a spy in their own ranks, because the train employee is found murdered soon after.

A whole section of horsemen is deployed, which is pressuring Brylov's gang. In their camp, Shilov befriends the Tatare Kayum, who finally shows him a bag with the treasures. On the steep bank of the river, Kayum falls into the rapids. Shilov rescues him from drowning. He reproaches him for wanting gold provided for the poor. Meanwhile, Lemke is initially with Brylov, then Shilov interrogates him. Lemke offers half of the sum.

Shilov and Kayum take a raft to which Lemke has tied to a steep slope where Brylov is waiting for them. He shoots them with a machine gun, but they struggle to climb the high bank, where Kayum is killed. Brylov flees with the suitcase, Shilov shoots him, and he falls dead in the gorge of the river. Lemke tries to persuade Shilov to cross the border with him, but he stays steadfast and takes the wounded Lemke with him to hand him over to the Chekists and make up for the damage. On a distant meadow he recognizes the mounted police force, and the car with the Chekists. They all run towards him. Shilov seems to be one of them again.

In Mikhakov's Eastern, the Italo-Western, which had its first great successes in the 1960s, is much more evident than the classic American Western. The machine gun is borrowed from Corbucci's Django (1966) [fig. 16 and 17], Sergio Leone was more effective for the film aesthetics. He had completed his style-building trilogy in 1972 (Per un pugno di dollari (1964), Per qualche dollaro in più (1965) and Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo (1966)] and also two of his three "Once Upon a Time Films": C'era una volta il West (1968) and Giù la testa (1971). Lavrentiev reports that Mikhalkov worshiped Leone. While the film was approved by a commission, one of the officials commented on a scene with "It's

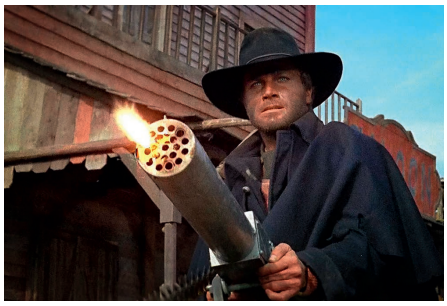

Fig. 16: DJANGO – The hero and his machine gun

Fig. 17: SVOY SREDI … – Brylov and his machine gun

just … Chekhov," while another said: "I would even say, Nikolai Ivanovich, that this is Bunin." Mikhalkov had grinned in his mustache: "Thank God they didn't understand that we were quoting Sergio Leone here."[23] Brylov does indeed look like an imported hero from a Western. He's wearing a wide-brimmed hat [fig. 18], not the uniform cap or the turban of the other Eastern heroes. The long duster also seems to have been taken from Leone's C'ERA UNA VOLTA IL WEST. Shilov shoots Brylov with a typical Western revolver [fig. 19], not with the Mauser of the Chekists. The music, that Artemev is responsible for, is based more on Ennio Morricone's sound, than on the older Hollywood melodies.

Fig. 18: SVOY SREDI … – Brylov with Western hat

Fig. 19: SVOY SREDI … – Shilov's revolver

The plot is essentially about three men and the temptation of a suitcase full of gold and jewelry. Lemke robbed them and ran away with it to start a new life across the border. Brylov takes it because he feels strong enough. Shilov needs it to restore his

23 Лаврентьев, *Красный вестерн,* loc. cit., стр. 190/191. [Это же просто … Чехов такой (…) Я бы даже сказал, Николай Иванович, что это Бунин. (…) Слава богу не поняли что здесь мы цитировали Серджо Леоне.]

good reputation with his former comrades. His reputation is worth more to him than anything else. These former comrades are just as affected by Shilov's initial failure as he is. Sarychev, the chairman of the governorate, moans: "No Shilov, no Brylov, no gold"[24] and is happy in the end to have Shilov and the gold again.

6 Telokhranitel

In 1979, Ali Khamraev varied the theme of the legitimacy of social order in the film Telokhranitel (Телохранитель "The bodyguard").

The border troops of the Red Army manage to arrest Sultan Nazar at the end of the Russian civil war. He is considered the actual head of tribes that oppose Soviet power. The insignia of Nazar's rule include the Tamga, an amulet that he wears around his neck, and an antler-like crown for his wife or daughter. These insignia are coveted by Fottabek, who with their help wants to become a Sultan himself, and also crown his wife Albash. He therefore attacked the building in which the small division of the Reds defended themselves and their prisoner. The commander instructs the shepherd and hunter Mirzo to take Nazar and his daughter Zarangis across the mountains to Bukhara. The Soviet power is already established there.

Mirzo, his brother and a few servants take on the job. They act as the Sultan's bodyguard. They cleverly hide Nazar and his daughter, but they are discovered by the men chasing them. When they think they have encircled him for the first time, Mirzo manages to confuse and escape the herd of horses he is carrying (TC 0:20:06). They will meet again at the next festival, and are hunted again (TC 0:26:50 [Fig. 20]).

Fig. 20: TELOKHRANITEL – A chase

24 TC 1:26:15. [Шилова нет, Брылова нет, а золота нет].

Finally, Mirzo and his companions leave the car and the horses and move on foot, but the princess wants to be carried. This makes it difficult for them to move forward. Mirzo's brother, who is supposed to keep watch in the evening, is in love with Nazar's daughter and takes care of her, so that Nazar can escape. Mirzo has to catch up with him. Even when it begins to snow in the region, Fottabek manages to stay on their heels, and even overtake them. As soon as they come back to the inhabited area, they are brought in as criminals, because Fottabek is already there (TC 0:50). Whose people beat up Mirzo, but Nazar says they should stop. In the morning everyone meets under a tent roof. Fottabek now has the Tamga, the badge of the legitimate sultan. Mirzo is said to be killed by a cobra, but he catches the snake and escapes. Jugglers, that are Mirzo's people, stop by the tent and kidnap Nazar and his daughter. Nazar is very weak, so the group divides. Mirzo's brother and Nazar's daughter go ahead of everyone else. The dance of a miracle healer doesn't help Nazar, Mirzo has to put him on his back to get underway. When a suspension bridge is destroyed, they cross the gorge with a rope. In another ravine, Fottabek's people, Mirzo and Nazar, are hiding. Fottabek takes Nazar's money and emblem again. When Mirzo intervenes, Nazar comes to his aid. He strikes Fottabek with a stone. Nazar now has to carry the battered Mirzo on his back [fig. 21] until they come to the outskirts of Bukhara. Mirzo waves to

Fig. 21: TELOKHRANITEL – the sultan carrying his bodyguard

riders on a bridge, and Nazar throws him and the money into the mountain river. The riders turn out to be Mirzo's brother, Nazar's daughter and some others. They save Mirzo and take Nazar and his daughter with them. When he stands in front of Mirzo again, he bequeaths him the Tamga.

Nazar recognizes Mirzo's philosophy of life and his hopes for the future, when he hands over the badge. This happens also, because Mirzo speaks of honesty, which he is currently demonstrating as a bodyguard:

> Nazar: The smart and hardworking will live better, and the lazy and stupid will envy. So, your equality of the poor and the rich will fall apart.

> Mirzo: We will give birth to many children, teach them honesty, honesty of heart, empathy for people. That's why they will be happier than us.[25]

Mirzo's ambitions are limited to domestic situations. The sultan's amulet does not attract him to power, especially since Tamga is associated with a power that is now in the past. Mirzo only wants to rebuild his mother's house, which the Basmachi destroyed. The film ends with his announcement:

> Mirzo *(to his brother)*: Just take the rifle. I need to finish building the house, I promised my mother, to return soon. Yes, and we have to take care for the old man, the hermit, that he will be able to plow his land even before death.
> Leader: Troop, march.[26]

So, in the end there is not a big ideological construction, but the reconstruction of a family house and the consolidation of the community.

7 THE END

Lavrentiev concludes his study of the Eastern with a chapter about the 1980s, which he gives the headline *Besslavnyj konets* (Бесславный конец, "Inglorious End"). He notes that the films run out of both heroes and opponents. The heroes are still chekists, but these "no longer have the mental strength for revolutionary struggle."[27] Zaytsev, the station manager, one of the heroes from the film Khleb, zoloto, nagan ("Bread, Gold, Gun", 1980) succumbs to his greed concerning three gold bars, which he wants to hide in a cemetery for himself. Gorbach, the chekist, delivers them to the finance commissioner, and brings the sacks of grain by car to the children's home. He represents more duty and the technical progress than the revolution.

Similarly, since the end of the 1970s, the opponents have been shown as complex personalities, so that Lavrentiev has seen a "covert apology of the White Guardism"[28] for those years.

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25 TC 1:10:00 ff. [Nazar: Умный и трудолюбивый будет жить лучше, а ленивый и тупой станет завидовать. Вот и развалится ваше равенство бедных и богатых.
Mirzo: Мы родим много детей, научим их честности, честности сердца, сочуствия к людям. Вот поэтому они будут счастливее нас.]

26 [Mirzo *(to his brother)*: Только винтовку возьми. Мне дом достроить надо, я матери обещал, скоро вернуться. Да ещё старика одного забрать надо, отшельника, пусть хоть перед смертью свою землю попашет.
Leader: Отряд, рысью марш.]

27 Лаврентьев, *Красный вестерн,* loc. cit., стр. 228. [нет больше душевных сил на революционную борьбу].

28 Лаврентьев, *Красный вестерн,* loc. cit., стр. 231. [скрытую апололгогию белогвардейщины].

Indeed, the Eastern needs a simple historical picture for the early 1920s in order to distribute "good" and "bad" as clearly as possible between the figures. To the extent that the simple structure was replaced by a differentiated view of the civil war, and that the whites, or the regional warlords were not only assumed to have lower motives, the ideological basis of the classical Eastern was lost.

One way to overcome the crisis has been indicated by Vasiliy Aksyonov in 2004. He proposed new narratives. After having shown the adventures of one's own east in the 1970s, it is time to turn to exciting topics in Soviet history that have not yet been made into a film. For example, the uprisings of convicts in the Gulags: "There were the brightest outbreaks of human freedom, such as uprisings of convicts in Vorkuta and Ekibastuz. There were a lot of people doing hard labor, who alone challenged the inexorable system."[29]

New narratives could also be made from the conflicts between Russian conquerors of Siberia and the local population in the 16th to 18th century – an analogous conflict to that of white settlers and indigenous Americans. However, that seems to touch on a taboo topic, the lifting of which could lead to ethnic tensions.

Another way to enable the genre to live on, was to follow the path of the Italo-Western, i.e. specifically: to soften the characterization of "good reds" and "bad bandits, or whites" and continue to create strong but rather morally questionable heroes. In the 1990s this attempt was made in the film Volchya krov ("Wolf Blood"), which was shot in 1995 under the direction of Nikolay Stambula.

Directly after the October Revolution units with special orders were founded. Rodion Dobrykh commands such a unit with about a dozen men. Their task is to fight Cossacks under the command of Ataman Yerofey Serkov in the Urals. These Cossacks raid settlements and villages and kill many of their residents. Dobrykh and his people are equally quick to kill or threaten death to their opponents. In this situation he points out that he has extraordinary powers. When he is accused by the chairman of the revolutionary tribunal, which was bribed by the Cossacks, and the chairman of the Cheka region, he shoots the two without further discussion. He does the same with the wife of his deputy, Fortov, who confronts him with a rifle in her hand.

Dobrykh's unit kills all the Cossacks in the course of the film, and Dobrykh himself shoots the Ataman when this reaches for his weapon.

It initially seems that the opponents in the civil war are confusingly similar to one another. However, there is a clear shift in favor of the Reds in subplots and equipment. Dobrykh's department carries two prisoners on a wagon: a paramedic, who is a right-wing social revolutionary and is supposed to be judged by a tribunal, but whom Dobrykh lets go because he helped his wife Klavdiya when she gave birth to her child. As a caring father, Dobrykh can show a charitable side. The

29 Аксенов, Василий "Культура. Кино. Вестерны и истерны", *Огонек,* 26 сент. 2004.

second prisoner is Serkov sen., a decorated colonel of the Whites whom his son, the Ataman, cannot free. In an unguarded moment, the colonel leaves the dray and shoots himself – symbolizing the self-abandonment of the Whites. Dobrykh's name sounds similar to *dobryj* ("the good"). Yevgeni Sidikhin is a handsome and

Fig. 22: VOLCHYA KROV – The sympathic red hero

athletic actor, who photographs very well [fig. 22] in his black leather clothing. The film criticism primarily emphasized the similarity of the parties, which was still completely unthinkable in the 1980s, and the closeness of the film to the aesthetics of the Italo-Western:

> His Reds are not angels at all, but those who were against them, also without a halo over their heads. The war is shown as a cruel and bloody, and by and large meaningless confrontation of strong men. Another thing is that the film was made without brilliance and comparison, for example, with the dashing and stylish "At Home Among Strangers …" by N. Mikhalkov, in my opinion, could not stand it …[30]

It is indeed a very male-dominated film in which women only play minor roles. The nuns of a monastery under construction must tolerate the Cossacks using it as a shelter, and Klavdiya is mostly shown wordlessly. As is often the case in the Western, the rising tension leads to a conflict between two strong men, only one of which can survive.

30 Федоров, А. "Образ Белого движения в российском игровом кинематографе на современном этапе", *Медиаобразование,* 2016, №. 2, стр. 61–79. [Его красные вовсе не ангелы, но и те, кто был против них, тоже без нимба над головой. Война показана как жестокое и кровавое, и по большому счету бессмысленное противостояние сильных мужчин. Другое дело, что фильм был поставлен без блеска и сравнения, скажем, с лихим и стильным "Своим среди чужих …" Н. Михалкова, на мой взгляд, не выдерживал …]

It is significant that Volchya krov was one of the two Easterns that were filmed in the 1990s. The other was Dikiy vostok which tried a new variant in the Eastern genre, as a postmodern game.

8 "THE WILD EAST"

The collapsing Soviet system in the second half of the 1980s not only lost the political-ideological control over film production, it also no longer provided funds for larger projects. The filmmakers were now free from the guidelines of the Ministry, but had to take care of the financing themselves. This gave rise to some low-budget productions, among them the film Dikiy Vostok (1993; "The Wild East"), which is, in a way, the end and crowning glory of the Eastern when it depicts a wild imagination about the east of Russia, in which various aesthetic and social imaginations of the early 1990s are integrated.

Dikiy Vostok tells a story that has migrated from east to west and now back to the east: it is the story of warriors who help defenseless people to defend themselves against bandits. In 1954, the Japanese Akira Kurosawa told it as 七人の侍, Shichinin no samurai ("The Seven Samurai"), in 1960 John Sturges recounted it as The Magnificent Seven. Kurosawa's film began a triumphal march around the world with unknown actors, Sturges relied on stars of his time such as Yul Brunner, Charles Bronson and others. Rashid Nurmanov again worked with largely unknown actors in his film, which was produced in Kazakhstan. Similar to the two previous films, it is about scarce food supplies that bandits rob farmers in order to survive. Consequently, the farmers finally fight back by getting support. In order to get the money or grain of the "sun children" *(deti solntsa),* criminal bikers attack and kill some of them. The sun children are a harmless large family of midgets, former circus performers who live frugally on the edge of the desert. The group sends two negotiators to the next settlement, where they win over Strannik (cowboy hat and boots, dust coat), who puts together a group for them: drunken Bitnik, Krestnyj, the bar owner, and Merylin, the owner of a limousine. On the way to the settlement of the sun children they collect a motorcyclist and a Mongol with his bird of prey. Finally, they meet Ivan Taiga. These seven organize the defense by training the sun children to fight for themselves. The sun children and their helpers have to experience several waves of attack by the bikers, in which all defenders, except Strannik and the Mongol, die. Strannik visits the headquarters of the bikers twice, who work with a group in Nazi uniforms [fig. 23]. The biker boss sits decadently in a bathtub, and later dresses in a grim reaper costume. Strannik sees through his strategy, and he manages to kill the boss of the bikers on the second visit, thereby winning the battle for the colony of the sun children. Bitnik had already set fire to the castle-like building of the bikers and their allies.

Fig. 23: DIKIY VOSTOK – Nazi uniforms

In Dikiy vostok, the Western hero and his Eastern counterpart prevail against right-wing radicals that had become fashionable in Russia in the early 1990s. They also appeared in Nazi uniforms. The wild mixture of bikers and right-wing radicals binds the film together, which actually shows a "wild East".

After defeating their opponents, the surviving helpers go their own way again: Strannik in his cowboy outfit to the west, the Mongolian in his traditional clothing to the east. According to a signpost, it is 50 km to China. The two symbolize the West and the East, and the cultural and political options between which Russia has been, and is still seeking its collective identity since the 1990s. They also go to the genre's origins: a samurai film, and a Western.

If you want to enjoy Western elements in film in the post-Soviet decades, you could go straight to the Western or, if Soviet nostalgia is more compelling, watch the DVDs of the old Eastern.

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Alye maki Issyk-Kulya (Алые маки Иссык-Куля, "The red poppy on Issyk-Kul'"). Motion picture. USSR: Kirgizfil'm, 1972. Prem.: Apr. 16 1973. Director: Bolotbek Shamshiyev. Script based on Aleksandr Sytin' novel *Kontrabandisty Tjan'-Shanya:* Vasiliy Sokol/Juriy Sokol/Ashim Dzhakypbekov. Fotography: Viktor Osennikov. Music: Michail Marutaev. Cast: Suymenkul Chokmorov (Karabalta); Boris Khimichev (Kondrat Kokaryev); Amina Umurzakova (Kempir); Sovetbek Dzhumadylov (Bayzak, head of smugglers); Aliman Zhankorozova (Ayymzhan); Gunta Virkava (Olga); Yeleubai Umurzakov (Kalmat); Temirova (Kalycha) and others.
Color – 100 Min.

Beloe solntse pustyni (Белое солнце пустыни; "White Sun of the Desert") Motion picture. USSR: Lenfilm, 1969; prem. March 1970. Director: Vladimir Motyl. Script: Valentin Ezhov, Rustam Ibragimbekov. Fotography: Eduard Rozovskiy. Musik: Isaak Svarts, Song: Bulat Okudzhava. Cast: Anatoliy Kuznetsov (Fyodor Sukhov), Pavel Luspekayev (Pavel Vereshchagin), Spartak Mishulin

(Sayid), Kakhi Kavsadze (Abdulla), Raisa Kurkina (Nastasya, zhena Vereshchagina), Nikolai Godovikov (Petrukha), Tatyana Fedotova (Gyulchatay) and others.
Color – 8l Min.

Dikiy vostok (Дикий Восток, "The Wild East"). Motion picture. Kazakhstan: Studio Kino, 1993. Director and script: Rashid Nugmanov. Production and Cinematography: Murat Nugmanov. Music: Aleksandr Aksyonov. Cast: Aleksandr Aksyonov (Beatnik, a drunkard), Farkhad Amankulov (Mongol, a hunter), Konstantin Fyodorov (Strannik), Zhanna Isina (Marylin), Viacheslav Knizel (Skull), Konstantin Shamshurin (Godfather), Gennadij Shatunov (Iona), Pavel Shpakovskij (Old man), Aleksandr Sporykhin (Ivan Tajga) and others.
Color – 98 min.

Khleb, zoloto, nagan. (Хлеб, золото, наган, "Bread, Gold, Gun"). Motion picture. USSR: Gor'kij-Studio, 1980. Director: Samvel Gasparov. Script: Robert Svyatopolk-Mirsky. Cinematography: Aleksandr Machilskiy. Cast: Vladimir Borisov (Vladimir Gorbach, chekist), Olga Gasparova (Olga Sokolova, nanny), Yuriy Grigorev (Sasha Antonov, sailor), Oleg Korchikov (Stepan Zaytsev, station manager), Eduard Martsevich (Arkadyj Mezentsev) and others.
Color – 66 Min.

Konets atamana (Конец атамана; "The End of an Ataman"). Motion picture. USSR: Kazakhfilm, 1970. Director: Shaken Ajmanov. Script: Andrei Konchalovsky/Eduard Tropinin/Andrei Tarkovsky (not credited). Cinematography: Askhat Ashrapov. Musik: Erkegali Rakhmadiyev. Cast: Asanali Ashimov (Kasimkhan Chadyarov, chekist); Viktor Avdyushko (Nikolay Suvorov chekist); Gennadi Yudin (Yukhan); Yuriy Sarantsev (Nesterov); Kurvan Abdrasulov (Akhmed), Vladimir Gusev (Petr Krivenko, chekist-predatel'); Vladislav Strzhelchik (Ataman Dutov); Boris Ivanov (Iona); Nurmukhan Zhanturin (Ablaykhanov); Altynai Yeleuova (Saltanat) and others.
Color – 146 min.

Krasnye dyavolyata (Красные дьяволята, "Red little Devils"). Motion picture. USSR: Kinosekcija Narkomprosa Gruzii, 1923. Prem.: Sep. 25, 1923 Tbilissi). Director: Ivan Perestiani. Script: Ivan Perestiani/Pavel Blyakhin (novel). Cinematography: Aleksandr Digmelov. Cast: Pavel Esikovskij (Misha), Sofia Zhozeffi (Dunjasha), Kador Ben-Salim (Tom Dzhekson), Konstantin Davidovskij (Budyonnyi). Vladimir Sutyrin, (Machno), Nikolaj Nirov (Garbuzenko), Svetlana Luiks (Oksana), Jan Burinskij (Esaul), Zakarij Berishvili (Bandit), Georgij Makarov (Bandit), G. Leini (Petrov) and others.
b/w – 130 min.

Ognennye vyorsty (О'гненные вёрсты, "Miles of Fire"). Motion picture. USSR, 1957. Director: Simeon Samsonov. Script: Nikolai Figurovsky. Cinematography: Fyodor Dobronravov. Cast: Ivan Savkin (Grigorij Fedorovich Savragin, chekist), Margarita Volodina (Katerina [Katya] Gavrilovna, nurse), Ilarionovič Šelakov), Antonij Chodurskij (Schauspieler Konstantin Romanovič Orlinskij), Vladimir Kenigson (Sergei Bekleminshev, veterinary, AKA Viktor Michailovich, white gardist), Yevgenij Burenkov (Vereka, wagon driver), Viktor Stepanov (Proshka, wagon driver) and others.
Color – 85 min.

Sedmaya pulya (Седьмая пуля; "The Seventh Bullet"). Motion picture. USSR: Uzbekfil'm, 1972. Director: Ali Khamraev. Script: Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovskiy/Fridrikh Gorenshteyn. Cinematography: Aleksandr Pann. Musik: Rumil Vildanov. Cast: Suymenkul Chokmorov (Maksumov, Commander of a police department); Dilorom Kambarova (Aygul); Khamza Umarov (Khayrulla, Leader of the Basmachi), Nurmukhan Zhanturin (Kurbashi); Talgat Nigmatulin (Ismail, a shepherd); Bolot Beyshenaliev (deserter); Melis Abzalov (Basmach); Bakhtiyer Ikhtiyarov (Tsagbulla, deserter); Anvara Alimova (Izmail's mother); Inogam Adylov (Ismail's mate); Radzhab Adashev (deserter) and others.
Color – 79 min.

Svoy sredi chuzhikh, chuzhoy sredi svoikh (Свой среди чужих чужой среди своих; "At Home Among Strangers, a Stranger Among His Own"). Motion pictures. USSR, 1974. Director: Nikita Mikhalkov. Script: Nikita Mikhalkov/Eduard Volodarskiy. Cinematography: Pavel Lebeshev. Music: Eduard Artemev. Cast: Yuriy Bogatyryov (Yegor Shilov, chekist), Aleksandr Kaydanovskiy (rotmistr Lemke), Sergey Shakurov (Andrey Zabelin, komandir eskadrona), Aleksandr Porokhovshchikov (Nikolay Kungurov, chairman of CheKa), Anatoliy Solonitsyn (Vasiliy Sarychev, chairman of gubkom), Nikita Mikhalkov (Esaul Brylov, ataman), Aleksandr Kalyagin (Vanyukin, railwayman), Nikolaj Pastukhov (Lipyagin, chekist), Nikolay Zasukhin (Nikodimov, worker), Konstantin Raykin (Tatare Kayum, bandit), Aleksandr Yakovlev (shtabs-kapitan), Aleksandr Adabashyan (brylovskij prikhvosten), Vadim Vilskij (bandit) and others.
Color. b/w – 97 min.

Telokhranitel (Телохранитель, "The Bodyguard "). Motion pictures. USSR: Tadzhikfilm, 1979 (prem.: Dec. 02.12.1980). Director and Script: Ali Khamraev. Cinematography: Yuriy Klimenko/Leonid Kalashnikov/Vyacheslav Syomin. Music: Eduard Artemev. Cast: Aleksandr Kaydanovskiy (Mirzo; bodyguard); Anatoliy Solonitsyn (sultan-Nazar); Shavkat Abdusalamov (Fottabek); Gulcha Tashbaeva (Albash; Fottabek's wife); Nikolay Grinko (idem; Grenzkommandant);

Anvara Alimova (Zarangis; Nazar's daughter); G. Igamberdyev (Kula; Mirzo's brother); Saimurad Ziyaytdinov (Saifullo) and others.
Color – 90 min.

Volchya krov (Волчья кровь, "Woolf Blood"). Motion pictures. Russia: Studio-S, 1995. Director: Nikolay Stambula. Script: Leonid Monchinsky/Nikolay Stambula. Cinematography: Radik Askarov. Music: Vladimir Komarov. Cast: Yevgenij Sidikhin (Rodion Nikolayevich Dobrykh, Commander of a ChON), Aleksandr Kazakov (Yerofey Spriridonovich Serkov, Ataman of Cossacks), Sergey Garmash (Frol Fortov, Dobrykh's Deputy), Irbek Persayev (Batjur, helper), Elena Pavlichenko (Klavdiya Dobrykh, Rodion's wife), Natalya Yegorova (Lukerya, Frol's wife), Vladimir Kashpur (Yegor Shkarupa, peasant), Regimantas Adomaytis (Spiridon Ivanovich Serkov, Army Officer, Erofey's Father), Lyubomiras Laucevicius (Saveliy Romanovich Vysotskiy, auxiliary doctor, right wing SR), Michail Zhigalov (Lazar Zajtsev, Chairman of gubrevkom), Viktor Stepanov (Zubko, chairman of gubrev court), Viktor Avilov (Borovik, chairman of gub CheKa) and others.
Color – 84 Min.

Vstrecha u staroy mecheti (Встреча у старой мечети; "Meeting at the Old Mosque"). Motion pictures. USSR: Tadzhikfilm, 1969. Prem.: March 9, 1970. Director: Sukhbat Khamidov. Script: Oleg Osetinskiy. Cinematography: Zaur Dakhte. Music: Eduard Artemev. Cast: Khodzha Durdy Narliyev (Issat Karimov); Roman Chomyatov (Viktor Gusev); Aleksandra Zavyalova (Masha); Boris Bystrov (Voloda Golubev); Rasmi (Ramzech) Džabrailov (Photograph); Anvar Turaev (kinomekhanik); Karlo Sakandelidze (Markyor Kote) and others.
b/w – 87 min.

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This book explores two film cultures and how they interacted: the American and the Soviet. For the latter, Hollywood was not only a rival and at times an enemy, but also a model. In the 1930s, the Soviet film minister Shumiatskii even dreamed of a "Soviet Hollywood". Many Soviet films were inspired by American movies and Russians successfully made films in Hollywood.

ISBN 978-3-86956-490-6 Online