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Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2024. 20(1): 40-95

DOI: 10.13187/me.2024.1.40

<https://me.cherkasgu.press>



Western Cinema on the Pages of the *Soviet Screen* Magazine (1969–1985): Reviews of Western Films

Alexander Fedorov ^a, Anastasia Levitskaya ^{b, *}, Andrei Novikov ^c

^a Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

^b Taganrog Institute of Management and Economics, Russian Federation

^c The Kosygin State University of Russia, Russian Federation

Abstract

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

Of the wide range of Hollywood and British films, Soviet film distribution in the period we analyzed included mainly films with an acute social message, critically showing Western realities. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that these films received maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*; articles by Soviet film critics emphasized the “progressive anti-bourgeois significance” of these films. It is very significant that, even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be completely far from politics, the reviewers of *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches.

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in *Soviet Screen*, there also appeared texts that were devoid of a direct appeal to politics. “Apoliticalism” was especially evident in reviews devoted to film adaptations of classical works, which often took place in the 19th century and earlier.

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were released into Soviet distribution in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s quite rarely. And here, *Soviet Screen* reviewers often sought to distance themselves from edifying political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of this or that entertaining film.

In Italian and French cinema, the *Soviet Screen* consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.” Of course, *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Francois Truffaut and other outstanding masters of cinema. But here, too, the magazine’s reviewers assessed their work mainly within the framework of Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

The sharp rejection of *Soviet Screen* reviewers was often caused by entertainment films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo, which were reproached for promoting “supermanhood” and violence. The *Soviet Screen*’s reviews of famous French and Italian comedies were more benevolent, but overall rather skeptical.

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than film distribution. And year after year, the editors of the magazine selected examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism: films of an anti-

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: a.levitskaya@tmei.ru (A. Levitskaya)

communist and anti-Soviet orientation, as well as films “glorifying the American military” and “whitewashing the Nazis.”

The openly entertaining part of Western film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine mainly in a sharply negative light.

Soviet Screen did not ignore the topic of film sex, popular in the West in the 1970s. Of course, articles were published about films of this kind, condemning the “decomposition of the morals of bourgeois society.”

In articles in *Soviet Screen* about international film festivals and the current repertoire of Western national cinemas and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, there was also a clear division of Western cinema into “progressive” and “bourgeois”.

Keywords: *Soviet Screen* magazine, Western cinema, film criticism, ideology, politics, reviews, articles.

1. Introduction

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the “stagnant” period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

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2. Materials and methods

The research methodology consists of key philosophical provisions on the connection, interdependence and integrity of the phenomena of reality, the unity of the historical and the social

in cognition; scientific, film studies, sociocultural, culturological, hermeneutical, semiotic approaches proposed in the works of leading scientists (Aronson, 2003; Bakhtin, 1996; Balazs, 1935; Bibler, 1990; Casetti, 1999; Demin, 1966; Eco, 1976; Eisenstein, 1964; Gledhill, Williams, 2000; Hess, 1997; Hill, Gibson, 1998; Khrenov, 2006; 2011; Kuleshov, 1987; Lotman, 1973; 1992; 1994; Mast, Cohen 1985; Razlogov, 1984; Sokolov, 2010; Stam, 2000; Villarejo, 2007 and others).

The project is based on a research content approach (identifying the content of the process under study, taking into account the totality of its elements, the interaction between them, their nature, turning to facts, analyzing and synthesizing theoretical conclusions, etc.), on a historical approach-consideration of the concrete historical development of the declared theme of the project.

Research methods: complex content analysis, comparative interdisciplinary analysis, methods of theoretical research: classification, comparison, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization; methods of empirical research: collection of information related to the subject of the project, comparative-historical and hermeneutic methods.

3. Discussion and results

Reviews of Western films, which in the period of the 1970s – 1985 were in Soviet film distribution and/or were shown on television in the USSR

As before, the *Soviet Screen* willingly and very positively reviewed Stanley Kramer's (1913-2001) films that were regularly released: *Bless the Beasts & Children* (USA, 1971) (Lvov, 1971: 14-15; Shcherbakov, 1971), *Oklahoma Crude* (USA, 1973) (Warsawsky, 1973: 3), *The Domino Principle* (USA-UK, 1977) (Andreev, 1979: 14), emphasizing their "progressive anti-bourgeois significance".

So the film critic Y. Warsawsky (1911–2000) wrote that in *Oklahoma Crude* the motives familiar to his work sound: disgust for cruelty and indifference, for cruelty and loneliness, to which acquisitiveness, which has become a passion, dooms (Warsawsky, 1973: 3).

And the film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) pathetically asserted that contrary to the newfangled frills in the field of either demonology or erotica, *The Domino Principle*, through the medium of feature films, thoughtfully explores serious problems. ... Artistic generalizations helped the authors to create ... collective images of great explosive power, to rise to very disturbing realistic generalizations (Andreev, 1979: 14).

The position of the *Soviet Screen* was similar in relation to the drama of Sydney Pollack (1934-2008) *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (USA, 1969) (Rakoviny..., 1970: 14; Shcherbakov, 1971), as rare in power accusatory document.

As is well known, from a wide range of Hollywood and British films, the Soviet film distribution in the period we are analyzing mostly films with a sharp social sound, critically showing Western realities.

Therefore, it is not at all surprising that it was these movies that received the maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*: *A Soldier's Story* (USA, 1984) (Esina, 1985: 10-11), *Absence of Malice* (USA, 1981) (Ivanova, 1985: 22; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15; Savitsky, 1985: 18-19), *West Side Story* (USA, 1961) (Sobolev, 1980: 5), *The Day the Fish Came Out* (UK-Greece, 1966) (Khloplyankina, 1972: 15), *The China Syndrome* (USA, 1979) (Khojaev, 1979: 7; Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18; Shitova, 1979: 16-17), *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977) (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18), *Conrack* (USA, 1974) (Chertok, 1974: 18; Ivanova, 1976: 8-9), *O Lucky Man!* (UK-USA, 1973) (Doroshevich, 1976), *The Front* (USA, 1976) (Andreev, 1978: 6-7), *...And Justice for All* (USA, 1979) (Dmitriev, 1983: 8-9), *Missing* (USA, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17), *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (USA, 1962) (Mikhalkovich, 1978: 3-4), *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19; Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18), *Frances* (USA, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17), etc.

So in the movie review *The Day the Fish Came Out* (UK-Greece, 1966) emphasized that the object of ridicule in it turned out to be rabid militarism, militarism, inhumanity (Khloplyankina, 1972: 15).

In an article about the film *The Front* (USA, 1976), film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) reminded the readers of the magazine that there is a real danger of even greater persecution of genuine fighters for civil rights, opponents of foreign policy adventures into which the reactionaries dream of dragging the country of all stripes, a powerful military-industrial complex (Andreev, 1978: 6-7).

And film critic O. Sulkin praised the drama *Frances* (USA, 1982), noting that it exposes to the utmost the monstrous mechanism of spiritual violence in a 'free' society (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

A very positive review in the *Soviet Screen* was also awarded to *A Soldier's Story* (USA, 1984): "So, racism is in the dock. Racism in a new guise, often demagogically hiding behind the "interests of civilization", "concern for ordinary people." But, one way or another, we recognize him in any camouflage. According to its anti-human essence, it does not change" (Esina, 1985: 10-11).

Film critic N. Savitsky wrote that in *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) S. Pollack, shed light on the dirty methods that the US intelligence agencies constantly resort to, not stopping at gross violations of constitutional norms and the criminal code in order to achieve the hidden strategic goals of the imperialist state", and in the drama *Absence of Malice* shows the "kitchen" of the bourgeois press, and the work of the American police, using techniques even more unscrupulous than those used by newspapermen. ... In both cases, imaginary and essentially anti-social, inhuman goals are pursued (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19).

Analyzing the film *The China Syndrome* (USA, 1979), film critic and theater critic V. Shitova (1927–2002) wrote: "Honor and praise here to the famous Jane Fonda, who played surprisingly modestly in her sense of self, resolutely discarding the halo of a movie star ... This Fonda's role is directly related to the social position of the actress, who consistently and bravely enters into political battles on the side of peace and a fair solution to social problems" (Shitova, 1979: 16-17).

And indeed, film critic N. Shaternikova (1934–2028) acted as a Soviet political observer on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*, arguing that social and political life of America so often resembles a gloomy adventure scenario, replete with episodes of assassination attempts, murders, unsolved plots to eliminate unwanted witnesses, that it can compete on equal terms with the most daring fiction (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18). And there fore movies *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977) and *3 Days of the Condor* (USA, 1975) turned out to be truly prophetic. Before our eyes, what they warned against is coming true. "In the Near and Middle East, American militarism is increasingly openly demonstrating its aggressive intentions. The Pentagon is no longer shy about openly revealing its interest in space programs – they plan to use flights under the Shuttle program for military purposes. And all this is covered up with lies about the "external threat", about the need to protect the vital interests of the American people. ... *The China Syndrom* also turned out to be prophetic. ... But it's not just about actual coincidences. All three films are true in the main – they accurately recreate the atmosphere of the "crisis of confidence" in the American "top": monopolies in the apparatus of political power, which is generated by the general crisis of capitalism" (Shaternikova, 1982: 17-18).

True, another film critic, R. Yurenev (1912–2002), was much more critical of the film *Capricorn One* (USA-UK, 1977). He wrote that the desire to set up a topical topic and then exchange it in entertaining situations was clearly demonstrated by the American director Peter Hyams in his film *Capricorn One*. The beginning is exciting. American cosmonauts going to Mars are stolen from the rocket and hidden in an abandoned hangar: the flight is unprepared, and it was decided to "stage" it with the help of movie and TV stunts. This is where the social drama about the conflict between science and the capitalist world would unfold. But the director is not interested in social problems. He literally stuns the viewer with a cascade of stunts... The stunt technique is great, but the idea? (Yurenev, 1978: 6-7).

The *Soviet Screen* treated the film *The New Centurions* (USA, 1972) rather reservedly, since, according to reviewer A. Doroshevich, it is designed for those who are frightened by the steady increase in crime in the United States and at that At the same time, it is well known that only positive emotions are by no means associated with the figure of a policeman, ... [but] the plot moves are indicated in the picture too schematically for artistically convincing characters to grow out of them (Doroshevich, 1975: 5).

It is quite significant that even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be absolutely far from politics, the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches. Eg, in a melodrama review *Kramer vs. Kramer* (USA, 1979) noted that the success of the movie is also due to the fact that, against the backdrop of unbridled cruelty and violence reigning on the screens of the United States, attempts to interpret family life exclusively in the spirit of Freudian and other "fashionable" concepts, the film *Kramer vs. Kramer* compares favorably with noble restraint, modesty, depth of penetration into the human soul. And this person is considered by the authors quite multifaceted. ... the film is a visible desire for aesthetic integrity and authenticity, the fullness of life, the indestructibility of good human emotions in relation to

everything that mass bourgeois cinema has been trying in vain to eradicate from the minds of the audience for many decades (Chernenko, 1981: 16).

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in the *Soviet Screen* there were also texts devoid of a direct appeal to politics.

So V. Ivanova wrote about *Bobby Deerfield* (USA, 1977), that in this film a constant theme of Sydney Pollack arises, which runs through his films, well known to us. It turns out that he and Remarque have a common theme – the theme of human loneliness, struggle and overcoming it (Ivanova, 1983: 9).

The “apoliticality” was especially pronounced in reviews of film adaptations of classic works, the action of which often took place in the 19th century and earlier: *Jane Eyre* (UK-USA, 1970) (Doroshevich, 1973), *David Copperfield* (UK, 1974) (Anikst, 1975: 4), *The Moonstone* (UK, 1972) (Anikst, 1975: 4), *A Tale of Two Cities* (UK, 1958) (Shemyakin, 1985: 10), *Murder on the Orient Express* (UK, 1974) (Dmitriev, 1978: 5).

Discussions of Western films unfolded on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* in the analyzed period extremely rarely.

For example, the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* D. Orlov (1935–2021) considered that film *Gloria* (USA, 1980) is another version of a noble killer, in this case it turns out to be a woman, a representative of the mafia, overwhelmed by a sentimental attachment to a boy ... There is nothing to be surprised about – we have before us another example of a stereotypical, not even marked by a spark of talent bourgeois, in this case American, film production (Orlov, 1981: 16-18).

But film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) did not agree with him, noting in *Gloria* (USA, 1980) the moral sense of artists, rarely found in our pragmatic age, faith in the beauty of a senseless act, verification of what turns out to be the only guarantee of a high human destiny (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were quite rare in the Soviet distribution of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s.

Many of them were reviewed by film critic and archivist V. Dmitriev. In his articles, he, as a rule, sought to distance himself from instructive political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of the work.

He wrote that director Michael Anderson's *Orca* (*Orca: Killer Whale*. U.S.-British-Italian, 1977) was almost defenseless against criticism. Extremely non-self-sufficient in its problems and stylistics, it can and does cause irritation with its genre heterogeneity, incorporating elements of western, melodrama, horror film as well as science-fiction and species tape. All this is justified not so much by its naive anthology, though it is explicitly stated, as by a certain ... simple-mindedness that allows you to use the findings of others, inserting extensive cinematic quotations into your work, not being afraid of bloody or sentimentalized stamps. One could even say that in *Orca* the animal takes revenge for all the desecration by man to which it has been subjected in numerous other films. The problem of the animal's rightness, or rather the rightness of nature before man, was not born now, but in recent years it has taken on an exhilarated, almost hysterical character in Western art, as evidenced, in particular, by *Orca*, which is interesting not so much as an expression of a certain social trend. And in this respect, familiarity with the film is useful and necessary, even if the issues raised in it are addressed at a very superficial level (Dmitriev, 1982: 8-9).

B. Dmitriev regretted that the release of John Ford's western *My Darling Clementine* (USA, 1946) in Soviet distribution was delayed by almost 30 years, and, according to present-day views, it is just an old film, black and white, a bit monotonous, slightly slow in pace, with too much unnecessary dialogue and fabulist explanations. ... But even after 30 years one feels that it is a masterful film, with no plot or pictorial seams, and a bias toward excessive touching is immediately counterbalanced by a comedy trick (Dmitriev, 1975: 5).

About one of the Soviet box office hits, *Mackenna's Gold* (USA, 1968), V. Dmitriev very convincingly wrote that this is a fairly typical example of a late western, the plot side of which, moving from adventure to adventure, prevails over the psychological specificity of the characters. ... Jack Lee Thompson, who shot the picture, belongs to the type of artists who are above all afraid of untested solutions. ... A high-class professional, Lee Thompson tries not to repeat himself either in the ways of mise-en-scene or in the principles of editing. One cannot help but pay tribute to him in his skillful sense of the spectacularity of cinema (Dmitriev, 1974: 5-6).

But the *Soviet Screen* treated Hollywood film musicals much more strictly.

If the literary critic A. Anikst (1910–1988) wrote that *My Fair Lady* (USA, 1964): that is great entertainment. The film has humor, grace, and for lovers of sentiment – a little bit of theatrical love

– in a word, everything that is supposed to be pleasant.pastime. ... In general, there are many times more successes in this film than shortcomings (Anikst, 1970: 14-15).

That film critic N. Lagina, based on extra-genre requirements for a clear designation of sociality and political position, literally crushed another famous musical on the pages of the magazine – *The Sound of Music* (USA, 1965), arguing that almost all the characters in the film are unambiguous and very schematic. ... Yes, the sounds of music remain from *The Sound of Music*. But not the echoes of history, characters, nor the more important socio-political background that the screenwriter and director claim. ... We leave the cinema with the beautiful and catchy melodies of Richard Rodgers, the charm of music and acting. ... But there remains annoyance from far-fetched situations (Lagina, 1972: 14-15).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937-2008) was even stricter about the musical *Funny Girl* (USA, 1968): “For some reason, this *Funny Girl* is not funny. Rather boring, honestly. There's a moment of overeating... The screen is so densely populated... with poker issues and the trappings of a sophisticated bourgeois life, that there's simply no room for anything else. The screen hits on the spot with tracer volleys of colors, the toilets are becoming more and more refined, the film is becoming more and more boring and petty-bourgeois. Once Wyler made a fairy tale called *Roman Holiday* (USA, 1953), which is well known to our viewers. ... *Roman Holiday*, however, was not a musical, but next to *Funny Girl* they seem almost a masterpiece of taste and elegance” (Ivanova, 1972: 14-15).

So strictly treated the comedy of W. Wyler *How To Steal a Million* (USA, 1966) film critic J. Bereznitsky (1922-2005): “The trouble with the movie is not so much in its diversity, but in its facelessness” (Bereznitsky, 1975: 4-5).

But the film critic V. Revich (1929–1997) appreciated another film popular in the Soviet box office *One Million Years BC* (UK, 1966) is significantly warmer (perhaps due to the complete absence in the plot of the movie of the bourgeoisie and other undesirable factors for the ideologized Soviet film criticism): “The technique of combined filming in the picture is quite high, especially in the earthquake scene, when people, distraught with fear, rush along the slopes of the mountain and fall into the abysses opening before them. The most accurate way to define the genre nature of the film is the word “comic”, which is not very popular with us – a complex combination of reality, fairy tale, fantasy, incredible adventures and parodies of the same adventures, that is, we have cinema entertainment in its purest form. But pictures of this kind deserve criticism if they carry some harmful charge. And so ... Probably, *A Million Years BC* will be a success with viewers who intend to relax and have fun for an hour and a half in the cinema. Especially in young people. But it would be good if, when they returned home, they looked at the book and added to their knowledge of dinosaurs, which had become extinct seventy million years before the advent of man...” (Revich, 1969).

On the other hand, recalling the “Tarzaniada”, film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005) instructively reminded the readers of the magazine that prhythmic films about the “man from the jungle” have repeatedly provoked sharp criticism from film experts, and indeed from all people with a good artistic taste. The falsity of the Tarzan films was felt by the vast majority of viewers. And although the last films of this series were made at a fairly high technical level, they were shown in half-empty cinema halls. ... These days Tarzan films are perceived as artistically helpless. That is why *Tarzan* left the screen in all countries long ago (Gromov, 1975: 19).

In the Italian cinema of the 1970s, *Soviet Screen* consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.”

In this context, film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) quite convincingly wrote that until quite recently, the rise of “political cinema” seemed strange, mysterious, and perhaps not accidental. A few years ago, a serious and objective observer, noting even the stunning success of Italian or Swedish films directly devoted to famous political trials, would still not dare to authoritatively predict that this cinematic line would soon evoke a response literally in all countries of the world. ... The second half of the twentieth century, with persuasiveness unknown to previous times, demonstrated the direct connection and dependence of the fate of man, society and politics. ... And in Sacco and Vanzetti (*Sacco e Vanzetti*. Italy, 1970) ... it was not only about the clash of pure souls with the world of bribery and betrayal, the individual – with the machine of capitalist statehood. No, the hero turned out to be, first of all, a politician, the conflict – a political conflict, and its solution, according to the artist, required active political actions.

At first it seemed that the “political film” irresistibly gravitates towards the form of a documentary detective close to it. Filmmakers diligently reconstructed the facts, revealed the secret

springs of events, brought out the circumstances hidden for the time being. What happened, how it happened, who is to blame – it seemed that this is the most important thing. However, over time, it became clear that the study of the actual plot of the murder for political reasons is not the most important thing in a film of this kind. It is much more interesting and tempting to reveal indirect springs, distant connections, to comprehend what happened not at the level of the first, direct culprits, but against the broad background of modern and historical political reality” (Demin, 1973: 4).

More traditionally (for Soviet film studies) film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) approached the subject of political cinema: the beginning of the 1970s in the West was marked by the flourishing of the so-called "political film", where traditional psychological collisions were replaced by clashes of ideas and political views. In the best "political films" of Italy, France, Sweden and some other bourgeois countries, the images of the communists are quite clearly outlined, though not always acting in the foreground. But this is no longer the fault, but the misfortune of the progressive artists of the West, who work under difficult conditions of pressure and daily control from monopoly capital. Let us be clear that the appearance on Western screens of every film that truthfully shows some facet of the labor movement and the images of its leaders is always an expression of the civic courage of its authors. And yet the dictates of time cannot be stopped. Even 10-15 years ago, talking about the image of a communist in Western cinema would have been impossible – such films simply did not exist. Today, no matter how difficult the path of art raising acute social problems is, we can name films that are well known to us... Of course, we are especially interested in and close to films created by masters whose life and work are firmly connected with the labor movement. The films of such directors show not only today's class struggles, but also the optimistic prospects of the social movement (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

Film critic B. Kokorevich was just as ideologically charged: “Progressive Italian cinema has repeatedly addressed the theme of the mafia. The neo-realists were the instigators of the anti-Mafist trend in the progressive cinema of Italy. ... The first big and significant victory of Italian filmmakers on the front of the fight against the mafia by means of art should be called the film directed by Francesco Rosi *Salvatore Giuliano* (Italy, 1962) – a passionate and bitter accusation not only of the mafia, but of the entire Italian bourgeois society, through and through rotten, affected by the malignant tumor of corruption. ... And a few years later, progressive Italian cinema releases a whole clip of anti-Mafist films ... However, progressive filmmakers in Italy are increasingly coming to the conclusion that it is not enough just to denounce this syndicate of criminals. Other means of dealing with them are also needed. And they can be found only by clearly imagining that the mafia will cease to exist only when the roots that gave rise to it – social injustice, blatant inequality, corruption, corrupt bureaucracy and police apparatus – disappear” (Kokorevich, 1978: 12).

Equally "politically correct" was the film critic S. Asenin (1922–2008), who emphasized that director Giuliano Montaldo belongs to that progressive wing of Italian directors who are true to the precepts and traditions of neorealism ... With his film *Sacco and Vanzetti* (Italy, 1970), he put himself in the first a number of masters of "attacking" political cinema, the art of uncompromising class positions (Asenin, 1971: 17).

The same S. Asenin argued that among the sharp socio-critical films, there is also Damiano Damiani's film *Investigation is over, forget it (L'Istruttoria è chiusa: dimentichi)*. Italy, 1971), which is merciless in its close revealing analysis, continuing and deepening the theme his *Recognition of the Commissioner of Police to the Prosecutor of the Republic (Confessione di un commissario di polizia al procuratore della repubblica)*. Italy, 1970). The action takes place in a prison, which is shown both as an instrument of power and as a “continuation”, a cell of bourgeois society infected with all its diseases and vices. Bribery, lawlessness and arbitrariness reign here, and the mafia stretches its tentacles here almost more confidently than in other areas of state life (Asenin, 1972: 17).

Highly, first of all, from a political point of view, other films by Damiano Damiani (1922–2013) were also rated: *I'm afraid (Io ho paura)*. Italy, 1977) (Filatova, 1981: 4-5) and *Man on his knees (Un Uomo in ginocchio)*. Italy, 1978) (Plakhov, 1983: 5-6).

So it was emphasized that in the film *I'm afraid* the author indomitably believes that it is in the power of people to change all this, stubbornly and furiously appeals to the viewer, prompting him to think, decide, act. The political cinema of Italy inherited the best features of Italian neorealism. Faithful to his principles and Damiano Damiani ... The dramaturgy of his films is constructive and clear, understandable to any viewer, it does not contain excessive plot intricacies,

too complex psychological dramas, intricate love affairs. A simple plot unfolds rapidly, replete with unexpected twists and turns, the “shooting” dialogue is clear and precise (Filatova, 1981: 4-5).

In general, other Italian films of “political cinema” also deserved a positive assessment from the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*: *Metello* (Italy, 1969) (Anninsky, 1972: 16), *The Day of the Owl* (*Il Giorno della civetta*. Italy-France, 1967) (Zorkaya, 1968), *In the name of the Italian people* (*In nome del popolo italiano*. Italy, 1971) (Dularidze, 1974: 4), *Respectable People* (*Gente di rispetto*. Italy, 1975) (Bachelis, 1978: 4), *San Babila Square: 20 hours* (*San Babila ore 20 un delitto inutile*. Italy, 1976) (Mikhalkovich, 1977: 4-5), *The Case of Matei* (*Il caso Mattei*. Italy, 1971) (Prozhogin, 1972: 17), *The Investigation into the case of a citizen beyond all suspicion* (*Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*. Italy, 1969) (Bogemsky, 1971: 16-17),

In particular, it was emphasized that the drama *The Case of Matei* shows how Mattei’s activities restore the forces of international and internal Italian reaction against him. The invisible, but clearly tangible ring of intrigues weaving against him shrinks, and now comes the tragic denouement. ... And yet the end of the film is optimistic. Mattei, of course, was not a revolutionary, but the cause for which he fought and died was of progressive importance for Italy (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Referring to the analysis of the sharply political film *The Investigation into the case of a citizen beyond all suspicion*, film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) wrote that the irony of the film is that the killer is the guardian of law and order himself, who, it turns out, can commit crimes with impunity. It is on this paradox that Petri’s caustic, sarcastic film is built – a satirical “black” comedy, a grotesque, a political pamphlet – all together, and at the same time a work very strictly sustained in style, thorough and at the same time ironic through and through, sometimes mischievous “psychoanalysis” and ridiculed nor any particular case, but the entire system of police arbitrariness and power in a bourgeois state, which gives rise to this arbitrariness, without law, violence. ... Gian Maria Volonté plays the role of a murderous policeman... Volonté is the No. 1 actor of the left political cinema and of the entire Italian cinema. ... This role is one of his brightest. The furious, sharply ironic style of play and the temperament of this great actor appeared in all its splendor (Bogemsky, 1971: 16-17).

Film critic E. Bauman (1932–2017) wrote that director Francesco Rosi (1922–2015), skillfully filming the book *Christ Stopped at Eboli* by Carlo Levi (*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*. Italy-France, 1979), addresses the acute socio-political issues reflected in the mirror of history. This picture, amazing in its picturesqueness, subtle psychologism, deeply lyrical intonation, is filled with a truly civic temperament in exposing fascism, in sympathy for the peasant poor, in protest against the lack of spiritual freedom. ... Rosie’s folk fresco is a broad social canvas that continues the best traditions of Italian progressive cinema (Bauman, 1979: 6).

Film historian S. Freilich (1920–2005) (Freilich 1980: 17) and journalist A. Makarov (Makarov 1982: 8) also praised the film.

Film critic G. Bogemsky was delighted with the picture Brothers Taviani’s *Father-master* (*Padre padrone*. Italy, 1977): the realities of folk life, the very theme of the film emphasizes the directors’ loyalty to the traditions of neo-realism as much as possible in the 70s. But along with this, there are many signs of a new political cinema, its expressive means and language. For example, irony is the favorite weapon of the Taviani brothers... *Father-Master* is, in a sense, a return to the roots and at the same time the ideological and artistic pinnacle of their work. This is a significant contribution to the meridionalist culture of Italy, a passionate and sincere protest against age-old poverty (Bogemsky, 1980: 4-5).

But the literary scholar and film critic L. Anninsky (1934–2019) took a rather harsh view of *Metello* (Italy, 1969), which was praised by the Italian press, reproaching it for “calligraphy” and excessive picturesqueness. He admitted that the film is politically sharp enough, and the class battles of the workers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are shown here in all their clarity.

L. Anninsky wrote that faithfulness to social problems, which returns the viewer to the simple and clear truth of neo-realism, to the truth of social struggle and civic activism, is the very thing that has been picked up by the Italian critics who contrast *Metello* with commercial cinematography as an example of meaningful art. “This aspect is undoubtedly decisive for the success of *Metello* on the Italian screen... However, it is interesting to consider *Metello* from another perspective – from the point of view of the stylistic quest of contemporary cinema. ... While watching (with one half of my mind) the development of the social plot, with the other half I was catching the picturesque associations: the misty river reminded me of Claude Monet, the bright

yellow colors of the theater performance – of Toulouse-Lautrec, the group of strikers on the sun-drenched grass of the park – of Renoir. ... As for *Metello* himself... I can't name any associations, but I must confess: here one can admire the plastic sculpture of the face, the "completeness of the image" in general, but by no means feel that intense will, that fiery fire, that obsession with an idea which is typical for a working man in the cinema of the 20s. These traits are still present in such "political films" of modern Italy as *Sacco e Vanzetti* by G. Montaldo. Such "political" films of modern Italy as G. Montaldo's and F. Rosi's *People Against (Uomini contro)*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1970) – their harsh black-and-white (here L. Anninsky makes a mistake: both these films are in color) "chronicle" stylistics are still closer to the material... The director's solution of the film is built upon counterpoint: on the one hand – the passionate class psychology of an Italian worker-socialist of the early century; on the other – subtle tints and colors, the play of sunlight on the hero's face, the velvet depths of the gardens, the merry illumination of the market. ... How do I feel about the film *Metello*? It's complicated. It's a beautiful film. Beautiful red and black, cream and yellow, green and sunny. One word: Italy. But, apparently, I am used to a different language in depicting the class battles that defined the face of our century" (Anninsky, 1972: 16).

Of course, the *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini (1920–1993), Luchino Visconti (1906–1976) and Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007).

So the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) in his positive review wrote that the film by Federico Fellini, *Amarcord* (Italy-France, 1973) has the character of a film-memories: its director draws material not from historical chronicles and documents and not from the boiling cauldron of life around, but from the pantry of his memory. ... In Fellini's film, everything is dominated by irony and humor. And the humor here is mischievous, biting. ... The anti-fascist theme sounded in Fellini in this film for the first time, and with the same passion with which he used to sound anti-clerical motives. So, the desire for simplicity, humanity, love of life, a truly popular atmosphere, an anti-fascist spirit – all this allows us to say that *Amarcord*, despite the "familiarity" of the material, represents a new stage in Fellini's work, *Roma* (Italy-France, 1972) (Bogemsky, 1974: 14).

The film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) also highly appreciated another outstanding work of F. Fellini – a philosophical parable *Orchestra Rehearsal (Prova d'orchestra)*. Italy-Germany, 1978), in which a troupe of musicians is considered as a model of society. As always with Fellini, there is no predeterminedness and schematism here. He sees the problems of democracy and power in the relations between the musicians and the conductor. Relations between the musicians themselves are also complex: by analyzing them, the director finds out the causes of fear and confusion that haunt people and prevent them from uniting their efforts. ... In "Orchestra Rehearsal" the grin of fascism flashed as a modern danger: the film is a warning to humanity and a desire to instill a sense of shame and guilt for passivity (Freilich, 1980: 16-17).

Another story F. Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On (E la nave va)*. Italy-France, 1983) was regarded by G. Bogemsky as a metaphor for today's Western world, and partly for the work of the most outstanding artist, one of the patriarchs of Italian cinema. ... Fellini's anxiety for his creative destiny, for the destiny of art, inseparably merged with anxiety for the destiny of the world, for the very existence of mankind (Bogemsky, 1985: 20-21).

To the drama by L. Visconti *Conversation Piece (Gruppo di famiglia in un interno)*. Italy-France, 1974) *Soviet Screen* returned twice (Prozhogin, 1975: 15; Zorkaya, 1978: 4-5).

And here the film critic N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) was right: made by a seriously ill and doomed to death master, *Gruppo di famiglia*... once again and, perhaps, with some kind of young frankness and clarity unprecedented before, demonstrated an amazing artistic phenomenon, called "Visconti cinematography" ... And the later creation of Luchino Visconti *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, with all its deep personality, with open and ringing confession, bears the stamp of actual topicality, is full of echoes of the real political struggle unfolding in Italian society. The place of the intellectual in today's Western life, in its complex, vague, disturbing spiritual situation – so a little straightforward, but still exactly, the theme of the film should have been defined. ... the deep moralism of the artist gives rise in the *Gruppo di famiglia*... to the theme of a person's responsibility to his neighbor. The spectacle, recreated more with pain and sorrow than with the pathos of denunciation, calls for a more complex analysis of the reasons, one of which for Visconti is the position of non-intervention, egoistic peace detached from the world with its passions and sufferings (Zorkaya, 1978: 4-5).

But the drama of M. Antonioni *Profession: reporter* (*Professione: reporter*. Italy-France-USA-Spain, 1975) *Soviet Screen* even devoted four articles (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17; Nedelin, 1977; Prozhogin, 1975: 14-15; Svobodin, 1975: 16-17).

But if the film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) appreciated this work of Antonioni very highly, then his colleague M. Chernenko was more restrained: “I am not one of her admirers, the picture seems to me mannered, pretentious, and in its moral message it’s simply not new, but it’s not a matter of personal opinion, but that one of the largest masters of world cinema in his conversation about the human soul is trying to get out from a closed world to a wide expanse of political, social, ideological conditions and motivations” (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

Quite a mixed critic Valery Geydeko (1940–1979) reacted to the adaptation of Shakespeare's famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1923–2019). On the one hand, he noted that the picture is far from theatrical, the film is dynamic, expressive, made in an emphatically modern manner. But on the other hand, some scenes shot in a fairly familiar and traditional manner, there are episodes that are probably obviously uninteresting to the director and therefore executed superficially and hastily. ... Zeffirelli consciously sharpens some motives, consciously, sometimes defiantly muffles and omits others. And it is precisely from here that some of the costs and losses of this original, polemically sharp, talented and bright film (Geydeko, 1972: 15).

But about the film by Ettore Scola *We All Loved Each Other So Much* (*C'eravamo tanto amati*. Italy, 1974) from three reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* (Bozhovich, 1977: 5; Demin, 1975: 8-9; Prozhogin, 1975: 14) there were essentially no disagreements. All of them noted the high artistic level taken in this picture by its authors.

So film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2001) wrote about this uncommon in its artistic merits picture like this: cinematic analogies, quotations and half-quotes that fill the film by Ettore Scola are not at all the amusements of a film library scholar, they have a dual function: on the one hand, they convey the atmosphere of the time, and on the other, they confirm the connection of the film with the best traditions of Italian cinema. Following the example of his famous predecessors, director Ettore Scola strives to tell the bitter truth about the state of Italian society. But his film is warmed by sympathy for a person, and it cannot be called pessimistic in any way (Bozhovich, 1977: 5).

With a certain touch of excessive politicization, but on the whole quite adequately assessed on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* film critic G. Bogemsky another outstanding film – *The Desert of the Tartars* (*Il Deserto dei Tartari*. Italy-France-Germany, 1976) by Valerio Zurlini (1926–1982): the director managed to achieve complete identity between the literary fundamental principle and the film, which truly complement each other, managed to convey the gloomy, oppressive atmosphere of the novel. ... in philosophical metaphors and fantastic images, the anti-militarist spirit, the condemnation of military psychosis, is clearly read. It is precisely this that primarily attracts Zurlini's film, a parable film that sounds so modern today, when certain circles in the West are again whipping up military hysteria. ... So, what we have here is a film that, although not easy to perceive, reveals to an attentive viewer all the richness of its content, standing out among others for its genuine artistry and high professionalism (Bogemsky, 1980: 4-5).

The attention of the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* was also attracted by films dedicated to two outstanding Italian scientists: *Galileo Galilei* (Italy-Bulgaria, 1968) (Vasilyeva, 1970: 15) and *Giordano Bruno* (Italy-France, 1973) (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17; Chudov, 1974: 17).

But if in a review about Galileo Galilei emphasized that an interesting general idea of the film in the incarnation significantly suffers from excessive rationalism, from straightforwardness in this analysis of vices and evil (Vasilyeva, 1970: 15), that the film *Giordano Bruno* was perceived absolutely positively, as it is permeated with a fierce passion for the struggle of reason, knowledge, striving for the happiness of people on earth, against religious dogmas and canons, against the cold cruelty and arbitrariness of the Vatican – the eternal guardian of the inviolability of social foundations, the power of the most conservative forces (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

Among the Italian melodramas, the *Soviet Screen* undoubtedly preferred the work of the classics of neorealism: “Italian director Vittorio de Sica told a wonderful love story in the film *A Brief Vacation* (*Una breve vacanza*. Italy-Spain, 1973) ... De Sica and screenwriter Cesare Zavattini... made the film sincere and pure. ... The film lacks the austerity, harshness and uncompromising nature of De Sica and Zavattini's early work. This work is brilliant, artistic, but it has in common with neorealist films the truth of life, especially in the depiction of the life of a working family. *A Brief Vacation* is like a song with a well-known melody, but performed masterfully, with impeccable artistic taste” (Chertok, 1974: 18).

Analyzing another Italian melodrama – *Crime in the name of love* (*Delitto d'amore*. Italy, 1974) – film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) presented to the readers of the magazine her formula for success: Comencini openly emulates another, state-of-the-art superfilm model, combining sensitivity to the changing tastes of the public at once with strong, unchanging techniques that always and everywhere guarantee success. This model, this latest formula, was promulgated by the Americans in *Love Story*. The formula is simple, like all ingenious. It is necessary that there be two young people who romantically love each other, pure in heart and ardent in soul, and that there is a callous world around them that does not understand them. The hero's parents are infected with the selfishness of the rich, the heroine's relatives are endowed with the pride of the poor. There is no one to rely on, and inexperienced, touching heroes must endure in complete solitude, one after another, the terrible blows of fate, up to the fatal, inevitable illness of the girl ... Comencini produced the most social, most "neorealistic" version of the *Love story* formula. ... Everything is filmed soundly, solidly, diligently, and only genre fluctuations confuse – from the impassive fixation of an uncombed nature to openly farcical, conditional tones. ... The shot puts an end to this film, which at first had all the features of a social study, but in the main it remained a melodrama (Demin, 1976: 4-5).

Even stricter approached another melodrama – *The True Story of the Lady with the Camellias* (*La Storia vera della signora delle camelie*. Italy-France-Germany, 1981) – film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013), so, in his opinion, the picture as a whole is so aestheticized, that in the exhausting slowness of her action, there was almost no room left for a glimpse of a living feeling, and even the blood clots that the unfortunate heroine coughed up from her destroyed lungs looked here simply as bright spots of a colorful ornament (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

From the rather variegated spectrum of Italian comedies, the *Soviet Screen* singled out Pietro Germi's *Serafino* (Italy-France, 1968), awarded at the Moscow Film Festival (Bogemsky, 1972: 14-15; Galanov, 1969).

Noting in his review that this work by Germi is rough, harsh, sometimes imbued with too salty peasant jokes, G. Bogemsky was convinced that the film distribution, which we so often and quite reasonably criticize for releasing second-rate foreign films on the screen, acquiring *Serafino*, he did the right thing. The film is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. ... *Serafino* is a cheerful, cheerful comedy, full of folk humor, although it sometimes involves bitterness and mockery inherent in the talent of this director. ... The anti-bourgeoisness of *Serafino*, which laughed evilly at the money-grubbers and philistines, was not forgiven by the entire bourgeois press of Italy... However, a wide audience in Italy accepted the picture. ... Against the background of the gloomy movies that filled the Western screen, imbued with aching melancholy and despair or inhuman cruelty, murders and robberies, cheerful, the spiky, life-loving *Serafino* is by no means a negative phenomenon: it is controversial, one may like it or not, but it does its job of ridiculing bourgeois morality and mores. ... “Is it so scary that our children and grandchildren will see this comedy, as one of the readers worries about this? If they are 16 years old, if their family and school have taught them to look at life, sweeping aside everything superficial and dirty, instilled in them a sense of justice and morality, introduced them to the classics of world literature, then, I think, nothing terrible will happen” (Bogemsky, 1972: 14-15).

Approximately in the same vein, he assessed the comedy *Romanzo popolare* (Italy-France, 1974) film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999): the film is filled to the brim with coarse folk humor, splashing health, everyday scenes and scenes of love, taking place both in reality and in the imagination. Here are Italian folk types, here is the director's emphasized – even too emphasized – attention to the everyday joys of ordinary people, to the everyday events of their lives. ... *Romanzo popolare* is in many ways an epigone of the neo-realist films of the fifties (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

Quite benevolently were reviewed in the *Soviet Screen* and two very popular comedies in the Soviet film distribution with the participation of Adriano Celentano: *Bluff* (*Bluff storia di truffe e di imbroglioni*. Italy, 1975) (Bogemsky, 1979: 12-13) and *The Taming of the Scoundrel* (*Is Bisbetico domato*. Italy, 1980) (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Film critic G. Bogemsky wrote that in *Bluff* directed by Sergio Corbucci (1926–1990) showed himself to be a master of bluffing: the lack of originality, fresh, thought, he replaces with varying success with a cascade of tricks, an inexhaustible fiction for more and more fraudulent tricks, deceptions of all calibers... It's all about the performers of the roles: here the director of *Bluff* has real, genuine trump cards, or rather, aces... These aces are Anthony Quinn and Adriano Celentano. ... Adriano Celentano attracts, although, as always, he hardly sings in the film. He is amazingly

plastic, his movements, gestures, grimaces are unexpected, unusual, conveying as well as his jokes, all the peculiarity of his own system of humor. This "system" is a complex mixture of folk, purely Roman humor with classical clowning and modern, slightly absurd humor in the spirit of the so-called "English"... We must also admit that Corbucci leads his rogue narrative with a certain amount of irony, with a smile, with a certain self-exclusion, sometimes even a little parody. The stylization of the film of the '30s also gives the film a certain conventionality. And what also saves *Bluff* is its supple, genuinely cinematic, old comic pace. What more could one demand from a blatantly entertaining movie?" (Bogemsky, 1979: 12-13).

And film critic V. Dmitriev rightly considered that in *The Taming of the Scoundrel* (*Is Bisbetico domato*. Italy, 1980) the unpretentious story was played very well, with a precise sense of the genre and with maximum inner freedom played by Adriano Celentano and Ornella Muti (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

There were noticeably fewer "progressive political films" in France in the 1970s than in Italy, but the *Soviet Screen* tried to support this particular direction in cinema on its pages.

So the drama of Bernard Paul *Time to Live* (*Le Temps de vivre*. France, 1968) was noted in the magazine as the beginning of a truly social cinema in France, as one of the first films about the working class, about the problems associated with the position of the proletariat during scientific and technological revolution in the West (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

For the same reasons, Michel Drash's film *Élise or Real Life* (*Élise ou la vraie vie*. France-Algeria, 1970), dedicated to the exploitation of Arab workers in France, the solidarity of ordinary people in the struggle for equality and human dignity (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Moreover, the assumption was even made (reckless, as it turned out very soon) that these few shoots of a truly democratic French culture will merge in the near future with a "workers' cinema" created by the working people themselves – about their own problems and for themselves ... To be perhaps this is the key to the future of French cinema (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

From the same ideologized position films such as *Assassination/The French Conspiracy* (*L'Attentat*. France-Italy-FRG, 1972) were evaluated in the *Soviet Screen*, as he told about the massacre of the reaction over one of the leaders of the national liberation movement (Bozhovich, 1979: 18; Braginsky, 1973: 13) and *Judge Fayard Called the Sheriff* (*Le Juge Fayard dit Le Shériff*. France, 1977) (Bozhovich, 1979: 18).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya (1939–2021) noted that not being free from some clichés of the political-detective genre, Yves Boisset made a film that is extremely important for today's French cinema, a film imbued with the director's political temperament (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

And film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2021) wrote that bourgeois society and the state are nothing but a system of organized crime – Yves Boisset returns to this idea again in the film *Judge Fayard Called the Sheriff*... The picture of bourgeois society painted by Yves Boisset in the film is quite real (Bozhovich, 1979: 18).

Other socio-critical films were also highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*: *Professional risk* (*Les risques du métier*. France, 1967) (Shcherbakov, 1969), *Direct report on death/Death Watch* (*La Mort en direct*. France-Germany, 1980) (Dolmatovskaya, 1981: 16; Razlogov, 1981: 18), *Order and security in the world* (*L'Ordre et la securite du monde*. France-USA, 1978) (Razlogov, 1981: 18), *The Prize of Peril* (*Le Prix du danger*. France, 1983) (Shitova, 1984: 10-11).

At the same time, it was emphasized that political analysis ... is much less accurate in the French painting by Laurent Heynemann *Birgit Haas Must Be Killed* (*Il faut tuer Birgitt Haas*. France-Germany, 1981), but and here the story of the romantic passion of an unemployed man who was tried to be used to kill a terrorist objectionable to the authorities, and his potential victim contains a call for the victory of sincere human feelings over ruthless criminal machinations (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15). But gradually the film deviates from the rails of a political detective story, as it seemed at the beginning... worse, but that the actions and feelings of the characters are more and more decisively ruled by melodrama (Plakhov, 1985: 10).

Approximately from the same position, the film critic V. Dmitriev assessed the "revealing potential" of the film *A Thousand Billion Dollars* (*Mille milliards de dollars*. France, 1982), since this picture for all the nobility of the original message cannot be compared with the best of these films, replacing artistic research with straightforwardness and dissolving revealing pathos in the intricacies of a criminal plot that begins to live its own life according to the laws of the genre (Dmitriev, 1984: 10-11).

Analyzing the film André Cayatte *Where There's Smoke (Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu*. France-Italy, 1972; in the Soviet film distribution: *Blackmail*), film critic G. Dolmatovskaya complained about the simplified interpretation of the revealing subject: “This film leaves a feeling of some awkwardness, as if the motif of a frivolous song was inserted into a classical symphony. This happens because the director, apparently, fears that the social line of the film in its purest form will not attract the viewer. And now the picture is "enriched" with many juicy details. Beautiful details, admiring exquisite interiors, luxurious swimming pools... in a number of scenes become self-sufficient, and, naturally, the civic pathos of the film is muffled” (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

With respect to film adaptations of French literary classics *The Thibault Family (Les Thibault*. France, 1973), *Les Misérables* (France, 1972) the tone of the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*, as it happened more than once before, was devoid of politicization (Krechetova, 1975: 6; Mikhalkovich, 1974: 4-5).

During the analyzed period, several notable French and Swiss francophone films appeared on the Soviet screen, addressed to modern everyday topics, with vivid female images played by Annie Girardot, Natalie Bay and Isabelle Huppert.

In particular, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya enthusiastically praised the film Jean-Pierre Blanc's *The Old Maid (La Vieille fille*. France-Italy, 1971) where the brilliant Annie Girardot plays the role of an unusual after recent spectacular and eccentric roles. ... The charm of this simple film lies in humanity, subtle, clever humor (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And the film critic K. Razlogov (1946–2021) wrote very warmly about the *Week of Vacation (Une semaine de vacances*. France, 1980) that one of the strongest aspects of B. Tavernier's talent is respect for his characters, the accuracy and depth of understanding of the nature of the character and the individuality of the actor playing this or that role (Razlogov, 1983: 18-19), the desire for realism also distinguishes the *Week of Vacation* is the story of a Lyon teacher who suddenly doubted her vocation. Again, the focus of the author's view is a way out of the rut, an internal crisis, but finding resolution not in a crime or passive surrender, but in a return to normal life and to one's work, which is so necessary for oneself and others (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

The journalist A. Makarov, in our opinion, very correctly noted that the film *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière*. France-Switzerland, 1976) seems to be a *Boring story* in Chekhov's merciless sense of the word. That is, tragically terrible and at the same time ordinary and familiar, sometimes even not attracting special attention to itself. ... Ordinary for everyone, except for the one whose heart breaks (Makarov, 1985: 10).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937–2008) wrote that the movies of Claude Goretta (1929–2019) – *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière*. France-Switzerland, 1976) and *The Girl from Lorraine (La Provinciale*. France-Switzerland, 1980) – captivate with noble restraint in expressing feelings, which might seem to someone a fashionable detachment, if not for the general intensity of the artistic temperament. Two perhaps the most popular actresses in France now – Isabelle Huppert and Natalie Bay – embody, as it were, opposite facets of the character of a modern young French woman. The property that unites them and, perhaps, the only one they have in common is “provincialism”, a clear rejection of the spirit and essence of the modern capitalist city with its crazy rhythm, cynical pursuit of success and prosperity, mania of irrepressible consumption (Ivanova, 1985: 22).

The more politicized film critic N. Savitsky believed that *The Girl from Lorraine (La Provinciale*. France-Switzerland, 1980) provides an example of a deep and artistically convincing study of acute social problems of the modern West – unemployment, alienation of a person in a capitalist society, all-pervading amorality. ... Claude Goretta, an honest and observant artist, speaks from the screen calmly, without affectation. But under this apparent dispassion, the unimagined drama of a typical fate and true circumstances inherent in a privately owned society clearly emerges: an image of a cold and ruthless world, indifferent to human suffering and hostile to natural human aspirations, emerges (Savitsky, 1985: 18-19).

An unexpectedly sharp reception was received on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* by the philosophical parable of the classic of French cinema art Alain Resnais *My American Uncle (Mon oncle d'Amérique*. France, 1980), whose undisguised irony and parody for some reason were not noticed by reviewers.

Film expert V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) wrote that he was upset by this picture, where an extremely gifted artist, blindly trusting a controversial biological theory, maximally schematized

the complex relationship between human character, the possibility of an act and the world around (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

Film critic R. Yurenev (1912–2002) echoed him: direct transfer of conclusions from rats to people seemed to me too straightforward. ... To be honest, all this is done chaotically and boringly. ... And the episodes where the director put rat heads on the characters - masks, thereby resorting to direct analogies between rats and people, seemed not only vulgar, but also tasteless (Yurenev, 1984: 8-9).

As we have already mentioned, the *Soviet Screen* extremely rarely deployed polemics about Western films on its pages.

But in the mid-1980s, Ettore Scola's outstanding film *Le Bal* (France-Italy-Algeria, 1983) received this kind of controversy.

First, the magazine published a review of the famous writer Y. Nagibin (1920–1994), where he spoke of *Le Bal* sharply negatively: “The film, where not a word is spoken, but only dancing and gesticulating, where beautiful music sounds, deeply disappointed me. I did not find almost any innovations in it and very little simply human worse – it seemed to me professionally sloppy, hastily worked out, thoughtless and, most importantly, not experienced by its main creator – the director, although he has a big name. The device on which the film is based and which for some reason shocked my acquaintances so much has a long beard. Alas, this is not at all, not at all new: to show the movement of time, the change of eras through music, dance and simple pantomime. ... For the grotesque, there is not enough wit for satire – evil humor. It turned out to be a humorous spectacle, sluggish and cumbersome” (Nagibin, 1985: 18-19).

This was followed by a review by musicologist I. Taimanov, who wrote that Y. Nagibin's negative approach to *Le Bal* raises serious objections, and then dwelled in detail on the artistic merits of this film, its historical and cinematic references: “For Ettore Scola, *Le Bal* is not only the history of France, but also the history of French, more broadly, of world cinema. Or more precisely: *Le Bal* for him is the history of France through the prism of cinematic history. This important layer of the picture was completely bypassed by Nagibin. But to fully feel the film of Scola (and its poetics, we object to the reviewer, just requires empathy) can only be plunged after the director into the world of his memories – the world of cinema. ... if we agree that any work of art experienced and suffered by a talented artist is already a miracle, then *Le Bal* can certainly claim such an assessment” (Taimanov, 1986: 19).

As before, *Soviet Screen* published articles about French entertainment films.

Here the literary critic and film critic L. Anninsky (1934–2019), reviewing *Black Tulip* (*La Tulipe Noire*. France-Italy-Spain, 1964) Christian-Jacques (1904–1994), wrote that the authors of the film either try to seriously hurt important ideas along the way for entertainment, or, on the contrary, use these ideas for entertainment purposes, which, of course, is no better. ... As for the dances and final kisses with which the main characters (he and she) crown their activities near the gallows, this, in my opinion, is not just bad taste. ... It is a pity that Tulip has faded, blackened. He did not become sinister, of course, although he was put on a frightening black mask. Alas, we are not afraid. We are sorry (Anninsky, 1970: 15).

Film critic L. Dularidze reviewed even more “sour”, indeed, a weak film *The Royal Chase* (*La Chasse royale*. France-Czechoslovakia, 1969): Francois Leterrier is a student of Bresson, but, alas, a student who inherited little from him. In Leterrier's paintings ... the psychologism and philosophy of Bresson's work acquire the character of pretentiousness and idle talk. In *The Royal Chase*, claims are multiple (Dularidze, 1972: 19).

A sharp rejection of the reviewer of the *Soviet Screen* was caused by Georges Lautner's film *Cop or Hood* (*Flic ou voyou*. France, 1978): “For all his supermanship, the hero Belmondo is extremely uncharismatic. ... I don't want to “cheer” for Stan Borowitz. Everything human seems to be alien to him. Well, except for the love of his daughter. But this line is perceived as alien, unable to convince and truly excite. However, leaving the hall, you will think about the ease with which the guardians of the law turn into gangsters. Such “reincarnations” are apparently inherent in a sick society in which heroes like Stan Borowitz and his opponents thrive” (Kovshov, 1981: 4-5).

Another film by Georges Lautner (1926–2013) – *No Problems* (*Pas de problème!* France, 1975) did not please the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote about him like this: “At the risk of remaining old-fashioned, the author of these lines must confess that playing with a corpse did not seem very appetizing to him” (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya did not like the musical comedy *All are Stars (Tous vedettes!* France, 1980) by Michel Lang (1939–2014), because in it, according to the reviewer, humor recedes before the pressure of vulgarity (Dolmatovskaya, 1981 : 16).

More benevolent, but generally rather skeptical, were the *Soviet Screen* reviews of other well-known French comedies.

Film critic I. Lishchinsky wrote that in *The Big Runaround (La Grande vadrouille*. France-Great Britain, 1966) “the plot, and the whole atmosphere of what is happening, in fact, does not bother the director much. War and occupation, English pilots and German SS men – all this is quite arbitrary ... At the same time, you cannot refuse the director either in ingenuity or in professionalism. He knows his business. Ouri is staging, so to speak, a “pure” comedy, a comedy without any extraneous impurities ... But still, as you can see, a comedy that is too pure every now and then turns out to be a comedy on idle. Something is missing. From time to time you catch yourself thinking that you are both funny and bored at the same time” (Lishchinsky, 1971: 16-17).

It would seem infunny film adaptation of the play by Claude Magnier *Oscar* (France, 1967), director Édouard Molinaro (1928–2013) made full use of the comedic gift of Louis de Funes (1914–1983). The audience in the cinemas (as well as at the *The Big Runaround*) laughed with might and main, but the harsh Soviet film critics reproached the director that in the movie *Oscar*, in a work of banal and low taste, he surrounds his manufacturer with some kind of egg-shaped chairs, fantastic floor lamps, fills the house with ceramics, abstract structures, trellises, aquariums and an aviary with pheasants. ... Acting so much and so often, Louis de Funes, of course, hardly develops his already established image (Lishchinsky, 1972: 18-19).

Well, the reviews of I. Lishchinsky have long been forgotten, but the audience continues to laugh in the vastness of these funny and temperamental comedies...

But here Pierre Étaix’s comedy *Big Love (Le Grand amour*. France, 1968) was praised by the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) wrote that this movie at first should produce a strange impression of slowness of pace, poverty of events, lack of adventure. ... If you look at an object for a long time, it may seem ridiculous. This is how Pierre Étaix uses a movie lens. ... Étaix in his film not only tells love stories, but shares some impressions about this love. He shares some of his observations and counts on the viewer's powers of observation. Monsieur Pierre is very cautious, thoughtfulness is his friend. Thought must become the friend of the spectator. Monsieur Pierre was in no hurry to go anywhere, and yet he made me laugh (Bogomolov, 1972: 15).

The parody comedy *Blond Man with One Black Shoe (Le Grand blond avec une chaussure noire*. France, 1972), popular with Soviet viewers, was also received favorably by the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993) wrote that *Blond Man with One Black Shoe* is one of the films that critics are much more willing to watch than discuss. The goals set by the authors in this case are so obvious and this comedy looks so fun that there is no need to think anything. ... Isn't this why you appreciate the moments when the movement along the rut of the plot suddenly stops and you suddenly get a chance to be surprised anew that the fantastic situation of the film is ordinary, almost ordinary, because it is born of reality, and the people brought together on the screen by the conventional plot live this way in reality and consider this monstrous life quite normal (Khlopyankina, 1975: 9).

However, the continuation of this comedy – *The Return of the Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe (Le Retour du grand blond*. France, 1974) – was received much colder in the *Soviet Screen*: film critics wrote that the material looks already worked out (Dolmatovskaya, 1975: 18-19), without revealing anything fundamentally new to us, neither in life nor in art (Bozhovich, 1976: 4).

Édouard Molinaro’s comedy *A Pain in the A... (L'Emmerdeur*. France-Italy, 1973) was clearly more fortunate in the *Soviet Screen*: the actors make this film a comedy of characters. Their choice is paradoxical, but accurate... Before us is not an eccentric of the “de-Funesian” sense, but a story dressed in the form of a comedy about a kind man who did not allow a murder to be committed (Sergeev, 1975: 2-3).

Film critic V. Gulchenko (1944–2018) gave a fair assessment to the comedy *The Toy (Le Jouet*. France, 1976), emphasizing that Pierre Richard discovered there a rare and deep comedic gift – a fusion of the lyrical and the eccentric, declaring himself as a screen successor of the culture that shows the world as the protagonist of the “little man”, not skimming on all sorts of paradoxes and deliberate absurdity of situations. ... The creators of the film *The Toy* are concerned that everything human in a person does not die out (Gulchenko, 1978. 11: 4-5).

Following its rule, the *Soviet Screen* also supported politically biased films in Spanish cinema. So film critic E. Bauman (1932–2017) wrote that, with the picture *Seven Days in January* (*7 días de enero*. Spain-France, 1979) is an example of militant, incendiary journalism that passionately invades reality. The name of its author, the master of Spanish cinema, Juan Antonio Bardem, is well known to Soviet viewers... The director seeks to involve the viewer in violent socio-political battles. The plot of the picture, made with documentary persuasiveness and fiery pathos, is based on a real event: the villainous murder of a group of lawyers who fought for the rights of workers' trade unions, a murder committed in January 1977 by savage terrorists and directed by the supporters of the fallen Francoist regime. The film, merciless in exposing neo-fascist groups, conquers with its energy and pathos in depicting the masses (Bauman, 1979: 5).

Film expert V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) noted that behind the Spanish film *The Nest* (*El Nido*. Spain-Argentina, 1980) there are long-standing cultural traditions of the country and which cannot be unambiguously explained. It can be read simply as a strange and sad story about the friendship-love of an old man and a teenage girl, and as a metaphor for post-Franco Spain, and as an anti-feminist work that sees in the heroine of the film some kind of modern Lady Macbeth, ready to commit a crime in order to achieve her goals. In *The Nest*, there are preconditions for each of these interpretations. But the main thing in it is still human readiness for help, imprudent and doomed to failure, quixoticism lost in advance, which cannot bring visible results (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

But entertainment films of Spanish production *Soviet Screen* liked to ridicule.

So the film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006) published an ironic review of the musical melodrama, which had a huge audience success in the USSR *Let Them Talk* (*Digan lo que digan*. Spain-Argentina, 1967), simulating two opposite opinions: "Like" and "Dislike": Like: the romantic plot of the film. It is played out on great passions, which we, perhaps, lack in our current life. ... This is a film about songs and love, suffering and fidelity. Dislikes: The fact that the authors tell this hilarious story without any humor. ... It is clear that the authors needed the entire plot to connect purely pop numbers. But why, in general, pleasant, expressive singing should be wrapped in a heap of platitudes and utter fiction? (Zorky, 1970: 13).

Just as ironically finished with the Spanish melodrama *Magical Love* (*El amor brujo*. Spain, 1967) film critic F. Frantsuzov: Instead of the beauty of dances, the annoying flickering of the Navahs, humor gave way to the ominous aspirations of cheap romance, lightness and grace were replaced by the heavy pace of "realistic" passions ... Everything is serious, and everything is fake (Frantsuzov, 1971: 12).

The Spanish musical melodrama *My Last Tango* (*Mi último tango*. Spain, 1960) was released in Soviet distribution with a big delay: 11 years after its creation. But this did not in the least prevent more than thirty dozen spectators from watching and rewatching it in cinema halls.

But the Soviet film press reacted to this film very dismissively.

Film expert Victor Demin (1937–1993) wrote in the *Soviet Screen* that Sara Montiel is a good singer, and Maurice Ronet is a first-class theater and cinema actor. But the more they try to put on a cloak of plausibility over their experiences, the clearer it becomes that we are facing mannequins. ... Watching all this is very embarrassing. The laws of the genre make it difficult to believe that this is serious, that the happy ending will not take place. And if so, then the heartbreaking suffering of the heroine, who allegedly became blind and allegedly drove her lover away from herself, looks like blasphemous antics. So at the carnival, well-fed and happy people put on freak masks ... There are things that are unworthy to play with. In recent years, domestic cinema has not spoiled us with musical films. Naturally, the emptiness yearns to be filled, and some viewers, in the simplicity of their hearts, may mistake a speculative and untalented craft for "living life." That would be the most distressing thing (Demin, 1972: 19).

Victor Demin also tried to explain the reasons for the popularity of *My Last Tango*: Such films have their own charm, their own fabulous, ingenuous world, with songs, jokes, flowers and applause, with picturesque poverty and even more picturesque luxury, with tears in the penultimate part and with an indispensable final kiss on the so-called diaphragm. It's easy to say, "That doesn't happen in real life." And if the film is staged not according to life, but according to a dream? ... "Make us beautiful!" ... Life flies, anxious, difficult, stormy, to match the age. But another viewer still prefers to go to the cinema oasis. Everything is there as you want, there is the sea, the sun, youth, love, there a charming artist looks with a bewitching look and gently kisses – if not you, but your full-fledged representative Maurice Ronet, who perfectly showed what you

would like to be. It is a painkiller film, a healing film, and even with the guarantee of the most charming reveries (Demin 1972: 19).

Despite this, three years later, another article appeared in the *Soviet Screen*, designed to educate the audience in “good taste” and reveal the mechanisms of the mass success of such melodramas.

Film critic Y. Smelkov (1934–1996) wrote that it is very easy to be ironic about films like *The Queen of Chanticleer* (*La Reina del Chantecler*. Spain, 1962), *Let Them Talk* (*Digan lo que digan*. Spain-Argentina, 1967) and *Yesenia* (Mexico, 1971), and it is very easy to explain that [these movies] are lifeless, artistically primitive and made from ready-made stamps. But the irony seems inappropriate to me, because the tears in the cinema were sincere ...

Lifeless? And if a person wants it to be not like in life, but “like in a movie”? ... It is not difficult and even pleasant to prove the lack of content and artistic inconsistency of such paintings, but the trouble is that it can be proved only to those who themselves think so. ...

Therefore, it makes sense to take out, so to speak, the conversation about the level and quality of such films and try to look at them from the point of view of box office success and the reasons for it.

At first glance, these reasons are simple and understandable. He loves her, she loves him, there are obstacles on the way to their happiness... At the same time, one film containing all these indispensable elements is a noisy and stormy success, and the other is not exactly a failure, but collects, say, several hundred films in Moscow. Thousands of viewers, while the first – millions. There are, therefore, some qualities, seasonings to the mandatory set, without which everything depreciates.

It seems to me that there are two such qualities: the absolute seriousness of intonation and the equally absolute isolation, the tightness of the plot conflict, the absence of any correlation with real life. ... – no motivations, but a lot of passions. And the viewer's empathy arises, since the film appeals to simple and eternal human emotions, and it is quite clear who to sympathize with and who to resent. The simplicity of the plot and the seriousness of intonation open up scope for emotional perception; they go to such films “to worry” and after the session they say: “Good movie – I cried to my heart's content.” ...

To reinforce these considerations, we can cite an example – the rolling fate of the film *The Married Couple of Year Two* (*Les Maries De L'An Deux*. France-Italy-Romania, 1972). It did not work out as well as that of *Yesenia*, the box office success turned out to be smaller and short-lived. But what actors: Belmondo, Brassler, what fights, what chases! It was irony, in my opinion...

I am not against melodrama films or entertainment films, I am against them being recognized as the only ones worthy of attention and entitled to the title of works of art. Let there be a movie in which everything is “like in a movie”, but it hardly makes sense to fence it off from real cinema, which tells deeply and truthfully about real, unimagined life! (Smelkov, 1975: 8-9).

However, the majority of viewers either did not read such critical articles or did not pay any attention to them. And they got into such melodramas exactly what the Soviet film press so stubbornly criticized.

For the analysis of West German films in the *Soviet Screen* were chosen, first of all, “progressive works”.

For example, the drama of R.W. Fassbinder *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*. FRG, 1978) (Krasnova, 1981: 16; Zorkaya, 1983: 8-9).

Film critic G. Krasnova wrote that this was “not only and not so much a study of the psychology of a female entrepreneur ... Fassbinder sought to reflect some of the patterns of the first post-war decade of the country, which went down in history under the name of the “Adenauer economic miracle.” And if in this picture Fassbinder managed to reach broad social generalizations, then, first of all, because he was interested not only in the heroine herself with her ambitions, but in Maria Braun as a typical character of the era” (Krasnova, 1981: 16).

Film critic N. Zorkaya (1924–2006) echoed her: Before us is the story of another female biography, mutilated by fascism, another victim of the war. ... Fassbinder's cinematic heritage is uneven, along with deep, serious, socially significant films, there were also trick films, paradox films. *The Marriage of Maria Braun* is one of the best works of the talented cinematographer (Zorkaya, 1983: 8-9).

In a review of the drama *Mephisto* (Hungary-Austria-FRG, 1981), film critic V. Dmitriev wrote that this story of a talented actor who sold his soul to the devil and became the official artist

of Nazi Germany, despite the fact that many of the realities of Nazi law and order were deeply disgusting, has a documentary basis ... But it's not about the authenticity of the source material. This picture is a merciless study of the fate of a person who does not have a moral core, who put his professional development at the forefront and naively believed that he could deceive the state machine of the Third Reich (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

And the film critic A. Troshin (1942–2008) reminded the readers of the *Soviet Screen* that this socio-political and moral problems, tightly tied into a tragic knot, the temperamental, masterfully staged, filmed and played picture of István Szabó was provided, of course, by the primary source. Klaus Mann's novel shows how far an artist's willingness to pay any price for success, willingness for the sake of success can take him! – sell your soul to the devil (Troshin, 1982: 14-15).

An in-depth analysis of another notable film – *Fedora* (FRG-France, 1978) – film critic and historian V. Dmitriev suggested in the *Soviet Screen: Sunset Boulevard* (USA, 1950), if its design is slightly coarsened, is built on a simple antithesis of winning Hollywood – losing artists. In *Fedora*, the situation becomes more complicated: the concrete mechanism of Hollywood is taken out of action, the artist (in the film, a famous movie star) gets the right to independently play out his fate and try to win it, but, and this is the main bitter conclusion of the picture, it turns out that you can win only in the traditional Hollywood manner – by renouncing oneself, on someone else's happiness and on "foreign bones." ... Maybe here is a memory of unproduced films, of failures, of working for the needs of the public, of endless self-repetitions, of the fear of new decisions, of his own great talent, largely wasted on trifles, – after all, all this was in the life of the director, and you can't get away from it anywhere. Here analysis gives way to conjecture, but one does not want to abandon it. It seems that there is some truth in it (Dmitriev, 1981: 5).

It is curious that, proceeding from the considerations of "progressive criticism of bourgeois society", *Soviet Screen* could present even weak films from an artistic point of view on its pages worthy of the attention of readers.

For example, here is the text published on the pages of the magazine about the film *The Mystery of the Honeymoon Motel* (*Meat/Fleisch*. FRG, 1979): Unheard of, fantastic experiments that turn people into robots, into an instrument of someone else's will! This is done by "specialists" in the secret laboratories of the CIA and the Pentagon. Psychotropic, biological, narcotic drugs were tested on unsuspecting Americans – students, athletes, military personnel, hospital patients – without their knowledge, without their consent. ... In [the film] it is precisely the power of the underground business that is shown – whether it trades in people, pornography or drugs. It shows the impotence of the victim, and the collapse of hopes for the law, for the forces of order. ... In the finale of the painting *Mystery of the Honeymoon Motel* with its dizzying flashing in the order of an intricate plot kaleidoscope, the sense of proportion betrayed the authors. This, in my opinion, from distrust of the audience, from the indestructible desire for proven commercial stereotypes: not sparing blood, breaking through to a happy ending. However, all these flaws are excusable, because the picture, made in accordance with all the laws of the adventure genre, turned out to be generally emotionally strong and, most importantly, true, accurate in displaying the signs of the "American way of life" (Dunaev, 1983: 17).

Film critic V. Revich (1929–1997) tried to isolate a serious political meaning even in the parody film *Agent reluctantly* (*Es Muß nicht immer kaviar sein/Diesmal muß es Kaviar sein/Top secret – C'est pas toujours du caviar*. Germany–France, 1961): Comedies are: a) serious works of art, b) cute little things, and c) not cute little things. Between these three types there are hybrid phenomena, lyrical comedy, suppose. The West German movie *Agent involuntarily* combines all three points at once. ... The theme of the lack of rights of a small person who accidentally fell into the game of alien and most often hostile "higher" forces is not resolved in the picture too deeply, but it is there. However, the authors of the film somewhat complicated the matter. ... Liven did not complete a single task of any intelligence, which also required considerable abilities and efforts from him. Indeed, a very small step is needed for him to turn into a real positive hero, even into an anti-fascist fighter (the film takes place in 1939–1945). But the authors did not take this step. ... No, he will not be burdened with heavy thoughts, the most natural comedy awaits him, at times almost eccentric. ... However, the authors seem to have overdone their diligence. At times, not only the endless leapfrog of intelligence and counterintelligence bothers. Interest in the film itself is blunted (Revich, 1970: 14-15).

Among the films of the Scandinavian cinematography, the *Soviet Screen* has traditionally positively singled out the works of the most famous masters. For example, *Autumn Sonata* (*Höstsonaten*. Sweden, 1978) by Ingmar Bergman (Rubanova, 1982: 9).

However, to pass by the popular music movie *ABBA* (*ABBA: The Movie*. Sweden-Australia, 1977) the magazine also could not get through, noting that the music of this quartet attracted millions of fans in many countries with its undeniable merits. It is melodic, singsong, rich in various moods from playfully cheerful to romantic nostalgic. There is in it captivating lyricism, sweet sincerity, sincerity of intonation. The secret of success lies in the unique coherence of the four, their perfected vocal technique. ... The filmmakers deliberately idealize their characters, wrapping them in a veil of musical selflessness, omitting those details and worldly touches that might seem prosaic. Such idealization and mythologization are generally characteristic of the wave of musical films about pop and disco stars (Sulkin, 1981: 20).

Reviews of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution in the period of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, which did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than the film distribution. And here the editors of the magazine year by year chose anti-communist and anti-Soviet films as examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism, as well as films that “glorify the American military” and “whitewash the Nazis”.

So film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) did not get tired of repeating that for a long time now, Hollywood has been conducting in films a crude and persistent operation to reassess the history of the Second World War, rehabilitating the Wehrmacht for this purpose, placing the blame for the well-known facts of crimes against humanity solely on the SS and Gestapo. ... Hitler's warriors are shown as honest and noble soldiers; they tortured people, killed and robbed only supposedly SS men. But no less cynical are some European films, especially those in which an attempt is made, if not to shift, then to share the blame for all the horrors of the occupation between the conquerors and the conquered. Cynicism was most often covered up by the demands for “psychologization” of films about the Resistance, the need to “expand the view” of the past, and similar quite respectable words (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Particularly negative (and we must say, from a political point of view, quite natural) reaction was caused by the *Soviet Screen* Michael Cimino's drama *The Deer Hunter* (USA-UK, 1978).

Film critic R. Yurenev (1912–2002) was convinced that this work is a vivid example of a reactionary, slanderous film is *The Deer Hunter* – an American film directed by Michael Cimino. ... Let's leave aside the mysterious circumstance that the heroes of this film are Russian by origin. ... Apparently, all this was needed to demonstrate the notorious “secrets of the Slavic soul.” Or to explain the characters' innate, so to speak, interest in Russian roulette. ... The just war waged by the heroic people against the French and American imperialists for forty years is shown [in this film] only in a monstrous episode where a Vietnamese blows up Vietnamese women and children. The Vietnamese woman is shown as a prostitute who is not ashamed of her own child. ... And most importantly, the heroic Vietnamese warriors, whose courage and military prowess the Americans were given to experience to their fullest, are shown as savages torturing prisoners! And the justice of the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese, who defended their homeland, freedom, unity. But in *The Deer Hunter* it's the other way around. The Vietnamese are shown as fanatics, executioners, and the American interventionists are shown as innocent victims and invincible supermen. What kind of pacifism is this! This is undisguised racism, an insulting slander against a people who have won worldwide sympathy for their heroism! (Yurenev, 1979: 19).

No less negative reaction was caused by the *Soviet Screen* drama *Nicholas and Alexandra* (Great Britain, 1971), which tells about Emperor Nicholas II and his family.

In full accordance with the then Soviet textbooks, journalist V. Vasilets wrote that it is best to watch this film without knowing Russian history at all. Maybe then the story of two loving spouses and their sick heir would be able to arouse sympathy. One could believe in the anger of the tsar when he learns about “Bloody Sunday” and asks his prime minister who gave the order to shoot. It turns out no one. Just one soldier was frightened by the approaching crowd and fired, and after him others began to shoot. The story in *Nicholas and Alexandra* is distorted not out of ignorance, but for a specific purpose, and the last, deliberately detailed scene of the execution of the royal family puts an end to it: look, they say, look what lovely, innocently suffering people were killed by an inhuman revolution. This scene is not at least in contrast to the drama of Bloody Sunday and

many other tragedies of Nicholas's Russia, for which this mild and sweet – according to the film – man was nicknamed "bloody" by the people (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

The magazine's reaction to another Western film on the Russian theme, *Great Catherine* (UK, 1968), was rather ironic: The film was based on a little-known play by Bernard Shaw, and the authors managed to free themselves from all the advantages of the original. ... Going to the film, I tried to imagine in advance that "Russian cranberry" that almost inevitably accompanies such works, and I guessed something. Of course, there is a lot of snow (artificial, really), and all Russians without exception drink vodka from decanters. However, I underestimated the imagination of the director and his consultants. It turns out that in the Winter Palace, apart from the Empress and the courtiers, there lived... chickens, pigs and piglets; Potemkin had not shaved for months... dirty Cossacks in shaggy fur masks danced at balls... It is a shame about the actors who have to make faces in this vulgar, chauvinistic film, whose release coincided not by chance with the unfriendly campaign against our country unleashed recently in England (Khodjaev, 1969: 15).

The Soviet Screen also reacted quite actively to the youth theme that was gaining momentum in the West by the early 1970s (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17; Yakovlev, 1970: 14), while positively emphasizing that "with the desire of the authors to uncover the social roots that push the youth of America to violence and cruelty", gives these films a special relevance (Yakovlev, 1970: 14).

However, R. Sobolev wrote that the film *The Born Losers* (USA, 1967) by Tom Laughlin (1931–2013) (in the credits he is under the pseudonym T.S. Frank), tells about a youth motorcycle gang "wild angels", does not possess any special artistic merits ... Here the truth is cleverly mixed with lies. ... The film, in fact, shows such vile things that if it had not been filmed by the Americans, one would think: this is an anti-American work. After all, if what is shown in the film can happen in any society, then it means that this is already a stinking corpse, and not a society. ... [But everything] ends happily. There was a man in a frightened town who was not afraid of the "angels". It is characteristic that the "green beret" is presented in the role of this "hero", which, remembering the training received in Vietnam, picked up a carbine and ... opened fire on the gang. ... The film ... contains two conflicting thoughts. On the one hand, he condemns violence, on the other hand, he shows the hero of yesterday's rapist who returned from Vietnam ... Some publicists argue that the "angels" are potential fascists. Director Roger Corman depicted them in the film *The Wild Angels* (USA, 1966) (where the name came from) – with swastikas, iron crosses and other attributes of stormtroopers (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

At the same time, the same R. Sobolev noted that director Dennis Hopper (1936–2010) in *Easy Rider* (USA, 1969) showed another version of motorized vagrants – it's just young people who refused to live in American society, who left on their motorcycles about a kind of hermitage and social non-existence. They are not enemies or friends of modern America, they are "strangers", but true Americans, intuitively feeling their denial of the "American paradise", are really hunting for them. ... They shoot, despite the fact that one of them has a star-striped US flag on his chest ... in any case, the "angels" are evidence of the deepest crisis in American society (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

R. Sobolev argued that about the youth actively participating in political life, Hollywood is diligently silent. Only strata of declassed youth, by no means the most important in the social system, were shown in Hollywood films due, obviously, to their exoticism. This is, first of all, hippies, whose protest took the ugly, in fact, suicidal form of leaving society for the world of voluntary begging and drug hallucinations. Such a protest does not threaten the system in any way (Sobolev, 1972: 16-17).

However, film critic E. Kartseva (1928–2002) believed that We saw those who protest in *Punishment Park* (USA, 1971) by Peter Watkins... The picture of the massacre of dissidents painted here is so reminiscent of today's America that many viewers mistook the director's fantasy for a documentary. Indeed, only the punishment park is fantastic in the picture – this prototype of the concentration camp of the future. Everything else is a true reflection of US life in the early seventies. In the same way, participants of all kinds of progressive movements are seized there, they are judged in the same way, they are thrown into prisons in the same way, from which many no longer come out. What is projected on the screen here is what worries and torments Americans today (Kartseva, 8: 16-17).

The *Soviet Screen* wrote very approvingly about the drama *Rage* (USA, 1972) by George Scott (1927–1999), where the protagonist's combat with the monstrous machine of militarism aroused sympathy (Alexandrov, 1974: 16-17).

And, of course, the magazine wrote very warmly (Moikin, 1974: 20; Sobolev, 1976: 18-19) about Sydney Pollack's drama *The Way We Were* (USA, 1973), where the main characters – american communists – were shown very sympathetically.

R. Sobolev did not hide his joy because in this film among the complex everyday situations and vicissitudes caused by McCarthyism, the idea of communists as people of the highest moral standards is clearly drawn. In this film, one of the most exciting was the scene in which a person who has achieved material well-being, but mentally broken during the time of the “witch hunt”, betrayed the ideals of youth, realizes that he was happy only in that short period when friends were standing next to him were communists (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

R. Sobolev was pleased and (as it turned out, very quickly stalled) a new and interesting and characteristic phenomenon in the West – the beginning of filming by the workers themselves, supported by many major masters of professional cinema, including one of the founders of Italian neorealism, C. Zavattini, an outstanding French documentary filmmaker C. Marker and others. Film groups of workers shoot films about the political and economic struggle of the proletariat, about the activities of party and trade union activists. ... It is also clear that these films are hushed up by the bourgeois film press. However, for example, Zavattini believes that today, when the culture of the ruling class is collapsing, a culture that is still resisting, using even its teeth”, the only alternative to bourgeois art is folk art, in particular workers' cinema (Sobolev, 1976: 18-19).

A positive reaction from the film critic R. Yurenev caused serious, realistic, socially deep film *Bound for Glory* (USA, 1976) directed by Hal Ashby (1929–1988), where the traditions of American realistic cinema are clearly visible. The film critic saw in this film the features of socialist realism: truthfulness, nationality, political sharpness (Yurenev, 1978: 6-7).

Criticism of the capitalist society, to one degree or another seen in the films *Scarecrow* (USA, 1973), *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (USA, 1972), *The Great Gatsby* (USA, 1974), *Hammett* (USA, 1982), *Sleeper* (USA, 1973), etc., were approved by other reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* (Chudov, 1975: 17; Moikin, 1974: 18; Pogozeva, 1973: 16-17; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

Journalist V. Chudov wrote, for example, that let the picture of Woody Allen *Sleeper* (USA, 1973) does not rise to expose the foundations of a 'sick society', but Allen's diagnosis of this society is accurate and uncompromising (Chudov, 1975: 17).

The *Soviet Screen* devoted two articles (Kapralov 1972: 15-16; Vasilets 1972: 18) to Stanley Kubrick's much acclaimed film *A Clockwork Orange* (UK-USA, 1971), which mercilessly explored the nature of violence.

V. Vasilets believed that the author of the novel based on which the film is based believes that evil cannot be corrected with good. But Kubrick claims with his film that nothing can fix it at all. Such a view of a person is incredibly gloomy. This is a cry of horror (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

Film critic G. Kapralov (1921–2010) agreed with this in principle. He noted that although *A Clockwork Orange* (UK-USA, 1971) shone with a rainbow of colors, rumbled with bravura music and went at a frantic pace. He parodied, sneered, prophesied, predicting to the modern capitalist world a further escalation of violence, immorality, permissiveness, its creator wandered in the darkness of modern bourgeois so-called civilization and saw no way out of its gloomy dead ends (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

Recognizing the high artistic level of the film F.F. Coppola's *Apocalypse now* (USA, 1979), reviewers of the *Soviet Screen* assessed its anti-war pathos ambiguously.

So the poet R. Rozhdestvensky (1932–1994) wrote that this is a powerful and violent film. The cruel madness and some kind of planned senselessness of the actions of the Americans in the Vietnam War are shown here so accurately, summarized so passionately that it becomes chilly and disturbing. You watch two-thirds of the film excitedly, in one breath. But the last third of it is clearly worse. The film stops moving, stops living. There is a feeling of conventionality, a hoarse false note begins to sound. On this very note the film ends (Rozhdestvensky, 1979: 21).

And the film critic S. Freilikh (1920–2005) emphasized that the title of the picture corresponds to its style: the American aggression in Vietnam is shown as a tragedy of the human spirit, as the destruction of morality. ... How does Coppola achieve this? He tames horror, aestheticizing it. But this, in my opinion, is the contradiction of the picture: Coppola aestheticizes the evil he opposes. The social conflict is resolved aesthetically, and therefore the artist passes by the tragedy of the Vietnamese people. But what and how is shown on the screen – the dehumanization of the aggressor, his moral collapse, inspires respect for the picture, made with the latest cinematic technology (Freilikh, 1980: 16).

On the pages of *Soviet Screen*, the film critic G. Kapralov rather superficially assessed B. Fosse's masterpiece *Cabaret* (USA, 1971) (this musical came out in the Soviet distribution only in the era of "perestroika"). Kapralov, arguing that this film, created in the variety-spectacular style, entertained the viewer with the love affairs of a frivolous cabaret singer, through the "prism" of life which, according to the authors, supposedly viewed the years when fascism came to power in Germany. But, in fact, a few cleverly presented slips and dashing danced and sung numbers by Liza Minnelli made up the content of this feature film (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

Reviewers of such notable films as *The Hireling* (UK, 1973), *The Triple Echo* (UK, 1972), *The Romantic Englishwoman* (UK-France, 1975), *Airport-75* (USA, 1974), *The Godfather, Part II* (USA, 1974), *Nickelodeon* (USA, 1976), *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (UK, 1982), *The Return of the Soldier* (UK, 1982), *Heat and Dust* (UK, 1983), *The King of Comedy* (USA, 1983), *One from the Heart* (USA, 1982), *The Outsiders* (USA, 1983) (Bauman, 1983: 1-2; Chernenko, 1976: 16-17; Ivanova, 1975: 16-17; Khlopyankina, 1973: 4-5; 1977: 1-2; Razlogov, 1983: 14-15; Svobodin, 1975: 16-17 and others).

In particular, film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote that monotony, repetitiveness, a sense of emptiness, meaninglessness – this whole complex of states of a person in the Western world became the subject of analysis in Joseph Losey's *The Romantic Englishwoman...* The film is internally ironic, the acting is full of psychological paradoxes (Svobodin, 1975: 16-17).

Film critic V. Ivanova (1937–2008) noted that *The Romantic Englishwoman* is a very English film, that is, everything in it is as ironic as it is bitter, as frivolous as it is wise. ... Everything is very vague, unfinished, unsaid, everything in English is restrained and ironic. And... so endlessly dramatic. Because there is all this, it all lives in the souls of people – and the cage, and nightmares, and the bitterness of resentment, and the tragedy of misunderstanding. And a fierce desire for protest – spontaneous, senseless, desperate. And all these abysses are not at all terrible, it would seem, the abysses of a comfortable world (Ivanova, 1975: 16-17).

And the film critic and screenwriter T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993) was, of course, right that the picture of Peter Bogdanovich *Nickelodeon* (USA, 1976) does not at all aim to document the history of the formation of cinematography. Rather, it is a stylization, a sly fantasy on the theme of silent films. All the heroes of *Nickelodeon* live in the rhythm of silent comic movies. Endless falls, slaps in the face follow one after another, creating on the screen an atmosphere of funny and absurd fuss, which is now so striking to us when we watch old films (Khlopyankina, 1977: 1-2).

And here is another cinephilic declaration of love to Hollywood cinema – F. Coppola's melodrama *One from the Heart* (USA, 1982) film critic K. Razlogov, alas, did not like it: "An attempt to restore traditions on a new basis of video technology characterizes Coppola's painting *One from the Heart*. The combination of a banal tear-jerking plot with the refined formalism of electronic special effects and deliberately archaic pavilion shooting led to the appearance of a picture that is strange, aesthetically interesting in its own way, but essentially stillborn" (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

Was negatively evaluated in the *Soviet Screen* and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (UK, 1971) by Roman Polanski, as the bloody tragedy of Shakespeare became bloody in the literal sense of the word. And yet the film leaves the viewer cold. Spectacularly impressive scenes have become an end in themselves, overshadowed the characters. The screen shows a terrible story rather than a great human tragedy – the tragedy of passions and delusions (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

The frankly entertaining part of Hollywood and British film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine in a largely negative way.

Thus, a review of Hollywood science fiction films emphasized their stampede from reality, or rather, from the bleeding American reality, with its rampant crime and rampant devastating inflation, with rising unemployment and exacerbation of class and racial contradictions. In a word, this is a traditional for Hollywood immersion in the world of dreams, illusions, carried out today with the involvement of the broadest technical innovations. ... Modern Hollywood science fiction presents the past, present and future in the form of fairy tales, legends, comics. Old fairy tales, well known to everyone and having a happy ending, are dressed up in futurological attire. ... *Superman* does not know defeat and is called to personify the "American way of life". The spectators are hammered into the idea that the American superman "can do anything" (Romanov, 1982: 18).

The same negative attitude was applied to such sensational films as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (USA, 1981), *Clash of the Titans* (USA, 1981), *Star Wars, Episode IV – A New Hope* (USA, 1977), *Excalibur* (USA-UK, 1981), etc: Hollywood has nothing to say to American moviegoers, the only

thing left to do is to dazzle their imagination with intricate stunts, the splendor of 'special effects' and the opportunity to escape for at least two hours into a world of illusion and fairy tale from the bleak reality, from the restless contemporary issues (Romanov, 1982: 18).

Film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004) reviewed S. Spielberg's film *Jaws* (USA, 1975) quite ironically (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

The films *Cat People* (USA, 1982), *Class of 1984* (Canada, 1982), and even *Blade Runner* (USA, 1982), which has now become a classic of the sci-fi genre, received negative attention from the *Soviet Screen* (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

In particular, film critic O. Sulkin wrote that in the "cold phantasmagoria" of *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott could not overcome "and the taste of commercialism" and "relishes the bloodbath perpetrated by his hero, without stinting on disgusting details" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Much warmer O. Sulkin spoke about *ET (The Extra-Terrestrial)*. USA, 1982) "The Western viewer is tired of the massive attack on his mind with the help of unbridled violence, pornography, pathology. Isn't this the reason for the audience success of the next movie of the American director Steven Spielberg – *ET*? In the story of the touching friendship between Los Angeles kids and a harmless creature with sad eyes that has strayed from the starship, there is a clear echo of the ethics of the famous Disney cartoons. Children, as it were, cleanse civilization from the filth of cynicism and fear. ... The author of recent box office record holders ... Spielberg knows how to choose a "sure" plot. Intuition did not disappoint this time either. *ET* beats all previously registered attendance figures" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Of course, the Italian cinema of the 1970s gave *Soviet Screen* much more reason to write about "progressive political" and anti-bourgeois cinema.

The film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) once again reminded readers that the militant tradition of neo-realism lives on and develops in Italian cinema. There, in the atmosphere of the intensification of neo-fascism, documentaries and historical films were given priority... Using film archives and actual events, they remind us of the past and passionately urge people to be vigilant. ... The debate on the screen about the Resistance continues. The decisive role in the defeat of fascism was played by the Soviet Army. ... The significance of the Resistance, among other things, is in establishing the people as the driving force of history, in establishing the organizing role of communist and workers' parties (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

In an article with the characteristic title "Tent on the square. The working class on the screen of Italy" film critic G. Bogemsky, that although there are a lot of costs on the way of the Italian "workers' cinema", such films as *The Working Class Goes to Paradise (La Classe operaia va in paradiso)*. Italy, 1971) by Elio Petri (1929–1982), *The Seduction of Mimi (Mimi metallurgico ferito nell'onore)*. Italy, 1972) by Lina Wertmüller (1928–2021), *Trevico-Torino* (Italy, 1973) by Ettore Scola (1931–2016), documentaries shot by Ugo Grigoretti (1930–2019) and others brave, unusual for Western art, films about workers are made under difficult, sometimes dramatic conditions. All the more valuable are these attempts to "master" the acute working-class subject matter, to reveal it in the complex context of contemporary social reality. And with each film, "workers' cinema" becomes an increasingly important aspect of the progressive direction of Italian political cinema (Bogemsky, 1973: 14-15).

True, some of the "progressive and anti-bourgeois" Italian films about the working class were cautiously criticized in the *Soviet Screen*. This applied, for example, to the movies *The Secret of N.P. (NP il segreto)*. Italy, 1971) by Silvano Agosti and *The Working Class Goes to Paradise (La Classe operaia va in paradiso)*. Italy, 1971) by Elio Petri.

For example, the journalist N. Prozhogin (1928-2012) believed that E. Petri's film far from everything can be agreed, it rather one-sidedly touches on the problems of the labor movement, but he touches on the burning issues of Italian reality, shows the contradictions in modern the labor movement of the capitalist countries and does not hide its difficulties, in particular, both the threat of reformism of the social democratic persuasion, and the objectively provocative role of leftist groups. From this followed a very optimistic (but in reality not justified) conclusion that, "returning to the themes dictated by life itself, Italian cinema again rises, as it did in the first post-war years, on fertile ground (Prozhogin, 1972: 20).

The Abuse of Power (Abuso di potere). Italy-France-FRG, 1972), quite traditional for Italian political detectives of the 1970s, told the story of a young police commissioner who "too" conscientiously undertook the investigation of the circumstances of the murder committed by the mafia entrusted to him, however, N. Prozhogin emphasized that using the example of Badzoni's

film, one can trace the danger that constantly threatens art with a commercial approach to it on the part of producers (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

But the strongest satire on the morals of the upper strata of Italian society seemed to N. Prozhogin of the film *Respectable Rome* (*Roma bene*. Italy-France-FRG, 1971) by Carlo Lidzani (1922–2013). He also praised the movies *Let me introduce myself: Rocco Palaleo* (*Permette? Rocco Papaleo*. Italy, 1971) and *A beautiful, honest immigrant from Australia would like to marry a pure girl, my compatriot*, (*Bello onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata*. Italy-Australia, 1971) because they told about the sad life of Italian emigrants in the USA and Australia (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) spoke warmly about another Italian film, where the characters were revealed in the unusual conditions of a foreign country – *I will put things in order in America and return* (*Sistemo l'America e torno*. Italy, 1974) (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

But in the political position of the authors of the film *Lucky Luciano* (Italy-France-USA, 1973), G. Bogemsky discovered a significant flaw, since the documentary style in itself does not yet fully provide either artistic or historical truth. Francesco Rosi, focusing on the machinations of American politicians who use the mafia for their own purposes, wittingly or unwittingly makes Luciano, the king of drugs, almost a victim of "big politics" (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

Another picture of the cruel world of mafia and gangsters *The Valachi Papers* (*Cosa Nostra/Le dossier Valachi*. Italy-France, 1972) was accused in the *Soviet Screen* of promoting violence, because murder and violence are the essence of the film (Moikin, 1973).

Among the Italian films about the war, the *Soviet Screen* responded positively to the drama *Men Against...* (*Uomini contro*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1970) (Lipkov, 1971: 15). But about the film *Mussolini: the last act* (*Mussolini: ultimo atto*. Italy, 1974), film critic G. Bogemsky responded rather negatively, noting that in the performance of Rod Steiger, the Duce is a sick, crushed man – a victim of his own ambition, past mistakes, betrayal of his accomplices and, in general, historically unconvincing (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

G. Bogemsky also reacted ambiguously to two dramas about the life of prominent scientists – E. Galois – *I have no time* (*Non ho tempo*. Italy, 1973) by Ansano Giannarelli (1933-2011) and *Socrates* (Italy-France-Spain, 1971) by Roberto Rossellini (1906–1977).

He reproached the film *I have no time* for an avalanche of endless monologues, popular lectures, because of which for all the nobility of the idea, the film becomes boring and tedious (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17). And in the work of R. Rossellini he was completely disappointed: Perhaps, in short-term television programs, "in portions", the viewer can withstand the popular film presentation of the teachings of Socrates, his disputes with Plato and his students, numerous historical comments. But right away, in a two-hour film, emphatically devoid of entertainment, entertainment, all this is perceived very difficult (Bogemsky, 1974: 16-17).

But, of course, the *Soviet Screen* could not pass by the works of Federico Fellini (1920–1993), Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975), brothers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani and Bernardo Bertolucci (1941–2018).

Journalist N. Prozhogin wrote, for example, that in *Rome* (*Roma*. Italy-France, 1972) by Federico Fellini the hand of a great master is visible. There are no loose scenes, sloppy shots. Everything in it is carefully thought out, weighed. Even the deliberate, like an obsessive dream, the protractedness of individual episodes and the fragmentation of the film with a sudden, seemingly without apparent connection, change of scenes showing Rome either forty years ago or today, have their own semantic load. The author clearly wants to convince the audience that, no matter how the appearance of the city and even the political system of the country changes – from fascism to parliamentary democracy, Rome remains the same – both comic and tragic gathering, in fact, disunited people, carriers of voluptuousness and insane carelessness, leading them to inevitable death. This theme of Rome as "eternal Babylon" is not new in Fellini's work. ... But ... [Fellini's] look at Rome, life is ultimately dictated by the confusion of an intellectual who is in a deep spiritual crisis, who received a Catholic upbringing and lost faith in his former ideals" (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

Thus, according to the article by N. Prozhogin, one could get a complete picture of the reasons why *Rome*, as well as *The Sweet Life* (*La Dolce vita*. Italy-France, 1960); *Satyricon* (Italy-France, 1969); *Casanova* (Italy-USA, 1976) and *City of Women* (*La Città delle donne*. Italy-France, 1980) never came out in Soviet distribution.

N. Prozhogin criticized Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Decameron* (*Il Decameron*. Italy-France, 1971) even more sharply: "Having preserved the plot outline of several novels by Boccaccio, Pasolini

distorted their spirit. Instead of the coarsely sensual, but joyfully provocative atmosphere of the Renaissance, he created an extremely monotonous and dull world of adultery. ... Perhaps Pasolini needed the Decameron only as a pretext for expressing his views not only on the Renaissance. But in this case, his film should evoke an even stronger objection” (Prozhogin, 1972: 17).

The works of the Taviani brothers in the *Soviet Screen* were also evaluated ambiguously.

If the film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) believed that the philosophical drama *Alonzanfan!* (Italy, 1973) breathes with "deepest pessimism" (Svobodin, 1975: 17), and film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) upset *The Meadow (Il prato)*. Italy, 1979) with its unbridled "literaryness" of the plot, the conventionality of the characters and the incomprehensibility of the final conclusions (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17), then film critic O. Sulkin argued that “the excellently filmed folk drama *The Night of San Lorenzo (La Notte di San Lorenzo)*. Italy, 1982), epic in form, saturated with folklore symbols, plastically expressive, is worthy of the highest praise: “With all artistic passion, the Taviani brothers assert: fascism is the worst of evils, the tragedy of the nation, which cannot be forgotten, cannot be forgiven, justified "because of prescription” (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Reviewing drama Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Moon (La Luna)*. Italy, 1979), film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) wrote that by design, this is an interesting picture. The young man is a drug addict, his mother cures him with her love. Love conquers illnesses and fears, it would be wonderful if love itself was not a disease – mother and son find themselves in physical proximity. The Oedipus complex in the most fatal way destroys the poetry in the picture, there are beautiful scenes in it, it is with great regret that we have to talk about it as a whole (Freilikh, 1980: 17).

And the shocking *Salomè* (Italy, 1972) by Carmelo Bene (1937–2002) aroused complete indignation among film critic G. Kapralov (1921–2010): “The Italian snobbish artist, esthete writer, formalist director, enjoyed that that in his disgusting, pretentious film *Salomè* for almost half an hour he showed footage in which the heroine, with thin fingers, literally skinned King Herod with her thin fingers... It is difficult for anyone who was not at this session in the Venetian Cinema Palace to imagine that happened in the hall. Some fans of sadism tried to applaud, but hundreds of spectators truly screamed in indignation and disgust, demanding to stop showing the picture. After the session, Carmelo Bene appeared, accompanied by two policemen guarding him” (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

Film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) ambiguously approached Ettore Scola's drama *Passion for Love (Passione d'amore)*. Italy-France, 1981), which told about human deformity, and not moral, but physical, not hidden, but put on display occupying a significant portion of the screen space. The principle of extreme shock impact ..., of course, is debatable and cannot be considered the only one in the case of cinematography addressing such anomalies, but the moral purity [of the film], which calls for compassion in relation to any representative of the human race, cannot be questioned (Dmitriev, 1981 : 16-17).

The tragicomedy *The Smell of a Woman (Profumo di donna)*. Italy, 1974) by Dino Risi (1916–2008), film critic A. Svobodin was reminded of the theater of the era of guest performers. In the middle is a big artist – the rest is not so important! But Gassman once again showed that he was worthy of this position. His playing is so rich in psychological details, nuances, details, his vigilantly. The awn is so great, and the temperament is so volcanic, that the role must be recognized as exemplary. The problems of the film, although not new and somewhat academic, are serious. The collapse of a "strong personality", the drama of individualism (Svobodin, 1975: 16).

And with regard to the tragicomedy *Traffic Jam (L'Ingorgo – Una storia impossibile)*. Italy-France-FRG-Spain, 1979) by Luigi Comencini (1916–2007), film critic V. Shitova (1927–2002) noted that the final of Comencini's shallow but likable movie lays claim to an apocalyptic universality: life has stopped, it has bottled up itself, there is nowhere to expect deliverance. ... The symbolism of the finale is straightforward, but it would be unfair to deny it expressiveness (Shitova, 1979: 16-17).

So, the *Soviet Screen* of the 1970s evaluated Italian cinema mainly according to strictly adhered to Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

But two sensational films of the 1970s were subjected to the most fierce criticism in the magazine: *The Night Porter (Il portiere di notte)*. Italy-France, 1973) by Liliana Cavani (this movie got into Soviet distribution only in the era of the late “perestroika”) and a film adaptation of the novel by M. Bulgakov *The Master and Margarita*.

The high intensity and reasons for the condemnation of *The Night Porter* in the Soviet press can be judged by a very characteristic article in this sense by film critic R. Sobolev: As for *The Night Porter*, no lengthy comment is needed here. Cavani, a young Italian who has not experienced the horrors of war, told reporters that she decided to make a "truthful film" after learning that some female prisoners in the concentration camps were in touch with the guards and still wear flowers on their graves. Her "truth" is that the young guard, unrestrained by anything, willingly shows his worst instincts towards the prisoners. But this, according to Cavani, is only one side of the "truth". The other is that the girl-prisoner who became his mistress also throws back moral prohibitions and does not lag behind her SS man in anything. The film argues that a person will certainly become a beast, if he can become one. To prove this thesis, Cavani creates an extremely dirty, erotic film. Youth does not free a person from the need to think sensibly. Cavani could have judged what Hitler's concentration camps were by the documents, by the number of millions of people who died in them, and not by the stories of SS mistresses. Therefore, she was offended in vain when one of the spectators – former prisoners – spat in her face – that was criticism, of course, extraordinary, but completely deserved by Cavani (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

D. Pisarevsky (1912–1990), editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen*, was no less harsh in relation to the film *The Master and Margarita* (*Il Maestro e Margherita*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1972):

"The author turned out to be very far from understanding the humanistic idea of the work and the era depicted in it, and not only did not bring the novel closer to millions of moviegoers, but gave a false impression of it. ... the novel became just an excuse to slander about literary Moscow. ... From the very first shots, when a wooden, snow-covered, similar to a wretched village Moscow appears, it turns out that the talented writing of M. Bulgakov has been replaced by popular prints in the style of a la russe. ... However, it's not just about the "spreading cranberries" of the production. The philosophical idea of the novel, a cross-cutting thought penetrating and merging together the modern, historical, and fantastic layers of the book, has undergone a radical revision. Revealing in all the bizarre polyphony of things the conflict of good and evil, the writer, with the whole system of his images, affirms the inevitability of the victory of good, the doom of everything that is hostile to human happiness. This is the most important task and pathos of the book. A. Petrovich puts everything upside down. His film is about the triumph of evil, about the hopelessness of human destiny. ... The notorious problem became the center of the film "freedom of creativity", freedom, interpreted from the bourgeois-anarchist positions. Here the novel "preparirovan" with surprising shamelessness. His plot and images have undergone such fantastic metamorphoses in the film, before which even the fun and tricks of evil spirits described by M. Bulgakov pale. ... All this is a gag of the authors of the film, from which a mile away reeks of bourgeois insinuations about Soviet literature. ... The wonderful fusion of Bulgakov's prose, the fusion of realistic everyday life, violent fantasy, high symbolism, satirical grotesque, turned into pretentiousness and eclecticism in the film. ... In all this, the calculation of philistine tastes, commercial success comes through. In an effort to please that part of the Western public, for whom the more scathingly told about Moscow, the better, the authors have become like peddlers of stale goods" (Pisarevsky, 1972: 18).

Film critic G. Kapralov fully agreed with the opinion of D. Pisarevsky, whom the film *The Master and Margarita* (*Il Maestro e Margherita*. Italy-Yugoslavia, 1972) outraged as a bad caricature, smacking of an "anti-Soviet odor" (Kapralov, 1972: 15-16).

A connoisseur of Italian cinema, film critic G. Bogemsky (1920-1995) undertook the "dirty job" of analyzing Italian commercial cinema in the *Soviet Screen*.

At first, he spoke negatively about the "spaghetti westerns" popular at that time: From these pictures (the films of Sergio Leone can be named as an example...) love, friendship, nobility, mutual assistance and solidarity are expelled – those good human feelings that warmed and made this genre of adventure film attractive. But cruelty – brutal beatings, senseless torture and torment – and gross naturalism are brought to their maximum. Even two or three such adventure films, with dozens of murders in each, are hard to endure, but when they are at the box office, as it was in Italy, 80 titles at once, it becomes a real national disaster! In addition, many of these inhumanly cruel films are imbued with the spirit of racial discrimination brought from American cinema, which is generally alien to Italians (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

Then he exposed the harmful "subtexts" of entertainment films about "robbery in Italian": "It would seem that films about crooks, which are also extremely numerous, are less dangerous. They are imbued with humor, sometimes really funny, they are, so to speak, "thieves' comedies." ... no matter who steals where, no matter what: the diamonds of a Brazilian bank or the crown of the

English queen, the treasure of St. Januarius or the secret of the superbomb, it is important how, in what way it is done. But even these purely conventional films sometimes turn out to have a double bottom: the plot of a funny thieves' comedy suddenly contains a fair dose of foul-smelling politicking. So, in the painting by Marco Vicario *The New Major Operation of the Golden Seven* (*Il grande colpo dei 7 uomini d'oro*. Italy, 1966), a gang of gangsters abducts a Soviet ship using a submarine with a magnet, allegedly arrived in Havana with a load of gold bars to "arrange" revolutions in Latin America! The Cubans in this film are shown in an evilly caricatured form, and our sailors are so careless that when they take their ship away, they sing "Dubinushka" as if nothing had happened" (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

But G. Bogemsky's greatest regret (in our opinion, quite justified) was caused by the flow of Italian "militarist films": Home-grown militaristic films poured onto the Italian screen. It doesn't matter who performs "feats" in these pictures – unknown red berets, English commandos or Italian (and fascist!) warriors – they are equally bloodthirsty, they kill in the same cold-blooded way, terribly naturalistically, enjoying "right" to kill the weak and defenseless (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

A similar attitude to the Italian commercial cinema was in the article of the journalist N. Prozhogin: Those who profit from films seem to be convinced that the most salable commodity in the West these days is sex, murder, robbery, any form of violence. Even leaving aside frankly low-class films, we have to admit that the alcove theme captivated some directors who were known in the past for meaningful works. This, for example, comes down to the latest film by Luigi Comencini with the intriguing title *My God, how low I have fallen!* (*Mio Dio come sono caduta in basso!* Italy, 1974) (Prozhogin, 1975: 14).

The approach of the editors of the *Soviet Screen* to French films of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s was also consistent (moderate) criticism of films of outstanding masters and sharp criticism of commercial film production.

The films of Francois Truffaut and Claude Chabrol practically did not get into the mass Soviet film distribution in 1970s, but the *Soviet Screen* wrote about them quite often.

So film critic E. Kartseva (1928–2002) regretted that Francois Truffaut (1932–1984) in the film *Fahrenheit 451* (UK-France, 1966) largely simplified the idea of the story. There is not that all-encompassing atmosphere of mass stupidity of people that is so impressive in Bradbury, there are no attempts to analyze why people voluntarily put up with this situation (Kartseva, 1972: 16-17).

The refined and psychologically subtle melodrama by Francois Truffaut *Two Englishwomen and a Continent* (*Les Deux anglaises et le continent*. France, 1971) was disappointing for journalist Y. Bocharov, who thought that even in this film the talented artist remains faithful to his lyrical manner, but the plot seems far-fetched (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) wrote that Francois Truffaut's drama *The Last Metro* (*Le Dernier métro*. France, 1980): is distinguished by a very high visual culture. One can only be surprised at the maximum accuracy with which the everyday structure of Parisian life during the Nazi occupation is reproduced on the screen. However, one should also be surprised that the former rebel, the head of the "new wave" François Truffaut, who in the past fiercely opposed academic art, has now himself removed an academic, geometrically calculated movie, almost indifferent in its Olympian contemplation. Because of this academicism, scissors arose between the tension of the plot and the manner of its implementation, and the anti-fascist pathos of the film turned out to be greatly muted (Dmitriev, 1981: 16-17).

It seems that a much more objective assessment of the artistic significance of *The Last Metro* was made by film critic and culturologist A. Razlogov (1946–2021), who highly appreciated this outstanding picture: The idea of the indestructibility of creativity even in hostile environment, bizarre intersections of the real life of the actors and their stage roles make this film a logical continuation of Truffaut's reflections on the meaning of art in the modern world (Razlogov, 1981: 17).

Referring to the work of another master of French cinema art, Claude Chabrol (1930–2010), journalist Y. Bocharov reminded the readers of the magazine that this director released a series of films imbued with bitter irony and criticism of the society in which he lives and works. The artist set out on an ambitious plan to create a gallery of images of the contemporary bourgeoisie, a panorama of bourgeois morals. ... *Ten Days Wonder* (*La Décade prodigieuse*. France-Italy, 1971) caused mixed responses. The artist is reproached for the excessive complexity of the plot, the lengthiness of the action. ... Despite the fact that this film cannot be called a completely successful author, it did not cause alarm among admirers of his talent. Chabrol is full of strength, energy,

ideas and courage. He goes his own way, and one can undoubtedly expect new interesting works from him (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Not so optimistic, although, in general, quite respectfully, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya (1939–2021) perceived the work of C. Chabrol: made the film *Let the Beast Die* (*Que la bête meure*. France-Italy, 1969). Here are excellent actors (and especially Jean Yann), cold landscapes that smell like the sea, thoughtful interiors, there is dynamics and tension, and the music is involved in the action, but the word "commercial" is spinning somewhere close if you want to retell the plot (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And quite ironically approached the film by C. Chabrol *Innocents with Dirty Hands* (*Les Innocents aux mains sales*. France-Italy, 1975) film critic A. Svobodin (1922-1999): "There were two famous actors at once – Rod Steiger and Romy Schneider. ... It is twisted masterfully, but, alas, interest in the film fell from time to time. Then an erotic scene was given. A method that is used quite widely. ... The powerful personality of Rod Steiger with all recently with the incomprehensible force of penetration who played Napoleon and Mussolini, did not save. Romy Schneider seemed like an average actress. But their desperate professional conscientiousness was instructive. Nothing can be done – such is the acting life!" (Svobodin, 1975: 16).

The films of Claude Lelouch, which were not included in the Soviet film distribution, were presented to the readers of the *Soviet Screen* quite ambiguously: *Life, love, death* (*La Vie, l'amour, la mort*. France, 1969); *New Year* (*La Bonne année*. France, 1973); *Smic Smac Smoc* (France, 1971), *Bolero* (*Les Uns et les autres*. France, 1981).

Film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote that we again observe a kind of diffusion – the penetration into the social film of commercial style to the needs of the philistine taste. Diffusion, which was so noticeable in the paintings of Claude Lelouch *Live for Life* (*Vivre pour vivre*. France-Italy, 1967), where the background was a political theme, and *Life, love, death* (*La Vie, l'amour, la mort*. France, 1969), conceived as a social drama. In the end, commerce supplanted everything. ... The hand of Lelouch the operator is correct. Perhaps he became stricter in the visual solution of his films. Only that sincerity and true warmth that were in *A Man and a Woman* (*Un homme et une femme*. France, 1966) disappeared. In the movie *New Year* Lelouch seems to be slightly ironic about yesterday. Above the purity, romance, sadness of *A Men and Women*... Not the playful atmosphere created around the robbery, not for a moment the beautiful performance of Lino Ventura saves the viewer from boredom. The film is empty, like an empty street in a southern town out of season. Not even a single thought can be found in this film. ... Many years of improvement of the director in the ways of commerce made his professionalism unnecessary. And this is the most terrible consequence that awaits the director, who sacrifices the meaning of art for the sake of the evening delight of the layman (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

Journalist Y. Bocharov also wrote about C. Lelouch in the same spirit, noting that in the film *Smic Smac Smoc* (France, 1971), the director touched on the topic of low-paid workers, which is acute for France. ... But Lelouch facilitates this theme by creating a vaudeville based on it. A half-hearted position takes revenge on the artist – ribbons come out of his hands, extremely superficial (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

Criticized in the *Soviet Screen* and large-scale work of C. Lelouch *Bolero* (*Les Uns et les autres*. France, 1981): An attempt to embrace the immense, to cover the most important events from 1936 to the present day. ... A movie complicated in form, a wide canvas that claims to be generalizations. With a lot of events that are impossible to enumerate. The film is immensely dragged out (Frez, 1982: 17).

The attitude to the drama of C. Lelouch was also ambiguous *Matrimony* (*Mariage*. France, 1974) (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

But the drama *The Last Train* (*Le Train*. France-Italy, 1973) by Pierre Granier-Deferre (1927–2007), which took place in 1940 in the Nazi-occupied France.

Film critic A. Svobodin (1922–1999) wrote that compassion for the heroes of this film is not only momentarily sensual, but philosophical and poetic, as happens, for example, when reading Tyutchev's tragic poems (Svobodin, 1975: 17).

And film critic R. Sobolev (1926-1991) noted that *The Last Train* talks about high moral purity, about the impossibility of betrayal for a real person and about love that elevates people (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Referring to other French films about the Second World War, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya regretted that in this film there is no complete picture of the heroic Resistance. It is not the army

that operates, but single individuals, connected only with each other in a strange, hostile world. How exactly they fight the Germans, we did not find out (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

Much more negative reaction was caused in the *Soviet Screen* by the drama *Lacombe Lucien* (France-Italy-FRG, 1973) by Louis Malle (1932–1995). Film critic R. Sobolev wrote that Malle took a real case of betrayal and considered the fate of the village boy Lucien, who served in the Gestapo, and then shot by the verdict of the court. Outwardly, Mal is objective: France, in fact, was split by the occupation and the Vichy regime, which bore the shadow of a swastika. There were French people who wrote denunciations about the French, and there were French policemen who tortured and shot French patriots. All this can and should be told, but... only if the "ashes of Klaas" knock in the heart of the artist. Malle is trying to create a "portrait of the era", making her the hero of a traitor, a cruel and mentally limited person. ... The indifference of the film's author to those who supported the greatness of the unbroken national spirit in those years, turns into an equation between the partisans and the Petain police. In the end, according to Malle, it turns out that Lacombe accidentally became a traitor (Sobolev, 1975: 1-2).

Found in a magazine "and for criticism of exquisite films *Benjamin* (*Benjamin ou les Memoires d'un Puceau*. France, 1968) by Michel Deville (1931–2023) and *Claire's Knee* (*Le Genou de Claire*. France, 1970) by Éric Rohmer (1920–2010) and others, none of whom made it into Soviet film distribution in the 1970s.

For example, film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote that the elegant, very beautiful in color "costume" comedy by Michel Deville *Benjamin* [would not be worth] mentioning if it were not for the magnificent Michel Morgan in the title role and the exquisite camera work of Ghislain Cloquet (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

And G. Dolmatovskaya (in our opinion, without evidence) accused the psychologically subtle picture of Éric Rohmer's *Claire's Knee* (*Le Genou de Claire*. France, 1970) of the fact that in a film with such a bold name, there is not even a drop of sensuality ... What well, against the background of rampant sex on the Western screen, it seems that this is not bad. The only bad thing is that there is no feeling. ... And if the director wanted to show people who died at the age of 35 for feelings, he achieved his goal (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

Recognizing in the sensational film *Blow-Out* (*La Grande bouffe*. France-Italy, 1973), a cruel satire on the consumer society, film critic L. Pogozheva (1913–1989) was convinced that the trouble with this movie is that the critical fuse contained in it is combined with a solution of the problem that is vulgar in its very nature. Four excellent actors – Marcello Mastroianni, Philippe Noiret, Michel Piccoli, Ugo Tognazzi – played not only an apocalyptic vision of the death of the modern world, but also a humiliating zoologism, showed the disgusting details that accompanied the actions of the heroes in their intention to commit suicide with the help of gluttony. Both grub and "love" are shown on the screen with some amazing shamelessness, with savoring and naturalism truly unbearable (Pogozheva, 1973: 17).

The film critic K. Razlogov was also very strict, claiming that in *The Woman Banker* (*La Banquière*. France, 1980) by Francis Giraud (1944–2006) the viewer is given the opportunity to admire the dubious enterprise of the heroine-banker. This frank apology of bourgeois morality did not become an artistic achievement (Razlogov, 1981: 17).

Film critic O. Sulkin was no less severe in his article. He first accused Andrzej Wajda (1926–2016) of "artistic" running of "pseudo-historical ideas" in the French film *Danton* (France-FRG-Poland, 1982). And then he lamented that in the film by Jean-Jacques Annaud *Quest for Fire* (*La Guerre du feu*. France-Canada, 1981) "ahistoricity is clothed in the clothes of a scrupulous study of primitive society. We seem to be convinced: "homo sapiens" has always been cold and heartless, it is "in his blood". A gloomy, meaningless spectacle..." (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Active protest from the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* D. Orlov (1935–2021) was caused by the film *Charlie Bravo* (France, 1980) by Claude Bernard-Aubert (1930–2018): Returning his memory to the last days, hours and even minutes of the stay of the French colonialists in Vietnam, the director is trying to sort of revise not so much the political (which would be just stupid today!), but the moral results of that war imperialist, colonial. On the one hand, and people's, liberation – on the other. Depicting the suffering of a bunch of thugs dressed in khakis, and with them a blond girl from a medical school, the director is trying to win over the sympathy of the audience to their side. The partisans are cruel to the point of senselessness, and they set traps and traps, and for some reason they shoot from behind every bush. The creator of this movie does not try to answer only one question: who invited this flying detachment of flayers to a foreign land, what do they

need here, why weren't they at home? Hopeless are attempts to overestimate and rethink what history long ago gave its clear, clear and final answer (Orlov, 1981: 16-18).

Other notable French films deserved higher ratings from the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*: *To Die of Love* (*Mourir d'aimer*. France-Italy, 1970), *The Infernal Trio* (*Le Trio infernal*. France-Italy-FRG, 1974), *Loulou* (France, 1980), *Watchmaker from Saint-Paul* (*L'Horloger de Saint-Paul*. France, 1974), *Vincent, Francois, Paul and the Others* (*Vincent, François, Paul... et les autres*. France-Italy, 1974), *Slap* (*La Gifle*. France-Italy, 1974), *Jean's Wife* (*La femme de Jean*. France, 1973), *Lily, love me* (*Lily, aime-moi*. France, 1975), *Cage* (*La Cage*. France, 1975), *Molière* (France, 1978) (Andreev, 1979: 18-19; Bocharov, 1972: 155; Chernenko, 1975: 9; Dolmatovskaya, 1975: 18; Golubev, 1975: 19; Ivanova, 1975: 16-17; Markova, 1975: 17; Razlogov, 1981: 18).

The *Soviet Screen* of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s also published a number of articles about films traditional for the French entertainment cinema about policemen and bandits.

Here K. Razlogov positively noted that Michel Drash (1930-1990) in *The Red Sweater* (*Le Pull-over rouge*. France, 1979) denounces the inertia and bias of the actions of the police and prosecutors during the trial, and *The Police War* (*La Guerre des polices*. France, 1979) is directed primarily against the police themselves. He also praised the detective Yves Boisset *The Woman Cop* (*La Femme flic*. France, 1980), where the heroine is forced to leave the police service, since her investigation revealed the involvement of very high-ranking persons in the crimes (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

And then the conclusion followed that the combination of the futility of the fight against crime and the assertion of crime as the only way to restore trampled justice, the inability to find oneself in the grip of the bourgeois way of life and the doom of any active protest ... are also inherent in many other movies – a wide range of anti-bourgeois works, films of various subjects, genres, styles, individual creative manners. Their authors are united by the idea of leaving society, the rejection of traditional norms, the desire to gain true freedom outside the restrictive framework of the bourgeoisie (Razlogov, 1981: 18).

But at the same time, “the professionalism of other masters can easily degenerate into craftsmanship, brilliant acting can become self-indulgent actors' "numbers" (for example, in recent adventure comedies starring Jean-Paul Belmondo), the coherence of stories can become clichés repeated from film to film. ... With all the talent of their creators, the significance of these pictures does not go beyond variations on traditional themes that are essentially deadpan for contemporary Western art” (Razlogov 1981: 18).

One of such films with the participation of Belmondo – *The Inheritor* (*L'Héritier*. France-Italy, 1972) – was analyzed in the *Soviet Screen* by film critic G. Dolmatovskaya: In the plot structure of *The Inheritor* much resembles *The Mattei Affair* (*Il caso Mattei*. Italy, 1971) is a strong, poignant political film by Italian director Francesco Rosi. Already the “secondary” itself, the variation of the finds of a talented predecessor, is a quite clear sign that *The Inheritor* belongs to commercial cinema. ... And the director himself has no power to resist this force. Instead of the notorious cinematography of white telephones, he offers the viewer the cinematography of his own jets, equipped with the techniques of intelligent cinema: the wandering camera, the meaningful retrospections, the terseness of dialogues – all this cold and precise professionalism and directorial sophistication substitute the civic passion of the author, without which there is no political film (Dolmatovskaya, 1973: 12-13).

Critically presenting the film *The Burglars* (*Le Casse*. France-Italy, 1971) by Henri Verneuil (1920–2002) and other French films about crime on the pages of the magazine, the journalist Y. Bocharov wrote that the time of noble detectives like Sherlock Holmes or Maigret passed. Now detectives are increasingly competing with gangsters in atrocities. And the sympathy of the audience is given most often to gangsters. I have not seen a single detective on the screen who would die with glory in the line of duty. But gangsters invariably die like heroes in an unequal battle. There is no point in explaining what the educational value of such movies is. Even if we assume that in this way the police, standing guard over the interests of the bourgeoisie, are exposed (Bocharov, 1972: 15).

The *Soviet Screen* did not bypass the popular in the West (and, of course, in France) theme of cinema sex in the 1970s.

So film critic L. Pogozheva informed readers that in the French film *Mother and the Slut* (*La maman et la putain*. France, 1973) for more than an hour and a half, the characters cannot make a choice with whom to stay: with his wife or mistress. The film takes place mainly in bed. The film contains social criticism of society, interprets the problem of society's disastrous indifference

to man, condemns morality, or rather immorality, prevailing in bourgeois reality ... But still, modern man, according to the author of the film, first of all, shows interest in sex (Pogozheva, 1973: 16-17).

Moreover, the film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) was convinced (in fact, erroneously, since the example for proving this thesis was chosen extremely unsuccessfully) that the satirical picture became the limit of showing sex in French cinema. Bertrand Blier *Get Your Handkerchiefs Ready* (*Préparez vos mouchoirs*. France-Belgium, 1978): Here bourgeois art has crossed limits that until recently it was not decided: children now enter into sexual games as characters (Freilich, 1980: 17).

Among the French comedies that did not get into the Soviet film distribution, the magazine chose, as a rule, the works of famous comedians. For example, he praised Gerard Ury's comedy *The Brain* (*Le Cerveau*. France-Italy, 1969) for satire (Revich, 1971).

The film critic G. Dolmatovskaya wrote quite kindly and another well-known comedy by Gerard Ury – *Delusions of Grandeur* (*La Folie des grandeurs*. France-Italy-Spain-FRG, 1971): Free exercises on the theme of *Ruy Blas* by Victor Hugo testify that Ury is a comedian and Louis de Funès have a rich arsenal of comic tricks, sometimes already familiar, because de Funès is not inexhaustible, and we happened to see much more subtle manifestations of French humor (Dolmatovskaya, 1972: 14).

The works of notable masters were selected by the *Soviet Screen* for articles on Spanish cinema.

So film critic L. Pogozheva (1913–1989) wrote about the film *Anna and the Wolves* (*Ana y los lobos*. Spain, 1973) by Carlos Saura (1932–2023) (Pogozheva, 1973: 16-17).

A film critic Y. Warszawsky (1911–2000) wrote about another film by Saura: *Hole* (*La Madriguera*. Spain, 1969).

And it should be noted that this film evoked generally negative emotions in the venerable film critic: “Photo advertising at the entrance is alarming: some disgusting bugs and spiders are crawling over the body of a young woman; another photo frame shows the bloody face of a young man. Isn't it a horror movie? No, we are told, [*Hole*] is a problematic work by a sharp-minded artist, responding to the dramas of the times. ... But do not rush to summarize – everything is deceptive in the film of Carlos Saura. The film hardly needs your viewer's analytical skills – it takes the incompatibility of human beings as the eternal curse of the human race. Bardem and Berlanga meditated, grieved, called for humanity – their student Saura becomes hardened. Either the heroes of the film, or the author come up with new and new tortures for young souls, then in a dream – as, for example, with bugs – then in reality. ... From time to time you remember: somewhere all this has already happened, and more than once. Two people living inseparably together is hell. Whose motive? Of course, Sartre. The young woman is forever traumatized by her childhood fear of a Catholic trial; whose motive? Everyone will tell you: Fellini! A homemade masquerade with dressing up to revive love passion – who did we meet this with? Cinema connoisseurs will answer without hesitation: Buñuel! “Theater for yourself” becomes too cruel, threatens spouses with death ... Many viewers will remember the film with Elizabeth Taylor *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (USA, 1966). Saura's film is also made up of “blocks”, only different ones. ...

Obviously, a few fans separate [*Hole*] from the flow of the usual film repertoire because in the film, whatever you say, the director's talent and serious school make themselves felt: after all, he was a student of Bardem and Berlanga. And it is felt somewhere that the underlying basis of the drama is a crisis of life values. But where is the “nerve” of the artist? Bardem once said about Carlos Saura and other young filmmakers of his generation: “We tried to convey our heartache and anger to them, it all turned out to be only cruelty.” The film by Carlos Saura confirmed this disappointing characterization” (Warszawsky, 1969: 14-15).

Like the cinematographies of other Western countries, the *Soviet Screen* looked for anti-bourgeois and anti-militarist films in West German cinema.

In particular, the film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005) believed that the anti-war film of Michael Verhoeven *OK* (West Germany, 1970) for all its miscalculations – one of the best works of “young cinema” of Germany, or, as it is also called, “German new wave” (Gromov, 1972: 16-17).

Further, E. Gromov noted the artistic merits of P. Fleischmann's philosophical and analytical drama *Hunting Scenes in Lower Bavaria* (*Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern*. FRG, 1969) and film-parables of A. Kluge: These paintings are very different both in genre and in style, and ideologically and aesthetically. But there is something in common between them: frankness bordering on

naturalism in the depiction of the shady sides of life and the predominance of a negative, critical principle (Gromov, 1972: 16-17).

E. Gromov highly appreciated F. Schlöndorff's *Minute Flash (Strohfeuer)*. West Germany, 1972): Unlike the avant-garde frills of the directors of the "young German cinema", ... his film is staged in a realistic manner, there is no naturalism in it. The topic is taken quite relevant and serious – the position of women in Germany. The film shows with its own eyes that despite all the declarations of politicians and various "sex revolutions", discrimination against women in public life continues to be a fact. The soft and sincere play of the leading lady ... gives the picture a special charm and subtlety (Gromov, 1973).

Film expert K. Razlogov praised another sharply social movie – *Lead Times (Die bleierne Zeit)*. Germany, 1981) by Margarethe von Trotta: Not accepting terrorism, the director and the main character – and this is the depth and historical accuracy of the film *Lead Times* – understand that a sense of hopelessness often pushes on the path of bloody actions that do not achieve the desired results (Razlogov, 1983: 14-15).

In this context of support for socially oriented West German films, film critic E. Gromov wrote indignantly about the film *Touch, my friend (Las jucken, Kumpel!)* West Germany, 1972): Today the working theme is in fashion, and the film is declared as "proletarian" – about the Ruhr miners. However, the working family is shown in it as a completely bourgeois social unit in its way of thinking and even in everyday life. Vulgarity screams in every frame. And not only because the picture is implicated in the most explicit pornography. More symptomatic is the ethical position of the author and his characters. A wife can cheat on her husband with anyone. He pays her in the same coin. Something like a "group marriage" is also permissible, only a violation of external decorum, order in the apartment, decency in clothes, and so on, is unacceptable. And this is a "proletarian" way of life?! (Gromov, 1973).

However, the *Soviet Screen* wrote relatively rarely about West German films like *Touch, My Friends*.

In the foreground were still the paintings of the first row: *The Tin Drum (Die Blechtrommel)*. FRG-France, 1979) by Volker Schlöndorff, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser (Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle)*. FRG, 1974) by Werner Herzog and others.

So the film critic S. Freilich (1920–2005) highly appreciated Volker Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum*, noting that the film is based on the novel by Günter Gross in the tradition of expressionism and satirical grotesque, who always resorts to a fantastic situation (Freilikh, 1980: 17).

And film critic M. Chernenko (1931–2004) wrote that in the drama *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, the director is trying to break through to the secret of psychological, philosophical, universal. For how many times has the screen tried to convince the viewer of the original human meanness, bestial cruelty. And this German Mowgli of the twenties of the last century, not burdened with the vices of civilization, turns out to be the embodiment of decency, kindness, goodwill, and such that it becomes one of the reasons for his tragic death – a complete inability to self-defense, the inability to believe in evil, ill will, cynicism (Chernenko, 1976: 16-17).

True, other films by W. Herzog in the *Soviet Screen* were much less fortunate. Film critic S. Freilich wrote that in bourgeois cinema the apocalyptic theme is treated in a decadent way. ... the spiritual crisis of bourgeois society is accepted as a crisis of the human race. Hence the fear of the end of the world, the aestheticization of horror (in connection with which various kinds of monsters and monsters appear on the screen in abundance), in these pictures the importance of the subconscious and instincts is exaggerated (which is the reason for excessive attention to sex and human pathology). Unfortunately, this also includes the film *Nosferatu (Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht)*. West Germany-France, 1979) (Freilich, 1980: 17). The film critic O. Sulkin and another mystical visionary film by W. Herzog – *Fitzcarraldo* (West Germany, 1982) (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Turning to the work of another famous West German director – R.W. Fassbinder – film critic O. Sulkin wrote that "There is some tragic sense in the fact that Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who flashed like a comet across the cinema sky and left at the age of 36 as the author of 40 (!) movies, put an end to his work with the painting *Querelle* (West Germany-France, 1982), which absorbed all the inconsistency of his talent, which crossed all conceivable boundaries of morality, reflecting deep pessimism, the crisis of the artist's worldview" (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

The attempts of the authors of some West German films to whitewash the Nazis and distort the events of the Second World War aroused justifiably sharp rejection among the reviewers of the *Soviet Screen*.

So film critic O. Sulkin wrote about the military drama *The Boat (Das Boot)*. Germany, 1981) by Wolfgang Petersen (1941–2022): “The most expensive film in the history of West German cinema was made on a grand scale, inventively, technically flawlessly. What do we see? Everyday life of the crew of a Nazi submarine. Her life is specific. And morals even more so. Fascist pirates, it turns out, do not like the Fuhrer, despise the Nazi uniform, ignore the greeting "Heil Hitler". But they listen to the BBC, sing English and French songs with pleasure, and openly conduct "seditious" conversations. They have never heard of genocide, concentration camps and similar "land" horrors perpetrated by "colleagues". Do they kill themselves? They kill, but... immeasurably suffering and tormented by a guilt complex. The viewer is trying to convince that these are "good guys" to evoke sympathy and admiration for their fortitude and endurance. This is how an attempt is made to justify what cannot be justified, this is how historical truth is distorted, this is how they try to rehabilitate Nazism. It is far from accidental that the right-wing press on both sides of the Atlantic praises in every way the film “useful for NATO”, clearly adjusted to the current imperialist conjuncture” (Sulkin, 1983: 16-17).

Journalist M. Borisov rightly argued that the film *Cross of Iron (Steiner – Das Eiserne Kreuz)*. West Germany-UK, 1977) shows the fascist thugs with the *Magnificent Seven*, and the war in the form of a sports game with the participation of experienced professionals: if they lose, then this is not so scary – happiness, they say, will smile another time. ... the viewer should be on the side of Steiner: he is kind, humane, the idol of a captive boy killed by cruel, soulless Russian barbarians (Borisov, 1977).

Film critic A. Karaganov (1915–2007), who wrote that in the military drama *Cross of Iron*, was in complete agreement with him: *Cross of Iron* idealized was shown a sergeant of the Nazi army, fighting somewhere near Novorossiysk, so this movie was on a par with dozens of less noticeable and not so skillful in art movies, directed by a vile and cunning idea that if the Wehrmacht was “cleansed” of “extremes "SS" army, this army of courageous and experienced soldiers can serve the "West" well in the military confrontation with the "East" (Karaganov, 1982: 1).

Following M. Borisov (Borisov, 1977), A. Karaganov (Karaganov, 1982: 1) and V. Chernenko (Chernenko, 1983: 16-17), film critic L. Melville emphasized that in the film *Cross of Iron* “the German invaders fighting on the Russian front are falsely romanticized. In the director's interpretation, they are “just people”, by the will of fate beyond their control, thrown into difficult conditions, the same for all parties: both the aggressors and the defenders of their homeland. It is quite clear that such an "existentialist" equalization of political and moral opposites does not clarify the true meaning of the events of the Second World War, but obscures it to the limit. And in the film *The Boat (Das Boot)*. West Germany, 1981), W. Petersen "tries to present the horrors of war through the eyes of ordinary Germans, who, without hesitation," carried out orders "given" from above "... Depicting the torment and horrors, through which ordinary submariners pass, W. Petersen tries to arouse sympathy and sympathy for them. Insidious intent: after all, in this way they are trying to distract the viewer from the question – why are they following orders? Their conscience is not burdened, not one of them awakens a sense of guilt and responsibility for what they have done” (Melville, 1985: 20).

We can agree with the final conclusion of L. Melville even today: in a number of Western films, the events of the Second World War are distorted in favor of speculative schemes and reactionary concepts that are beneficial to those circles in the West who seek to pervert the lessons of the fight against fascism, to justify, and sometimes even rehabilitate the plans revanchists (Melville, 1985: 20).

Presenting Swedish cinematography on its pages, the editors of the magazine again turned to the work of the director Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007), who was almost inaccessible to the mass Soviet audience.

Here journalist A. Dumov wrote with regret the following: “When I watched *The Touch (Beröringen)*. Sweden-USA, 1971), the impression of Bergman's previous painting *Shame (Skammen)*. Sweden, 1968) was still vivid in my memory, a vivid work in which the destructive effect is revealed wars on human souls. Against this background, Bergman's new ribbon appears to be a cheap commercial craft, a zigzag in creativity” (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

And the film critic L. Pogozeva remained dissatisfied with the pessimism of another psychological drama of the great Swedish director – *Cries and Whispers (Viskningar och rop)*. Sweden, 1972) (Pogozeva, 1973: 16-17).

True chamber drama of I. Bergman *After the Rehearsal* (*Efter repetitionen*. Sweden, 1984) received an assessment in the *Soviet Screen* (Bauman, 1985: 16-17).

It was also noted that Roy Andersson's *A Swedish Love Story* (*En Kärlekshistoria*. Sweden, 1970) enjoys great and well-deserved success in Sweden: This film is not only about the younger generation, but also about Sweden itself today, about the everyday life of ordinary people. R. Andersson, by all accounts, has a bright talent. They predict a bright future for him (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

As before, *Soviet Screen* tried to impress upon its readers that the most interesting phenomenon in Swedish cinematography are the social works of young artists... Being honest before their conscience, they look upon art as a weapon in the struggle for the reorganization of society on progressive principles. Each of them, to the extent of their understanding and skill, opens the audience's eyes to capitalist reality, to the world of social injustice (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Journalist A. Dumov believed that the best of these works is *The Line*: A small Swedish village, blooming summer, joyful faces. Suddenly, a foreign aircraft with bacteriological weapons on board crashes nearby. An epidemic begins. The authorities don't fight it. Only an order is given not to let anyone into the infected area and not to let them out of it. The film blames capitalism as a system in which the common man becomes a pawn in the hands of politicians and the military (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Another movie in this series, – continued A. Dumov, the film *Comrades, the enemy is well organized*. It is documentary, tells about a two-month strike of miners in the Swedish North, one of the largest in the country in the post-war years. Members of the strike committee were involved in the processing of the footage. This was of considerable benefit, for it helped to focus attention on the main thing. Perhaps not all the assessments of the authors can agree. But the film undoubtedly contributes to the intensification of the workers' struggle for social progress (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

However, knowing that Swedish cinema is not only philosophical films by Ingmar Bergman and films about the working class, the *Soviet Screen* did not get tired of exposing Swedish films that to one degree or another reflected the tendencies of the sexual revolution.

In particular, it was noted that director V. Sjöman shocked the audience with the dilogy *I am curious* (*Jag är nyfiken*. Sweden, 1967–1968), and, perhaps for the first time in the history of cinema, stuffed them with scenes of sexual acts, which caused a storm of discussions in Western cinema. In order to rid the movie of censorship prohibitions, he equipped it with a "parallel" line – the search for heroes of social justice. Sjöman seemed to have found a gold mine. But she quickly faded. The film business began to search for a new vein. And found it in the form of "popular scientific" films... Their essence is the on-screen demonstration of sexual acts mixed up with the speculations of sexologists about sexual problems (Dumov 1972: 12-13).

Articles about international film festivals and foreign film weeks in the USSR

In articles in the *Soviet Screen* on international film festivals, the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies, and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, a clear division of Western cinema into "progressive" and "bourgeois" still reigned.

Most willingly, the *Soviet Screen* wrote about the state of affairs in Italian cinema and the Venice Film Festival.

In particular, the film critic G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) recalled that the cinema of Italy is well known to our audience. It once gave rise to neorealism, an outstanding artistic phenomenon in the entire world cinema, which arose, as the Italians themselves do not get tired of repeating with gratitude, under the beneficial influence of our cinema – the films and theoretical works of S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin, A. Dovzhenko and other Soviet masters. Even today it remains in Italy the leading edge of the daily struggle for national and democratic culture against the expansion of American capital and ideology. True, today in this struggle, the preponderance so far – at least quantitatively – is on the side of the so-called commercial film production. The commercialization of Italian cinema goes hand in hand with its Americanization. Having taken over a significant part of film production, American capital is taking over the film distribution, and now the cinema chain. ... If you analyze Italian film production over the past year or two, you see that a good 90 percent are movies that are a mass consumer product in the Western sense of the word, a product that is skillfully made, in beautiful packaging, but no less rotten, if not poisonous. . The vast majority are films about gangsters. This does not mean that erotica and just pornography have lost their positions on the Italian screen, but they are being pressed by cruelty, violence, robbery and murder.

At the same time, “in the Italian “consumer society”, the process of commercialization of cinema has gone so far that even some films that seem to be protesting against the bourgeoisie immediately become an object of sale and purchase, a subject of speculation. Following Marco Bellocchio's film *Fists in the Pocket* (*I Pugni in tasca*. Italy, 1965), which anticipated the "cinema of protest", dozens of films by young directors came out – with rehashings of the motifs of this "rebellious" film. However, extreme “leftism” accompanies fashion speculation in them, pseudo-protest covers up sophisticated eroticism and cruelty more purely than in commercial films (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

On the other hand, as the same G. Bogemsky noted, the main theme of the advanced cinema in Italy has been and remains the anti-fascist and anti-war theme. ... These are very different films, but all of them are imbued with a strong condemnation of fascism and sound like a reminder of its atrocities. However, progressive Italian filmmakers now approach the anti-fascist and anti-war theme even more broadly: fascism yesterday is neo-colonialism and American imperialism today is the thought that pervades some of the new films (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

As examples, further cited the films of Valerio Zurlini *Seated at His Right* (*Seduto alla sua destra*. Italy, 1968) is a passionate anti-colonialist work inspired by the feat of Patrice Lumumba; *The Battle of Algiers* (*La Battaglia di Algeri*. Italy-Algeria, 1965) and *Queimada* (*Burn!/Queimada!* Italy-France-Colombia, 1969) by Gillo Pontecorvo (1919–2006).

At the same time, G. Bogemsky admitted that not everything is so simple and prosperous in the sphere of progressive, anti-bourgeois, anti-fascist, anti-colonialist cinema: some films are of an anarchist, leftist character, in some, along with extremist motives, revisionist-capitulation sounds (Bogemsky, 1971: 13-14).

The TASS correspondent in the UK, V. Vasilets, complained on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: Filmmakers are sure that sex and violence are what keep the audience in the hall. The opposite is now almost impossible to prove, because other films in London are not so easy to find. Indeed, of 436 films shown in West End theaters last year, only eight were free of explicit violence and sex and could be watched by children. Here are some of the titles of films currently on the London screen. ... The lion's share of the rental is violence, sex, anti-Soviet propaganda. ... The campaign of spy mania, which recently swept through England in a dirty wave, finds continuation in endless television series, newspaper "ducks", and film handicrafts. Soviet people are most often represented in them as stupid, treacherous, poor in spirit. Subsidizing such "works" are not interested in art. They cook them, spurred on by the menacing noise of the demonstrations of the English unemployed, the desperate pensioners who cannot live on meager handouts, the students' unions, whose rights are trampled on by the Conservative government. They avert the eyes of the public, slipping it, instead of deep social causes, an imaginary reason from outside the “red danger” (Vasilets, 1972: 18).

Film critic R. Sobolev (1926–1991) created a similar panorama of American cinema, arguing that in the United States, as always in the past, only individual paintings really deeply and reliably reflect the reality of life. The bulk of the approximately 340 films that are now shot annually in the United States are purely commercial productions. A large place is occupied by films that were previously divided into “gangster”, “detective”, “police”, etc., and are now increasingly called “crime films” (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

Further, R. Sobolev spoke sharply negatively about Hollywood “horror films”: Although vampires, werewolves, and all sorts of monsters still densely populate the screen, the ruler of the underworld himself, Satan, comes to the fore today. R. Polanski laid the foundation here, having filmed *Rosemary's Baby* (USA, 1968): an story about how an anti-messiah came into the world instead of a messiah – the son of an American woman and the devil. There have been many such films in the past seven years. The most sensational of them is *The Exorcist* (USA, 1973) by W. Friedkin (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

And then the film critic reminded readers that a special and significant part of modern American film production is made up of pictures that critics began to call “retro” ... They appeared quite a long time ago – the already famous gangster ballad *Bonnie and Clyde* (USA, 1967) by A. Penn not only showed the horrors of the great depression of the early 1930s, but to a certain extent romanticized that time. However, the true heyday of "retrocinema" came in the 1970s. ... One must agree that, in principle, turning to history has nothing wrong: history often helps to understand the present, to avoid mistakes. It seems, however, that for the most part retro is a cinema of illusions, so familiar to Hollywood, the factory of dreams (Sobolev, 1974: 16-17).

As for another English-speaking country, Australia, the pages of *Soviet Screen* emphasized that in all the film studios of the country, all its cinemas, have passed into the grasping paws of the American and partly English film companies and are completely controlled by them. More than 400 feature films are imported into Australia each year, mostly from the US. A stream of foreign-made commercial movies promoting violence, cruelty, greed, bestial attitude towards women, explicit pornography filled the screens of literally all cinemas. But where will you go and to whom will you tell if colonial times have come in Australian cinema, if the “enlightenment” of the population has been completely transferred to foreign film companies? ... In addition, Australian producers generally do not dare to invest any significant funds in national films, rightly fearing that they will not be able to compete with Hollywood action films worth millions (Romanov, 1971: 12-13).

According to TASS correspondent R. Serebrennikov, French cinema in the 1970s also experienced a difficult period of creative difficulties and sharp social contradictions. ... Catastrophically reduced the total number of cinemas. ... There is a continuous rise in prices for cinema tickets (Serebrennikov, 1973: 14-15). And then the article expressed regret that progressive French films about workers and peasants ... are experiencing difficulties in France with access to mass film distribution. And all this is happening at a time when French cinema is experiencing an acute shortage of ideas, when the screens are crammed with ordinary production, when there are too few topics that have a public and social sound (Serebrennikov, 1973: 14-15).

No matter what happened in the cinema, according to the *Soviet Screen* went in the 1970s in Sweden: In the mid-50s, up to 72 million film visits per year were registered in the country, and in 1970 only 28 million tickets were sold, that is, an average of 3.5 tickets for each of the eight million inhabitants. The attendance of Swedish films has especially decreased. ... An important role in the process of renunciation of the masses from the art of cinema was played by the low artistic quality of most films. Cinematography could effectively fight to retain its audience by developing their artistic tastes and offering them great art. However, it is easier for businessmen to “make money” on surrogate films than on good films. ... And Swedish commercial cinema most often follows the well-trodden path of producing purely entertainment films. All these crafts are without fail “peppered” with bed scenes in a concentration that meets the tastes of their creators. ... Today, the Swedish movie screen is dominated by American, French, English, Italian and other Western film products, mostly low-quality, entertaining (Dumov, 1972: 12-13).

Similarly, Norwegian cinematography was presented on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*. In particular, it was reported that almost half of all films that were released in general distribution in Norway glorified violence: 190 films featured murders, and in 51 films the victims of the murderers were women, and yet “these statistics do not include “permissible”, which is not contrary to “moral principles” “society sexism!” (Vesenberg, 1969: 12).

An alarming picture of the state of film distribution in Germany and West Berlin also arose in an article by film critic E. Gromov (1931–2005): “Most of the films shown on the West Berlin screen are stereotypical products of bourgeois mass culture. The themes of violence and sex vary in every way” (Gromov, 1973).

But when at the Workers in German Cinema Festival held in West Berlin ... titles of films devoted to the modern class struggle flashed on the screen, critics began to talk about the 'second breath' of [West German] proletarian cinema. The critics spoke of a 'second breath' of [West German] proletarian cinematography... A number of films attracted the attention of spectators and the press, owing their birth to a general intensification of political life, workers' mass demonstrations, and the indignation of youth against social injustice and the inequality of women (Chudov, 1974: 16). However, this article went on to criticize R.W. Fassbinder's television film *8 o'clock – not all day* (*Acht Stunden sind kein Tag*. FRG, 1973), where the consciousness of the necessity of the class struggle is somewhat blunted and even replaced by conciliation. The talented artist's subjective views on the class struggle and other problems of capitalism (Chudov, 1974: 16).

Film critic A. Novogradsky (1911–1996) was glad that at the film festival in Oberhausen a storm of passions was caused by the competition film of the West German director Axel Engstfeld *Festive Evening* (*Feier-Abend*. Germany, 1983), which was awarded the jury prize. ... The entire space of the documentary frame is filled with helmeted policemen. Eight thousand keepers of order on the streets of Bonn. Who are they protecting? It turns out that this evening the Bundeswehr is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The associated parade processions with torches, so reminiscent of the marches of the Nazi military, cause indignation among many ordinary residents of the city (Novogradsky, 1983: 18-19).

Having visited the next West Berlin Film Festival, the editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen*, D. Orlov, was pleased to inform the readers of the magazine that the West German directors and producers who made a joint statement during the festival expressing their indignation at the incompetence of the film forum management that had admitted such helpless films to the competition were also right. They also said that they would not participate in the festival from now on unless the situation changed in the future (Orlov, 1981 16-17).

However, D. Orlov went on to say that the lack of competence alone cannot explain the essence of the problem. It would be more accurate to speak about bias, about tendentiousness, about a certain, unambiguous position of those who lead the festival, directing its course – publicly and unspokenly. It is not without reason that one of the "incompetent" managers blurted out the admission that the West Berlin festival is being held on American money. In the context of this confession, the story of the screening at the festival two years ago of the slanderous American film *The Deer Hunter* also becomes especially clear (Orlov, 1981 16-17).

The competition program of the Cannes Film Festival in 1983 included such significant films as *Nostalghia* (Italy-USSR, 1983) by Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986), *Money* (*L'Argent*, France-Switzerland, 1983) by Robert Bresson (1901–1999), *The Legend of Narayama* (Japan, 1983) by Shohei Imamura (1926–2006). However, despite this, in the report about this festival, the key phrase was a standard phrase for this kind of material: "Looking at the long series of films you watched at Cannes with one glance, you come to a sad conclusion: his program clearly ignored the main, burning problems of the time, those that worry the people of the planet: the problems of peace and security, the preservation of life on Earth, the assertion of social justice" (Shulyukin, 1983).

Short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

In the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s, *Soviet Screen* from issue to issue published on its pages short messages about the release of filming and the release of foreign films on the world screen.

Very rarely, but among these informational messages slipped those that are usually classified as "yellow".

In particular, in 1972, the *Soviet Screen* published an article about how the Frenchman Jean-Claude Dag became the world's first robber director: he was arrested by the Paris police on charges of seven bank robberies. And although Jean-Claude motivated his activities by the fact that he needed funds to stage a grandiose gangster action movie, the court sentenced the filmmaker-robber to many years in prison (Radi ..., 1972: 16).

Similar material from the category "their morals" was dedicated to the actor Jose Antonio Valdelomar González (1958–1992): he first played the central role of a gang leader in Carlos Saura's *Fast! Hurry! (Deprisa, deprisa!* Spain, 1981), who received the main prize at the West Berlin Film Festival, and then, together with his partner, was arrested by the police after a real bank robbery (Kudrin, 1981: 18).

In 1975, film critic G. Bogemsky told the readers of the magazine in some detail about how Fellini was robbed of a film with key episodes of the not yet released *Casanova* (Italy-USA, 1976) (Bogemsky, 1975: 17).

In 1982, a note was published that the people of the 'world's most democratic state' were shocked to learn that Monroe had not committed suicide, but was the victim of a planned assassination committed by agents of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. In the grave atmosphere of bourgeois ideology in a society where pragmatism and militant callousness have long been a tool in the deception of people, the grinding and corruption of souls, where disappointment, pessimism, despair are the main motif of both real life and the life of art generated by this reality, the tragic story of the actress acquires a truly symbolic sound (Birukov, 1982: 17).

And in the pages of the 1984 magazine *Soviet Screen* described the details of the scandal associated with the fact that Hollywood director John Landis was threatened with imprisonment because on the set of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (USA, 1983) actor Vic Morrow and two children who starred in the film six and seven years old were killed (Leonidov, 1984: 20).

4. Conclusion

Based on content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of texts published during the "stagnant" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1969–1985), the authors came to the following conclusions.

Of the wide range of Hollywood and British films, Soviet film distribution in the period we analyzed included mainly films with an acute social message, critically showing Western realities. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that these films received maximum support in the *Soviet Screen*; articles by Soviet film critics emphasized the “progressive anti-bourgeois significance” of these films. It is very significant that, even when reviewing American films, which seemed to be completely far from politics, the reviewers of *Soviet Screen* demonstrated ideological approaches.

Of course, among the reviews of American and British films in *Soviet Screen*, there also appeared texts that were devoid of a direct appeal to politics. “Apoliticalism” was especially evident in reviews devoted to film adaptations of classical works, which often took place in the 19th century and earlier.

Frankly entertaining Hollywood and British films were released into Soviet distribution in the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s quite rarely. And here, *Soviet Screen* reviewers often sought to distance themselves from edifying political and ideological assessments, concentrating on a professional analysis of the artistic quality of this or that entertaining film.

In Italian and French cinema, the Soviet Screen consistently gave preference to political films that “expose capitalist reality.” Of course, *Soviet Screen*, as before, could not ignore the works of Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Francois Truffaut and other outstanding masters of cinema. But here, too, the magazine’s reviewers assessed their work mainly within the framework of Marxist ideological principles, on the basis of which even the films of such recognized masters as Federico Fellini were criticized.

The sharp rejection of *Soviet Screen* reviewers was often caused by entertainment films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo, which were reproached for promoting “supermanhood” and violence. The *Soviet Screen's* reviews of famous French and Italian comedies were more benevolent, but overall rather skeptical.

Of course, the range of Western films, for one reason or another, did not reach the Soviet mass audience, was much wider than film distribution. And year after year, the editors of the magazine selected examples for criticism of bourgeois society and imperialism: films of an anti-communist and anti-Soviet orientation, as well as films “glorifying the American military” and “whitewashing the Nazis.”

The openly entertaining part of Western film production has traditionally been viewed by the magazine mainly in a sharply negative light. In particular, it was emphasized that Hollywood has nothing to say to American moviegoers; all that remains is to amaze their imagination with intricate tricks, the magnificence of “special effects” and the opportunity to escape for at least two hours into the world of illusions and fairy tales from the bleak reality, from the restless modern problems (Romanov, 1982: 18).

Soviet Screen did not ignore the topic of film sex, popular in the West in the 1970s. Of course, articles were published about films of this kind, condemning the “decomposition of the morals of bourgeois society.”

In articles in *Soviet Screen* about international film festivals and the current repertoire of Western national cinemas and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, there was also a clear division of Western cinema into “progressive” and “bourgeois”.

5. Acknowledgments

This research was funded by the Russian Science Foundation grant (RSF, project No. 23-28-00015, <https://rscf.ru/project/23-28-00015/>) at the Taganrog Institute of Management and Economics. Project theme: “Western cinema on the pages of the Soviet Screen Magazine (1925-1991)”. Head of the project is Professor A. Levitskaya.

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