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Published in the USA  
 Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)  
 Has been issued since 2005  
 E-ISSN 1994-4195  
 2022. 18(3): 356-369

DOI: 10.13187/me.2022.3.356  
<https://me.cherkasgu.press>



## Soviet Cinema in the Mirror of *Crocodile* magazine

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### Abstract

The analysis of the materials published in *Crocodile* magazine about Soviet cinema shows that under censorship the magazine often published critical reviews of the entertainment genres films, directors of which were not acclaimed by the officials. In those rather rare cases, when the work of renowned film directors were subjected to feuilleton criticism (for example, *Russian souvenir* by G. Alexandrov), most likely this had been previously agreed on by authorities.

Meanwhile, the unauthorized *Crocodile's* attack on the “ideologically correct” Soviet film (the incident with the adventure film *Invisible Jan*) caused a negative reaction of the authorities and the corresponding reprimand of the magazine’s editorial board.

The *Crocodile's* choice of films for its satirical arrows was largely random, since very often artistically very weak, but very popular Soviet films remained unnoticed by the magazine, while films which either failed to collect a large box-office, or were of true artistic value, for some reason became the subject of caustic ridicule of *Crocodile's* feuilletonists and reviewers.

The era of perestroika spared the *Crocodile* from censorship, which significantly reflected on the topics of magazine feuilletons about Soviet cinema, but at the same time it marked the beginning of the crisis of both the satirical magazine, and the Soviet cinema.

**Keywords:** *Crocodile* magazine, Soviet cinema, criticism, review, feuilleton, film, cinema, USSR.

### 1. Introduction

Much work of film criticism issues (Andrew, 1976; 1984; Aristarco, 1951; Bazin, 1971; Bergan, 2006; Branigan, Buckland, 2015; Casetti, 1999; Gibson et al., 2000; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Metz, 1974; Villarejo, 2007, etc.) has been carried out, yet the specific subgenre of film reviews published in *Crocodile* magazine has not been given attention to by Russian or foreign film studies researchers. Most likely, this turned out to be due to the fact that cinematography as a whole occupied a rather modest place among the other materials of *Crocodile* magazine. And researchers were more attracted to the main – satirical and humorous side of this magazine, which, of course, was the main one.

### 2. Materials and methods

The satirical magazine *Crocodile* was chosen as the object of research, which (unlike other Soviet periodicals) considered films from a special critical and feuilleton angle. The subject of research is the evolution of articles about Soviet cinema in the magazine *Crocodile*. Methods include content analysis, comparative analysis, classification, analogy, induction and deduction, and generalization.

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### 3. Discussion and results

The satirical magazine *Crocodile*, published in the USSR and Russia from 1922 to 2008, not often addressed cinema issues, but when it did, it was done in a special perspective, significantly different from the traditional press, especially film magazines. Without seeking to be comprehensive in the analysis of the author's concepts and the peculiarities of the film language, the *Crocodile* journalists, as a rule, concentrated on ironic interpretation of the film plot and sarcastic conclusions regarding the ideological and/or artistic significance of the film under review.

It is well known that in the Soviet Union for many decades there was a kind of "untouchable caste" of cinematographers, whose films were to be only given positively appraising reviews. Therefore, *Crocodile* chose "minor" targets for its ironic reviews and articles about cinema – mainly films of entertainment genres made by film makers who were not on the list of authorities' favourites.

However, even in this case, the magazine sometimes "made mistakes". For example, the incident was caused by the article that dared to ridicule the military action film *Invisible Jan* (USSR, 1943), directed by I. Annensky and V. Petrov.

During the Great Patriotic War, the magazine *Crocodile* was not focused on cinema. However, sometimes the magazine still recalled the tenth muse with scathing notes. One of them was written in 1943 in connection with the release of the military adventure film *Invisible Jan*. by a well-known feuilletonist Evgeny Bermont (1906–1948).

Having assumed *Invisible Jan* a clumsy copy of American adventure films, E. Bermont acidly took it apart as a "collection of dilapidated cinematic clichés":

"Cliché No. 1. A handsome young man in a fashionable coat (actor E. Samoilov) unexpectedly receives an inheritance. However, not from a millionaire uncle, but from a patriot professor. The inheritance, of course, is poorer than the American one, as everything in this copy is poorer, dimmer and flatter than in the original.

Cliché No. 2. A young heir in an elegant racing car with an unknown, intriguing purpose sets off on a journey. Unfortunately, the goal is unknown only to the Committee on Cinematography and intrigues only the cast Garkusha-Shirshova and Alexeev-Meshiev, while an average film viewer solves the mystery earlier than Samoilov gets behind the wheel.

Cliché No. 3. A young eccentric girl (actress Garkusha-Shirshova) is being pursued by the police. The girl hides in the trunk of the young heir's car and goes with him to the unknown (for the actors and the Cinematography Committee!) journey. By the way, Garkusha-Shirshova, instead of performing the part of an ardent Czech patriot, is trying to act a kind of capricious billionaire's daughter from a Hollywood action movie. Of course, it's flattering to become Greta Garbo, but wanting is not enough, alas.

Cliché No. 4. The young heir and his Hollywood companion by the will of circumstances (and the poor fantasy of directors!) have to spend the night in one hotel room... Oh God! How many times have we already been present at the cinema ... in such a piquant atmosphere!

And finally, cliché No. 5. A frenzied car race is traditional for every adventure film. By the way, the car race in the *Invisible Jan* resembles the American one no more than Garkusha-Shirshova does resemble Greta Garbo..." (Bermont, 1943: 6).

The review concluded that in the Soviet press the film is "praised mainly for the fight against the German occupiers in the Czech Republic" (Bermont, 1943: 6), and not for any of its artistic merits, which are not present at all.

*Crocodile* issue with this article by E. Bermont was signed for publication on July 3, 1943, and on September 25, 1943, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party adopted a Resolution "On the errors of *Crocodile* magazine (Resolution..., 1943), where this publication was accused of serious mistakes on the topic of cinema. Firstly, the magazine got a caricature exposing the activities of the Committee on Cinematography in a negative light (it appeared on the pages of the magazine at the end of August 1943), and secondly, for the "cheeky and snarky review of the motion picture *Invisible Jan*, for which the executive editor of the magazine *Crocodile* G. Ryklin was severely reprimanded.

Four days later, the *Pravda* reacted very quickly to this criticism of *Crocodile* by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in an editorial article "On Idealism in Cinema". It pointed out that "*Invisible Jan* can be seen as an example of a meaningful, ideological film., very popular with the Soviet audience. The film correctly, in a fascinating way, tells about the heroic struggle of the Czechoslovak people against the Nazi

invaders. The Soviet press highly appreciated this useful, informative film. Readers are surprised by the film review, published in No. 24 of *Crocodile* magazine, in which Bermont in a cheeky and snarky form scolds a good Soviet film, its directors and artists. There is no need to say how wrong and erroneous *Crocodile's* publication ([About ..., 1943: 3](#)).

However, such criticism of *Crocodile's* film reviews by the authorities was, rather, the exception than the rule. Usually the magazine *Crocodile* chose an "allowed" target.

For example, during the "thaw" period, the magazine bravely smashed the film *Save Our Souls* (USSR, 1960) directed by A. Mishurin.

Director Alexey Mishurin (1912–1982) directed nine full-length feature films during his career, four of which (*The Young Years*, *Save Our Souls*, *The Queen of the Gas Station*, *The Ballet Star*) were included in the thousand box office leaders among Soviet films. The main hit of director A. Mishurin was, of course, *The Queen of the Gas Station*, however, *Save Our Souls* – a touching story about how a brave Soviet sailor saved a drowning rich Englishwoman – had also considerable success with the audience.

After the release of *Save Our Souls*, the *Crocodile* magazine published a devastating review under the catchy title "Save yourself, those who can!.." ([Vesenin, 1960: 11](#)).

It sarcastically stated that after the premiere of the film, "screenwriters will be ashamed to offer studios raw and gray, insipid and just boring comedy scripts. The directors will only start releasing funny, fervent, witty pictures full of inventive plot twists and brilliant life situations observations. There will be no place for clichés, flat jokes, or stilted heroes in new films!" ([Vesenin, 1960: 11](#)).

And then, by a rather witty ironic rendering of the plot of the film *Save Our Souls*, the *Crocodile's* feuilletonist E. Vesenin (1905–1980) presented to readers this quite naive film as a parody of cinematic stamps.

Meanwhile, E. Vesenin recalled that "the path of the script *Save Our Souls* was not strewn with roses. ... the action of the first shots took place in the Leningrad port, and the ship was called "Baltika". The script was clearly intended for the Lenfilm studio. But they did not understand the deep idea inherent in the script, and rejected it. The author was extremely discouraged by the failure. In despair, he grabbed his head and ... offered a script rejected in Leningrad, to the Kiev studio. Of course, the script underwent a radical alteration taking into account local conditions. ... It is not difficult to imagine what this scenario would look like if it were rejected in Kiev, and the author would have to offer his services to the Tbilisi studio. The hero would then be called Gaga, the heroine – Suliko, the ship would be called "Kazbek", and the captain, inviting the trainee Gotu Gagoberidze, would offer him, before leaving Batumi, to take a last look at the distant outlines of his homeland mountains. ... this amazing movie made an indelible impression on everyone who has seen it. So indelible that there is no need to watch it for the second time. After watching, the audience can not recover for a long time and, leaving the cinemas, repeat with one voice: – Save our souls! Save yourself, who can!.. And this is the best proof that the film has reached everyone's heart!" ([Vesenin, 1960: 11](#)).

*Crocodile* also bited the film *Ten Steps to the East* (USSR, 1961). The cameraman of this spy movie, German Lavrov (1929-1995), received a diploma for the best cinematography at the All-Union Film Festival, but in 1962 the *Crocodile* magazine published a devastating review signed by a "group of viewers", who strongly advised not to watch this film, because after watching it, "you will lose an interest in adventure for good. ... the film frames are flashing, as if in a kaleidoscope, one is more incomprehensible than the other. We do not undertake to retell the plot of the film, because even by collective efforts we could not understand what was going on and what it was about. ... the question remains, what was the fuss about? The perplexed viewer...is waiting for something else. But the film is already over" ([Gelfand et al., 1962: 4](#)).

An even more caustic review in *Crocodile* was given to the spy film *Aqualungs at the bottom* (USSR, 1966). Its director Evgeny Sherstobitov (1928-2008) directed 19 full-length feature films, mostly "ideologically sustained" and designed for the children's audience, but only three of them (*We Take Everything Over*, *Andromeda Nebula* and *Aqualungs at the Bottom*) managed to enter the thousand highest-grossing Soviet films.

Young viewers in the release year watched *Aqualungs at the Bottom* with moderate interest. The Soviet press reacted to this film, as, in fact, to most of E. Sherstobitov's film works, with some irony and sarcasm. However, this kind of criticism did not affect the director, and later he managed to direct 15 more films of a similar artistic level.

But still, the main critical blow to the *Aqualungs at the Bottom* was inflicted by the *Crocodile* magazine in a witty review entitled "But the spy is naked!" (Repinskaya, 1966: 6). The title of the article is an allusion to *The Emperor's New Clothes* by H.C. Andersen where the child cries out "But he hasn't got anything on!" The review mockingly pointed out that the authors of the film "the spy is provided with a special sign. He appears on the beach with such a particular face expression that it instantly becomes clear to the viewer: this man hates the sun, the sea, and people on the beach. The boys playing at the beach are the first to recognize the morally undressed spy. This is where the authors of the film make ... – a decisive step in the fight against clichés. Of course, one is expecting: now the border guards will catch a spy. Nothing like that! The nearby border outpost, as well as the organizations responsible for our peace, are just assisting a group of boys. ... Without these children, our intelligence officers, firstly, would not have known that the enemy had intruded. Secondly, they would not have been able to identify him. Thirdly, they would not have found the spy equipment hidden at the bottom of the sea. And, in the end, apparently, they would have let the enemy easily escape abroad" (Repinskaya, 1966: 6).

The writer and journalist Lev Belov (1919–1996), with noticeable pleasure, criticized in his feuilleton another unsuccessful detective – *The Man in Civilian Clothes*, which told a story about Soviet intelligence officers operating in Germany in 1936. The film's director Vasily Zhuravlev (1904–1987) directed 14 full-length feature films, five of them (*Space Flight*, *The Border is Locked*, *Fifteen-year-old Captain*, *Black Business* and *The Man in Plain Clothes*) entered the list of the thousand most popular Soviet films.

After watching *The Man in Plain Clothes*, it seemed to L. Belov that "the laurels of the creators of *Seventeen Moments of Spring* deprive many cinematographers of peaceful sleep. One after another, the films are being made, in which a pale shadow of a television Muller appears, then a ghostly likeness of the courageous Stirlitz-Isaev, then someone else of that kind. In a word, there has appeared a cliché. Hence it is clear why ... D. Bystroletov and V. Zhuravlev in their film *The Man in Plain Clothes*... tried to get away from the well-known patterns as much as they could. And it should be noted with all delight that they succeeded. Our next residents in Hitler's Berlin named Sergei and Vsevolod must gain access to important enemy secrets. Of course, it was possible to follow the example of Stirlitz in a complex mental game with the Gestapo. But is it worth replicating? It is much more original to show opponents as such fools that a baby can easily outsmart them. ... In a word, a convincing anti-cliché has been created, which may well embarrass *Seventeen Moments of Spring* and many other films about the actions of our intelligence officers behind enemy lines" (Belov, 1974: 8-9).

Another quite ordinary action film – *Suspicious* (USSR, 1978) – also became a convenient target for *Crocodile*: "I'm speechless and so happy for the hero. How artistically he opens one safe after another with the help of foreign lock picks! How stylish he plays cards with bankers, generals, and counterintelligence officers, and always wins! He seems to be not a spy, but a habitual criminal! Then one is starting to wonder, where, in fact, the hero got this experience? Who sent him to Chisinau and why? There are a lot of questions. The creators of the film must have felt themselves that there was obviously too much of "raspberry" in their film ... However, it's not easy to astonish a cinemagoer today. The audience have seen it all" (Kvitko, 1980: 8-9).

In the fall of 1980, the detective film *Private Person* was released on Soviet television screen. A sarcastic review of this film under the headline "The detective with pathos" followed in *Crocodile*. It featured the proven technology of devaluing the film's plot: "An investigator with the rank of colonel behaves on the whole normally: fights with a dozen hooligans-bodybuilders; conducts difficult but successful psychological duels with his colleague and former classmate, who stopped overworking and bought a symbolically canary-colored Lada car; the colonel jumps from car to car on the move; and in the finale of the film, as far as can be understood by some signs, leads a large military operation to detain a criminal. At the same time he is constantly thinking (this is necessary: criminals are not fools either, one of them, for example, regularly reads the *Literary Newspaper*). These thoughts completely exhaust the colonel, he hardly sees his wife, but he unravels all the action-packed intricacies ten moves ahead. ... And yet... we have learnt and loved this outwardly mocking, but inside a kind, gentle and sympathetic person. He is so astute, so accurately knows everything that has happened, is happening and will happen, so able to immediately get on the trail and develops such activity that local police officers become exhausted when fulfill his instructions. On their own, they would have been solving this case for a year, if at

all... It has been a long time since the image of a detective was written with such a sweet simplicity" (Ustenko, 1981: 11).

*Crocodile* did not appreciate the film adaptation of A.N. Tolstoy's novel *Hyperboloid of engineer Garin* directed by Leonid Kvinikhidze (1937–2018) called *The Collapse of engineer Garin* (USSR, 1973).

The Soviet press met the *Collapse of Engineer Garin* with hostility. Yet the most offensive and scathing article was published in *Crocodile* magazine.

Writer and critic Mikhail Kazovsky literally destroyed Leonid Kvinikhidze's film in all aspects, claiming that he recognized Garin "by the beard. And by the eyes. The actor O. Borisov's eyes sparkled so it was immediately obvious that he was playing a villain. Otherwise, Garin turned out to be somewhat pale. A crook — and that's it. I can't even believe that such a hyperboloid could be built. Even if it was someone else's idea. It would be better for him to work as an insurance agent or manage an amateur theatre. The beautiful Zoya Monroe was also quickly recognized by everyone. The artist N. Terentyeva looked very impressive. Especially in a pantsuit and with a cigarette in her mouth. However, in the novel she was not only a beauty, but also the personal secretary of the billionaire Rolling, had her own counterintelligence and robbed passenger ships. But the film viewer forgave her such trifles. Moreover, at this time the audience was trying hard to guess what character the actor V. Korzun was playing. Unexpectedly for everyone, it turned out that it was Rolling, who according to the novel should be fat and flabby. And in the film he is so handsome that one may feel sorry for him because everyone deceives him. Then the open and too familiar face of A. Belyavsky appeared on the screen in the role of Shelga. Shelga in his performance is very simple and straight, and that's right. Because when an honest, but not very smart hero defeats the mean, but very smart villain, it feels satisfying. Meanwhile, the film gradually unfolds. Garin is running around with his hyperboloid, looking like a big flute. Zoya whimpers charmingly, Rolling is putting his brave face. And the viewer didn't believe in anything. What was happening on the screen did not touch him. One by one, new heroes appeared. They resembled their book characters not in the least. ... In short, the wide television audiences were watching the film and were more and more perplexed: "Is this really called a "new reading of the book"? How can you read like that? From right to left, or what?" ... The film ended, and the viewer sat dejectedly in front of the TV. "Why? he thought. — Why was it necessary to spoil the book if nothing was said as a result? Again, I was mistaken for a round ignoramus who eats such a pate from Tolstoy's novel with pleasure! Tell me, what did this film give to me, besides four ruined nights?" (Kazovsky, 1973: 5).

In my opinion, Leonid Kvinikhidze's film was far from as simple and banal as it was presented in M. Kazovsky's feuilleton. And I can safely call the performance of Oleg Borisov (1929–1994) in this film an outstanding work in its carnival, semi-mystical interpretation (the author's review: Fedorov, 2012: 101-110).

*Crocodile* "sharpened its teeth" not only on detective stories and other action films, but also on films about sports.

The director Yuri Chulyukin (1929–1987), who had worked as a documentaries director until 1959 later became a successful comedy genre director (*Unyielding, Girls*), and this, in my opinion, was the best period of his work. In total, he directed 14 full-length feature films, four of which (*Unyielding, Girls, Royal Regatta, Let's Talk, Brother ...*) are on the list of the most popular Soviet films. *The Royal Regatta* is the last of the three most famous comedies by Yuri Chulyukin. After the triumph of *Unyielding and Girls*, a new breakthrough was expected from him, but the sports comedy *Royal Regatta's* box office turned out to be more modest.

The *Crocodile's* feuilletonist Andrei Nikolsky mockingly wrote that in *The Royal Regatta* (USSR, 1966), "scriptwriters, directors, cameramen, and artists are gripped by a single desire to make the film as best as possible. Maybe even a masterpiece. They spare no effort. The actors fall into the water more often than necessary. Even a representative of the clergy is included in the film for more laughter. One must agree that nothing more could have been done. The colors, of course, are great. The film tape is good quality now. And yet you leave the cinema a bit perplexed. If it was just a documentary about rowers-athletes, everything would be fine. Probably, it would be captivating. ... However, the creators of this picture ... position the movie as a comedy. And this only makes it worse. Because a comedy should be at least humorous, and there is no humor whatsoever, except for the fact that the characters fall into the water" (Nikolsky, 1967: 8).

A. Nikolsky wrote one more acid review to another comedy on a sports theme — *The Ball and the Field* (USSR, 1962): "the hero wants to sneak from work to go to a football match. He asks a friend to send a telegram that his mother-in-law has died. Employees receive the telegram and come to express sympathy. Some, of course, even offer to "lend" their mother-in-law...When jokes about mother-in-law migrate from the pages of pre-revolutionary humorous magazines to the modern screen, it can safely called a disaster" (Nikolsky, 1967: 8).

Journalist and film critic Vasily Sukharevich (1912–1983) mockingly wrote about his impression after watching a sports theme film *If You Leave* (USSR, 1977): in a cinema theatre, "with 803 seats, only 80 tickets were sold. In an excellent, but almost empty hall, in silence, without interference, I am appreciating the film ... A capable rower from a team of eight athletes was lured to another team but to row on a single boat. And no one understands why. The hero has no character, and his girlfriend is just a mask, a selfish one, and nothing more. It turns out that all the meanness, all the torment of treason are not demonstrated on screen. What remains? A dry statement of events" (Sukharevich, 1978: 4).

Film critic Felix Andreev, affiliated with the film studies journal *Soviet Screen*, also published in *Crocodile* a feuilleton article "How to make a sports film", where based on films *Eleven Hopes* (USSR, 1975) and *The Sprinter's Place is Vacant* (USSR, 1976) he sarcastically compiled a kind of unified framework of this kind of film production:

1. "Athletes are a young, unsophisticated people. All their actions are dictated by the apt expression: "Might goes before right!" To illustrate this thesis more clearly, the film characters laugh together at jokes like: "Here the English Queen's mother asks for your autograph. So go to this mom!" A little rough, of course, but the simplicity and unpretentiousness of the characters is obvious. It's not bad, also to make the film characters tongue-tied. ...

2. Physical injury. You can't build a conflict without injuries. They are based on the collisions of the heroes with life, with each other. After all, trauma inevitably entails hospital wards, visits to friends, intimate conversations about the meaning of sports. Besides, where else but in a hospital the character can find a young doctor necessary for a love theme?

3. Training and participation in important competitions. International matches are desirable. Because only they allow the film crew to reliably get used to the atmosphere of alien sports mores. And also, importantly, it allows you to introduce huge chunks of sports battles into the film, saving the screenwriter and director from puzzling efforts to develop the plot, from developing a logical line of behavior of the characters. ...

However, I think it makes no sense to continue the list of such framework components that have nothing to do with genuine sports life" (Andreev, 1976: 7).

*Crocodile* also criticized the works of talented filmmakers who were not among the "untouchables". So the director Nadezhda Kosheverova (1902–1990) staged 19 full-length feature films, 11 of which (*Arinka, Spring in Moscow, Cinderella, Cain XVIII, Honeymoon, Careful, Grandma!, Today is a new attraction, Old, Old Fairy Tale, Shadow, Tiger Tamer, Involuntary Driver*) are among the thousand highest-grossing Soviet films. Her circus comedy *Today is a new Attraction!* starring the legendary Faina Ranevskaya (1896–1984) was watched by almost twenty million viewers only in the first year of its release, but *Crocodile* clearly did not like the picture, and it ridiculed the film in its favorite genre of "open letter".

This time it was a letter from an imaginary group of tiger hunters: "Excited, we bought tickets to the comedy *Today is a New Attraction!* We expected to see a good movie, and our hopes were justified. We were shown magnificent nature shots of numerous wild animals. And the fact that these shots were made not against the background of the jungle, but in a noisy city, side by side with people — this only made the film more beautiful. Moreover, people did not interfere with the actions of the animals, who confidently went along the storyline to the end. ... But not everything is fine in this movie. Clearly alien, in our opinion, is the episode with the wonderful actress F. Ranevskaya. After all, she plays so great that you want to cry. Especially when she is fired from the post of the director of the circus. We don't know about you, *Crocodile*, but we realized that this piece was from a completely different, feature film, and an inexperienced film editor, mixed the tapes and glued this sequence to a sciencefiction film" (Kandybov et al., 1967: 6).

However, there was also a case when *Crocodile* attacked the director, who was considered a classic of Soviet comedy — Grigory Alexandrov (1903–1983). It happened during the "thaw" times, when in 1960 the long-awaited comedy by Grigory Alexandrov *Russian Souvenir* was released on the screens of the USSR.

Grigory Alexandrov made this political comedy hoping to regain the former glory of a Soviet film comedigrapher No. 1. That's what he wrote about the *Russian souvenir* in the magazine *Soviet Screen*: "Laughter is the brother of strength," says a folk proverb. And, indeed, the weak don't laugh. But for the people living in our country, strong, confident in its strength and rightness, laughter is not a threat. Not accidentally does a joke, humor invariably permeate the most responsible political speeches of the head of our state, N.S. Khrushchev. ... Our comedy should be not only funny, satirical, but also life-affirming, contagiously cheery, joyful. ... After all, the comedy is devoted to the problem of coexistence and friendship between peoples. The film shows the rapid flow of modern life, into which a group of foreigners traveling around the USSR unexpectedly finds themselves. And all their tendentious ideas about the Soviet Union, formed under the influence of the propaganda machine of the Cold War, collapse facing everyday reality, which they witness" (Alexandrov, 1960: 10).

However, the planned triumph did not happen: the Soviet "thaw" press, freed from its former reverence for the maestro, literally routed *Russian Souvenir*. The audience, attracted to the cinemas by the fame of the director and the cast, as a rule, left the cinemas disappointed too ... The story told by G. Alexandrov was perceived as brightly colored cardboard, and the foreigners looked too caricatured.

*Crocodile* responded to the premier of the film with a really terrible review signed with the pseudonym "Kuzma Bluzhdayuschy-Maskin, Doctor of Cinematographic Sciences." Now it is difficult to detect who was hiding behind it, but there undoubtedly the review reflected the editorial position.

The review used a traditional *Crocodile's* technique: an ironic retelling of the film's plot: "By the powerful means of humor, satire, buffoonery, clowning and melodrama, the film tells us about an extraordinary tour of a group of foreign tourists. ... Having given the characters hard time in the very beginning, the authors continued leading them along the wrong path. On their own or all together, tourists drown and float throughout the film, fall down from steep mountains and conquer them, travel on rafts or in the bucket of a moving excavator, hide inside animal skins and even from time to time ride on each other. They are washed by the rains, showered with dust. Dump trucks dump them out of the body at full speed when they are awake, and bears, unequivocally licking their chops, crawl from under their beds when they sleep. The iron hand of the director inexorably pushes them into the steam room of the Siberian bath, then onto the rocket launch station, then into the mechanism of the clock of the Spasskaya Tower. But this is not all. Among all these fantastic rotations, the foreign tourists still manage to diligently spy on each other, insidiously put each other to sleep, exchange ringing slaps in the face, and, finally, they reach the point where they beat their fellow traveler — Dr. Adams — with their head against one of the Kremlin bells. The Doctor survives. The bell, too. But not every spectator. ...And the audience really laughs. Laughs at oneself for having queued up for a cinema ticket. ... It remains a mystery how, after all, the foreign tourists managed to find time for a real acquaintance with socialism, while the storyline was all filled with dates with bears and lovers, lightning-fast crossings and dizzying flights. And Siberian new buildings and Moscow avenues did flash somewhere on the turns, only flashed. And only on turns" (Bluzhdayuschy-Maskin, 1960: 7).

As we can see from the text of the review, G. Alexandrov was mainly reproached for the fact that he failed to properly present the achievements of the socialist system in *Russian Souvenir* and got too carried away with tricks and film gags.

Today, *Russian Souvenir* is perceived as a curious testimony of the famous director's attempt to fit into a new political and socio-cultural situation, relying on the stereotypes of the Cold War and his previous cinematic achievements.

*Crocodile* was still less merciless to comedies of less famous film directors.

For example, the journalist, screenwriter and cartoonist Svyatoslav Spassky (1926–2005) wrote very sharply about the comedy *Take Care of Men* (USSR, 1983) directed by A. Sery (1927–1987).

The director with a difficult fate – Alexander Sery – directed only five films (*Shot in the Fog*, *Foreigner*, *Gentlemen of Fortune*, *A Bargain for a Bargain*, *Take Care of Men*), but all of them made it into the list of the top 1000 Soviet films.

Some hold the opinion that Alexander Sery was actually the director of one hit film – *Gentlemen of Fortune*, but he directed at least two more successful box-office comedies – *The Foreigner* (1965) and *A Bargain for a Bargain* (1977). Paradoxically, the comedies director's

life was really dramatic: he served time in prison for a fight, was wounded by a harpoon, fell seriously ill, and in 1987, being deeply depressed, killed himself...

The reviewer S. Spassky ironically laughed at the fact that in the comedy *Take Care of Men* the main character "Vovik is a nonsense engineer of some kind of, humble to say, sewing machines, earning one hundred and twenty rubles a month. And, of course, Marfa is the deputy director of a large research institute that is creating something large-scale, extremely useful to the country, although the institute's employees are frankly idling, gossiping, showing off outfits, flirting, trying to get deficit products during working hours. Familiar surroundings. Isn't it the same one we've already seen in *Office Romance*? Thus the conflict has arisen: the discrepancy of the married couple in all aspects, family and social status. A timid Vovik is not a match for the brilliant Marfa. And Marfa does not satisfy her husband, because she is too business-like to create family comfort and delicious soups. ... "According to the laws of the comedy genre," probably the author of the script Marina Akopova and the director Alexander Sery will answer. — To make people laugh." OK. But then again, why is the film called so one-sided: "Take care of men"? What about women? And the children? And the old people? Wouldn't it be more accurate to call it: "Take care of the viewer!?" (Spassky, 1983: 10).

In the same year, the same S. Spassky attacked another comedy in *Crocodile*. This time it was the film *Quarantine* (USSR, 1983) by I. Frez.

Ilya Frez (1909–1994) directed 16 films, 8 of which (*The Elephant and the Rope, First-grader, Vasek Trubachev and his Friends, Trubachev's Squad is Fighting, I loved You ...*, *The Adventures of the Yellow Suitcase, We Didn't Learn That, Could One Imagine?*) are included in the thousand most popular Soviet films.

The comedy "Quarantine" is a story about a five-year-old girl who, due to quarantine in kindergarten and busy parents and grandparents, has to spend time with strangers. From under the anti-pedagogical tutelage of a student janitor the girl runs away to the care of an eccentric circus cashier. From a clothes designer, who systematically starves herself, – to a strange hermit architect. And everyone is busy, busy... Mom's experimental mice need to give birth. Grandmother is impatiently being waited for by a long-time admirer. The grandfather-writer dedicates his time to his few readers. Her great-grandfather-academician is busy with his staff. Her great-grandmother is teaching foreign students...

The director managed to find a charming performer of the leading role. She has a childish naive spontaneity, yet an extraordinary for her age wit. In my opinion, the dreams of the little character are the successful creative gain of the film. Frankly parody-like, evoking somewhat unexpected associations with Fellini films, they are made with a mischievous fantasy. For example: an aspiring writer (grandfather) ingratiatingly holds out the pages of his manuscript to... Leo Tolstoy! The latter, frowning, casting a discontented glance at the page, throws it away and majestically continues on his way... In short, the authors offer us a kaleidoscope of events, a lot of chases and tricks, funny songs by Alexey Rybnikov and quite a serious moral about how important it is to always find the time to raise your own child.

However, Svyatoslav Spassky's judgment of *Quarantine* was sharply negative. Having ironically rendered the storyline, S. Spassky moved on to the main goal of his feuilleton: "The most serious conflict, perhaps, is between the great-grandfather and the great-grandmother – he smokes secretly from her!... great-grandmother throws her husband's cigarettes from the balcony. A passerby picks up a pack, stops: maybe something else will fall? Hopes are justified – a lighter falls right into his hands. Then he greedily puts his palms together and waits. As a result, he catches a weighty drop of feces of a flying crow (the viewer has the pleasure of seeing this drop in close-up). Moral: don't expect anything to come free! Perhaps a scene with a girl who sitting on a potty (and this is shown twice), will cause tender emotion in some viewers, but the described episode with a crow is not able to cause anything but disgust. A drop of excrement in a barrel of syrup..." (Spassky, 1983: 5).

*Crocodile's* review by Victoria Tubelskaya on R. Vasilevsky's rather weak comedy *Give us the Men!* was written much more wittily: "What would you think if you were offered to see a film called *Give us the Men!*? Probably, you would have thought, like I have, that this is a frivolous box-office film, French or Italian, with countless adulteries and beauties. Very intrigued, I got ready to have fun. Imagine my surprise when it turned out that the film was about the pioneers of the sixth grade. But I was not at all upset: being an experienced spectator, I immediately determined from the double toe loop, brilliantly performed at the skating rink by the counselor Igor, disguised as an old

woman, that this was a comedy. Fine, I am going to have fun! But actually I didn't. The further I was watching, the more I was overcome with envy, and envy does not mix with laughter. Remembering my school years, I desperately envied the completely rosy life of screen sixth graders: they did not do homework, they had no responsibilities and no troubles. ... I'm not sure if Igor will become a teacher. Apart from the fact that he can make a double toe loop and sing, nothing is known about him. Nor do the viewers learn about the other characters — both children and adults. They somehow do not have character. One thing for sure: the comedy is not hilarious. Fact!" (Tubelskaya, 1986: 9).

Much less frequent than about films of entertainment genres, the magazine *Crocodile* wrote about dramas.

In 1963, the USSR released the film of the then not yet so famous George Danelia *The Way to the Wharf* with Boris Andreev in the title role. The audience took this picture quite warmly, but the *Crocodile* magazine was dissatisfied with the finale of this movie and published a feuilleton (the author of which hid under the pseudonym "Reviewer") under the meaningful title "The Bell is tolling the alarm": "In a classical drama, everything was simple. Your relatives and neighbors have harassed you — take poison and die like Romeo. ... The dramas of our days are no less bloody. However, unlike Shakespeare, modern authors kill their characters not just like that — but at a high intellectual level, with an obligatory dose of philosophical fog. You won't even understand right away: who is who... In general, Shakespeare would not have been able to baffle the audience with the dramatic finale in vague innuendos. The classic was simpler. The author of the script V. Konetsky and the director G. Danelia left him far behind. *The Way to the Wharf* shows us not the first case of a dashing plot twist at the end of the work. But, apparently, the matter has gone far enough if the mentioned film ending caused confusion even among experienced film critics" (Reviewer, 1963: 2). As we can see, this article is based on just a petty quibble about the open ending of the film.

Director Yuri Egorov (1920–1982) directed 14 full-length feature films, eight of which (*A Simple Story, Volunteers, Freezing Sea, Fathers and Grandfathers, One Day, 20 years later, If You're Right, A Man from the Other Side, They were the First Ones*) belong to the thousand highest-grossing Soviet films.

Yuri Egorov's films of the 1950s – 1960s generally fit well into the thaw's context and never disappointed the audience's expectations. The fact that they did not reach the box office numbers of Nikolai Moskalenko's films (1926–1974), can be explained by the fact that the films of Yuri Egorov (especially the ones made in the 1960s) were more subtle, and more complicated.

The "thaw" period drama *If You're Right...* (USSR, 1964) with a wonderful duet by Stanislav Lyubshin and Zhanna Bolotova captivated the audience with the sincerity of its intonation. Today, alas, this quiet film is rarely remembered, although it has its own fans.

However, in the year of the film release, it was ridiculed in the *Crocodile* magazine. The author of the article, hiding behind the pseudonym "Reviewer", used a characteristic manipulative technique of an erratic, mind-numbing retelling of the storyline: "Alyosha Goncharov is a simple cute guy. And at the same time very active. He combines studying and work. He works and studies. During the day, he goes fixes telephones at people's homes. And in the evening he studies at the university. Alyosha Goncharov walked, worked, repaired phones and fell in love with one girl. Her name is Galya. Also such a simple and pretty girl. But not so active. Because she only works. As a technician-engineer. And she does not study. Once upon a time Alyosha had a problem with one client. At first, the client treated Alyosha badly. Then Alyosha reacted badly. To the client. And to his coworkers. And even to Galya. In despair, he decided to fix televisions. Then, however, he pulled himself together. Realized. Came to Galya. But she wasn't at home" (Reviewer, 1964: 12), etc. And then *Crocodile's* feuilletonist tried to convince readers that the film authors should have made a short film instead of the full-length feature movie.

Director Theodor Wolfovich (1923–2004) made only eight films during his career, four of which (*The Last Inch, Tough Nut, Comrade General, The Procession of Golden Beasts*) were very popular at the time.

In 1963, T. Wolfovich's film 1, *Newton Street* was released, which featured the problems that arise in the lives of young scientists.

Film critic B. Sukharevsky (the pseudonym of a film critic, journalist and poet Victor Orlov, 1929–1972) published a negative review of the film, but a graduate student of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the RSFSR I. Logvinov (by the way, a future Ed.D. and a corresponding

member of the Russian Academy of Education) wrote an indignant letter to the *Crocodile* editors, in which he accused the film critic of the false interpretation of the film.

An open letter by B. Sukharevsky followed, in which he once again justified his negative attitude to the work of Theodor Wolfovich: "Dear Comrade I. Logvinov! I am writing to you because there is a conflict between us. I didn't like the film *1 Newton Street*, and you did. ... the film is made deliberately loud, with a clear desire for originality for the sake of originality. In the pretentiousness of the scenario twists and the director's work, in the tasteless "modernist" design. As a result, a certain way of life, which could become both interesting, and nice, and deep, became simply unpleasant. ... This is the essence of our disagreement with you, ... dear comrade graduate student" (Sukharevsky, 1964: 5).

*Crocodile* also attacked the drama directed by Frunze Dovlatyan (1927–1997) *Hello, it's me!* (USSR, 1966), which was strongly supported by the Soviet film press. *Crocodile* magazine however published a caustic feuilleton in 1966:

"A lot has already been written about the movie *Hello, it's me!*, and critics are extremely unanimous in their praise. They praise the script, the direction, the actors' performance, and the cameraman's work. If memory serves me correctly, only the work of the costume designers' was not praised. However, it seems to me that the reviewers inexcusably missed one important point that allows us to call a film a new word in cinema. I am sure that *Hello, it's me!* is the first successful experience of combining a feature film with a scientific documentary. Judge for yourself: almost half of the movie the characters walk. They walk in the literal sense of the word, that is, they move around the screen in an upright position, alternately exposing their right and left legs. ... Professional critics write about the moral purity of the characters, about loyalty, about poetry, about the twist, which is called the dance of youth, but not a word do they write about the main activity of the characters - walking! Yet, the audience follows the endless walking of the heroes with intense attention! I myself heard people whispering in the hall: "Look, here he goes again! Now he will walk for five minutes!". ... In fairness, it should be added that some viewers, indifferent to the walking method of movement on the screen, complained about the prolonged duration of this two-part film. Take away the endless walking of heroes, they say, and the film would turn from a two-part into a one-part. For them, perhaps, such logic is reasonable, especially since the ticket would cost twice as cheap" (Khodok, 1966: 14).

As one can see, having put aside arguments about the artistic merits of the film *Hello, it's me!*, the author of the feuilleton, in fact, found fault only with its duration, although he could easily find examples of films that are really weak in artistic aspects.

In fact, few positive reviews of films appeared in *Crocodile*, too. For example, a wonderful television film directed by M. Kozakov *Pokrovsky Gate* (USSR, 1982).

As a director, Mikhail Kozakov (1934-2011) often worked on television, he made 25 TV films and theatre plays. The most popular of them were *Nameless Star* and *Pokrovsky Gate*.

M. Kozakov's comedy *Pokrovsky Gate* has long become iconic, and a lot of characters' phrases have become popular sayings. But "in the beginning, the film was met with fury by the then TV-head Lapin, whose power was reinforced by his friendship with Brezhnev: "You and Zorin cannot say: "Down with the red Kremlin!" — and you make such pictures! It's disgusting!.. This is some kind of Zoshchenko!" (Rassadin, 2007).

In the year of the release of *Pokrovsky Gate* on TV screens, journalist Mikhail Kazovsky wrote for *Crocodile* that "Zorin and Kozakov's old house and an old apartment is a kind of a metaphor, it's a symbol of morals that are going away forever: philistinism, lack of spirituality, lack of will, inertia... At the same time, the 50s are the time of the youth of the film's authors, and a powerful lyrical line breaks into the comedy, line of memories, it is voiced by Bulat Okudzhava's songs, by the narrator's voice over... That is why the authors look into the past neither mockingly, nor nostalgically, but with cheerful irony, seeing a lonely tired man in an alcoholic and amateur song writer, and a confused woman in a middle-aged lady acting militantly possessive about her ex-husband. The combination of funny and sad, comedic and lyrical, laughter and tears helps to depict the film characters alive, juicy, made of flesh and blood. And, of course, as true artists, the authors do not divide the characters into negative and positive. ... The whole cast is wonderful ... — they act accurately, intelligently, and convincingly" (Kazovsky, 1983: 11).

With the advent of perestroika, *Crocodile* gradually began to get rid of censorship prohibitions and became much sharper. This, of course, also applied to its film reviews.

Thus in January 1991, an article by journalist Andrei Vavra was published, dedicated to the sexual revolution that overtook Soviet cinema with understandable delay.

A. Vavra began his feuilleton with a phrase that was quite hackneyed in the Soviet press of those years: "My God, how fast time flies! After all, not so long ago, the participant of the teleconference, I remember, decisively cut off her foreign opponents with a proud statement: "We don't have sex!". Well, if we don't, we don't. But only a couple of years have passed, and the era of erotic revelry, the sexual revolution is already here. Art reflects that. In any case, our theatre and film makers willingly switched from exposing the dark sides of life to exposing pretty actresses" (Vavra, 1991: 10).

And then the summary of I. Vasilev's film *Veniks. Floor brushes* (USSR, 1991) follows: "The author was going to entertain the viewer, tired of the screen "darkness". Moreover, he also meant somewhat sex education. Therefore, all the characters — a young artist, a rich heiress, her mother and father with his lover, an artist's mistress, a young maid — do not so much spend time in formal conversations over a cup of coffee, as they arrange their love affairs. A comedy, as you know, is a dynamic genre. Therefore, in Vasilev's film, the characters now and then hide in the closet or under the sofa, fall into bed, kick their legs, run upstairs, hug and kiss. At the same time, one or the other girl casually takes off various small clothes items. ... And in general, judging by his previous film — *Help, Brothers!*, director Vasilev only maintains his creative credo: if young pretty actresses act in a film, then let them actively engage in erotic education of the Soviet viewer! In general, this is a typical modern entertainment movie: directors want to film nudes, actresses don't particularly mind" (Vavra, 1991: 10).

Further, A. Vavra told the *Crocodile* readers about how the actress L. Velezheva, who starred in the film, protested about the filming of erotic scenes with the participation of an anonymous stand-in without telling her. And as a result, he came to the conclusion "about the mass procession of naked ladies on the screens": "Of course, I understand: freedom, democracy, emancipation. But this march began to acquire a very deliberate character. ... And won't it happen as a result that an actress who does not agree to act naked will soon have no place at all in Soviet cinema?" (Vavra, 1991: 10).

Time has shown that V. Vavra was pretty hasty with his forecast: the sexual film wave in the USSR came to naught pretty quickly. As, however, the total number of Soviet films made in the 1990s has sharply decreased. The *Crocodile's* circulation was also steadily falling. In January 1991, the circulation of the magazine was 2.8 million copies, in January 1993 — 0.5 million copies, in January 1999 — 34 thousand copies...

*Crocodile* still managed to barely survive until 2008, when, with a circulation of 20 thousand copies, it finally ceased to exist due to its obvious unprofitability.

#### 4. Conclusion

The analysis of the materials published in *Crocodile* about Soviet films showed that under conditions of strict censorship, the magazine mostly wrote critically about films of entertainment genres, directors of which were not acclaimed by the officials. In those rather rare cases, when the work of renowned film directors were subjected to feuilleton criticism (for example, *Russian souvenir* by G. Aleksandrov), most likely this had been previously agreed on by authorities.

Meanwhile, the unauthorized *Crocodile's* attack on the "ideologically correct" Soviet film (the incident with the adventure film *Invisible Jan*) caused a negative reaction of the authorities and the corresponding reprimand of the magazine's editorial board.

The *Crocodile's* choice of films for its satirical arrows was largely random, since very often artistically very weak, but very popular Soviet films remained unnoticed by the magazine, while films which either failed to collect a large box-office, or were of true artistic value, for some reason became the subject of caustic ridicule of *Crocodile's* feuilletonists and reviewers.

The era of perestroika spared the *Crocodile* from censorship, which significantly reflected on the topics of magazine feuilletons about Soviet cinema, but at the same time it marked the beginning of the crisis of both the satirical magazine, and the Soviet cinema.

#### 5. Acknowledgements

This article was written with the financial support of the scholarship of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation in 2022. The head of the project "Soviet Cinema in the mirror of the *Crocodile* magazine" is Professor A.V. Fedorov.

## Filmography

1, *Newton Street*. USSR, 1963. Directed by T. Wolfowich. Scriptwriters T. Wolfowich, E. Radzinsky. Actors: Y. Ilyenko, L. Kadochnikova, E. Friedman, N. Kryukov and others.

*Ball and the Field*. USSR, 1962. Directed by K. Mgeladze. Scriptwriters: S. Zhgenti, K. Mgeladze (based on the story "The Fan" by E. Berdzenishvili). Actors: I. Khvichiya, V. Ninua, G. Talakvadze and others.

*Collapse of Engineer Garin*. USSR, 1973. Directed by L. Kvinikhidze. Scriptwriter S. Potepalov (based on the novel "Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin" by A. Tolstoy). Actors: O. Borisov, N. Terentyeva, A. Belyavsky, V. Korzun, G. Sayfullin, M. Volkov, V. Tatosov, E. Kopelyan, E. Romanov, A. Kaidanovsky, A. Masiulis, V. Nikulin and others. Premiere on TV: 15 October 1973.

*Diving on the Bottom*. USSR, 1966. Directed and written by E. Sherstobitov. Actors: A. Barsov, T. Klyueva, R. Sabirov, V. Bedunkevich, G. Yukhtin, L. Perfilov and others. 15 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Eleven Hopes*. USSR, 1975. Directed by V. Sadovsky. Scriptwriters: V. Ezhov, V. Sadovsky. Actors: A. Papanov, L. Virolainen, Y. Demich, A. Goloborodko, B. Shcherbakov, E. Leonov-Gladyshv, N. Ozerov, M. Vodyanoy, I. Gorbachev and others.

*Invisible Jan*. USSR, 1943. Directed by I. Annensky and V. Petrov. Scriptwriters O. Ziv, A. Stolper. Actors: E. Samoilov, E. Gorkusha, Y. Alexeyev-Meshiev and others. 15 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Give us men!* USSR, 1985. Directed by R. Vasilevsky. Scriptwriter M. Dymov. Actors: B. Shuvalov, V. Fedorov, A. Yarygin, A. Lazarev and others.

*Hello, It's Me!* USSR, 1966. Directed by F. Dovlatyan. Scriptwriter A. Agababov. Actors: A. Dzhigarkhanyan, R. Bykov, N. Fateeva, M. Terekhova, F. Dovlatyan and others. 10 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*If You Are Right...* USSR, 1964. Directed by Y. Egorov. Scriptwriters E. Braginsky, Y. Egorov. Actors: S. Lyubshin, J. Bolotova, A. Krasnopolsky, G. Sokolova, G. Sayfullin and others. 20.7 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*If You Go*. USSR, 1977. Directed by N. Litus and V. Shunko. Scriptwriters: H. Aronov, Y. Rybchinsky. Actors: I. Shkurin, T. Trach, I. Gorbachev, B. Khimichev and others.

*Man in Plainclothes*. USSR, 1973. Directed by V. Zhuravlev. Scriptwriters: D. Bystroletov, V. Zhuravlev. Actors: J. Budraitis, N. Gritsenko, I. Skobtseva, L. Khityaeva, V. Druzhnikov, A. Masiulis, V. Kenigson and others. 26.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Place of the Sprinter is Vacant*. USSR, 1976. Directed by A. Ivanov. Scriptwriter S. Tokarev. Actors: S. Komarov, B. Bachurin, P. Butkevich, S. Stankevich, L. Perfilov and others.

*Pokrovsky Gate*. USSR, 1982. Directed by M. Kozakov. Scriptwriter L. Zorin (based on his own play of the same name). Actors: O. Menshikov, L. Bronevoy, I. Ulyanova, V. Bortsov, A. Ravikovich, E. Koreneva, S. Pilyavskaya, T. Dogileva, E. Morgunov and others. TV premiere: 11 February 1983.

*Private Person*. USSR, 1980. Directed by A. Proshkin. Scriptwriter I. Mengeritsky. Actors: A. Kuznetsov, T. Tashkova, G. Polskikh, L. Merzin, N. Denisov, G. Yukhtin, B. Tokarev and others. TV premiere: 15.11.1980.

*Quarantine*. USSR, 1983. Directed by I. Frez. Scriptwriter G. Shcherbakova. Actors: A. Kremer, E. Simonova, Y. Duvanov, S. Nemolyaeva, Y. Bogatyryov, T. Peltzer, P. Kadochnikov, L. Fedoseeva-Shukshina, E. Solovey, N. Arkhipova, V. Antonik, A. Pashutin, E. Karelsky and others.

*Royal Regatta*. USSR, 1966. Directed by Y. Chulyukin. Scriptwriters: B. Vasilyev, K. Rapoport, S. Listov. Actors: N. Kustinskaya, V. Smirnitsky, A. Gruzinsky and others. 15 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Russian Souvenir*. USSR, 1960. Directed and written by G. Alexandrov. Actors: L. Orlova, A. Popov, P. Kadochnikov, E. Garin, E. Bystritskaya, V. Gaft and others. 16 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Save Our Souls*. USSR, 1960. Directed by A. Mishurin. Scriptwriter E. Pomeschchikov. Actors: A. Belyavsky, L. Fedoseyeva-Shukshina, V. Dobrovolsky, M. Orlov, S. Martinson and others. 16 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Suspicious*. USSR, 1978. Directed by M. Badikyanu. Scriptwriters M. Badikyanu, A. Grigoryan (based on the novel "The Mister from Istanbul" by Kh.-M. Muguev). Actors:

R. Nakhapetov, S. Toma, B. Ivanov, V. Nikulin, V. Glagoleva, B. Brondukov, Y. Medvedev, R. Gladunko and others.

*Take Care of Men.* USSR, 1983. Directed by A. Sery. Scriptwriter M. Akopova. Actors: N. Ruslanova, L. Kuravlev, A. Vokach, A. Lazarev, N. Selezneva, R. Markova, N. Agapova and others. 16.1 million viewers in its first year.

*Ten Steps to the East.* USSR, 1961. Directed by H. Agakhanov and V. Zak. Scriptwriters A. Abramov, M. Pismannik. Actors: A. Dzhaliev, A. Kulmamedov, Y. Markov, F. Yavorsky and others.

*Today, a New Attraction.* USSR, 1966. Directed by N. Kosheverova, A. Dudko. Scriptwriters: Y. Dunsky, V. Frid (based on a story by K. Konstantinovskiy). Actors: M. Polbentseva, O. Koberidze, F. Ranevskaya, I. Gorbachev, M. Gluzsky and others. 18.8 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Way to the Wharf.* USSR, 1962. Directed by G. Daneliya. Scriptwriter V. Konetsky (on his own story). Actors: B. Andreev, O. Jakov, L. Sokolova, A. Metelkin, V. Nikulin, B. Oya, G. Vitsin and others. 16.4 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration.

*Veniks. Floor brushes.* USSR, 1991. Directed and written by I. Vassilev (based on a farce by C. Mannier). Actors: E. Redko, O. Zhulina, S. Nemolyaeva, A. Lazarev, E. Durova, G. Milliar, L. Velezheva and others.

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