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History of Soviet Cinematography: Regional Aspect, Banned Films and Science Fiction Movies

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Abstract

The materials for this article are books by contemporary authors on the history of Soviet cinema and the problems of Soviet cinema censorship.

Our proposed methodology is based on an integrated approach that provided consideration of all aspects and relationships that influenced the processes under study. Research methods used in the work include historical-comparative and historical-systematic.

The analysis of film studies literature has shown that in recent years, the authors have been particularly interested in studies of the development of Soviet cinema. However, against this background, not so many works have been published about Soviet films subject to censorship, and in fact there are no books that would collect and systematize information about Soviet science fiction. The information vacuum that formed in 2021 was filled with a number of new monographs, which are discussed in this article.

Keywords: film history, USSR, Soviet Union, film studies, film criticism, sociology, science fiction.

1. Introduction

The analysis of film studies literature has shown that in recent years, the authors have been particularly interested in studies of the development of Soviet cinema. However, against this background, not so many works have been published about Soviet films subject to censorship, and in fact there are no books that would collect and systematize information about Soviet science fiction. The information vacuum that formed in 2021 was filled with a number of new monographs, which are discussed in this article.

2. Materials and methods

The materials for this article are books by contemporary authors on the history of Soviet cinema and the problems of Soviet cinema censorship.

Our proposed methodology is based on an integrated approach that provided consideration of all aspects and relationships that influenced the processes under study. Research methods used in the work include historical-comparative and historical-systematic.

3. Discussion

Along with a wide range of film studies literature in the USSR, books covering the development of cinematography in certain regions are also distributed. So in 1983 the book *The*

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Cinematic Life of the Capital of Soviet Ukraine was published (Zhukova, Zhurov, 1983). In it, the authors investigated the formation of cinematography from the moment of the first public film show of the Lumière brothers at the N. Solovtsov Theater, which took place on December 14, 1896 in Kiev (Zhukova, Zhurov, 1983: 5), until the release of Timofey Levchuk's film *From Bug to the Visla* (Zhukova, Zhurov, 1983: 144). However, the authors in their work limited themselves to a description of the filmmaking processes. Unfortunately, the cinema activity in Kiev was outside the scope of the study.

The development of cinematography in Moscow is reflected in the book *Moscow cinema addresses: A short guide*, published four years later (Budyak, Mykhaylov, 1987). The authors of the book invited the readers to take a short journey, starting with the first screening of the Lumière brothers' cinema in the *Hermitage* summer garden, right up to the events of the cinema life of the capital of the USSR in the 1980s (Budyak, Mykhaylov, 1987: 3). Unlike Ukrainian film critics (Zhukova, Zhurov, 1983), the authors of this work in a popular form introduced readers to the so-called "cinematic routes" of Moscow, the book revealed the addresses where films were shot, addresses of Moscow cinemas. More detailed information on cinematographic enterprises was presented in a separate reference section (Budyak, Mykhaylov, 1987: 346-348).

Note, however, that such literature was not widely disseminated in the Soviet Union. An increased interest in the development of cinematography in certain regions was outlined only after the collapse of the USSR.

One of the first works was a small brochure of Ukrainian film experts *Poltava Cinematic*, published in a limited edition in 1999 (Havrylenko, 1999). Although the response of the Ukrainian film critic Alla Zhukova noted that "the book is not a consistent publication in the same style, and that each chapter of the book has its own character and style" (Zhukova, 1999: 3), in our opinion, this was not a very successful attempt to unite in one work various aspects of cinematographic activity in Poltava. The work was poorly structured: on pages 7-16, a brief excursion to the "magic lanterns" sessions and the first film shows in Poltava was presented, the rest consisted of information about cinematographers who had a relationship with Poltava, as well as a documentary essay about a Poltava collector. According to the authors, this book opened the series *Golden Pages of the History of Cinema of the Ukrainian Province*, but the continuation of the series was never published.

Two works exploring the formation and development of Lviv cinema, the authors limited the same time frame – 1896-1939. In the monograph *From the history of cinema culture in Lviv 1918–1939* (Hyershevs'ka, 2004), the author introduced previously unknown facts about the formation and development of Lviv cinema into scientific use. The book consisted of two sections *Acquaintance with cinema and its importance for the inhabitants of Lviv in 1896–1918* (Hyershevs'ka, 2004: 6-30) and *Cinema Culture of Lviv in the Interwar Twenties in 1918–1939* (Hyershevs'ka, 2004: 31-77). In each of the sections, the author explored the formation of film production, film criticism and theatrical business in Lviv on the basis of archival materials and materials from printed sources.

The book *History of cinema in Lviv 1918-1939* (Kotlobulatova, 2014) can be characterized to a greater extent as an album rather than a study. A rather modest text, presented in the book in two languages – Ukrainian and Polish. The text is arranged thematically – *Films that were shot in Lviv* (Kotlobulatova, 2014: 8-26), *Cinemas in Lviv* (Kotlobulatova, 2014: 27-85) and *Lvivians in Polish and World Cinematography* (Kotlobulatova, 2014: 86-94).

Two other books by Ukrainian film critics have explored the formation and development of cinema in Odessa. The monograph *Cinema in Odessa: A Guide to Old and New Cinemas* (Malinovskiy, 2010) is similar to the aforementioned work *Moscow cinema addresses: A short guide* (Budyak, Mykhaylov, 1987). In it, the author gave a wide panorama from the first film shows of the Lumière brothers in Odessa, to modern cinemas, examined the processes of organizing the production of film equipment in Odessa from the first workshops to the organization of the KINAP plant. A positive factor of the work is the widespread use of archival sources: documentation on the permission to open cinemas and cinema studios, information about cinema figures who worked in Odessa.

Book *Odessa... Silent Cinema. 1897-1930* (Mislavskiy, 2015) in its structure is a biofilmographic reference book and consists of three sections: Filmographic (Mislavskiy, 2015: 6-131), Biographical (Mislavskiy, 2015: 132-348) and Appendices (Mislavskiy, 2015: 349-375). The section *Appendices* includes information about events and dates related to the cinema of Odessa, about cinemas and film distribution organizations, about books and periodicals published in

Odessa, as well as addresses of Odessa film workers. Another regional biofilmographic reference book is *The Cinematic History of Kharkov 1896–2010. Names. Films. Events* (Mislavskiy, 2011).

In the 21st century, the publication of books on the development of cinema in certain regions has also intensified in Russia. For example, in 2003, the film critic V. Mikhailov published the book *Stories about the Cinema of Old Moscow* (Mikhaylov, 2003), written in the genre of an essay on local history. It is dedicated to film entrepreneurs, film distributors, cinema owners, as well as the first censors of cinema. The author pays special attention to Alexander Khanzhonkov and his company.

The book *Moscow in the cinema. In the places of cult Soviet films* (Mitrochenkova, 2015) is built on the principle of a tour of cinematic Moscow along the route of the metro lines. The book acquaints readers with the filming locations of the cult Soviet films *The Irony of Fate or Easy Steam*, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, *Office Romance*, *Ivan Vasilyevich Changes Profession*, etc. The publication includes a short filmography (Mitrochenkova, 2015: 148-152).

Similar in genre and the book of the former editor-in-chief of the magazine *Ecran* B. Pinsky *Moscow in the cinema. Leaving nature. Following in the footsteps of the heroes of your favorite films* (Pinsky, 2017).

The book *Cinematography in St. Petersburg. 1907-1917. Filmmaking and Filmography* (Kovalova, 2012). Filmmaking in St. Petersburg-Petrograd is presented in this monograph for the period from 1907 to 1917. The work contains information about St. Petersburg film companies, detailed filmography, as well as information about more than 500 St. Petersburg cinemas, and is designed primarily for specialists in film historians.

Also worth noting is the scientific publication *Cinematography of Siberia: Communication, Language, Creativity* (Khilko, 2010). The book contains scientific and methodological material about the cultural and ecological potential, content and language in documentary and fiction cinematography in the Novosibirsk, Omsk and Kemerovo regions. For the first time, the author explores the features and ways of communicative interaction between amateur and professional cinema, as well as the cinema club and festival movement, as a form of creative communication in the region.

Two more monographs are devoted to the cinema of the Urals – *Cinema of the Urals* (Kirillova, 2013) and *Ural Cinema. Time, destinies, films* (Kirillova, 2016). These works give an idea of the formation and development of cinematography in the Ural region. The book reflects the work of the Union of Cinematographers, the Yekaterinburg House of Cinema, various film festivals, the Sverdlovsk Film Studio and other film production enterprises. Films and filmmakers related to the Ural region are described in separate sections.

In the same row is A. Fedorov's book *Cinematic Taganrog* (Fedorov, 2021), structured according to the canons of the cinematographic reference book, including the sections *Films Filmed in Taganrog and its Environs* (Fedorov, 2021: 5-73), *Cinematic Taganrog: who is who* (Fedorov, 2021: 74-83), *Filmography* (Fedorov, 2021: 92-97), etc. The positive qualities of this book include extensive annotations, and most importantly, what is lacking in many reference publications – reviews of Soviet and Russian film critics on the films filmed in Taganrog: *The Man I Love* (1966, directed by Y. Karasik), *Steppe* (1977, directed by S. Bondarchuk), *The wedding day will have to be clarified* (1979, director S. Puchinyan), *Rooks* (1982, directed by K. Ershov), *The Night is Short* (1981, directed by M. Belikov), *Burnt by the Sun-2* (2010, directed by N. Mikhalkov), etc. Very interesting and biographical section of the book, which presents famous actors, directors, film critics who were born in Taganrog: Faina Ranevskaya, Ivan Perestiani, Zinovy Vysokovsky, Victor Demin, Nikolai Dobrynin, Fedor Dobronravov, Pavel Derevyanko and many others (Fedorov, 2021).

4. Results

Two books by Professor A. Fedorov stand apart in the main stream of film studies literature on the history of Soviet cinema. These are the monographs *Soviet science fiction in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* (Fedorov, 2021) and *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* (Fedorov, 2021).

The book *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* (Fedorov, 2021) is one of the first attempts in Russian film studies (and we note very successful) to collect and systematize an array of film critical information about the so-called "shelf films", for censorship reasons, were not released in the all-Union rental, or had a limited release in certain republics in 1951-1991. As a result of censorship bans, the destinies of

the most talented filmmakers were broken, and their films were forgotten for many years. The book includes more than forty films that were released for distribution at least five years after the completion of filming.

Of course, Russian cinematography has addressed the topic of Soviet "shelf" films earlier (Fomin et al., 1992; 1993; 2006), but it mainly dealt with documents preserved in the archives (orders, memos, etc.), testimonies of filmmakers—eyewitnesses, etc. The Russian film experts E. Margolit and V. Shmyrov wrote about the banned Soviet films of 1924–1953 in the book *The Excluded Cinema 1924–1953* (Margolit, Shmyrov, 1995).

It was the existence of this work by E. Margolit and V. Shmyrov, as A. Fedorov notes, that determined the time interval of his own research: 1951–1991 (Fedorov, 2021).

A. Fedorov's book is of undoubted interest, since it examines many paintings prohibited by the Soviet censorship. As you know, at different times, *Check on the Roads*, *Commissar*, *Theme* and others, which have already become classics, ended up on the "shelf".

As you know, it is almost impossible to avoid all sorts of errors and inaccuracies when writing a reference work, since you have to process a huge array of sources. To avoid this A. Fedorov used a kind of know-how, which is a monitoring approach. Some parts of the text of the book *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* were previously tested by him on the Internet platforms *Yandex*, *Kino-prensa.ru*, *Kino-theater.ru*, *Facebook*. Thanks to this approach, the author received useful corrections and comments from fellow film critics and users.

However, if we operate with the rental figures (that is, the number of viewers who watched this or that film), from which various ratings are formed, then we can say with confidence that sources often give an overestimated digital indicator of some Soviet films. In our opinion, the discrepancy between the information about film attendance and the actual number of viewers who watched a particular film is due to flaws in the Soviet film distribution system, which was based on a combination of planning/commercial and propaganda tasks. All Soviet distributors were obliged to fulfill the state plan for the demonstration of specific (Soviet) films, but everywhere these instructions were violated. There were frequent cases when the reports indicated attendance figures for an ideologically important Soviet film, but in fact, instead of it, a box-office foreign action movie or comedy was shown. Therefore, in some cases, the digital indicators of the attendance of some Soviet films do not correspond to reality. The officials of the State Committee for Cinematography were aware of these violations, but they turned a blind eye to them.

V. Fedorov included exclusively full-length feature films in the book *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions*, since the banned Soviet short animated documentaries, documentaries, may in the future be included in a separate edition (Fedorov, 2021: 4). At the same time, the list of banned Soviet films selected for the book was compiled on the basis that they were inaccessible to viewers for five or more years.

In the course of writing this book, the author found out that sometimes the well-established information about the total prohibition of one or another Soviet film turned out to be wrong. So, according to many sources, the film by Kira Muratova *Long Farewell* (1971) did not appear on the all-Union screen, as it was banned and lay on the "shelf" until perestroika 1987. However, the author managed to find out that this movie still appeared on the all-Union screen in 1971 with a circulation of 500 copies (Fedorov, 2021: 5).

A. Fedorov also debunked the established opinion about the ban of the famous film by Andrei Konchalovsky *The Story of Asya Klyachina, Who Loved But Did Not Marry*. The book provides convincing facts according to which Konchalovsky's picture was released in the all-Union release under the title *Asya's Happiness* (Fedorov, 2021: 7). According to the author, the aforementioned films by A. Konchalovsky and K. Muratova, which were shown in film distribution in the late 1960s and in 1971, were watched by at least 1–2 million viewers (Fedorov, 2021: 8).

This information is beyond doubt. The author is well aware of the political and cultural context of Soviet times and he wrote in detail about the numbers of film distribution in his previous monumental book *One Thousand and One Highest Grossing Soviet Film: Opinions of Film Critics and Viewers* (Fedorov, 2021).

The book *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* is structured as follows: film distribution, supplements, filmography and a references.

The first section *Record-holders of the banned Soviet feature films (1951–1991), lying on the "shelf" for more than five years or stopped during the filming process* includes well-known films

(Fedorov, 2021: 10–81). However, the most interesting and highly valuable information is provided in the extended descriptions. First of all, these are the cited reviews of film critics and viewers, which makes it possible for readers to compare different opinions and reflect on how these films were perceived then and how they are seen now, in the 21st century.

For example, let us refer to the description of the first film in the section *Record-holders of the banned Soviet feature films (1951-1991) – Agony (1974/1975)* by Elem Klimov. A. Fedorov has done a tremendous job of finding information. The description contains published reviews of the leading film critics L. Anninsky, L. Mamatova, V. Fomin, I. Shilova and others, audience reviews, as well as various documents on the ban of the film *Agony* (Fedorov, 2021: 10-14).

A. Fedorov's material about the film *Agony* can be supplemented with a story about the Ukrainian experience of film screenings: for example, even after the release of *Agony* on Soviet screens in 1985, this film was not released in Kharkov for almost a year: *Agony* was shown at closed screenings in the regional administration of cinematography, the regional department of film distribution, and the regional committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. In addition, the visit to Kharkov of the actor A. Romashin, the performer of one of the main roles of the film, was organized. The actor had a meeting with directors of cinemas and staff of the regional administration of cinema, at which he talked about how the shooting of the film *Agony* took place.

Also for almost a year on private screenings of Kharkov was shown *Garage* by E. Ryazanov (1979). This film, according to the leadership of the regional administration of cinematography, was removed from the rental by order of the State Committee for Cinematography of the Ukrainian SSR at the request of the Kharkov Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and only after the intervention of the State Committee for Cinematography of the USSR, the film began to be shown in Kharkov cinemas.

In this regard, let us mention the situation associated with the film *Autumn* (1974, director A. Smirnov). This film was not shown on Ukrainian screens. But ... the director of the Kharkov regional film distribution department traded one film copy with his Belgorod colleague, and the picture was repeatedly shown at private screenings.

In the practice of Soviet film distribution, there were repeated cases when the films were not released in the union distribution, but were shown only in individual republics. A section of the book *Soviet full-length films (1951-1991), released only for republican distribution* (Fedorov, 2021: 82-86) is devoted to such films.

The advantages of A. Fedorov's book include testimonies of some eyewitnesses with whom the author of the book recorded interviews. Thus, the testimony of Alexander Ivanov, the performer of one of the main roles of the destroyed film *The Moment of Truth / In August of the forty-fourth* (1975, director V. Žalakevičius), is very valuable. There is practically no evidence of the peculiarities of the filming process of this film. The actor shared very interesting memories of his work and filming the film (Fedorov, 2021: 97-102).

Unfortunately, Alexander Fedorov did not manage to record an interview with Valentin Vinogradov, the director of the film *Eastern Corridor*, released in limited release in 1966. In his letter to A. Fedorov, Valentin Vinogradov expressed deep gratitude to the author of the book for the brilliant analysis and analysis of his film. The director, in particular, noted: "Dear Alexander Viktorovich! I read your amazing, dear for me work about my miserable *Eastern Corridor* with a feeling of rare heartfelt joy. This feeling has not visited me for many years. It comes to me only when I open my soul mate, like-minded person. Thank you very much and bow to you. V. Vinogradov. 23.05.2011" (Quoted from: Fedorov, 2021).

Reflecting on the stereotypes of the Soviet cinematic image of war and the film by Valentin Vinogradov *Eastern Corridor* (1966), A. Fedorov examines the structure of the ideological and plot stereotypes of Soviet films on the military theme of the 1940s – 1960s. In particular, in his research, the author identifies several components: historical period, scene of action, setting, household items, methods of depicting reality, characters, their values, ideas, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures; a significant change in the life of the characters; a problem that has arisen; finding a solution to a problem; solving a problem. The book also analyzes the market conditions that contributed to the concept, the process of making the film, the structure and techniques of storytelling (Fedorov, 2021: 87-96).

Using the film *Eastern Corridor* as an example, Fedorov examines the ideology of Soviet authors in a socio-cultural context. According to the author, the creators of the *Eastern Corridor*, "contrary to the prevailing stereotypes, practically for the first time in the history of Soviet cinema,

proposed a different ideological concept of the military theme: war as the destruction of the humanistic human principle as a whole" (Fedorov, 2021).

Also, the book by Alexander Fedorov *Soviet science fiction in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* (Fedorov, 2021) is very well structured.

In his research, the author makes a very successful attempt to give a broad panorama of Soviet fiction films in the mirror of the opinions of film critics and viewers. This work, in fact, has no analogues in Russian film studies (even in the only specialized edition, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Morozov, 1993), Soviet science fiction films are not presented).

In his work, A. Fedorov uses the same research approaches as in the book *Record holders of the banned Soviet cinema (1951-1991) in the mirror of film criticism and viewers' opinions* (Fedorov, 2021).

The book consists of one main section and four additional ones. It is interesting to note that along with the box-office record holders of the Soviet box office (*The Mystery of Two Oceans*, 1957; *The Amphibian Man*, 1962; *The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin*, 1965; *The Hotel At the Dead Climber's*, *The Inquiry of Pilot Pirks* – both 1980; *The Wizards* (1982); *The Testament of Professor Dowell* (1984), *The Invisible Man* (1985), etc.), the book presents the diploma works of VGIK graduates – R. Nakhapetov (*Wine from Dandelions*, 1972), N. Lukyanov (*Choice*, 1972), T. Tóth (*Madman and Angel*, 1990) (Fedorov, 2021: 8; 13; 15).

Three chapters of the book are devoted to iconic works – *The Mystery of Two Oceans*, *Amphibian Man*, *The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin* (Fedorov, 2021: 231-244, 245-252, 253-261). In them, the author brilliantly analyzes these novels and their adaptations.

Also, thanks to the materials of this book, it is possible, for example, to trace the dynamics of the development of films of the genre of "space fiction" – for both children and adults: *Aelita* (1924), *Space Flight* (1936), *The Sky Calls* (1959), *Planet of Storms* (1962), *Towards a Dream* (1963), *Andromeda Nebula* (1968), *Moscow-Cassiopeia* (1974), *Great Space Travel* (1975), *Teens in the Universe* (1975), *Through Thorns to the Stars* (1981), *Orion's Loop* (1981), *Moonlight Rainbow* (1983), *Guest from the Future* (1984), etc. And, if, say, most of these films is well known, but *Aelita* by Yakov Protazanov and *Space Flight* by Vasily Zhuravlev are heard only by film critics.

The film *Aelita* is based on the story of the space adventure of the Red Army soldier Gusev and the victory of the revolutionary Martian proletariat, equal to the advanced workers of the USSR. In the material about this film, A. Fedorov cites the opinion of a representative of the official Soviet film criticism: according to Nikolai Lebedev, the film was "an attempt to please the audience of capitalist countries... *Aelita* the company leaders relied on an export thriller, technically and staging not inferior to the best Western European films, interesting both for the first-screen public inside the country and for the foreign bourgeois viewer. The film was supposed to be "large-scale" and "sensational" – with an unusual plot, a large number of characters, with popular names of the author, director, performers of the main roles..." (Quoted from Fedorov, 2021: 8).

However, in fairness, we note that for the "foreign bourgeois viewer" the film was not of wide interest, primarily because of its propaganda orientation. Also, the spectacular side of the picture left much to be desired (Western viewers were well acquainted with the more technological films of the recognized masters of world cinema F. Holder-Madsen (*Journey to Mars*, 1918) and F. Lang (*Woman on the Moon*, 1929), etc.

However, the next Soviet film *Space Flight*, filmed in the genre of "space fiction", on which the leadership of the Soviet film industry did not stake, turned out to be much more interesting, both from the technological and artistic side. It was a real technical breakthrough. The picture was released in January 1936. By this time, almost all Soviet films were sound, but *Space Flight* was subtitled. Only music was recorded on the soundtrack. The value of this film was appreciated after several decades. The opinions of contemporary film critics and viewers cited by A. Fedorov coincided in a positive assessment of the film (Fedorov, 2021: 85-86).

Space Flight is considered the first Soviet science fiction film about space. Its release was preceded by two years of work at the *Mosfilm* studio. The project consultant was Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, who made 30 drawings of a rocket plane for the picture. Thanks to his help, Soviet filmmakers managed to create an amazingly realistic picture of a trip to the moon for their time.

It is interesting to note that two years later A. Kutter's film *Spaceship 1 Launches* (*Weltraumschiff 1 startet...* Germany, 1937) was released. It was a propaganda film about the flight of a German crew to the moon in 1963. But the most interesting thing is that some of the technical elements of this picture are obviously borrowed from the *Space Flight* (the shape of the rocket plane, its launch, hangar).

Of particular note is the section *Soviet science fiction at the turn of the 1950s – 1960s and its American screen transformations* (Fedorov, 2021: 261-272). For the analysis, the author chose films shot in the genre of space fiction *The Sky Calls* (1959, directed by A. Kozyr and M. Karyukov), *Planet of Storms* (1961, directed by P. Klushantsev), *Towards a Dream* (1963, directors M. Karyukov and O. Koberidze). All these films have played a significant role in the development of space fiction in world cinema, and above all in Hollywood.

The work of the undeservedly forgotten Pavel Klushantsev had a huge influence on American directors Stanley Kubrick, George Lucas and others. Being an unusually gifted person, and thanks to his ingenuity, P. Klushantsev literally "on his fingers" created unique technologies in the field of modeling and special effects. The technological solutions of his films far outstripped the work of his American colleagues, as well as the space achievements of the USSR outstripped the space developments of NASA. At a time when handicraft plywood spaceships were flying on American screens, in the films of Pavel Klushantsev, viewers watched realistically created space models.

A distinctive feature of popular science films by Klushantsev was the interspersing of feature moments in which the author unusually expressively showed starships and the life of the future. According to this principle, the pictures *The Road to the Stars* (1957), *Moon* (1965), *Mars* (1968) were shot. These films did not receive wide popularity in the USSR, but they were well known to Hollywood specialists, thanks to a detailed analysis of these films on the pages of specialized American magazines.

In this regard, it can be argued that the creators of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968, directed by S. Kubrick) were inspired by Klushantsev's film *The Road to the Stars*, in which a space station revolving around its axis was masterfully ingeniously made, and the effect of weightlessness inside station. Also from the film by Pavel Klushantsev, the creators of the special effects of the film by G. Lucas *Star Wars* borrowed the idea of the head space station of the Empire.

But, perhaps, the most famous work of P. Klushantsev was *Planet of Storms*. This film was re-edited twice in the USA: in 1965 under the title *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* and in 1968 under the title *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women*, about which A. Fedorov writes in detail in his book (Fedorov, 2021).

Interestingly, after a decade and a half, viewers saw a very similar space shuttle from the movie *Planet of Storms* in the movie *Star Wars*. However, a more significant borrowing was found in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The robot from *Planet of Storms*, created in the likeness of man, inherited his instincts and natural fears. In the episode, when he carries two astronauts through the red-hot lava, he discovers a danger to his mechanisms and decides to free himself from his "load", but was turned off in time by one of the astronauts. This motif was brilliantly used in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and ran like a red thread throughout the plot. When the on-board computer of the spacecraft learned that they want to turn it off, it begins to defend its "life" and in turn kills the crew members. At the end of the film, the surviving captain of the ship turns off the enraged computer.

As A. Fedorov rightly notes, *Planet of Storms* by Pavel Klushantsev was staged in an era of extremely popular space theme throughout the world. Hence, according to the author, "a whole series of science fiction novels, novellas, short stories, comics, films about distant planets, intergalactic flights and extraterrestrial civilizations appeared" (Fedorov, 2021: 262). As noted above, *Planet of Storms* was bought by an American company and was released in two versions in the United States. A. Fedorov analyzed the differences between the original version of the 1961 film and the two remastered American versions of *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* and *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women*, released in 1965 and 1968, respectively (Fedorov, 2021: 261-265). In a comparative analysis, A. Fedorov found out that the changes in the American versions (remounting and filming) were directly related to the political situation in the world and the relationship between the USSR and the USA.

Another Soviet science fiction film, *Towards a Dream* (1963), "which was re-edited and, together with specially filmed episodes in the spirit of horror films, was released on US screens under the sonorous title *Queen of Blood* (1966) underwent a similar American film transformation" (Fedorov, 2021: 265).

As a result of the analysis, Alexander Fedorov came to the following conclusions:

1. From 1919 to 1991, at least 158 Soviet science fiction films were shot, of which 29 (18.3 %) were short films and 32 (20.2 %) television films.
2. The number of Soviet science fiction films for children was only 24 films (15.5 %);

3. The bulk of Soviet science fiction films (84.5 %) were films for an adult and family audience;

4. Of all Soviet science fiction films with the theme of space and aliens, 59 tapes were associated, which is 37.3 %;

5. From 1919 to 1949, only 6 science fiction films were shot, from 1950 to 1960 – 5. In the 1960s – 19, in the 1970s – 30, in the 1980s – 78, of which the maximum number of science fiction films falls on the years of perestroika. A total of 58 films were released from 1985 to 1991, which is about the same as for the entire period from 1919 to 1979 (Fedorov, 2021: 149).

And if we talk about the author's personal preferences, then we can recall one of the interviews in which A. Fedorov named *Solaris*, *Stalker* and *Letters of a Dead Man* among the best Soviet science fiction films, which, in his opinion, remain the pinnacle of Soviet philosophical cinematic fiction. From science fiction films designed for a mass audience Fedorov singled out *Planet of Storms* and *Amphibian Man* (Tselykh, 2021). And it's hard to disagree with his opinion.

4. Conclusion

As a novelty of Alexander Fedorov's research approach, we can note the principles of monitoring and testing his materials on various Internet platforms that he used. Thanks to this approach, the author received useful corrections and comments from fellow film critics, but was also able to create a more objective panorama of the process under study. Of course, the opinions of film critics are very valuable, but at the same time you need to understand that sometimes the opinions of amateur film fans can also be very useful. That is why A. Fedorov turns to the portal *Kino-theater.ru*, where in the section *Discussions* there are in-depth analytical reviews of films written by ordinary viewers.

The novelty of A. Fedorov's research is also undeniable: Soviet science fiction has not yet been comprehensively studied. It should be noted that in the genre of science fiction, wonderful films were shot that made up the treasury of Soviet cinema – *Solaris*, *Stalker*, *Kin-dza-dza*, *City of Zero* and many others.

We believe that A. Fedorov's books that we have analyzed are united by a responsible approach to working with sources, which has resulted in fundamental works that are so necessary for modern film studies.

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