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Western Cinema on the Pages of the *Soviet Screen* Magazine: 1986–1991

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Abstract

Based on the content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of the texts published during the "perestroika" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991), the authors came to the conclusion that materials on the subject of Western cinema on this stage can be divided into the following genres:

- ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience (1986–1987);
- articles on the history of Western cinema;
- biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors (as a rule, with positive ratings);
- interviews with Western filmmakers (as a rule, with those who came to Moscow film festivals);
- reviews of Western films (here we can note a violation of the old tradition: if in 1986–1987 the magazine still often negatively evaluated some "politically harmful bourgeois" films, then later Western film production was evaluated without regard to ideological stereotypes, moreover, even received a positive interpretation films that were previously rejected for ideological reasons);
- articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, reviews of the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies (no longer divided into "progressive" and "bourgeois" cinematography);
- short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

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

1 Introduction

In this article, we will focus on the analysis of materials about foreign cinema published in the *Soviet Screen* magazine from 1986 to 1991, when its editors-in-chiefs were: D. Orlov (1935–2021), Y. Rybakov (1931–2006), V. Demin (1937–1993).

In [Table 1](#) presents statistical data reflecting changes (from 1986 to 1991) organizations, the organ of which the journal was, its circulation, periodicity. The names of the editors of the journal and the time intervals of their leading work in the publication are indicated.

The authors of texts about Western cinema in the *Soviet Screen* in most cases were well-known film experts, film critics, some of whom held leading positions in the editorial offices of magazines and newspapers of that period.

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Table 1. *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991): statistical data

Year of issue of the magazine	Organizations whose authority was a magazine	Magazine circulation (in million copies)	Periodicity of the journal (numbers in year)	Editor of the magazine
1986	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	D.K. Orlov Nos. 1-23 Y.S. Rybakov No. 24
1987	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	Y.S. Rybakov
1988	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.7	24	Y.S. Rybakov
1989	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	0.9 - 1.0	18	Y.S. Rybakov
1990	USSR State Committee for Cinematography, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR	1.0	18	Y.S. Rybakov Nos. 1-3 Editorial board (Nos. 4-8) V.P. Demin (Nos. 9-18)
1991	Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Goskino of the USSR (Nos. 1-17) Publishing house "Pravda" and the editorial staff of the <i>Screen</i> magazine * (No. 18)	0.4 - 0.7	18	V.P. Demin

* Under the name *Screen* the magazine was published only in 1991.

Table 2. The main authors of the publications of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991) on the subject of Western cinema

No.	Surnames of film critics who most often published articles on Western cinema in the <i>Soviet Screen</i> magazine	The number of articles published by these film experts in the <i>Soviet Screen</i> magazine on the subject of Western cinema
1	Kudryavtsev S.V.	16
2	Braginsky A.V. (1920–2016)	10
3	Plakhov A.S.	10
4	Tirdatova E.I.	10
5	Dmitriev V.Y. (1940–2013)	9
6	Sulkin O.M.	8
7	Andreev F.I. (1933–1998)	7
8	Lavrentiev S.A.	7
9	Osipov A.A. (?–1991)	7
10	Mikhalkovich V.I. (1937–2006)	6

1. S.V. Kudryavtsev (born 1956) is a film critic, director. Graduated from the Film Studies Department of VGIK (1978). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia. He taught at VGIK (1994–1998), at the Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Directors (2006–2013), at the Institute of Contemporary Art (2008–2010; 2015–2018). Published in the magazines: *Soviet*

Screen, Cinema Art, Video Digest, Cultural and Educational Work, Video-Ace, in the newspaper *Kommersant-daily*, *Screen and Stage*, etc. Author of books and reference books: *500 films* (1991); *+500* (1994); *Latest 500* (1996); *Our cinema* (1998); *3500* (2008); *Nearly forty-four thousand* (2015–2017). In 2021, the premiere of his first feature "arthouse" film *...and there will be a daughter* took place. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia.

2. A.V. Braginsky (1920–2016): film critic and historian, translator. Graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (1941). Was a member of the Soviet Communist Party, Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Author of many articles and books on French cinema. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Cinema Art*, etc. Author of books: *Le Chanois* (1972); *Christian-Jacques* (1981); *Jean-Paul Belmondo. In cinema and in life* (1997); *Gerard Depardieu. Stolen letters* (1998); *Alain Delon. In love and life* (1999); *Catherine Deneuve* (2000), etc. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia in the category "Literature about cinema" (for a series of books about French film masters) (1999).

3. A.S. Plakhov (born 1950): film critic and historian. Ph.D. (1982). Graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of the Lviv University (1972) and the Film Studies Faculty of VGIK (1978). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation (2014). He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party (since 1980), President of FIPRESCI (2005–2010). Worked in the department of culture of the newspaper *Pravda* (1977–1988), taught at VGIK. Browser in newspaper *Kommersant*. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Seance*, *Sight & Sound*, etc. Author of books: *Struggle of ideas in modern Western cinema* (1984); *Western screen: the destruction of personality* (1985); *Catherine Deneuve* (three editions: 1989; 2005; 2008); *33 in total. Stars of world film directing* (1999); *33 in total. Close-up of the stars* (2004); *Aki Kaurismaki. The last romantic* (2006); *Directors of the present* (2008); *Directors of the future* (2009); *Cinema on the brink of a nervous breakdown* (2014); *Ozone* (2018); *Cinema beyond* (2019); *Visconti. History and myth. Beauty and death* (2022), etc. Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia, Honorary Diploma of the President of Russia (2014), Nika Prize "For Contribution to Cinematographic Sciences, Criticism and Education" (2017),

4. E.I. Tirdatova (born 1951): film critic, director, screenwriter and producer. Graduated State Musical and Pedagogical Institute (1972) and Film Studies Department of VGIK (1985). Member of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia, Vice-President of the Russian Guild of Film Critics. He teaches at VGIK, at the Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Directors and other Moscow universities. Published in the magazines: *Soviet Screen*, *Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Opinions*, etc., in newspapers: *Screen and Stage*, *Culture*, *Interlocutor*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, *Russian Courier*, *Izvestia*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Evening Moscow*, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, *Parliamentskaya gazeta*, *SK-news*, etc. In 1990 she wrote (together with P. Chernyaev) the script for the documentary film *Your "leaving object" Leonid Obolensky*. In the 21st century, she began to master the profession of a producer and director of documentaries and feature films. Author of the books: *Henry Fonda* (1989), *Spotted movie* (2020), etc. Laureate of the Russian Guild of Film Critics.

5. V.Y. Dmitriev (1940–2013): film critic, archivist. Graduated film studies department of VGIK (1962). Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation (1998). He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party (since 1974), the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. After graduating from VGIK, he worked at the State Film Fund (department of scientific processing of a foreign fund), since 1996 he was deputy Director General of the State Film Fund of Russia. Created and became the artistic director of the festival of archival films "White Pillars". Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Film Studies Notes*, *Séance*, etc., in the newspapers: *Independant Paper*, *Culture*, etc. Author of books (together with V. Mikhalkovich): *Alexander Ford* (1968, the monograph was not published due to A. Ford's emigration to the West); *Anatomy of a myth: Brigitte Bardot* (1975). He starred in the films *Mournful insensibility* (1983) and *Down with commerce on the love front* (1988). Co-author of scripts for documentaries *Promised Land. Return* (2000), *Flowers of the Occupation Times* (2003), *Big Holidays of the 30s, Forties* (2004) and others. Laureate of the State Prize of the Russian Federation in the field of literature and art (2007) and the Nika Prize "For contributions to the motion picture sciences, criticism and education" (2013).

6. O.M. Sulkin: film critic, journalist. Graduated from Moscow State University. Member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. Worked as head department of foreign

cinema in the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1981–1987), editor-in-chief of the magazine *Soviet Film*. Co-author of the project of the film encyclopedia *Video Guide*. Since 1995 he has been living and working in the USA. He lectured at the UN, at a number of US universities. He was a film reviewer and reporter for the *New Russian Word* newspaper, and is currently a correspondent for the *Voice of America* Russian Service. Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Itogi*, *New World*, etc., in the newspapers: *Vedomosti*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *Evening New York*, etc. Author of books: *Natalia Andreichenko* (1984); *Yuri Ozerov* (co-authored with N. Sumenov) (1986); *Oleg Yankovsky* (1987).

7. F.I. Andreev (1933–1998): film critic, journalist. He was a member of the Soviet Communist Party and the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR. Worked as a deputy editor-in-chief of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1980–1990). From 1990 to 1998 he lived and worked in the USA, where, in particular, he was Executive Director of the Brighton Beach Borough Management Association (New York). Published in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Crocodile*, in the newspapers *Soviet Culture*, *Soviet Cinema*, etc. Author of books: *Ivan Pereverzev* (1982); *Oleg Tabakov* (1983).

8. S.A. Lavrentiev (born 1954): film critic, film critic Studied at Acting Department of the Sverdlovsk Theater School. Graduated from the Film Studies Department of VGIK (1982). He served in the Nizhny Tagil Drama Theater (1975–1977), worked as a researcher at the *Illusion* cinema of the USSR State Film Fund, researcher at Institute of Cinema History, editor-consultant of the *Ostankino* TV channel, editor-consultant of the film screening service of the *TV-6* channel, director of film programs at a number of film festivals. He taught at the Moscow University "Synergy", the Moscow Institute of Television and Radio Broadcasting "Ostankino". He acted in the films: *Prishvin's Paper Eyes* (1989), *Concert for a Rat* (1995), *Specialist* (2009), *The Firebird* (2021). Published in the magazines: *Cinema Art*, *Soviet Screen*, *Seance*, in the newspapers: *Screen and Scene*, *Literary Newspaper*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets* and others. Author of books: *Igor Maslennikov: Creative portrait* (1988); *Clint Eastwood. Furious and beautiful* (2001); *Red Western* (2009); *Mosfilm directors* (2021).

9. A.A. Osipov (? – 1991): film critic. Published in the magazine *Soviet Screen / Screen*. Author of the book: *Actors of French Cinema* (1991). He died in 1991.

10. V.I. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006): film critic and historian. Graduated from the Belarusian State University (1959) and film history department of VGIK (1968). Ph.D. (1997), professor. He was a member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and Russia. He worked as a researcher at the State Film Fund (1963–1966), in office of foreign cinema at VGIK (1966–1968), editor of the foreign department in the journal *Cinema Art* (1968–1970), researcher at the Institute of Art History (1970–1974), researcher at the Research Institute of History and Theory of Cinema (1974–1977), researcher at the State Institute of Art Studies (1977–2006), professor at VGIK (1986–2006) and at the State University of Management (2000–2006). Published in scientific collections, in the magazines *Soviet Screen*, *Screen*, *Cinema Art*, *Film Studies Notes*, *Literary Review*, etc. Author of books: *Alexander Ford* (1968, together with V. Dmitriev, the book was not published due to A. Ford's emigration to the West); *Anatomy of a myth: Brigitte Bardot* (1975) (together with V. Dmitriev); *Meetings with the X muse* (1981) (together with V. Demin, I. Weisfeld and R. Sobolev); *Barbara Brylska* (1984); *Figurative language of mass media* (1986); *Poetics of photography* (1989) (together with V. Stigneevev); *Selected Russian cinemas* (2006). Laureate of the Guild of Film Critics of Russia.

Articles of the *Soviet Screen* magazine in the first four months of 1986 practically did not differ in subject matter and manner of presentation of the material from publications of 1983–1985. And this is not surprising, since the active "perestroika" processes in Soviet cinema began in May 1986, when the memorable V Congress of Soviet Filmmakers took place (May 13–15, 1986), many key figures were not elected as delegates. At this congress and the subsequent meeting of the new secretariat of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR (it took place on May 29, 1986), the contents of the *Soviet Screen* magazine and its active editor-in-chief D.K. Orlov (1935–2021) has been heavily criticized.

Realizing that a chair staggered under him, D.K. Orlov made an attempt to keep his position, emphasizing in the editorial of issue 18, handed over to the set on August 1, 1986, that the editors "with special attention are studying critical remarks against our publication", since nand the V All-Union Congress of Cinematographers loudly, honestly and uncompromisingly spoke about the need for fundamental changes and in film production, and in the film distribution system, and in the work of the creative union itself.

This led to the conclusion that one of the most important, paramount conditions for solving pressing problems, overcoming the crisis situation is to increase the level of criticism, designed, first of all, to restore the criteria for assessing the ideological content, artistry, and aesthetic value of film works that have been blurred in recent years. The ability to call a spade a spade, to tell the authors of a failed picture, despite the faces, albeit bitter, but the truth, the desire to support true talent on its difficult path to the audience – this is what filmmakers and all our readers expect from a film magazine today ... What should the Soviet screen be like?

Both the editorial team and our numerous authors – film critics, critics, filmmakers of various professions – are now living with thoughts about this. Maybe, readers have already noticed certain changes in the content and design of the latest issues of the magazine. But, of course, its restructuring cannot be limited to what has already been done.

Too significant are the claims against the magazine, expressed both from the rostrum of the congress of cinematographers, and from the secretariat of our creative Union, and in the press. Undoubtedly, in determining its current activities, the editors will not pass by a single critical remark, each of which is prompted by a high interest in ensuring that the *Soviet Screen* as a mass, critical and journalistic illustrated publication meets the most important tasks of today (K..., 1986: 3).

D. Orlov always followed the rules of the game and, responding to criticism of the magazine, thathe "carried out the line of Goskino", rightly pointed out that "what other line, in fact, should he have pursued, being his official organ?" (Orlov, 2011).

And, indeed, after the 5th Congress of Cinematographers of the USSR, D. Orlov began to significantly change the content of the *Soviet Screen* magazine, proving from issue to issue that he was able to "rebuild" and effectively follow the course of state and cinematic changes. Let us suggest that if, at the end of 1986, D. Orlov would not have been replaced in the chair of the editor-in-chief Y. Rybakov (1931–2006), the *Soviet Screen* magazine would be no less critically "sharp" and "perestroika"...

At the end of 1986, the theater scholar Y. Rybakov took over as editor-in-chief of *Soviet Screen*. Despite the general decline in film attendance in the USSR, the circulation of the magazine in 1987–1988 remained at the level of 1986: 1.7 million copies. At the same time, Y. Rybakov initially left the editorial board of the *Soviet Screen* in the same composition (and the deputy editor was, as under D. Orlov, film critic F. Andreev), significant changes occurred in it only at the beginning of 1988, when famous film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993).

The way Y. Rybakov saw the *Soviet Screen* can be judged from the editorial article, published in early 1987: "Changed in the life of the country, in our life. The fresh wind of perestroika, glasnost, and the struggle for the moral health of society seemed to have moved like an avalanche the stale layers of habits acquired in the recent past towards inertia of thought and action. Change. The delegates of the 5th Congress of Cinematographers of the USSR, which took place in May last year, also visibly felt them. A frank business conversation, which was heard from the rostrum of this representative forum of screen masters, allowed in a free creative discussion to identify, identify "pain points" and "bottlenecks" in film production and distribution. It became clear that without new approaches to urgent problems, without a collective thought based not on good-hearted wishes, but on a deep and honest analysis of the existing situation, it is impossible to reach a qualitatively new round of creativity. Today, cinema is going through a difficult, but very interesting and fruitful time of renewal. Not everything is working out the way we would like. There are still gray films made by an indifferent hand (and, alas, there are quite a few of them), still quite unresolved, and sometimes even unresolved issues in film distribution, still coming out on the screens, sometimes criticism still rolls along the familiar, well-trodden rut. ... Perestroika is a big and complex job, not designed for one day. And the new year 1987 coming into its own, the year when the entire progressive world will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, now takes on his shoulders all our unfinished business. To continue what has been started so actively, not to calm down, not to turn halfway – this is today the main task, the duty of the cinematographer to the time" (Na..., 1987: 2).

As can be seen from these theses, the new program of Y. Rybakov was not much different from what D. Orlov on the pages of the magazine in the summer of 1986. *Soviet Screen* was ready to follow the current party guidelines and decisions of the new leadership of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR, with all the necessary references and citations. Moreover, the November issue of the magazine for 1987 traditionally placed on the first cover an anniversary inscription, in this case "70 years of the Great October Revolution", and then came the

corresponding quite ideologically consistent materials written by representatives of the older generation of film critics and film critics.

At the same time, it was under Y. Rybakov, several "youth" issues of the *Soviet Screen* were published, where articles by young film critics were published, many of which were sharply out of step – both in style and in material – from the usual rut of this still mass magazine.

However, the continuing decline in film attendance and, on the contrary, the growing distribution of video did their job: in 1989, the circulation of the magazine reached one million copies. In addition, instead of 24 issues per year, only 18 issues began to appear (though with an increase in the volume of each issue from 24 to 32 pages).

In 1989, the *Soviet Screen* also reacted to the invasion of video, a heading *Videocompass* appeared on its pages, which was initially led by film critic S. Kudryavtsev (then he was replaced by film critic A. Vyatkin).

Here we agree with N. Shishkin: "Affecting ideological and legal aspects of the video boom, a publication represented by video enthusiasts ... defended the freedom to choose spectacles without ideological interference, took the side of an ordinary video amateur who, by accident, could end up in the dock even because of watching a Western video film at home. When the deepening process of liberalization led to the removal of this problem from the agenda, its place was taken by the issue of video piracy, in the approaches to which the editorial staff showed a certain loyalty" (Shishkin, 2020: 930).

Meanwhile, the "perestroika" tendencies in the USSR were rapidly gaining momentum: on May 23, 1989, a decree was issued on the restoration of Soviet citizenship by director Y. Lyubimov. In July of the same year, the journal *Novy Mir* for the first time in the USSR began publishing A. Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago*; On November 9, 1989, the destruction of the Berlin Wall began, and on January 30, 1990, the USSR agreed to the unification of Germany. On November 18, 1989, the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the restructuring of creative, organizational and economic activities in Soviet cinematography" was issued, which practically approved the previously given permission to create cooperatives, including cooperatives for the production and distribution of films. And most importantly, in 1989 there was a change of power in many countries of Eastern Europe.

All this led to the fact that the editorial course of Y. Rybakov began to be perceived by the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR as not corresponding to the dynamics of the "perestroika" events, and in the spring of 1990, one of the then secretaries of the Union of Cinematographers, film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993).

Despite all the changes, the circulation of the *Soviet Screen* in 1990 still amounted to a million copies. But the general trends of the economic crisis, reinforced by a sharp drop in attendance and cinema halls and the flourishing of pirated video, led to very negative trends for the existence of the magazine, about which V. Demin wrote in his article in September 1990: "We are clipped wings, increasing the price per issue two and a half times. The rise in price of paper is accompanied by rise in price of printing services. *Soyuzpechat* is going to charge twice as much for distribution. Let's add a rather harsh tax law. This means that our income, which has been greatly reduced, which, however, does not go to either the staff of the journal or its authors, will still be cut off by the tax rate.

Today we have a million subscribers. How many will there be on January 1, 1991? Half? Quarter? What part can be compensated by the lost retail? One tenth? The equation is obtained with a very large number of unknowns, to which new ones will be added, also not yet known. More than fifty private and cooperative journals have already been registered in Moscow. ... Someone was able to contact a foreign printing base, much newer than ours. What response will be born in the soul of the reader when these and other publications lie next to the *Screen*? How will our polygraphy and paper sound in the conditions of this competitive struggle? And what about our content? ... Forecasts, even the most desperate ones, are worth absolutely nothing – we have nothing to compare our tomorrow with, we have not yet lived in the conditions of the book and magazine market" (Demin, 1990: 3).

The year 1991 showed that V. Demin's fears were largely justified: the circulation of the magazine (from the name of which the word "Soviet" was removed) fell sharply to 0.4–0.7 million copies, with a final trend of temporary stabilization at the level of 400 thousand copies.

In 1991, the editorial board changed in the journal: instead of F. Andreev, who emigrated to the USA, the position of deputy editor was taken by film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1993),

the second deputy editor was the journalist and film critic V. Kichin, the journalist B. Pinsky became the responsible secretary.

The materials of the magazine became more “free”, politicized, calling for further “democratic changes” in society, which could not but cause sharp resistance from the conservative part of the Ekran audience, who perceived these changes extremely negatively.

The third and sixth issues of *Screen* in 1991 featured characteristic letters from this category of readers:

“I subscribed to your magazine for 15 years. It's a pity to leave, but such a magazine as *Demin* made it together with like-minded people is not interesting to me. Now the magazine publishes only that material that coincides with the views of *Demin*, where everyone is trying to kick the party, one way or another. Who is angry, and who is with a cheerful gleam in his eyes. Because of this, the journal lost a lot of what it had, after all, even the usual objectivity. So we get a sad picture: you no longer go to the cinema, because they have recently overfed us with negativity, and now you have to give up the magazine as well” (V. Balandina).

“Mr. *Demin*, V.P. Since 1957, I regularly received the *Soviet Screen* by subscription and kept all the issues, but this year I canceled the subscription. Cause? Rejection of the political coloring of the magazine, its aesthetic norms. Your unbridled cosmopolitanism could still be tolerated to some extent, but Russophobia, skillfully camouflaged and presented in every issue, is not worth enduring. ... I wish you to lose all your subscribers and burn out, but for you personally, as they used to say in the old days, neither the bottom nor the tire” (V.K.).

“For twenty-two years I have regularly read your magazine, but I am ashamed of the new *Soviet Screen*, and I did not subscribe to it for the 91st year. I will take it in my hands only when the “naked” ones disappear from it. ... I'm tired of tearing pages out of a magazine, I have two sons, and I'm ashamed that they see these vulgarities. Why does the state need depravity? We need money, and behind this money they forgot about morality. Goodbye. I'm crying!”

“I have always subscribed to your magazine, but this year I will not. Money sorry? No no. That's not why at all. Your magazine prints more filth than any other magazine prints. I am a man, not a bore and not a hypocrite, but not a dirty trick either. I will see a naked woman anyway if I need to. It is not necessary for me to look at this “beauty” in a magazine. And then on the inserts of some whores you print, on the covers – what the men are ashamed of...” (Musein).

V. *Demin* was not too lazy to answer these letters, emphasizing that the magazine does not and did not have any Russophobia, that “we regularly publish two, three opinions about the film”, and “who wrote where how many millimeters of a female naked shoulder can be shown, from which millimeter to start the ban?” that “the very principle of publicity already presupposes a dispute with a point of view, even the most authoritative one, if it is incorrect. ... truth for the sake of truth” (*Demin*, 1991: 22, 4).

But it can be assumed with a high degree of probability that the majority of readers who unsubscribed from *Screen* magazine in 1991 were not affected in any way by such answers. In 1992–1998, the circulation of the magazine continued to fall sharply, which eventually (already with a circulation of 40 thousand copies) led to its disappearance ...

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 and 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

– *ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience*

Despite the fact that at the end of 1986 there was a change of editor-in-chief at the *Soviet Screen*, and the growth of “perestroika” tendencies regarding Soviet cinema continued, in the approaches to exposing the “harmful influence of bourgeois cinema”, the *Soviet Screen* of 1986–1987 largely retained the traditions of previous decades.

For example, film critic O. Sulkin, in his article “Aggression of Pseudo-Culture”, who reviewed A. Kukarkin’s book “Bourgeois Mass Culture” (Kukarkin, 1985), wrote that “by sharpening the argumentation, convincingly revealing the reactionary essence of the pseudo-aesthetic manifestations of the ideology of imperialism, we will be able not only to more successfully resist the attacks of enemy propaganda, but also to seize the initiative, at the same time to strengthen the atmosphere of ideological and moral exactingness among the workers of our socialist culture. ... The ideological struggle does not forgive carelessness, underestimation of the harmfulness of models of bourgeois consumer goods. A. Kukarkin's book ... convincingly shows the destructive impact of Western pseudo-culture on the human psyche and mind” (Sulkin, 1986: 22).

In a similar vein, international journalist M. Ozerov (1944–2022) wrote on the pages of the magazine, emphasizing that in American “mass culture” is reviving with renewed vigor such a phenomenon as anti-Sovietism. It is precisely among the anti-Soviet films, moreover, of the most rude kind and, moreover, “tuned” to violence, that Stallone's films, the action films *Red Dawn* (USA, 1984), *Firefox* (USA, 1982) and a huge number of other frank fakes (Ozerov, 1986: 20-21).

In an article by another well-known international journalist, M. Sturua (1928–2021), the attention of the readers of the *Soviet Screen* was drawn to the connection between the Pentagon and Hollywood: Wall Street finances militaristic movies. The Pentagon acts as their “idea producer”. Such, for example, is the film *Patriot* (USA, 1986), the main character of which is Superman from the sabotage squads of the US Navy. Incidentally, now Hollywood has become a genuine mouthpiece of state terrorism. This is evidenced by such films as *The Green Berets* (USA, 1968), *Top Gun* (USA, 1986), praising vulture pilots based on aircraft carriers, *American Anthem* (USA, 1986), the series of films *Rambo* and some others. The anti-Sovietism of movies labeled “Made in the Pentagon and Hollywood” literally cries out to the heavens. ... The military doctrine of the United States proceeds from the principle of the admissibility of nuclear war, survivability and victory in it. That is why the Pentagon is acquiring first-strike weapons, that is why it is implementing the Star Wars program – plans for the militarization of space. Yes, the destruction will be great, say the strategists of the Pentagon, but in the end, America will survive and erect the building of “Pax Americana” – “the American world” on the ruins of civilization. In full accordance with this extremely dangerous doctrine, Hollywood is churning out films like *Mad Max* (1979), whose heroes are supermen, in the end, America will survive and on the ruins of civilization will erect the building of “Pax Americana” – “the American world.” In full agreement with this extremely dangerous doctrine, Hollywood has made films like *Mad Max*, in which the heroes are supermen who recreate the “New Jerusalem” from nuclear ruins based on a cult of strength. Similar ideas underlie the film *Terminator* (USA, 1984). The only difference is that the main character in *Mad Max* is a policeman, while the main character in *Terminator* is a robot (Sturua, 1987: 2-3).

Further, M. Sturua reasonably noted that the process of quite a definite politicization of American cinema and, if I may say so, the “cinematographization” of American politics, it was no coincidence that it crossed itself with Reagan, his presidency. The point, I repeat, is by no means that Reagan was a film actor in the past. The fact is that with his coming to the White House to power in the United States, the most militaristic, anti-communist circles, having imperial ambitions, but calling us the “evil empire”, seized control. The crusade they declared against socialism and progress began to dominate the ideology and culture of America, distorting and distorting them. Therefore, the camera turns into a weapon. And not only in a figurative sense. ... In the film *Born American* (1986), overseas thugs sow death and destruction in the Soviet Union. In the painting *Amerika* (1987) will show the “Soviet” occupation of the United States. How far all

this is from the ideas of friendship among peoples, from the principles of peaceful coexistence! (Sturua, 1987: 2-3, 11).

In the same 1987, journalists Y. Algunov and V. Orlov emphasized that the 70th anniversary of October is celebrated not only by us and our friends in the world. Those who do not like the Soviet way of life are also "celebrated". They "celebrate", of course, in a peculiar way: first of all, strengthening, hardening, forcing anti-Soviet propaganda. All lines. Through all channels. And not least with the help of cinema and television, the audience of which is tens and hundreds of millions of people. ... An unbiased display of both our history and socialist reality has been and remains the strictest taboo for the American film industry. But slander and lies have become more sophisticated. Fortunately, there were some of the "former" who were eager to share "knowledge" (Algunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

However, further, in the order of objectivity, they drew the attention of readers to the "sober, bitter realism of O. Stone's films" *Platoon* (USA, 1986) and *Salvador* (USA, 1986), characterizing them as philosophical movies about the moral consequences of aggression, however, stipulating that, unfortunately, such examples can be counted on the fingers (Algunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

Since 1988, such articles with clearly expressed anti-American and anti-bourgeois accents no longer appeared on the pages of the "perestroika" *Soviet Screen*.

And the then worldview of Soviet film critics of the older generation can be judged from the article of one of the most consistent (in the 1950s – 1970s) conductors of the Marxist-Leninist teaching in film studies S. Freilich (1920–2005): "There is a great confusion in our society now . We are used to living in slavery. With a one-party system, it was easier, you knew in the evening what would happen in the morning, they would give you instructions, they would tell you where to go, what to do. And now we do not know how the Communist Party Congress will end. The paradox is that our cinema now lives off a stagnant period. During the period of stagnation, paintings were banned, many of which have now won international prizes. When you think about it, the usual notion of the "torment of creativity" is filled with historical content" (Freilikh, 1990: 12-13).

As a result, by the end of the 1980s "bourgeois cinematography, which for a long time was a "vague object" of ideological denunciation for Soviet viewers and critics, has ceased to be such. The editors of [*Soviet Screen*] were faced with the task of eliminating the audience's illiteracy with regard to previously banned film production and overcoming their own inferiority complex, which has political, social and professional roots. ... [But] the rehabilitation of bourgeois cinema initiated by socio-political transformations did not cause a noticeable increase in the number of publications about it, only the tone changed" (Shishkin, 2020: 700, 702).

– articles on the history of Western cinema

With regard to the history of Western cinematography, the *Soviet Screen* magazine did not change its traditions even during the period of "perestroika" and still spoke warmly about the work of Chaplin. True, now the authors openly expressed regret that many important films of this great cinematographer were not bought for the Soviet film distribution, or bought too late.

For example, director E. Ryazanov (1927–2015) wrote as follows: "Charlie Chaplin for me and, I think, for the vast majority of the world's population, of course, is a genius and precisely a genius for good. ... Another thing is curious: before the war, our country bought films of the world comedian. ... But *The Great Dictator* (1940) was not bought. He was not shown to the people, who at that time were waging a desperate battle not for life, but for death with the fascist hordes. But the picture of Chaplin would have helped the fighters, she debunked the enemy, destroyed him with laughter, struck, as they say, on the spot. Who banned Chaplin's anti-fascist movie? Was it Stalin himself, who saw that some analogies could be associated with him? Or one of the devoted lackeys? Don't know. ... True, our country did not buy films of the brilliant master further. We got acquainted with the films *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), *A King in New York* (1957), *A Countess From Hong Kong* (1967), *Limelight* (1952) belatedly ... We were explained that Chaplin's films are so expensive that for the price of one of his films, you can buy a dozen others. And these "others" were bought. The country was flooded with foreign cheap crafts in every sense, the brains of the audience were stuffed with commercial crap, and our people did not see the films that the whole world watched. In fact, Chaplin was stolen from the people. For films should be watched when they are made, and not decades later. Each film is a child of its time and acts in its context" (Ryazanov, 1989: 25-27).

E. Ryazanov was echoed by film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006): "I remember the beginning of the seventies, when we finally acquired and released on the screen several great Chaplin films.

These were *The Gold Rush* (1925) and *The Circus* (1928) almost half a century late, *Limelight* (1952) and *A King in New York* (1957) with a delay of only 15-20 years... Then, in the early seventies, Chaplin's films suffered a crushing failure at our box office. Any *Queen of the gas station* could then easily knock out *A King in New York*. I will not talk about the mediocrity of our film distribution, which ruined masterpieces in the bud – gray advertising, complete lack of control over the premiere situation of "old" films, absolute conviction in their "unwatchability" – what a professional word! – and immediate shoving off the screen into film storage. Many thousands of viewers simply did not have time to get to the cinemas, many, many thousands remained in the dark that Chaplin's films were in our bins, and to this day – I was convinced of this more than once! – they simply don't know that *Circus* and *Gold Rush*, *Lamplights* and *A King in New York* were bought by us and seemed to be on the screens. And again at meetings with the audience questions, notes: when will we finally see Chaplin? Rolling results were shameful and, as usual, unpublished. But they should have been published today for moral self-purification" (Zorky, 1989: 28-29).

Taking this opportunity, we will finally present here the statistics of the USSR Goskino, intended in the 1970s for purely official purposes: *A King in New York*: 12.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration; *Gold Rush*: 10.6 million viewers; *Circus*: 8 million viewers; *Lamplights*: 6.4 million viewers. And here A. Zorky is right: the attendance of the *Queen of the Gas Station* was much higher: 34.3 million viewers in the first year of the demonstration, and yet it was far from the highest grossing Soviet comedy film of the 1960s and 1970s.

In "perestroika" *Soviet Screen / Screen* also published positive articles about the work of B. Keaton (Chernenko, 1987: 20-21), I. Bergman (Utilov, 1991: 23); G. Garbo (Trauberg, 1990: 24-25), V. Leigh (Utilov, 1991: 25), R. Taylor (Kompanichenko, 1991: 12-13), M. Rökk (Mosina, 1991: 6), D. Durbin (Bosenko, 1991: 6-7), M. Lanza (Shishov, 1989: 27), G. Philipe (Bozhovich, 1991: 10-11), J. Gabin (Braginsky, 1991: 13).

At the same time, film critic V. Utilov (1937–2011) wrote that the best roles of Vivien Leigh have always been a cry of pain and a challenge to compromise, hypocrisy and indifference. This is the secret of Vivien Leigh: a great actress, a caring person, a lady with a broad and generous soul (Utilov, 1991: 25). And Ingrid Bergman was given something more than the ability to perfectly clearly and emotionally convey the feelings of a woman in love, experiencing unbearable psychological pressure, doubting and finally experiencing her discovery of a woman. With her heroines, Mystery returned to the screen: incapable, joyful, knowing no barriers of love-instinct, love-gift, love-rock. On top of that, this actress was perfectly cinematic (Utilov, 1991: 23).

Film expert V. Bozhovich (1932–2021), clearly exaggerating and obscuring the situation in the Soviet film distribution of the 1950–1960s, composed an entire ode to the remarkable French actor Gerard Philip: our gloomy screen of the 1950s and 1960s of the dazzling Gerard Philip in the role of Fanfan-Tulip. This jubilant hero burst into the circle of inhibited characters, who, without ideological sanction and author's permission, seemed to be unable to take a step, burst into this jubilant hero, like a messenger from another world. He did not look back at anyone, was not afraid of anything, did not reflect: he was a man of action and obedience only to his own emotional impulse, a direct outburst of feeling. ... Movies like *Fanfan La Tulipe* (1952) and *Great maneuvers* (*Les Grandes manoeuvres*, 1955) illuminated by the brilliance of the French tradition, the skill of their creators and the smile of Gerard Philip, and now, as if alive, stand before the eyes of our memory (Bozhovich, 1991: 10-11).

Other retro-portraits of actors of past years were painted with a haze of nostalgia:

For many, it pops up before their eyes: a huge white staircase from *The Girl of My Dreams*, a magnificent, billowing dress, a dazzling smile and ... gilded shoes with huge heels. From a musical phrase to another, from the top step to the bottom step, these heels jump, beating the beat of an ever-accelerating melody, until the actress is at the foot, face to face with the audience ... Music and dance almost from the cradle joined the life of Marika Rökk, so that, it seems, her biography also obeyed their stormy, impetuous rhythm, which knows no respite (Mosina, 1991: 6).

Music of amazing beauty and sadness. A graceful girl with a gentle soulful face. And an incredibly handsome young man in military uniform, circling his partner in a captivating waltz ... Such a sad and wonderful memory was *Waterloo Bridge* (1940) in the memory of those whose childhood and youth fell on the fifties. The waltz "Burning Candles" then sounded from the stage and on the dance floors. Photos of Vivien Leigh and Robert Taylor, even in the monstrous performance of local craftsmen, dispersed from the shelves and from under the floor ... Taylor

brought to the cinema – in addition to male beauty rare even for Hollywood – his own theme: a man whose talent manifests itself in love, in relationships with women ([Komanichenko, 1991: 12-13](#)).

We lived in poverty. Our girls are like a sigh of barracks melancholy. Plain black aprons and round collars... But Deanna Durbin. Vivien Leigh, Milica Korjus, Marika Rökk, Sony Henie, Francesca Gaal! *The Great Waltz* (1938) – we brought to life from the screens of the old Arbat ([Zorky, 1991: 19](#)).

An article by film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) about the key actor of the "Tarzaniada" J. Weissmuller (1904–1984) was more academic, although also not devoid of personal memories: "I came across an article in a foreign magazine about the last years of Johnny Weissmuller's life. He settled in Acapulco, the reporter wrote, exists on welfare, is practically a beggar. From a photograph on a magazine page, a haggard old face with protruding cheekbones, sunken cheeks, with an extinct look looked out. Sadly thought: and idols are not eternal. He really was an idol – Johnny Weissmuller, Tarzan, the hero of the childhood of people like me – fifty years old ... The canonical motives of the epic in the films with Weissmuller turned out to be emphasized, pointed, bulging. Here it became especially clear that with the help of Tarzan, nature is protected from people in general, from people as such. Tarzan fights not only with selfish and greedy Europeans, he is also at enmity with the local African population, thus placing himself outside the framework of the human community and finding himself "on the side" of nature. At the same time, this outcast cannot exist without an institution, which, it is true, is characteristic not only of man, but of almost all vertebrates, namely, without a family. From series to series, Tarzan acquired life partners. First, Jane appeared, rescued almost from the cauldron of savages, then a baby who miraculously survived a plane crash and was picked up by the "king of the jungle". Tarzan, Jane and the Kid, having gathered together, formed, as it were, the holy family of the jungle" ([Mikhalkovich, 1988: 17-18](#)).

On the pages of the *Soviet Screen* appeared, of course, and articles about filmmakers, whose work, although gone down in history, was not yet distant from the moment of publication for decades.

So film critic V. Dmitriev (1940-2013) published a review of the book "Luchino Visconti. Articles. Evidence. Statements" (1986), where he evaluated the work of this outstanding director respectfully, but ambiguously ([Dmitriev, 1987: 21](#)).

And the film critic K. Razlogov (1946-2021) wrote about a much more controversial figure in Italian cinema art as follows: "Introducing the audience to the paintings of the Pasolini retrospective held in Moscow and in a number of other cities ... I, with a sense of awkwardness, had to begin my speech with a blatant banality: "Who would have thought until very recently that this is possible... ". Of course, I immediately apologized to the audience for this common cliché, and yet – *The Flower of a Thousand and One Nights (Il Fiore delle mille e una notte, 1974)* just a few years ago even filmmakers had no right to watch. And now it is watched by "just" viewers who have bought a ticket for a particular session. Of course, the screening of Pier Paolo Pasolini's films in our country, although not as wide as we would like, is a sensation. One of the most complex and controversial figures in the culture of this century, the poet, writer, cinematographer, publicist, scientist, Pasolini combined such a number of talents and used them so recklessly that not only in our country, but also in his homeland, he often caused a shock reaction. Christianity and demonstrative homosexuality, Freudianism and Marxism in their own way focused the extremes of his nature, refracting in all those areas where he had a chance to create" ([Razlogov, 1989: 26-27](#)).

And absolutely unusual for Soviet film critics was an article by E. Tirdatova, who in 1988 dared to write a long positive article about director Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), who was categorically condemned in the USSR: "Hitchcock – this name sounded to us, "stagnant", fascinating. Hitchcock was frightened like a terrible beech: he put supposedly pathological "horror films". This incarnation of all the abominations of capitalist society was not allowed into our closed, closed from alien influences, pure and immaculate world. ... Yet before I say what Hitchcock did, I'll tell you what he didn't do. He did not deal with ghouls, ghouls, monsters, zombies and other evil spirits. So all sorts of Frankensteins, Draculas, Nosferatu, as well as King Kong are not his part. And Boris Karloff, like Bela Lugosi, he never shot, but shot more and more beautiful superstars: Ingrid Bergman, Grace Kelly, Cary Grant, James Stewart, Gregory Peck, Henry Fonda. ...

To do all the "i": a detective in its purest form – as an intellectual investigation – he was also of little interest. So what is Hitchcock? Hitchcock is the ultimate master of suspense. With the exception of a few works, all of his paintings are made in the thriller genre. Their indispensable affiliation is a riddle, a mystery, a crime. Ironic suspension is a must. Hitchcock is a master of

subtle psychological analysis. Hitchcock is style. Hitchcock is taste. Hitchcock is quality. "Light" camera and clear simplicity – this is also Hitchcock. Hitchcock is anti-literary, he is cinematic. ... The main thing for him – using all the specifics of cinema – editing, rhythm, angles, sound effects – is to create an atmosphere of tension. ... In my opinion, he has achieved the very balance that everyone who works in cinema dreams of deep down – the balance between spectacle and Art, commerce and Creativity” (Tirdatova, 1988: 12-14).

The last issue of *Screen* in 1991 was almost entirely devoted to the history of the film distribution of "trophy" Western cinema in the USSR.

A fragment from the memoirs of the film critic I. Manevich (1907–1976) was published there, in which he described how, in fact, the fund of the so-called “trophy films” was formed: “The Minister of Cinematography asked if I would like to urgently fly to Berlin. Naturally, I agreed. ... Bolshakov explained that my task was to find and urgently send a batch of color German films to Moscow. ... [Back] with me to Moscow flew the famous *Girl of my dreams* (*Die Frau meiner Träume*, 1944) starring Marika Röckk. I returned to my editorial cell on the fourth floor and now met films from the Reichsfilmarchive only in the cinema, where for many years they helped Glavkinoprokat to exceed the plan and receive awards” (Manevich, 1991: 4-5).

And the editor-in-chief of *Screen*, V. Demin (1937–1993), recalling his childhood, wrote that when the mysterious “New Film Program” appeared in cinemas in the late 1940s and early 1950s, everyone knew that this was another the so-called "trophy" film. Precisely what “so-called”, because, having defeated Germany, to take American, English and French films as a trophy – only we Russians can do this. ... Of course, the inevitable selection was carried out here too. Not a single Hitchcock film was given to us. Why scare compatriots? ... But the *Stagecoach* (1939) was brought – under the title *The journey will be dangerous...* As for Robert Riskin and Frank Capra with their socialist realism based on the Roosevelt program, they were presented almost completely... Excuse the expression, not a single striptease was presented to us at that time. But there were, there were extremely daring ladies' dresses, on stage or even in everyday life, and a millionaire recovering. And most importantly, in these films, to our amazement, there was a body, feminine, attracting, bewitching, lusting, or masculine, keeping a physical memory from work or a fight, with its own voice that does not coincide with the voice of pure reason. ... The trophy film was an anti-culture sally. Did Stalin understand this, did Zhdanov, Molotov, or anyone else understand it, but they introduced us to the feeling of a free person, not a cog in the state, not a person who is interesting because she is destined for something, but simply a person who exists in real life. space of life, without our censorship cuts (Demin, 1991: 2-3).

Recalling the release of the famous *Sun Valley Serenade* (1941) in the USSR, playwright V. Slavkin (1935–2014) wrote: What did we absorb while watching these films? We absorbed the lifestyle. Where else was there to see how others live – not us? Of course, the plot, of course, the music, but above all, the style! Yes, and music, jazz was perceived by us as life, and not as art. It was impossible to love jazz and at the same time remain a Soviet hemp in a gray Cheviot suit, with a Komsomol badge in a buttonhole. So the jazz banners intuitively understood from which side the danger came. But that's it guys, it's done! "Sun Valley Serenade" watched. Stylish people picked up the Chucha, spread the score between the guitar and the phono, someone learned the words in English... (Slavkin, 1991: 26).

Film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) was most analytical about this retro theme of the magazine, quite reasonably arguing that in the 1920s the revolution that had won in Russia and the victorious movie heroes from Hollywood” were united by “the uncertainty of the legal norms of the emerging statehood – as in conditional Wild West, and in the real circumstances of the revolutionary elements. Norms and laws matured and matured directly in the course of action and were identified with this or that character. Both the virtuous sheriff and the stern commissioner were equally sources of lawmaking, at the same time they contained the functions of a judicial search, coupled with repressive ones. In short, the Bolsheviks could probably in some ways and with some imagination enter into the position of Hollywood cowboys, who, in turn, were not alien to some of the slogans of professional fighters for the people's happiness.

Both did not get along on the issue of collectivization. Cowboys remained principled and irreconcilable individual farmers. In general, all Western movie heroes, even those who are socially close to us (like the tramp Charlie), turned out to be sworn individualists, in connection with which the iron curtain was lowered. From that moment on, our paths diverged: they moved each on their

own, relying only on themselves, and we are in formation, moving to the front step at the right moments... Therefore, in the distant twenties, American cinema was not useful to us.

The next fleeting meeting with him was almost illegal. I mean the appearance on our screens in the first post-war years of trophy pictures. Commercially, this operation turned out to be successful – films were rolled to the *darmovshchina*, which collected packed halls. But ideologically, it was an undermining and a puncture. Ragged Tarzan, a child of the jungle and the best friend of the monkey Chita, appeared as an apologist for the main bourgeois values – abstract humanity and devout individualism. But on us, the then Timurovites, he made an indelible impression. And Tarzan, and Robin Hood, and the avenger from El Dorado... acted at their own peril and risk, under personal responsibility.

...Then a date with a typical Hollywood cinematography turned out to be short-lived and therefore especially romantic. After all, it took place even before the first thaw. It was almost the only light in the window at the time of low pictures, when the moviegoer lived with visual impressions from *The Fall of Berlin* and *The Tale of the Siberian Land*. ... And, of course, our ideological overseers were right in their own way when they covered the light in the window and sent all the trophy movies to the special film fund. A person for whom the General Assembly is the Lord God did not have the right to associate with a person who relies mainly on himself (Bogomolov, 1991: 29).

– *biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors*

If in the 1950–1970s and the first half of the 1980s *Soviet Screen* tried to write mainly about "progressive" Western filmmakers, but during the "perestroika" period, the main reason for publishing creative portraits of foreign actors and directors was the appearance in the Soviet film distribution and the Moscow International Film Festival of films with their participation.

Thus, positive materials about famous Western actors appeared in the magazine: F. Ardant (Braginsky, 1987: 18); J. Birkin (Osipov, 1988: 24); L. Ventura (Braginsky, 1987: 18); M. Vitti (Babenko, 1986: 23); C. Deneuve (Amashukeli, 1990: 16-17; Rubanova, 1986: 20-21); G. Depardieu (Gérard..., 1988: 22, 24); M. Douglas (Nenasheva, 1990: 16; Pozdnyakov, 1989: 16-17); M. Jobert (Osipov, 1989: 26); A. Quinn (Tretyak, 1987: 21); J. Lang (Lavrentiev, 1989: 9-10); G. Masina (Bogemsky, 1986: 20-21); J. Marais (Mosina, 1991: 18); L. Minelli (Litvyakova, 1990: 15); O. Muti (Bogemsky, 1990: 16-18); J. Nicholson (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10); P. Noiret (Braginsky, 1987: 18-19; Makarov, 1986: 20-21); M. Placido (Bogemsky, 1987: 20-21); M. Pfeiffer (Vladimirov, 1990: 16-17; Osipov, 1991: 18); V. Redgrave (Yartsev, 1987: 18); M. Streep (Drozdova, 1990: 20-21); J.-L. Trintignant (Plakhov, 1991: 28-29); O. Hepburn (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 14-15); A. Hopkins (Anatolyev, 1987: 15); O. Sharif (Maskina, 1991: 12); A. Schwarzenegger (Kokarev, 1988: 12-13); I. Huppert (Isabelle..., 1988: 22, 24); quartet "Charlot" (Bragin, 1986: 21).

Unlike past decades, the biographies of some actors included some details of their personal lives. For example, S. Lavrentiev mentioned Jessica Lange's affair with Mikhail Baryshnikov (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10).

Analyzing the creative path of Audrey Hepburn (1929–1993), film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that her acting fate is a kind of confirmation of the idea that reality is as much subject to common myths as the "dream factory", and maybe even stronger. For the actress was persistently offered roles that were directly related to a certain mythological character. Such perseverance makes one think that here life dictated its own laws. ... Subsequently, critics noticed a curious feature of Hepburn's screen heroines: young people, the same age as these girls, almost never fell in love with them. The heroines of Audrey were adored by men who were fit to be their fathers – such is Professor Higgins, who turned a shabby flower girl into a society lady in *My Fair Lady* (1964). ... Novels with peers are a natural thing. But when passions flare up in the hearts of men very different in age, then one would want to think about obsession, about charms, in which both nymphs and undines and mermaids are excellent masters (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 14-15).

Just as accurately approached the actor's image, this time Jean-Louis Trintignant (1930–2022), film critic A. Plakhov recalled that after waking up after Lelouch's film *A Man and a Woman* (*Un homme et une femme*, 1966), the famous, Trintignant still remained "a man in himself." The smile of a happy lover and a successful professional did not become either his face or mask. Five years later, domestic distribution again prepared a meeting with the actor for us – and what a! Film *The Conformist*... The divided life of a neurasthenic, who feels at heart a stranger, an uninvited guest at the feast of life, is probably the main motive of Trintignant the actor! ... One

way or another, in his images, an otherworldly existence beyond the bounds of madness and absurdity is more and more visible (Plakhov, 1991: 28-29).

Film critic S. Lavrentyev was equally convincing about Jack Nicholson's creative credo, rightly pointing out that both in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and in *Professione: Reporter* (1975) an actor plays a person who cannot fit into the surrounding reality, who is uncomfortable in it, looking for ways to change its position. Let's say more – various variations of this model of human existence appear before us in all of Nicholson's major films. ... However, the losing heroes of Nicholson, even in the loss, do not cease to be Americans. They don't think about giving up. They perfectly feel stronger, cleaner, better than the life that defeated them. Depending on the individual traits of character, his characters can move away from life, spitting on it, become embittered or enter into a real fight with it. ... He is not just a good actor, there are many. He is an actor who expressed the essence of the era. There are only a few of them (Lavrentiev, 1989: 8, 10).

Film expert G. Bogemsky (1920–1995) reminded the readers of the *Soviet Screen* that Giulietta Masina (1921–1994) was glorified by films created by Fellini's mighty talent, it was in them that she gave us unfading images, touching and humane, which became not only classics of cinema, but symbols of defenseless kindness, sincerity, humanity. We do not at all want to say that Masina owes everything to Fellini, here the matter is much more complicated: it was not for nothing that Fellini himself repeated more than once that he owed everything to Giulietta. The mechanism of mutual understanding, interdependence, complementarity of these two great artists, who understand each other without words on the set and guide each other, is very subtle: more than forty years of married life and joint work are worth something! (Bogemsky, 1986: 20-21).

And the film critic I. Rubanova was convinced that the beauty of C. Deneuve has no marks of history. She is for all time, because she is close to what can be called the absolute of female attractiveness. This determined, on the one hand, the multi-genre nature of her work, on the other hand, the fact that a popular actress is not perceived as a representative and, as a result, an exponent of one generation. It happens infrequently (Rubanova, 1986: 20-21).

At the same time, film critic A. Osipov (?–1991) was sure that compatriot Catherine Deneuve – actress Marlene Jaubert – took her place in French cinema. And not only thanks to talent, the ability to be concise and recognizable in every role, the ability to convey on the screen the most complex range of movements of the female soul. Marlene Jaubert captivates with her now rare poetry, the depth and unspent feelings with which her heroines live – at the same time fragile and persistent, strong and restless (Osipov, 1989: 26).

Another talented French actress, Isabelle Huppert, also received warm words on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: The best works of the actress are distinguished by concise means of expression and at the same time great inner fullness. ... After the success of *The True Story of the Lady with Camellias* (*La Storia vera della signora delle camelie / La Dame aux camelias*, 1981), criticism increasingly began to compare Isabelle Huppert with the famous Greta Garbo, the romantic movie heroine of the 1930s, the best lady with camellias world cinema. They really do have a lot in common – lyrical charm, watercolor colors, subtle nuances of psychological nuances, a kind of melancholy reticence behind which the currents of an intense inner life pulsate (Isabelle..., 1988: 22, 24).

The magazine also praised the roles of famous American actresses: Liza Minnelli and Meryl Streep:

In *Cabaret* (1972), Sally Bowles, played by Liza Minnelli, is defiantly free, talkative, flirtatious, cheerful and at the same time pathetic, defenseless, naive and lonely. The actress, capable of grading a wide variety of feelings, with her sparkling performance, a whole cascade of changing emotions, does not leave any spectator indifferent (Litvyakova, 1990: 15).

Youthful ideals, an independent mind, mentality as a value in itself, sensuality as a feature of a developed intellect formed the basis of the type that the actress brought to the American screen. By analogy with the definition of traditional female charm – “she is all made from the bottom”, one can say about Meryl Streep that she (and her eroticism as well) is “all made from the top” (Drozdova, 1990: 20-21).

A kind of aloof in this series of creative acting portraits looked like a large, filled with a positive revision of the biography of R. Reagan, who was recently cursed by the Soviet press, an article by film critic E. Tirdatova, written clearly on the opportunistic wave of the “perestroika” revival of Soviet-American interstate relations and negotiations between the heads of the USSR and the USA – by M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) and R. Reagan (1911–2004): “For about a quarter of a

century, Reagan worked in Hollywood – and during this time he played more than 50 roles. He always treated cinematography and continues to treat it with great respect, considering it a very important part of the spiritual life of Americans. ... What is the reason for such popularity? ... Reagan immediately defined his role – "a typical American." He was, as they say, "a pleasant young man", easy, contact, flexible – and in the cinema, and in life. He was the most suitable for the embodiment on the screen of the ideal of the average American, corresponding in many respects to the idea of the president. What was included in this image? First of all, it had to be a person you can rely on. Reliable, strong and strong. Restrained and laconic, as befits a real man. Endowed with a sense of justice and duty, common sense and humor. Firmness of character and sincerity will not interfere with him either. Further: business, with a practical streak. Conservative in the good sense of the word – with stable habits, stable ideals. A patriot, a true friend and a good family man. And most importantly, simple, like everyone else. Therefore, the success that he achieves can be achieved by anyone. This is the type of positive hero (with variations and deviations, of course) that Reagan brought to the screen in most of his films.

The same actor's image then organically and naturally turned into a political image. ... In 1966, Ronald Reagan took over as governor of California and was re-elected for a second term four years later. ... Many believe that Reagan's spectacular success in the televised debate with President Carter played a decisive role in the general election, in which Reagan won. This is where his many years of experience in film and television turned out to be so necessary! Almost half a century ago, Reagan, through the mouth of his favorite hero Drake McHugh, said the phrase: "Someday I will surprise this city." The words turned out to be prophetic: Reagan became the most famous person in America" (Tirdatova, 1988: 20-21).

There were noticeably fewer articles on the work of Western filmmakers in the *Soviet Screen* in the second half of the 1980s than there were biographies of actors.

So the *Soviet Screen* could not pass by the seventieth birthday of the outstanding Swedish director Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007). Film critic A. Plakhov, in our opinion, absolutely correctly wrote that the film *Fanny and Alexander* (*Fanny och Alexander*, 1982) occupies a special place in Bergman's work. The bright Renaissance worldview is not at all alien to the "Nordic temperament" ... But the real nightmare of life, embodied in the world's sorrows of the middle of the century, eclipsed smiles, deeply settled and took root in the minds of Bergman's heroes. Regardless of their personal experience, each of them carries this nightmare and fear of life, which prevents them from enjoying everyday comforts, spiritual blessings and emotional attachments. Most of Bergman's male characters are either mired in hardened egocentrism, or they are obsessed with an abstract speculative idea... But women, unlike men, are able to suffer deeply and therefore suffer doubly – both for themselves and for the strong half of humanity. But the children who suffer most of all are those who, from birth, look into the mirror of the sins and torments of their parents (Plakhov, 1989: 30).

In connection with the long-awaited release of the musical Bob Fosse *Cabaret* (1972) in the Soviet film distribution, an article devoted to his work was published in the *Soviet Screen*, which noted that Sally Bowles, "Fräulein from America," on the stage of the triumphant *Cabaret* (1972) heralded the birth of a new musical. The personal catastrophe of the heroes in front of the audience develops into a worldwide catastrophe. Contrary to all the rules of a film musical, in the finale the lovers part, but another plot that developed in parallel, with and without their participation, corresponds to the canon of the chosen genre; in a fit of social hysteria, the country throws out a hand with a swastika on its sleeve. ... In *Cabaret* the musical comes to life not because it has mastered the modern film language. Here there was a "surgical intervention" in the core of the genre. ... The director uses the roll prepared for him by tradition. Heroes and spectators are equally defenseless against the magical "expected effect". True to the terms of the genre, the characters desire intensely, but their dreams cease to come true. Flywheel stuck. Utopia is preparing a big surprise and is not exchanging for trifles. She wants to make everyone happy. And as a result, everyone immediately punishes. The atmosphere, which Sally Bowles, in the spirit of the times, calls "divine decadence", is a sublimation of the feeling of Utopia. Since dreams have ceased to come true, the genre proclaims a new law: "Let yourself!" And the heroes obediently allow themselves everything, without becoming freer or happier because of this (Maximov, 1990: 28-29).

In 1991, *Screen* published one of the first articles that positively assessed the work of the émigré director Roman Polanski. Film critic A. Plakhov wrote that his *Cul-de-sac* (1966) and especially *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967) are distinguished by the grace of ambiguity, light

and piquant irony. ... And in the rather heavy-weight *Pirates* (1986), the most charming and inspiring moment is the uprising on the ship because of the rotten meat issued to the crew. As in the *Battleship Potemkin*, turned inside out not without malice. ... *Repulsion* (1965) can serve as a practical textbook for both psychopathology and filmmaking. This is a surprisingly capacious prototype of Polanski's later works, each of which develops one or another line outlined in it. ... Freudian paraphernalia (a crack as a "hole of the subconscious", secret attraction with an incestuous tinge) reappears in *Chinatown* (1974). The motive of disastrous, pernicious, infernal female beauty will be repeated many times in Polanski. In all this, internal connections are found with the intellectual problems of European and American modernism – with Jean Cocteau and Tennessee Williams, with Bergman and Antonioni. ... *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) is the pinnacle of Polanski's work: cruel, truly diabolical energy appears in it, a fairy tale plot is rooted in psychological reality. Once again, we are faced with a masterful deformation of time and space, with the destruction of habitual inertial connections, when the viewer, together with the heroine, begins to be convinced of the unreliability of his sensations, that things sometimes are not at all what they seem to us (Plakhov, 1991: 12-14).

The work of Woody Allen was also highly appreciated in the *Soviet Screen*: As a true intellectual – and Woody Allen is a very intelligent comedian – he, first of all, laughs at himself: at his appearance, his problems and complexes. And, amused, he overcomes the difficulties that inevitably arise on the path of a small, ugly, frail little man in a vast, ruthless world. There is great wisdom and great democracy in this self-irony (Pritulenko, 1989: 26-27).

– interviews with Western filmmakers

The principle of choosing interviewed Western filmmakers in the "perestroika" *Soviet Screen* was approximately the same as the choice of persons for writing creative portraits, that is, completely free, but, as a rule, tied to the events of the Moscow International Film Festival and the current film distribution.

Of course, positive acting interviews dominated: J.-P. Belmondo (Osipov, 1989: 16-17); K.-M. Brandauer (Gurkov, 1987: 23-24); L. Ventura (Braginsky, 1986: 20-21); M. Vlady (Svistunov, 1989: 26-27); M. McDowell (Kolbovsky, 1990: 14); G. Depardieu (Svistunov, 1987: 11); C. Cardinale (Svistunov, 1987: 22-23); N. Kinski (Braginsky, 1987: 20); M. Mastroianni (Sulkin, 1986: 21-22); M. Mercier (Shumyatskaya, 1991: 10); J. Moreau (Osipov, 1988: 22; Smirnova, 1991: 18-19); M. Placido (Rtishcheva, 1990: 31); R. Redford (Svistunov, 1988: 20); I. Rossellini (Karakoleva, 1991: 20-21); D. Sanda (Osipov, 1989: 16-18); A. Celentano (Bogemsky, 1987: 12-13, 15); H. Shigula (Krasnova, 1988: 20-21).

Interviews with Western directors, screenwriters and producers were significantly less: M. Antonioni (Antonioni, 1986: 20-21); P. Barthel (Fomina, 1991: 31); N. Jewison (Tirdatova, 1990: 24-25); J. Dreville (Vikhlyaev, 1986: 20); K. Lanzmann (Lungina, 1989: 26-27); C. Zavattini (Weisfeld, 1986: 20-21); P. Maslansky (Rakhlina, 1991: 26-27); O. Stone (*Platoon...*, 1987: 20-21).

In 1987, even an interview with the formerly "disgraced" émigré director Milos Forman was published (Kompanichenko, 1987: 21-22). It was very friendly, but cautious, without going beyond the then "red lines" (after all, 1987 of the "Great October" was practically the last year of its existence for the *Soviet Screen*, when it was to some extent important to show a positive difference between socialism and capitalism).

- reviews of Western films that got into the Soviet film distribution

Due to the fact that at the initial stage of "perestroika" Western films continued to be released to Soviet film distribution, purchased in a limited number and subject to numerous censorship restrictions in the previous period, in 1986–1987, the *Soviet Screen* published reviews mainly of secondary ones and today thoroughly forgotten western movies.

And in some reviews, the rudiments of the magazine's former ideological approaches were still visible, when it was important in the first place to single out (if any) a "progressive political component" in Western films.

Here is how, for example, in the *Soviet Screen* Giuseppe Ferrara's Italian film *One Hundred Days in Palermo* (*Cento giorni a Palermo*, 1983) was evaluated: The film follows the traditions of documentary art. conscientiously reconstructing the events of the political chronicle. It contains real names, carefully recreated pictures of the massacres of the mafia over their victims. ... The director skillfully inflates the atmosphere of fear around the protagonist, the inevitable expectation of a terrible end. ... The progressive forces of Italy still have a long and persistent battle ahead of them against the secret syndicate of criminals that is the offspring of capitalist society.

The Italian democratic public and the Communist Party have repeatedly noted that the Mafia can be eradicated only through profound social changes in the life of all Italian society, the elimination of unemployment, social inequality, poverty and exploitation (Malyshev, 1986: 19).

Analyzing the Spanish film *Demons in the Garden* (*Demonios en el jardín*, 1982), film critic N. Savitsky drew the attention of readers to the “correctly placed” ideological accents of the film: In *Demons in the Garden* a shaky and blurry, like a shadow projection of events and moods is given, by which a huge disturbing world lives, it seems, tightly fenced off from the cramped and prosperous little world of the petty bourgeois for an outsider's gaze... At the same time, it would be an obvious stretch to perceive the movie as an open metaphor for Spanish reality during the reign of Franco. Aragon does not pretend to do this at all, we are offered something else: a kind of random sliver of time; we are allowed to feel its atmosphere, suffocating, oppressive, and, looking closely, imagine the essence of the socio-political system, which deliberately emasculates the human soul (Savitsky, 1986: 9-10).

However, evaluating the political detective story *The Seventh Target* (*La 7ème cible*, 1984), film critic A. Osipov was more critical. Noting that in this film the thought of the defenselessness of the human person in a capitalist society, which has become especially aggravated in recent years due to the rampant terrorism. A. Osipov emphasized that the authors of *The Seventh Target* do not pretend to be a serious social analysis of the topic raised By the end of the film, the intrigue's amusement becomes self-sufficient. The authors' attempt to give psychological motivation to the actions of the characters turns out to be only external credibility, because this attempt is nothing more than the result of speculative plot constructions. None of the lines of the film is not fully revealed artistically. The contrived plot, the cold mannerism of directing, dramatic stamp deprive the picture of life volume and reliability. And here neither the charm of Lino Ventura, nor the talent of other performers who simply have nothing to play, nor the wonderful music of Vladimir Kosma (how often dramatic helplessness is hidden behind beautiful music) can save (Osipov, 1987: 11).

Film critic G. Maslovsky (1938–2001) reviewed the Spanish film *Stico* (1984) in a similar vein. The reviewer considered that the main task of this parable was to stigmatize a society in which the ancient slave relations were only modernized, acquired sophisticated forms (Maslovsky, 1987: 21).

Curiously, cursed by the Soviet press for the film *Confession* (*L'Aveu*, 1971), recognized as anti-communist and anti-Soviet, director Costa-Gavras was completely rehabilitated in the 1980s in connection with the release of his political drama *Missing* (1982), which sharply condemned the dictatorial regime of Pinochet.

Running a little ahead, it can also be noted that in 1990 a screening of *Confession* took place in Moscow, which was attended by the authors of this psychological drama, which was also reflected in pages of the *Soviet Screen* (Braginsky, 1990: 14; Gerdt, 1990: 14-15).

A magazine review of *Missing* in action noted that it recreates an atmosphere of total violence with amazing authenticity. It is everywhere, it seems to be dissolved in everyday life. ... Costa-Gavras exposes the dialectic of betrayal pretending to be mercy. ... *Missing* is a political film. He explores the "logic" of imperialist thinking, according to which man, whom the ancients called the "measure of things", becomes a neglected value, easily "subtracted" from life. Unrighteous power, in order to assert itself, needs deception and demagoguery. And those who cannot be deceived are destroyed. There is no need to talk about how relevant, how hot this topic is in our time (Valagin, 1986: 10-11).

Also positively evaluating *Missing*, film critic N. Tsyrukun wrote on the pages of *Soviet Screen* that almost simultaneously with Costa Gavras, American director Roger Spottiswoode made the film *Under Fire* (1983), also inspired by a true story: the murder in 1979 in Nicaragua of an American journalist who was preparing a report on the fighters of the Sandino National Liberation Front. ... The tense dramatic situation itself is deliberately weakened by them, rarefied, the narration is slowed down, so that the viewer is given time not only to follow the course of events, but also to think about them. The personal experiences of the central characters and how they gradually become aware of their involvement in the just struggle of the rebellious people for national independence and democracy come to the fore (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

N. Tsyrukun and S. Lumet's drama *Daniel* (1983) were positively evaluated: Lumet staged the picture, not counting on box office success and not hoping for the location of criticism. But, to his surprise, the film found its audience and received a high response from the progressive press. This, apparently, affected the interest of Americans, who are starting to get tired of pseudo-political tales

like *Red Dawn* (1984), *Moscow on the Hudson* (1984) or *Invasion USA* (1985), made in the spirit of cavernous anti-communism, to a film in which events related to the persecution of communists in the United States itself are recreated without any political chatter and tendentiousness, to a topic that was first heard in such a tone from the American screen. ... Lumet's film enters into controversy with a whole clip of films that have appeared in recent years in the United States, such as *First Blood* (1982), *Rambo: First Blood. Part II* (1985), *Commando* (1985), *The Delta Force* (1986), whose heroes, appearing in the guise of supermen, defend the expansionist interests of their country in Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and other far from borders of US regions. ... In Lumet's film, the problem of choice is posed rigidly: there are only two ways: resistance to the military-political machine or withdrawal from the struggle, but then the fate of the victim awaits you (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

Moving on to an analysis of the American film *Flashpoint* (1984), N. Tsyrukun wrote that it would be a stretch to call it a political film in the full sense of the word: the action-detective genre, the brilliant stunt numbers of the lead actor Chris Kristofferson do not allow the viewer to fully focus on the serious background of on-screen events: the theme of the assassination of the president runs as if on a tangent. And, perhaps, one could reproach the authors of *Flashpoint* that they only speculate on a sensitive topic, play on the interest in the mystery. This reproach would be absolutely fair, if not for one circumstance. The film unequivocally conveys the idea that the official version of the lone killer is doubtful, that there was a conspiracy organized not without the participation of the CIA and the FBI – otherwise why pursue and kill those who who is trying to find out the truth? It is precisely this thought that makes *Flashpoint*, for all its naivety, related to such serious films as *Under Fire* and *Daniel*, where, unlike the pictures that tell about the mythical "red threat", the incredible exploits of *Rambo*, etc., we are talking about real issues that are relevant to America and Americans, and the viewer can check for truth the rhetorical statements about democracy, human rights and bourgeois freedoms, in the light of which the American administration seeks to present its country to the world (Tsyrukun, 1987: 21-22).

The review of the film critic V. Dmitriev (1940-2013) on the Australian drama *Winter of Our Dreams* (1981), on the contrary, was devoid of ideologization: The film sympathizes with an individual in his searches and disappointments, in the desire to break himself and get out from the dreary and dreary everyday life. However, having got out, he risks being in a dead end of loneliness, and, to prevent this from happening, you need to go to the people involved in the business (Dmitriev, 1986: 10).

Of course, even during this period, the initial "perestroika" period, films by prominent Western screen masters sometimes got into the Soviet film distribution.

Thus, film critic V. Bozhovich (1932–2021) wrote that in Francois Truffaut's stylized and ironic film *Vivement dimanche!* This is done very subtly. Truffaut suggests that his viewer is an expert and connoisseur of the chosen genre. And not just a detective, but a detective of the 1930s and 1940s, with its black and white palette, restraint of external means and the finest lace of intrigue. ... The wonderful actors Jean-Louis Trintignant and Fanny Ardant do not play real people, but conditional cinematic characters. Their action and facial expressions correspond to certain feelings and dramatic situations, but are devoid of real psychological content. And again, no pressure, the parodic beginning is a little dawning. To play like this, you need the highest class skill (Bozhovich, 1986: 10).

Analyzing the film of another outstanding French director, Bertrand Tavernier, film critic A. Plakhov, not forgetting to ritually mention that he "gained a reputation as the largest director in France, an artist of anti-bourgeois in spirit," he further noted that in *Sunday in the country* (*Un Dimanche a la campagne*, 1984), this master "will show himself as a skillful restorer of time and – what is especially important – an in-depth interpreter of it. ... he managed to change his artistic style, remaining absolutely organic in the sound of his author's voice" (Plakhov, 1986: 10).

But in relation to the films of two famous Italian directors – Francesco Rosi (1922-2015) and Ettore Scola (1931–2016) – A. Plakhov was more strict.

So about the film *The Chronicle of a Declared Death* (*Cronaca di una morte annunciata*, 1987) A. Plakhov wrote that "Rosy, following Marquez, considers ... connections within a semi-patriarchal society, oppressed by the fate of age-old prejudices. The springs of a protracted and cruel conflict are not love, passion, not even jealousy, but adherence to rituals that are senseless in their wildness, encouraging people to play roles that are unusual for them. The humanistic pathos of this movie is stated frankly and strongly, but it is prevented from being realized by an equally

frank picturesqueness, decorativeness of the environment in which the characters are placed (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

And in Scola's film *Family (La famiglia)*, 1986), according to A. Plakhov, there is no sharpness of thought that captivated in the film of the same Scola *Terrace (La terrazza)*, 1979), built on a similar technique, there is no laconic expressiveness of microplots *Le Bal* (1983), although one cannot fail to pay tribute to the wit and ingenuity of the production (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

Damiano Damiani's film *Pizza Connection* (1985) received a very restrained assessment in the *Soviet Screen*. Film critic O. Nenasheva, recognizing that Damiani is a recognized master of political detective, who knows all the intricacies of the recipe for a "movie about the mafia", further made the reasonable conclusion that in the film *Pizza Connection* the desire to please the viewer outweighs. A sharp, dynamic... tough plot and frank melodrama of the story told, softening the disturbed hearts of the audience, will not make us regret the time lost in the cinema hall. And no frontal political attacks (Nenasheva, 1989: 29).

On the other hand, film critic A. Doroshevich considered David Lean's grandiose fresco *A Passage to India* (1984), based on the novel of the same name by E.M. Forster (1924). A. Doroshevich reasonably considered that having made the film after fourteen years of silence, Lean nevertheless remained faithful to his artistic principles, remained a romantic director, professing a "great style", striving to see some kind of eternity behind the vicissitudes of individual destinies, which in this case should carry India in itself (Doroshevich, 1987: 10-11).

Claude Lelouch's melodrama *Edith and Marcel (Edith et Marcel)*, 1983) also received quite a benevolent assessment in the magazine. Film critic T. Khloplyankina (1937–1993) wrote that the director did not overload this beautiful legend with either everyday details (which, however, is probably good), or psychology. As a result, the picture turned out to be whole in its own way, although – we repeat – and greatly stretched. There is a legend about love in it, and there is love itself – to the extent that the legend allows (Khloplyankina, 1987: 21).

A notable event in the initial period of "kinoperestroika" was the release of the famous film by Wim Wenders *Paris, Texas* (1984) in the Soviet film distribution.

Film critic A. Plakhov perceived this philosophical parable as the implementer of a universal model of human feelings and relationships (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21). And film critic E. Tirdatova noted that most of the audience attracted by the name of the picture will be disappointed. True, the spectacle that will open their eyes will be simply gorgeous: a dazzling, fantastic panorama of Houston at night or a strange, bewitching picture of a deserted suburb in the evening after a thunderstorm ... There is both a mystery and a touching story about lost love with tears and repentance, and a beautiful woman: the star Nastassya Kinski... Wenders' picture is extremely simple: it is a melodrama, the plot twists and tricks of which are directly designed for audience success ... and it is extremely complex – this is a thoroughly metaphorized parable about modern man (Tirdatova, 1987: 22-23).

In 1987, F. Fellini's film *And the ship is sailing (E la nave va)*, 1983), in general, there was a unique case: an enthusiastic review of it was posted on three pages of the *Soviet Screen* with color frames from the film! There was no such case with reviews of a Western film in the magazine either before or after...

Theater and film critic T. Bachelis (1918–1999) wrote that in the film *And the ship is sailing* Fellini's mischievous fantasy shifts the images of the film into the register of a buffoon opera, where the banal coexists with the original, the monstrously tasteless with impeccably beautiful, the sublime with base and where the music never stops. ... But through the amusing collage of cinematography and opera, comedy and lyrics, tragedy soon gives its voice (Bachelis, 1987: 6-8).

But around another then novelty of the Soviet film distribution – the movie *Ginger and Fred* (1986) by Federico Fellini – on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* (albeit with a large distance gap) a dispute arose.

Film critic N. Savitsky, in his very positive review, wrote that in the film *Ginger and Fred* the director – for the umpteenth time! – creates its own special world. Quirky, enchanting, extravagant. ... In the polyphonic sound of the film, the dominant motif gradually stands out – a sarcastically merciless debunking of modern "mass media", commercial television, this insatiable moloch of today's bourgeois culture, which grinds and crushes everything under itself. Talents, minds, human souls. This is more than just a profit-making spectacle. This is a whole "philosophy", a well-thought-out system for processing the mass consciousness in the interests of those who

“order the music”. A system of leveling the tastes, the spiritual demands of multimillion audiences, directly designed to kill any healthy taste, etching the spiritual beginning in man (Savitsky, 1986: 20-21).

In general, film critic T. Bachelis (1918–1999) agreed with N. Savitsky's opinion, arguing that *Ginger and Fred* is perceived very easily. Everything is clear in it, although in it sadness goes hand in hand with joy, serious drama – with a careless joke, lyrics – with irony, and faith in the future – with undisguised bitterness. That is, this is again a Fellinian mixture of contradictory feelings, a Fellinian brew, where the vulgar suddenly becomes elegant, the rough becomes tender, and the tender becomes sharp and spicy. One plot enters into another, “an object cuts an object”, and the trifle of a “tip-top” variety dance turns into a poem of resurrecting love. ... Let us note by the way that Fellini does not miss a single opportunity to caustically ridicule the stupefying television business (Bachelis, 1988: 18-19).

But the film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023) admitted that in the film *Ginger and Fred* he did not like the movie as a movie. ... The “love story” of the elderly dancers, told in the film, is not so much romantic as sentimental. Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni, great actors, meeting whom the audience stands up and the ovation does not stop for several minutes, this time did not add anything to what was known about them before, at least to me. The impression is that they appeared to remind of themselves. That, they say, they are alive... That they are healthy, full of creative powers (Bogomolov, 1990: 30).

No less controversial opinion about another famous Western film of the 1980s, which hit the Soviet film distribution, was expressed by A. Plakhov, reproaching him for being unemotional. Evaluating the masterpiece of Milos Forman *Amadeus* (1984), the film critic argued that “Foreman, having mastered the Hollywood self-discipline, did not succumb to the nostalgic elements, made the film cold, perfect in its own way and accepted as a product of the highest standard on all five continents (Plakhov, 1987 : 20-21).

But since not only masterpieces of Western cinematography appeared on Soviet screens in the mid-1980s, critical articles about ordinary productions of Western entertainment cinema also appeared in the magazine.

In particular, in his witty review of the American film *Heavenly Bodies* (1984) film critic V. Turovsky (1949–1998) noted that the authors of this film are very desperate, funny and fearless guys. Who would tell and who would believe that from a television program like our “Rhythmic Gymnastics” you can build a full-length, one and a half hour feature film into which they will try to squeeze love, aerobics, the problem of sports honor, the theme of the perfidious deceit of rivals, the conflict between honest knights sports and sharks of private capital. ... It is difficult to suspect the authors of the seriousness of their artistic intentions, and therefore it is difficult to question them on any account of art. The art of cinema, unlike the art of aerobics, was not part of their intentions at all, so they must be judged by the laws they adopted for themselves. They made an honest, frank, professional visual guide to aerobics, which at times is impossible to look at (Turovsky, 1986: 10-11).

But the most resonant in this series was the article by film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) “About *Angelique*”, published in 1987. To a large extent, this publication was a response to the emotional, but devoid of analytics, criticism of the situation in the Soviet film distribution, expressed by journalist Y. Geiko on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in his sensational article “Why *Angelique* came to us” In particular, Y. Geiko criticized the USSR Goskino in purchasing such entertaining Western films, such as French costume adventures: *Angelique – Marquise of Angels* (*Angelique, marquise des anges*) and so on movies (Geiko, 1985).

V. Dmitriev reasonably noted that the case of *Angelique*, which seemed so simple and unpretentious, now does not seem so simple. It's no secret that opinions clashed around the film. Critics are largely against it. The audience is largely in favor. The former allude to aesthetic illiteracy, the latter to isolation from the tastes of the broad masses. ... First of all, *Angelique* is not a historical film. It is a historical popular print, using the scenery and costumes of the 17th century not to restore the everyday truth of the past or to explain in depth the reasons for the clash of opposing forces, but to create a great performance that lives according to the laws of a multi-colored spectacle. ... *Angelique* is what it is: an entertaining picture that does not pretend to be much, a historical popular print, with its ups and downs, its not fully thought out aesthetics, its more than modest place in the pyramid of world cinema. ... Imagine for a second that the entire

screen is filled with *Angelique*, *Three Musketeers* or *Counts of Monte Cristo*. Nightmare. And if it is filled with some serious problematic films? Hand on heart, do we want this? (Dmitriev, 1987: 16-17).

With the light hand of V. Dmitriev, the *Soviet Screen* further wrote about Western entertainment film production that got into the Soviet film distribution, already without the previously obligatory ideological curtsy (Dementiev, 1989: 28; Eshpay, 1989: 28; Ivanova, 1989: 29; Mikhalkovich, 1989: 28; Razlogov, 1988 : 21-22; 1990: 25; Simanovich, 1989: 28; Stishov, 1989: 26-27; Sulkin, 1988: 21-22, etc.).

So film critic Y. Ivanova wrote that, of course, one can continue to call American action films a product of mass culture, accusing them of all sorts of commercial “sins”. But if for many years even our box office managed to patch up financial holes with the help of such “certainties”, it means that the viewer has a need for such cinematography. ... People love scary stories. Memories of sweet horror stretch from childhood, from tales of ogres and dragons to tales of witches and vampires. The need for emotional sensations of this kind gives rise to a steady interest in their carriers – rumors, detectives, horror movies. Even at the beginning of the century, it became clear that the timeless Horror Story, and even more so with a detective story – a sure pledge of commercial success of the film. It is precisely on such a win-win combination that Curtis Hanson's film *The Bedroom Window* (1987) is based (Ivanova, 1989: 29).

And film critic O. Sulkin rightly noted that the ingenuous main character of the film “*Crocodile*” *Dundee* (1986) “in the company of modern fashionable heroes of the commercial Western screen ... looks like a “black sheep”. It is enough to compare him with the muscular and merciless avengers of Stallone and Schwarzenegger, the gloomy outcasts of Eastwood and Pacino ... He is from some other value system. He personifies the myth-memory of mankind about the “golden age” ... He is somewhat akin to the Russian Ivan the Fool ... This hero is attractive, because he is from a fairy tale. From a fairy tale for all times” (Sulkin, 1988: 21-22).

Analyzing *The Soap Thieves* (*Ladri di saponette*, 1989), film critic A. Dementiev (1957–2023) was convinced that it was a very light, very “entertaining” comedy about how a neorealistic picture and commercial advertising are mixed up on the TV screen. ... How pleasant this unpretentious and at the same time witty film looked against the general background of the competition program! And let it be lightweight, let it be! At least cinema (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

The French comedy *The Runaways* (*Les Fugitifs*, 1986) was also positively assessed in the *Soviet Screen*: “The main thing for Weber is an interesting story. And the genre, the choice of actors and everything else is the closest and most acceptable way for him to tell this story. ... In *The Runaways*, as always with Weber, laughter is based on witty and tense comic situations, subtly sustained on the verge of absurdity. In general, this feeling of “on the edge” is extremely important for comedy as such. After all, here it is so easy to jump into vulgarity, into a frank psychological blunder, and simply into “not funny”. Until now, this feeling of Weber has not failed – it has not failed this time either” (Stishov, 1989: 26-27).

Film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) believed that Wolfgang Petersen in his films – *Enemy Mine* (1985) and *The Never Ending Story* (1984) – stubbornly follows a certain program, worship of the past felt to be the essence of Petersen's program, its basis. *The Never Ending Story* is about an attempt to breathe new life into the images of the past, taken not from the space sagas of modern fiction, but from traditional children's literature that has retained an affinity for fairy tales with their princesses, brave heroes and monsters. These creatures inhabit the Land of Fantasy in Petersen's painting. ... If *The Never Ending Story* is tied to traditional children's literature, then *Enemy Mine* is a clear move towards *Star Wars*. ... The story of the hero's initiation seemed ornamental in Lucas, in *Enemy Mine* it is the main content of the film. His hero – astronaut Will Davidge – in full accordance with the canons of initiation goes through all its stages: he leaves his familiar environment, though not of his own free will, acquires secret knowledge and, in the end, finds himself in a new environment – with those whom he considered enemies. ... Worshiping the past is called passeism. The creator of *The Never Ending Story* and *Enemy Mine* is no doubt a passeist. For him, the history of mankind is truly endless, since it makes its movement in a circle. Technique progresses infinitely, becomes infinitely more complex, but ethics does not need such progress – it immediately presented itself to the mythopoetic consciousness in its absolute forms. Having described the circle, humanity will return to them – this is probably how our future is conceived by the creator of *Enemy Mine*. The Passionist is not often optimistic. Petersen is inherently optimistic because he believes that the past is achievable (Mihalkovich, 1989: 28).

No less analytically another film critic – V. Eshpay (1953–2016) – reacted to another bright example of entertainment production – *Romancing the Stone* (1984), believing that this movie can be treated as an adventure thriller and not racking their brains over it, moreover, the majority will do so. However, this film is not as simple as it seems. Being drawn into the picture, you notice that everything is somehow shifted in comparison with the usual adventure films. ... Commercial cinema? Without any doubt. But accurately reflecting the artistic and cinematic tastes of middle-aged Americans. As a matter of fact, cinema, as the most mass-produced of the arts, should be so – accessible and, as far as possible, not vulgar. American yuppie directors do it well (Eshpay, 1989: 28).

But about *Single* (*Le Solitaire*, 1987) on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* in 1989, two reviews were published at once.

Film critic G. Simanovich melancholy noted that the film by Jacques Deray *Single* “evokes sadness. Police thriller with Belmondo – and suddenly sadness? You don’t believe anyone, they dismiss it, they go to look, and then they ironically advise you to turn to a neuropsychiatrist. ... I was also in anticipation. Having cast aside this annoying critical snobbery of ours, I, honestly, prepared to be that childish grateful viewer of adventure films, for whom dashing, spectacular attractions are much more important than artistic integrity, moral conception, general idea and other "conventions" important for finicky adults. And, God knows, I steadfastly fought back the annoying sensations that all this was, was, was, and it was already clear, it was known what the next episode would be.

When the derogatory, arrogant, biting term “Belmondism” was put into use by our criticism (and this is the end of the 70s), any domestic viewer who had the slightest understanding of cinema art, any admirer of the actor had every reason to be offended by Jean-Paul Belmondo. Yes, he has already participated in several not very successful police films, hinting at the image, the role of the hero, calmly looking down the barrel of an enemy pistol, but managing to shoot first. However, could one forget that this is the actor of Godard, De Sica, Louis Malle ... that theatrical Paris applauds him. We have to stick a label, that the brand is licked, once, and you're done. ... After *Single* I realized something had changed. It seems to be the same gestures, the same chic style of reprisals against opponents, but some kind of tiredness, mechanistic, "breathlessness" in Belmondo's game. And within the framework of a worn-out plot cliché, in terms of obvious director's amorphousness boring and vulgar actor it all comes out" (Simanovich, 1989: 28).

To a large extent reflecting the opinions of the mass audience, film critic A. Dementiev (1957–2023) argued with G. Simanovich: When I see any creation of Belmondo on the poster, even if it is at least three times *Single*, I’ll go, by golly. And I really do not want to be deprived of this pleasure. ... Belmondo will always be of interest to him. If this Belmondo is given a teaspoon a year, then they will love only him, dream only of him. I agree, The Loner may not be the highest quality essential item. But where are they, these high-quality ones? ... I want to watch Belmondo hold a cigar, get into the Citroen and kiss the baby. By God, even with sluggish directing, it's better than our beauty pageants. And Belmondo is a living embodiment of an amazingly beautiful life (Dementiev, 1989: 28).

In the late 1980s, succumbing to persistent pressure from the new Board of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR and the film press, the USSR Goskino bought and sent for wide release a considerable number of masterpieces of Western cinema, which had been inaccessible to the masses of viewers in previous decades. Of course, these old movies did not become box office hits (especially against the backdrop of an aggressive video boom), but they received considerable support in the *Soviet Screen*.

Thus, reviewing Jean Cocteau's *Orphée* (1950), released to the Soviet cinema with a colossal delay, film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that Cocteau refers to the ancient Greek myth not just to return it to modern times. The poet's existence is tragically torn between the real world and the beyond. This is how it was thought in antiquity, and this is how it is now. Cocteau's film tells about the eternity of this gap (Mikhalkovich, 1989: 26-27).

Film critic N. Amashukeli reminded readers that the director of the film *French Cancan* (1954) Jean Renoir "belongs to the generation of great French directors Jean Vigo, René Clair, Marcel Carnet. In his films, in particular in the *French Cancan*, simplicity and sophistication, a special, inherent picturesqueness, are surprisingly combined. The episodes of the exhausting rehearsals of the girls from the Moulin Rouge resemble paintings with blue and pink dancers by Degas, colorful posters, of course, Toulouse-Lautrec, at the sight of the narrow and hunching streets of Montmartre, Utrillo's drawings come to mind, and cheerful visitors to taverns, cafes and

cabarets seem to have gone from the paintings of Auguste Renoir, the director's father. Yes, literally every character in the film resembles the images of impressionist artists, each of his frames is permeated with a poignantly sad and at the same time cheerful sense of the world, characteristic of these artists. ... Let me repeat: the whole film is characterized by a special, amazing sense of style, exceptional cheerfulness" (Amashukeli, 1990: 28).

Referring to Federico Fellini's masterpiece *8 1/2* (1963), which was finally released in Soviet cinemas, theater and film critic T. Bachelis (1918-1999) reasonably argued that time is powerless before some works. *8 1/2* is one of them. And if the means of expression, first used by Fellini, are replicated a thousand times by his followers and imitators, then the main motive of the picture completely retains its freshness and power. Moreover, I dare to say that in our days, in the current social conflict, this motive has gained additional sharpness. For the main theme of the film is the heavy burden of responsibility that the freedom of expression granted to the artist imposes on the artist (Bachelis, 1988: 18-19).

Film critic N. Savitsky reminded the readers of the magazine that *The Red Desert (Il Deserto Rosso)*, 1964) was staged by the recognized master of Italian cinema Michelangelo Antonioni almost a quarter of a century ago, but an attentive viewer will certainly notice and appreciate the unique – not only for his time – the artistic solution of *The Red Desert*. The subtle, deep psychologism of this picture, where every, even the most inconspicuous nuance is essential, and optional details are absent. Impeccably accurate in terms of performing technique and at the same time naturally laid-back work of a well-coordinated ensemble of actors, in which Monica Vitti is confidently leading. The slender composition of the movie, all the more surprising given the almost eventless and deliberately blurred plot. workshop, a truly directorial use of color is not a help in achieving pictorial authenticity or self-made spectacle, but a powerful means of emotional impact that forms a capacious metaphor for human experiences. ... Antonioni chose one of the most disturbing and painful problems of the so-called post-industrial, that is, modern capitalist society, the problem of alienation, the catastrophic rupture of natural human ties, as the object of his primary interest. ... There are many questions in the film and questions for the film, and none of them suggests an unambiguous, simple answer. It is clear, however, that in a world where nature is fading away and living human feelings atrophy, breathing is difficult, and full-blooded existence is unthinkable. And there is nowhere to go from here ... But the world can (must!) be changed, trying to start at least a little to replenish the increasingly tangible lack of humanity in it, morality – in its broadest sense. This is the main result of the trip to *The Red Desert*, the main meaning of the message of the artist-humanist, addressed to the people of the Earth without a statute of limitations (Savitsky, 1989: 26-27).

These kind of retro-reviews adjoined articles about the old Hollywood westerns *Stagecoach* (1939) and *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

Film expert V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) wrote that we remember *Stagecoach* under the long, albeit expressive name of our distributors *The journey will be dangerous...* *Stagecoach* makes an unforgettable, indelible impression thanks to the skillful dosage of tension. ... Here, at Ford, all episodes with a moving carriage seem to be permeated with the "smell of danger." It seems to hang in the air and is physically palpable. In fact, this feeling is evoked "without cinema" – not by camera angles, not by montage, but by purely dramatic means, by the prudent and effective introduction of signs of an approaching threat into the plot (Mikhalkovich, 1991: 26-27).

And film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) in relation to *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) reasonably suggested that in the early sixties we did not have a more famous foreign film. The roar with which he rolled across the screens of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, very soon reached the ears of cinema lovers of the most remote outskirts. Copies were in short supply, they were torn hot from the processing machines of film copy factories and thrown to the audience, languishing from tedious waiting. ... And when the remarkable critic Yuri Mironovich Khanyutin dared to remark that he personally liked *The Magnificent Seven* much more than *The Seven Samurai*, it was considered a joke, unworthy scurrilousness, a mocking mockery of the shrine of world cinema. Protested and ostracized, Yuri Mironovich, as I recall, did not change his opinion, but he did not consider it necessary to vigorously defend it. ... For us, *The Magnificent Seven* was a solemn film that embodied the dream of male brotherhood, personal responsibility and that intoxicating feeling of freedom, when everything seems to be within your power, you can race on a beautiful horse against the wind and, breathing in the fresh air, feel yourself the master of the earth that is under your feet, the wide sky that is above your head, the entire boundless universe, of which you are a small part. How could this feeling please our ideological system to the limit with its forever

established hierarchy of values and priorities? Shouldn't it have frightened that considerable part of the citizens of our country, which saw the only possible evolution of society in a slightly modified Stalinism? (Dmitriev, 1990: 29-30).

But, probably, the most unexpected retro premiere of the Soviet film distribution in 1991 was Liliana Cavani's film *The Night Porter (Il Portiere Di Notte, 1974)*, accused in the 1970s of justifying Nazism not only in the USSR, but also in many other countries.

Film critic A. Plakhov wrote in his review, in our opinion, filled with very overestimated estimates of the secondary and morally slippery work of L. Cavani, that *The Night Porter* caused him "a surge of conflicting feelings. On the one hand, it was confirmed that the powerful energy of this picture continues to operate and has not been blown away by the wind of history. On the other hand, that the scandals that accompanied the appearance of the film are not connected only with the insanity of ideology, but affect the very nature of man, his "ego" hidden from prying eyes. ... Socio-cultural stratifications, intellectual metaphors and "naive" laces of postmodernity entangled the natural trunk, and it took the vital corrosiveness and feminine recklessness of Liliana Cavani to penetrate this core. ... This film, teetering on the dangerous edge of the erotic guignol, tried to locate somewhere between Visconti and Pasolini. ... Between two interpretations of fascism – as a demonic myth in the coordinates of the new history and as a decadent performance in the spirit of kindergarten libertinage. ... And the intuitive rebuff that the film caused in America, frightened by the double bogey of anti-Semitism and pornography, says not only that idiots are found everywhere, that there are far more of them than ideologically preoccupied Soviet film critics. He also speaks of the original frightening power that emanates from this piercing drama, testifying to the incomprehensibility of a person's actions, through and through, to "black holes" drilling his body and soul. ... Oh yes, and Cavani herself. and her teammates were convinced they were making a left-wing anti-fascist film. ... No matter how perverted and wild this love may seem, it is still ultimately hostile to ideology. Love is an exception, not included in the program of ideology. And so she must be killed. As for sex, it certainly enters into this program – one way or another, no matter how ideologically it is denied. ... Cavani's film is one of the acts of introspection of Western society, acts necessary in its time, when the "sexual revolution" was put forward as an antithesis to totalitarianism. The very combination of words is paradoxical. Cavani is one of those who reminded that violence is accompanied by pleasure, and all this together creates the ground for tyranny, for fascism. No revolution is a panacea and does not guarantee the free development of the individual. Now it is time to remind us of this. Liliana Cavani, whom we have been frightened of as a monster to whom it is dangerous to let underage children within reach, is indeed a tough, sometimes cruel director. In all her films one can find shocking scenes: as a rule, they receive some kind of meaningful justification" (Plakhov, 1991: 18-19).

But, of course, in the late 1980s and at the turn of the 1990s, relatively new Western films by well-known filmmakers appeared on the screens of the USSR, which were also analyzed now without biased ideological optics.

For example, film critic G. Krasnova reasonably noted that "in terms of dramaturgy, *The Longing of Veronica Voss (Die Sehnsucht der Veronica Voss, 1982)* loses to *Maria Braun (Die Ehe der Maria Braun, 1978)*, although over the script in collaboration with The same pair of playwrights worked as Fassbinder... But with all the imperfections, this film gives a visible idea of Fassbinder's style. ... the psychological drama of the film's characters is revealed in contrasts of light and shadow, black and white, and in this Fassbinder acts as a continuer of the traditions of German film expressionism – the art of light painting. Glare of light, falling on the faces of the characters, creates an atmosphere of uncertainty, doubt, impending disaster. The glow of neon advertisements and the twinkling of street lamps through streams of rain, the shimmer of precious stones, the sweep of the blades of a huge fan in the newspaper office – everything here is permeated by a continuous pulsation of light" (Krasnova, 1988: 21).

And film critic N. Petrova wrote that Arthur Penn's film *Four Friends (1981)* represents the duel of young heroes with life in the American ring of the 60s. ... We are watching how the hopes of young people melt away, how the illusions of a generation disappear, how the American dream gradually fades, although it still lives on. "What happened to the American Dream?!" W. Faulkner exclaimed in the 1950s. The echo of his words is heard in the Arthur Penn film. But the director does not give a definite assessment of the past, apparently not wanting to be categorical and simplify (Petrova, 1989: 29).

Speaking about the psychological drama *Father* (1990), in which the main character denounces a Nazi criminal 45 years after the Second World War, film critic O. Sulkin emphasized that “the most intriguing thing in the film is the gradual, very slow, but inexorable disclosure of the inner [former Nazi] Müller's world under the influence of external circumstances. It is clear that today he is a good, kind person. But is it possible to erase the sin you committed from your memory, like chalk from a school board? Can the gravity of what has been done leave the human soul? God forgives the penitent sinner, but the sinner is doomed to drag his cross to the end of his days. Directed by John Power, an avalanche of psychological nuances allows Max von Sydow inexplicably maintains the mysterious impenetrability of the soul, and this, without causing annoyance or languor, keeps the interest in the film” (Sulkin, 1991: 10).

Analyzing the film *Sweet Dreams* (1985), film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) believed that the English birthright did not allow Karel Reisch to completely dissolve in the elements of American cinema, to make a film literally following the formulas of traditional melodrama. ... This picture is not so much a continuation of Hollywood as a game of Hollywood, in condensed sentimentality, brutal tenderness, in a semi-magical world, which appears at the same time as a literal cast from the surrounding life and a semblance of a theatrical scenery (Dmitriev, 1989: 28).

But *The River* (1984), according to V. Dmitriev, is a cinematic formation that is not so common: it is a traditional Soviet film in a traditional American performance. ... We will see not only our plot schemes, of course, adjusted for American realities, but also our principle of editing, our principle of framing, our artlessness, when, for example, love experiences are depicted by changing the corresponding landscapes, and, finally, our pathos (Dmitriev, 1990: 16).

Referring to the sensational film adaptation of U. Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (*Il nome della rosa*), film critic V. Mikhalkovich (1937–2006) recalled that in the comments on the novel, Umberto Eco told about his trick: for the title, he deliberately chose a symbol so ambiguous in that it allows for many different interpretations. From the reader, the symbol requires mental work, efforts to find “its own” interpretation and substantiate it with plot events. Jean-Jacques Annaud, staging the film, coped with a similar task. ... Echoes of the fiction of two English writers – Conan Doyle and Fleming – seem to be fighting in the screen Baskerville, and this struggle is no less entertaining than the detective intrigue of *The Name of the Rose* (Mikhalkovich, 1990: 18-19).

Reviewing another striking Western film of the second half of the 1980s – *Angel Heart* (1987), film critic M. Drozdova correctly noted that in this film a split personality is masterfully built. The mystical branch of the plot opens a pathological mutant with two souls who commits crimes on the intuition of one of them that belongs to Lucifer. In the historical twist of the plot, we have before us a specific *American tragedy*. A painful stage in the nation's hateful romance with the Dream (the central character of its civil mythology). The picture was taken during a period of neo-conservative tendencies in American culture. And reflections on the painful relationship of the nation with its first fetish are quite natural. ... It remains to add that the elegance of the intrigue will allow those who are not up to it to avoid being drawn into philosophical historicism. Today, the American filmmaker who decides to talk about serious things most often erects them as an intellectual mezzanine above the first floor, accessible to anyone, right off the street (Drozdova, 1990: 29).

And we can probably agree with the film critic E. Plakhova, who, in her review of the psychologically subtle film *The Four Adventures of Renet and Mirabelle* (*Quatre aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle*, 1986), that there seems to be no phenomenon more alien to domestic distribution, than the films of the French director Eric Rohmer. So here you are, as many as three of his films “package” out on our screens. But, perhaps, it is against the inflamed, screaming background that the calm meaning of these paintings becomes especially transparent. Their stories are defiantly unpretentious. Little love misunderstandings, temptations and mistakes of youth, heart worries. Their heroes do not experience fatal passions, their main passion is curiosity about life. Knowing it not in an extreme, but in an everyday face, they discover its paradoxical nature. They also discover the play of contradictions within themselves. The essence of Romer's films is precisely in this subtlety of gradations of measurement, in the enlargement of the scale. Using this method, together with the director, we discover that any, literally any incident around us is far from unambiguous, and our own participation in it can be interpreted in completely different ways. ... Romer aestheticizes life, but does it with such graceful carelessness (or its appearance) that it seems as if life itself drapes itself into artistic forms (Plakhova, 1991: 14-15).

Film critic and culturologist K. Razlogov (1946–2021) reasonably stated in his voluminous article that 1987–1988 in world cinema was characterized by a radical change of milestones. Leadership gradually shifted from children's and teenage fairy-tale legendary movie comics to cinema for forty-year-olds: retro-nostalgic melodramas, dramatic comedies that allow former rebels of the sixties to find peace with themselves and honor the memory of their once abused parents. [However] the foreign repertoire of our cinemas ... based on the films of 1987–1988, nevertheless, as a whole, stands apart from the world film process. And this is no coincidence. The leaders of the world distribution both were and remain unaffordable to us in terms of prices, and they can be viewed at best in the out-of-competition program of Moscow international film festivals or on video. We still dare to hope that in the near future the “champion” of more than a decade ago, *Star War*”, will finally appear on the screens of cinemas, we timidly ask ourselves how the famous *E.T.* will be combined with the domestic psychosis of “flying saucers” (Razlogov, 1990: 25).

And then Kirill Razlogov, in his review of the current Soviet film distribution repertoire, we note certain advantages of the films *The Moderns* (1988), *Married to the Mob* (1988), *My friend is a traitor* (*Mon ami le traître*, 1988), *Tandem* (1987) and *To the left of the elevator* (*À gauche en sortant de l'ascenseur*, 1988) that although the principle of periodic self-repetitions can lead not only to a crisis in art, but often contributes to honing skills (Razlogov, 1990: 25), this is not always the case.

Among all this rather diverse bouquet of Western films, K. Razlogov singled out Eric Rohmer's elegant parable *My Friend's Friend* (*L'Ami de mon amie*, 1987) – a modern version of medieval morality... This story of love qui-pro-quo with unexpected happy endodrom could appear only in the country of Marivaux and the *Rules of the Game* (*La règle du jeu*, 1939) by Jean Renoir, whose heir can be considered Romer. Like his *Green Ray* (*Le rayon vert*, 1986) (Grand Prix of the Venice Film Festival and an unexpected guest of our screens), *My Friend's Friend* (*L'Ami de mon amie*, 1987) runs the risk of falling short of the expectations of everyone – distributors, directors of cinemas and spectators, but meanwhile this, in fact, the most famous picture of the reviewed repertoire (Razlogov, 1990: 25).

Thanks to the efforts of the film critic Y. Bogomolov (1937–2023), the “perestroika” *Soviet Screen* also responded to the screenings of Western television series in the USSR. At the same time, the mechanisms of their influence on the mass audience were revealed.

For example, Y. Bogomolov rightly wrote that in the *Jane Eyre* (1983) series that there is magic, which, however, contains motives of a non-aesthetic and non-artistic order. The series *Jane Eyre* is a myth about a person's stoic resistance to forces that doom him to spiritual conformism and social inequality. This is a myth with a winning ending. That is why it allows millions of people to get rid of, even if only emotionally and even for a short time, a complex of both social and moral inferiority (Bogomolov, 1989: 7). And the character of the Italian TV series *The Octopus* (*La Piovra*, 1984) – police commissioner Cattani we need for consolation ... the creators of this seemingly endless series lead Corrado Cattani consciously, or perhaps instinctively, to a one-man duel with an octopus. Folklore, fabulous patterns are already at work here. The hero must single-handedly crush the dragon or the haughty snake. And the fact that *The Octopus*, despite all the realities, both political and everyday, tying it to today, – the creation of folklore and mythology, so it's obvious. ... The main lesson taught by the Octopus is that evil is an organization, and good is an individual, a single person on a single Earth. So they are waging an eternal, as well as endless battle, in which Corrado is always at the forefront, and against him are countless hordes of bought, hired, intimidated by the octopus fighters of the invisible front (Bogomolov, 1989: 10).

And after watching the TV series *Dallas*, which appeared on Soviet television screens, Y. Bogomolov noted that the relationship of the people inhabiting *Dallas* is very contradictory, overflowing with unsatisfied desires and ambitious ambitions. But at the same time, this is a fairly stable world: the balance in it is maintained by the fact that everyone knows something compromising about the other. Compromising evidence is the weapon of the middle bourgeoisie. He also uses it for defensive purposes. ... Each series is built according to one plan: first, something like the harmony of personal and private business relations is demonstrated, then it, this harmony, is violated (some kind of dirty provocation, betrayal, hurricane), and then it is restored. ... If we lift the canopy of the business morality of ordinary American millionaires, then under it we will find a Russian folk tale that begins something like this: the old man had three sons: the eldest was a scoundrel, the middle one was an alcoholic, and the third was Bobby the Fool, that is, a simple kind soul. ... *Dallas*, in particular, hints at the fact that all of us – such adults, smart, civilized, regardless

of the color of our skin and the fifth point, from educational qualifications and social security – are terrible idealists in the deep subconscious (Bogomolov, 1991 : 23).

– reviews of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution

The ratings of Western films that were not shown in the Soviet film distribution on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* at the initial stage of perestroika were, as in previous decades, largely ideologically biased.

However, even today such American anti-Soviet "cranberry" crafts as *Red Dawn* (1984) and *Amerika* (1987) are perceived exactly as Soviet journalists wrote about them in 1986–1987: a mediocre anti-Soviet propaganda brew.

So the international journalist Y. Ustimenko wrote on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* that *Rocky-IV* (1985) makes a depressing impression: a monotonous scuffle with thickly smeared, wherever possible, blood and cannon punches of boxing gloves. The plot is obscenely primitive and boils down to a fight between Rocky and the "Soviet" champion Ivan Drago (it was necessary to come up with such a "purely Russian" name) (Ustimenko, 1986 20). And then Y. Ustimenko quite reasonably noted that such movies appeared on the screens at a time when the White House is frantically looking for an "external enemy"... [and] the United States carried out barbaric aggression against sovereign Libya, escalates threats against Nicaragua ... The authors of such films are characterized not only by the desire to distort Soviet reality, but also to present the Soviet people in the form of subhumans who have no place on earth, and therefore they are not worthy of pity and regret. It is not only a sport, but also a sacred duty of every 'true' American (Ustimenko 1986: 20-22).

In 1987, journalists Y. Alunov and V. Orlov published a review article, which quite objectively told the readers of the *Soviet Screen* about the most notable Hollywood anti-Soviet/anti-Russian film creations:

"In the *Red Dawn* (1984) show how the "Soviet landing force" made an attempt to capture the American town. In *Rocky IV* (1985), boxer Rocky Balboa proves the superiority of the American way of life in the "match of the century" in the Soviet ring...

Thus, a distorted, caricature image is persistently created about the USSR as a country that, in comparison with America, is in the "Stone Age" in terms of development. ... And the plot of the television movie *Amerika* is built on a wild fiction about the capture of the United States by the "Soviet Armed Forces" acting under the guise of UN troops. It was no coincidence that the idea of a television series saturated with hatred of the Soviet Union was born precisely in the bowels of the ABC, which for many years has been distinguished in the trio of commercial US television empires by militant reaction. ... a murky anti-communist, anti-Soviet, anti-UN brew, the creation of which was spent about 35 million dollars, spilled onto the TV screens in the homes and apartments of millions of Americans. During the 14.5 hours of TV time they saw the Capitol set on fire by the "Soviet invaders", members of the U.S. Congress fall, the "invaders'" tanks ravaging American cities and towns, and beast-like soldiers raping American women... This was the monstrous light in which ABC's efforts presented the Soviet Union to U.S. citizens" (Alunov, Orlov, 1987: 20-22).

It is curious that even one of the leaders of the "cinema perestroika" – film critic V. Demin (1937–1993) – in the same 1987, he very critically assessed the *Platoon* (1986), which was generally positively assessed by the Soviet press, telling readers of the *Soviet Screen* that although in West Berlin *Platoon* received the "Silver Bear" for directing, "at the announcement of this prize, as in the initial screening, the audience burst into heart-rending whistles. To understand such a reaction, one must not deduce the meaning of the picture from what is directly shown in it. The atrocities of the American army against the unarmed Vietnamese population are shown. Multiple and inventive. A young hero, a college boy, a volunteer pours out his bile in mental letters to a distant grandmother: what the hell took me into this swamp, this is not a war, but solid vomit, these are not comrades-in-arms – trash, human scum, food for prisons. So you are waiting for on-screen repentance: I participated in a vile and ungodly deed, forgive me, people, if you can! .. The film turns in a different direction. College bum grows into a great warrior. His inner monologues now herald newfound truths – friendship tested by bullets, brotherhood after despair, unity through hell. The politicians are to blame for not being able to avoid this vileness, and we – we have proved to the whole world that we can endure even worse. And a solemn dedication at the end – to those Americans who were and remained in Vietnam" (Demin, 1987: 20-21).

A rather sharp assessment was received in the *Soviet Screen* and the sensational film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) by Martin Scorsese. Film critic A. Braginsky (1920–2016)

wrote that delivered to Paris already with a halo of martyrdom (persecution by orthodox “fundamentalists” in the USA), this film was met with fierce attacks from the most conservative Catholic circles – “integrists”, who, like their American “colleagues”, do not allow any liberties in the interpretation of the image of Christ. ... I can testify: M. Scorsese made a rather boring film. ... One way or another, there is enough falsehood and even outright stupidity in the picture (Braginsky, 1989: 30-31).

And the masterpiece of Bernardo Bertolucci *The Sheltering Sky* (1990) received a completely ambiguous assessment in the *Soviet Screen*: “Bertolucci’s Desert is a test tube for a tricky experience with a hurtful, bitter, unambiguous result. Bertolucci cuts off everything extraneous, private, so that his research in the field of the human psyche reaches almost scientific purity. ... When Bertolucci stunned the world in the 1970s with his *Last Tango in Paris* (*Ultimo tango a Parigi / Le dernier tango a Paris*, 1972), few realized that the strength and novelty of the images was not in explicit sex scenes, but in the intensity of the psychological interaction of the participants in the drama. Bertolucci revealed completely new ways for cinema to penetrate the human psyche, sharply, like no one before him, exposed the existential conflict. In the new film, the fierce sexuality of *Last Tango in Paris* deliberately gives way to an almost dull physiology. Heroes not only cannot say anything to each other through sexual contact. They have absolutely nothing to say to each other. ... Anyone who tries to find a coherent story in Bertolucci’s new film will be disappointed. The director does not lead either the characters or us anywhere, except for the edge of the psychological abyss” (Rakhlina, 1991: 22-23).

Did not feel reverence for well-known Western directors and film critics. A. Dementiev (1957–2023), who, in our opinion, quite reasonably noted that inadapation of D. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* (1989), the famous Ken Russell tries in vain to repeat his own discoveries of twenty years ago, made by him in the brilliant film adaptation of *Women in Love* by the same author. Today’s Russell was only enough to picturesquely shoot, say, a glass of red wine on an inlaid table, but otherwise this solid and boring costume spectacle (at times, however, completely without a costume) causes only regret about Russell’s stormy energy that has gone somewhere – rebel of the 1960s and 1970s. Hector Babenko, from whom one could expect masterpieces after *Kiss of the spider woman* (1985), was presented with the painting *Ironweed* (1987)... which, whatever one may say, cannot be called a masterpiece. ... A sort of American *At the Bottom of the Great Depression* with an admixture of *The Threepenny Opera*: long, tedious and on the verge of a masquerade (and sometimes, frankly, beyond). ... The author of *Fifteen Years Old*, Jacques Doillon, seems to have delved into the study of the consciousness of a girl of adolescence so seriously that he achieved the feeling that his entire film was directed by such a fifteen-year-old girl – the level of directing, in any case, is appropriate (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

Just as strict (and, in our opinion, excessively and not always justifiably) to the works of famous Western screen masters of the second half of the 1980s, film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) also appeared on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*, literally defeating the Cannes and Oscar winners:

Too beautiful for you (*Trop belle pour toi*, 1989, special prize of the last Cannes Film Festival) – verbal fights, erotic fun, female perseverance and male impotence. An ironic self-parody by the fifty-year-old Frenchman Bertrand Blier.

Sex, Lies and Video movie (1989, Grand Prix of the same festival): male impotence and female perseverance, erotic fun, verbal fights. Touching narcissism of a young American Steven Soderbergh.

Pelle the Conqueror (*Pelle Erobreren*, 1987, Oscar for the best foreign film in 1988) by the Dane Bille August is a large novel form, heavy construction, intense directing, barely holding the crumbling material in his hands.

The Last Emperor (1987, Oscar for the best film in 1987) by the Italian Bernardo Bertolucci is a cumbersome novel form, tense construction, heavy directing, holding collapsing material to the limit of possibility.

And again you are convinced how dangerous it is to form an opinion about a picture based on what you hear, without seeing it. I recall the recent enthusiasm of our critics, addressed to the winner of the West Berlin Festival in 1989 *Rain Man* (1988), American Barry Levinson, but after watching the movie, I lower my hands, initially ready for a storm of applause. Before me is more than traditional cinema, rather conventional, overly theatrical, plot monotonous, and even the brilliant actor Dustin Hoffman seemed to me this time only a hypocrite, masterfully playing

sketches on a given theme and striving for technical perfection, not supported by internal obsession. One feels he is also tired (Dmitriev, 1989: 10-11).

However, V. Dmitriev treated many Western films that were deprived of such significant film prizes even more strictly:

How many pleasant words could be read in the foreign press in connection with the black comedy of the Englishman Peter Greenaway, *Drowning by Numbers* (1988)! And at first you really look with pleasure. And then such boredom, such self-satisfaction, such dissolute literaryism creep out onto the screen that even individual successful finds do not want to be attributed to noticeable merits.

I believe that the Englishman Ken Russell (born in 1927) has the right to shoot erotic episodes in the film *The Rainbow* (1989) using the old man's peeping method with pressure and barely restrained pleasure. But to be honest, it is absolutely incomprehensible to me why the American Phil Kaufman (born much later) uses the same method in his *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), turning a very serious movie into a political-sexual show with long tricks of very dubious taste, which, having appeared on the screen, begin to rapidly live an independent life and require that they pay much more attention to them than is required by the logic of the development of the action. And if we add to this the fact that, defusing the situation, the director lubricates the film with thick and deliberate sentimentality, then one of the generally recognized sensations of the festival does not seem to me a sensation at all (Dmitriev, 1989: 10-11).

Almost equally pessimistic was the article by film critic V. Kichin, devoted to the analysis of films presented at the Berlin Film Festival in 1991:

In the movie *House of Smiles* (*La casa del sorriso*, 1990) by Marco Ferreri, who went out to receive the Golden Bear, does not resemble the author of *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) or *Dillinger* (*Dillinger è morto*, 1968), who is now certainly "dead". The film breathes the energy of a paraplegic, and received the prize, according to the jury, for the totality of the master's contribution to cinema.

Sentence (*La condanna*, 1990). Special Jury Prize. Marco Bellocchio in recent years fell ill with mysticism and devilry. ... Panther-like divas from erotic visions finished off the audience, the film went under the friendly laughter of the audience, and the jury that handed him the "silver" was booted.

Dances with Wolves (1990). Kevin Costner (producer, director and lead actor) was named best director at the Golden Globes in Hollywood. And all this for a picturesque western on a grand scale, where each plot move is guessed in half an hour. Of course, the panoramas of South Dakota are amazing. Of course, the bison shake the hall with a stereotype. Of course, in every frame there is a humane idea of rapprochement between peoples and civilizations. But this is a product of the assembly line, not insight.

The Russia House (1990). The first big-budget American film shot in 'real Russia'. Sean Connery against the backdrop of Moscow cathedrals is impressive. Michelle Pfeiffer, filming in the USSR, experienced first hand the charms of our democracy and even went on strike in solidarity with the Soviet members of the film crew, who, according to our rules, cannot eat with the Americans and must swallow their saliva. Having known reality, she perfectly played the Russian woman Katya, exhausted by the most humane system. Katya is hungry, but spiritual. The hero Connery is full, but in love with Russian literature, temples, and then with Katya. Love is slightly hindered by the fact that he was sent here on a special mission by the Russian Department of the British Secret Service. ... Nevertheless, the usual spreading cranberries came out ... (Kichin, 1991: 25-28).

Much more warmly V. Kichin spoke about the films *Journey of Captain Fracasse* (*Il Viaggio di capitano Fracassa*, 1990) by Ettore Scola ("the film is touching, evokes nostalgia for the beautiful tradition of the "travel novel"), *The Godfather Part III* (1990) by Francis Ford Coppola ("the best of the Don Corleone series. ... 161 minutes of the film passes like a moment ... A brilliantly designed intrigue ends with an episode in an opera that is not surpassed in editing skill") and Peter Weir's *Green Card* (1990) ("he has now shot an absolutely brilliant comedy ... An example of witty dialogue, impeccably funny positions and superbly played characters") (Kichin, 1991: 25-28).

At the same time, film critic T. Khlopyankina (1937–1991), which at the Moscow International Film Festival in 1991 the Soviet spectator, who, on the one hand, believes that we have "no sex", and on the other hand, is already pretty tired of the dull domestic screen half-heartedness, but believing that somewhere out there, in well-fed and prosperous countries, still there is a diverse, powerful, great cinema, whose characters live with passions that are not limited to the limits of the bunk, a powerful sexual volley fell. ... After countless scenes that showed us how

men “fuck” with men, women with women, how a sister suffers from attacks of passion for her brother, how suddenly people who accidentally find themselves together in an elevator rush into each other’s arms, and how they try put themselves in a state of combat readiness bored with each other spouses, discussing all the stages, as if at a reception with a sex therapist – after this festival marathon, which merged into some endless on-screen intercourse, one could really forget that the word “love” has many other connotations (Khloplyankina, 1991: 6-7).

Of course, such a situation at the Moscow Film Festival was absolutely impossible to imagine either in the 1950–1970s, or in the first half of the 1980s, when censorship there was, of course, not as strict as in mass Soviet film distribution, but still very strict.

But in general, especially in the late 1980s and at the turn of the 1990s, Western films that did not end up in the Soviet film distribution were evaluated in the magazine with an unprecedented degree of benevolence.

Thus, film critic A. Plakhov quite highly appreciated the artistic level of Francis Ford Coppola’s *Rumble Fish* (1983) films shown at the Moscow Film Festival (here the director’s subtle understanding of the possibilities of cinema was noted by him “its deep impact on the level of the viewer’s subconscious”) and *Good morning, Babylon* (*Good morning Babilonia*, 1987) Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (Plakhov, 1987: 20-21).

Film critic I. Rubanova wrote that in the emotional drama of Francesca Arcebuggi *Toward Evening* (*Verso sera*, 1990) – the wind that calmed down by night, soft light, still sparse shadows – is poured into the very fabric of the film – quiet, discreet, to the point of modest asceticism. So gentlemen, fans of film fireworks – whether in the form of linguistic acrobatics or hummocks of plot incoherence – are asked not to worry (Rubanova, 1991: 7).

Film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) noted that *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989) outwardly seems to be enclosed in traditional US cinema forms. The dashing four young drug addicts, using all sorts of tricks, every time avoiding police persecution, rob pharmacies. ... You soon become convinced that the creator of a serious psychological study needed the traditional plot schemes of the first episodes as a kind of bait. What follows is a picture full of bitter and terrible generalizations of the “dehumanization of the heroes”, their gradual loss of the properties and qualities that until recently made four charming young people into people (Andreev, 1990: 28).

P. Almodovar’s films *Matador* (1986) and *Tie me up! (¡Átame!)*, 1989) (Vetrova, 1991: 26), *Jacquot from Nantes* (*Jacquot de Nantes*, 1991) Agnès Varda (Khloplyankina, 1991: 6-7).

And even the very ambiguous film by D. Jarman *The Garden* (1990) was interpreted on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* as an apocalyptic vision of the world ... Jarman is not embarrassed by arbitrariness, subjectivity, apparent randomness of images, as a result of the film they will make up a world of rare integrity, full of light and love, sublime and purifying. What is unique is that for all the author’s bias, he never stoops to straightforward social or political criticism. ... A picture that puzzles with its structure and strikes with artistic power (Kuznetsov, 1991: 11).

And quite paradoxically “perestroika” in the magazine looked unrestrainedly enthusiastic review of the film franchise about the adventures of the superhero Rambo, which was recently cursed by the entire Soviet press: “They scared us for eight years. And he is really scary when he makes a face, shaking his machine gun. And so – well, the sweetest person! Bad luck for John Rambo. Worn out by our videos and hammered by international observers, he finally broke through with his machine gun into the horizon of our domestic screen. Ronald Reagan himself at one time gave patronage to the movie hero, appreciating his merits in the fight against “godless communism.” And we, tormented by a cruel inferiority complex, could not then interpret his adventures otherwise than “damage to the military and ideological power of the USSR.” ... Meanwhile, in the film by Ted Kotcheff *First Blood* (1982) (then there were *Rambo II, III...*) the protagonist is initially presented not as a predator, but as a victim (having returned from the war, the veteran meets the open hostility of the authorities and is forced to enter into war with them). His cruelty is not the sophistication of the villain, but a reaction to misunderstanding, the aggression of the defender. This is a man who has gone through the fire and water of Vietnam and, like a “green beret”, can do nothing more than kill, crawl on his belly, and complete a task” (Ageev, 1990: 15).

The radical perestroika changes of the late 1980s, accompanied by the invasion of video, led to the fact that in the *Soviet Screen* there was a heading “Videocompass”, which gave a brief analysis of notable Western films that, for various reasons, did not fall into the Soviet film

distribution of the 1960–1980s. This column in 1989–1990 was written by film critics S. Kudryavtsev and A. Vyatkin.

At the same time, it was about both outstanding works of cinema and typical entertainment products.

In particular, S. Kudryavtsev, almost for the first time in the history of Soviet film criticism, gave a positive assessment of Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, noting that he "belongs to a small number of films, the importance of which increases over time. The scandalous story of 1972 about his "explicit erotic scenes" prevented a lot of people from accepting and understanding *Last Tango in Paris*. ... Fans of porn pictures will certainly be disappointed: the film, one might say, is innocent in comparison; that comes across sometimes in the program of Moscow international film festivals, not to mention what is found on video cassettes. ... The director managed to catch and show in the most clear form the monstrous confusion that reigned then in the minds and moods of society" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

S. Kudryavtsev also highly appreciated another until recently absolutely inaccessible to ordinary Soviet viewers, the film *Casanova Fellini* (*Casanova di Fellini*, 1976): side of his character's life. The witty fantasy of a great master deprives these scenes of rudeness and vulgarity, brings a sense of celebration, the triumph of love, freedom and liberation of the body and spirit (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Michelangelo Antonioni's classic masterpiece *Blow-up* (1966) also received, in our opinion, quite an adequate assessment: "Antonioni uses this story ... to create a parable about the unknowability of the world by man. Truth is hidden from the observer, as well as the boundary between illusion and reality. The theme of non-communicativeness, typical for M. Antonioni, of a person's inability to understand himself (and even more so, who is nearby) was transformed in *Blow-up* into a study of the philosophical problem of the relativity of human knowledge, which is content only with signs of things and events. The world here is a clownery, an illusory game in which everything is devoid of meaning and essence" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Another winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, *Scarecrow*, 1973, was also highly appreciated: "The sober and impartial attitude of the filmmakers to reality does not contradict their kind, slightly sentimental completely dissimilar people who loiter like tumbleweeds and seem to respectable townfolk "scarecrows." The humanity and sincerity of the picture allow it to retain its charm and power of influence even today" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

It seems that it was quite rightly noted that the satirical parable *Being There* (1979) by Hal Ashby, which successfully "uses" the display of the surrounding eyes of a person, on the one hand, "not spoiled" by civilization, and on the other hand, is a pure "product of of the television era, gives a striking effect – the hero gives presidents and politicians advice that is unexpected for them, but for him natural and simple. The greatest achievement of the film is the brilliant, virtuosic performance of the role of the gardener by Peter Sellers (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev called *Duel* (1971) by Steven Spielberg "a small masterpiece", where the director not only was able to inventively maintain tension throughout the plot, but accurately guessed the rare opportunity to create a philosophical parable about the impersonal, anonymous force of evil pursuing the ordinary a person, an "average American" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev also liked the screen version of the Broadway musical *Hair* (1979): "Perhaps it was the distance in time that allowed M. Forman to create not just a screen version of one of the first rock musicals, but a kind of portrait of a generation, a panorama of youth subculture 60-s. The acute relevance of the topics covered in the performance (the Vietnam War, student unrest, the spontaneous revolt of the "hippie" movement) and the calculation of scandalous outrageousness (in one of the episodes completely naked actors appeared on the stage) in the film gave way to a bitter and sober look at the "prodigal children" America and America itself, lost in a world of violence, military psychosis, rampant unbridled permissiveness. M. Forman's evil satire on the "powerful ones", on the insane military ... did not really appeal to American viewers and critics. ... However, such an attitude aside, the film, it seems, cannot but admire the unrestrained imagination, the vivid imagery" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Further, perhaps for the first time in the history of Soviet film criticism, two films by Andrzej Żuławski, *It's important to love* (*L'important c'est d'aimer*, 1974) and *Possession* (1981), received positive reviews. In fact, the plot, even tense, with elements of mysticism and detective story, is always for the director A. Żuławski only an excuse, a starting point. The action of his paintings suggests an expansive, metaphorical interpretation. The director gravitates towards the method of

fantastic realism, towards the genre of the parable about "human passions". According to Żuławski, one brief moment of happiness justifies long torments, strife, the eternal and irreconcilable struggle of the male and female principles, the dramatic, and often tragic fight of one person with another and at the same time with himself. ... Żuławski is a philosopher of initially doomed passion, confusing situation of mutual attraction – repulsion of a man and a woman. ... an ambiguous, complex artist (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

S. Kudryavtsev also claimed that the film *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1981) by Marco Ferreri is full of inner subtlety and wit. The "pain of an artist" here is not just an image. The intense, unceasing search for inspiration, the joy of creativity is far from being as beautiful as its result (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

But the boundless delight experienced by S. Kudryavtsev from watching the sensational drama Michael Cimino *The Deer Hunter* (1978) seems to us greatly exaggerated.

Apparently, in defiance of previous Soviet publications, in which this movie was subjected to well-founded ideological criticism (Yurenev, 1979: 19, and many others) S. Kudryavtsev, significantly simplifying and exaggerating the assessments of Soviet film critics of the older generation, decided, contrary to the plot and the author's concept of this movie, to try to inspire the readers of the Soviet Screen that "a large-scale saga about human destinies, which are mercilessly distorted by a senseless, useless war in Vietnam, our press accused of anti-Sovietism on the sole basis that some of the heroes were the children of emigrants from Russia, and in Vietnam American prisoners of war were mocked by playing "Russian roulette" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Meanwhile, the main claims to the really professionally made *The Deer Hunter* in the same Soviet Screen of the 1970s were made quite different: "The just war that the heroic people waged for forty years against the French and American imperialists is shown 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. The Vietnamese are shown as a confused herd running after the American soldiers. And most importantly, the heroic Vietnamese warriors, whose courage and military prowess the Americans were given to experience to the full, are shown as fanatics torturing prisoners! .. The Vietnamese are shown as fanatics, executioners, and the American interventionists are innocent victims and invincible supermen" (Yurenev, 1979: 19).

S. Kudryavtsev's assessment of N. Oshima's scandalous film seems unjustifiably overpriced. "*Corrida of Love (Empire of the Senses/L'empire des sens, 1976)*. Here, clearly overflowing with the "perestroika" impulse of "creative freedom", S. Kudryavtsev at that time "shockingly" wrote that "N. Oshima's film can make a shock impression, and not only on our viewers. The directorate of the Cannes Film Festival in 1976 did not dare to allow this film to participate in the competition precisely because of "obscenity". ... It took time to understand that there are no boundaries for true art, and these boundaries are set mainly by our moral prejudices. ... *Corrida of Love* is clearly not designed for one viewing. This is a profound exploration of the existential foundations of love, a philosophical analysis of the human personality and its limits, in particular the problem of the penetration of one individuality into another – at the edge of the abyss between life and death. In addition to this "European stratum" there is a specifically Japanese one: N. Oshima continued here his favorite theme of the collapse of national myths, rituals, ceremonies, codes of honor" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Referring to the best examples of entertainment cinema, S. Kudryavtsev rightly singled out Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) as one of the best films of the adventure genre, striking with the richness of fiction, incredible stunts, and the unique use of all kinds of visual effects, computer technology. This is not only a story of dizzying adventures... but also a witty, subtle, intellectual parody of films of this genre (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

Among science fiction films, *The Terminator* (1984) by James Cameron received a positive assessment: a wonderful example of tense non-stop action that does not let the viewer go literally for a second. ... The director accurately felt and sustained to the end the necessary rhythm and pace of action, showed remarkable imagination (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29).

Another sci-fi film, *Blade Runner* (1982), was also highly acclaimed: R. Scott very subtly combines the style of a typical "black film" in the spirit of D. Hammett or R. Chandler with science fiction at a high level of technical complexity. ... R. Scott's film is a good example of a very interesting combination of a spectacular "action movie" with an entertaining intrigue, with a philosophical picture-reflection (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

And Walter Hill's *48 hrs* (1982) was singled out from a wide range of police comedies, where the combination of a tense development of action with comic situations, tricks, gags can be defined as a "comic thriller" (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30).

And again, too enthusiastically, in our opinion, the mystical *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) by Roman Polanski was evaluated. We can agree that Polanski "not only created a fashion for" screen demonism", opening with his work a whole direction of films about modern occultism, but brought European culture to the film, connected the mystical genre with centuries-old philosophical searches in literature ... paying special attention to the manifestations of the magical, otherworldly, diabolical world at the level of everyday life (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 31). But with the fact that "from this point of view, the film *Rosemary's Baby* is perfect" can probably be argued...

With certain reservations, S. Kudryavtsev also positively assessed other famous Western entertainment films: *Trading Places* (1983) by John Landis (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29); *Blow Out* (1981) by Brian de Palma (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 29); *Robocop* (1987) by Paul Verhoeven (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 30); *The Omen* (1976) by Richard Donner and *Back to the Future* (1985) by Robert Zemeckis (Kudryavtsev, 1989: 31).

Whereas such secondary entertainment movies as *Cobra* (1986), *Xtro* (1983), *Class of 1984* (1982), *Salon Kitty* (1975), *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Police Academy* (1984) and others deservedly received negative ratings (Kudryavtsev, 1989, 29-30).

Analyzing the "Bondiana" that was recently mercilessly criticized by the Soviet press, film critic A. Vyatkin suggested that the readers of the *Soviet Screen* recall its plot scheme, which passes from film to film: 1. The enemy is a maniac who claims to rule the world or, at worst, to unleash a new world war. 2. Technique – on the verge of fantasy, the enemy – titanic, Bond – miniaturized. 3. Beauty – of all nationalities, colors of hair and skin, and none can resist the charm of James. 4. Plein air – like on tourist postcards. And finally. 5. Irony, parody, play – all this gives lightness to the most cumbersome inventions and reduces the drama of the most cruel fights (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

In general, we can agree that accusing Bond of dislike for the USSR is like accusing a fairy-tale knight fighting dragons of dislike for the animal world. Bond fights a Stereotype of the Enemy – during the Cold War, and during times of détente, his opponents often do not have a specific citizenship and a specific nationality. These are either maniacs-"Bonapartes" or agents of the fictitious organization SPEKTR (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

Further, A. Vyatkin, also without ideological pathos, introduced the readers of the *Soviet Screen* to the *Star Wars* franchise, reasonably noting that until recently, we associated the expression "star wars" not with cinema, but with the arms race. It is to be hoped that now *Star Wars* has forever occupied the only worthy place for them – on the screen (Vyatkin, 1990: 28-29).

Reflecting on the film adaptations of Stephen King's novels, A. Vyatkin wrote that King's fear is spilled in everyday life, among cars and computers, electric stoves and typewriters. His heroes are not only vampires and werewolves, but above all telepaths and psychics. Fear, according to King, inspires us not with a mysterious past, but with a threatening future, the sprouts of which are in our today ... King hits on sore points – social, political, environmental. But he does not paint global catastrophes. The horror of a single human soul is much more impressive, the writer believes (Vyatkin, 1990: 28-29).

In the same 1990, A. Vyatkin decided to review Hollywood horror films. First, he recalled that not so long ago, the horror film genre was one of the lures of the rotten West, along with chewing gum and rock music. Today we chew our own gum, and listen to our own rock, and films, as the audience complains, "are getting worse and worse" (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31).

And then, turning to the analysis of three famous franchises: *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Poltergeist*, Andrey Vyatkin wrote that the main reason for success with the audience is win-win use of the main factor of the "horror movie". This is the so-called "suspense", tension, that is, the viewer experiences a feeling of fear not so much at the sight of something terrible as in anticipation of it. Conventional tricks – disturbing music, the sound of steps, the creak of a door, a creeping shadow – always work flawlessly, causing an increased heartbeat (Vyatkin, 1990: 30-31). To this, as the film critic correctly noted, an element of irony was often added.

Articles about the problems of distribution of foreign films in the USSR and about the "video boom"

The first "swallow" in which the situation of film distribution of foreign films in the USSR was sharply criticized was a sensational article by journalist Y. Geiko (Geiko, 1985) in

Komsomolskaya Pravda, published in the fall of 1985. The Soviet film press, controlled by the USSR Goskino, then kept silent.

However, in May 1986, the fifth, so-called "revolutionary" Congress of filmmakers took place (from which, in fact, an active film restructuring began) and the subsequent meeting of the new secretariat of the USSR filmmakers, at which the *Soviet Screen* was criticized.

Against the backdrop of the weakening positions of the USSR State Film Agency and its then head F. Yermash (1923–2002), the editors of the magazine, in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves, published an article by film critic O. Sulkin "Only for sale?.. Polemical notes on the rental of foreign films", where it was noted, that a number of Western films that were released in the Soviet film distribution in the mid-1980s are designed "for the most undemanding taste" and even contain "justification for immorality": "Alas, in the distribution policy, there has recently been a more and more tangible bias towards films that are artistically untenable and ideologically flawed representing not even the second, but, so to speak, the third and fourth echelons of Western "mass culture". Let's not underestimate the harm they cause. After all, they teach the viewer, especially the young one, to the fact that cinema is not an art, that the perception of the film does not require any spiritual work, that it is like a dessert, a sweet pie that should be eaten quickly and immediately forgotten. It's easy to get used to film chewing gum, but it's much more difficult to get used to it. That is probably why many works that require a little bit of mental stress are not perceived, which is why there is a "discrepancy" with serious films. "Mass culture" deforms the value orientations of the individual, and sociologists and social scientists speak about this with concern. The harm is that for other viewers who do not fully realize that they are dealing with a fantasy world of "white phones", such film illusions often serve as a way of knowing the Western way of being. He looks at one such surrogate, another, and comes to the conclusion: all of them are millionaires, at the worst, half-millionaires; there is no life there, but paradise, blue or pink" (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

As necessary measures to correct this situation, it was proposed to put a decisive barrier to films that are empty, vulgar, tasteless, glorifying, sometimes openly, sometimes in the subtext, the notorious bourgeois values (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

And here, quite in the spirit of the traditional Soviet film criticism approaches of previous decades, it was emphasized that it was necessary to "give the green light" to "socially significant films, works in the credits of which appear the names of masters of world cinema art" (Sulkin, 1986: 10), although it was stipulated that foreign films of entertainment genres "in their best examples, we need in our "time of stress and passion" (Sulkin, 1986: 10).

Further, O. Sulkin touched upon in his article the problem of censorship cuts in Western films that were released in the Soviet film distribution, and gave a rather impressive list of masterpieces of the world screen that never made it to the Soviet mass film distribution ...

In one of his following articles in the *Soviet Screen*, O. Sulkin clarified his position on the topic of film distribution: "The main conclusion is as indisputable as it is banal: we go to foreign cinema mainly to have fun. We love to be entertained with quality, and we are very indignant at hack work. And then he pointed out the need to straighten a quivering doe from a rolling cart, that is, difficult, complicated films. Let her out of financial difficulties be taken out by a strong, full of energy horse of a sharp plot and bright entertainment available to millions. ... But [films that are difficult for a mass audience] should be delicately and cleverly screened separately, in parallel or in clubs... In the system of differentiated distribution, they will definitely find their grateful audience" (Sulkin, 1987: 18-19).

Shortly after the first of O. Sulkin's articles cited above, the editors of the *Soviet Screen* returned to the topic of Western film distribution in the USSR, asking the then head of the repertoire planning and film distribution department of the Main Directorate of Film Production and Film Distribution of the USSR Goskino L. Veraksa.

In his response, L. Veraksa tried (in our opinion, very unconvincingly) to get around all the sharp corners of the problem, concentrating the attention of the magazine's readers on the imminent release of several films by "famous masters of Western cinema" (F. Truffaut, S. Lumet) into Soviet distribution and box office films *Spartacus* (1960) S. Kubrick, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) S. Kramer, *Italian Divorce (Divorzio all'italiana)*, 1961) P. Germi, *Great maneuvers (Les Grandes manoeuvres)*, 1955) R. Clair (Veraksa, 1986: 3).

Continuing the discussion about the system of Soviet film distribution, film critic S. Lavrentiev recalled that "there is a department for editing and dubbing foreign films in the Main Directorate of Film and Film Distribution. From the name it is clear what is preferred here, what

comes first, but this does not bother anyone. It would never occur to anyone to ask: why do you need to “edit” foreign films at all? Such a question, obviously, seems blasphemous to the authorities. How could it be, after all, this is a tradition, and an old one at that!.. “Our Soviet viewer does not need this” – this is the main slogan of the work of the “editors”. Armed with it, uncles and aunts with scissors withdraw episodes, characters, entire storylines from purchased films...” (Lavrentiev, 1987: 21).

Further, S. Lavrentiev drew attention to the fact that often not film critics and historians wrote about Western cinema in the Soviet press, but political observers, staff correspondents of newspapers and magazines, who, on duty, are forced to stay in the bourgeois world for a long time, but at the same time they often make amateurish mistakes, confusing the names of directors and actors and reporting other false information (Lavrentiev, 1987: 19).

The same film critic also recalled another unpleasant Soviet tradition of the press, this time “cancelling”, hushing up this or that foreign cinematic figure: “Yves Montand has ceased to be sympathetic to our country – forget about the *Pay for Fear!* Simone Signoret made unfriendly remarks – no *Thérèse Raquin!* ... In this absurdity it is easy to trace a peculiar logic. Since almost any foreign filmmaker can, if desired, find a film or a statement that bureaucratically should be qualified as “hostile”, on the basis of this “point” one can constantly narrow the repertoire of the cinema (Lavrentiev, 1988: 20).

A kind of response to the articles by O. Sulkin and S. Lavrentiev was a conversation organized by the *Soviet Screen* of the director of the *Soyuzkinofond* A. Wesker, the head of the department for editing and duplicating films G. Inozemtsev and the former head of this department G. Bogolepov.

G. Inozemtsev hastened to reassure the readers of the *Soviet Screen*: Editing does not mean ‘cutting’ films. Such judgments come from ignorance of our profession. In his article, S. Lavrentiev gives examples of 15 years ago... These movies have not been in the box office for a long time, and there are no people who crippled them. So the pathos of the article is turned rather into the past...

A. Wesker added to the words of his colleague: The reductions were provided for by a standard contract for the purchase of films by capitalist countries. The Main Directorate of Film Production and Film Distribution was instructed: To make changes and cut films in accordance with the requirements of the Soviet screen without changing the meaning and content of the film. Why did you have to shorten the movies? One of the most significant is the shortage of film. Because of him, it happened at one time to release color paintings in black and white. Many episodes were cut if there was violence and pornography: their propaganda is prohibited by our Constitution. Unfortunately, there were also abbreviations that destroyed the meaning of the works, their artistic fabric (Quoted by: Nenasheva, 1987: 21-22).

Film critic A. Erokhin (1954–2000) also wrote about the problems of film distribution in his characteristic ironic and mocking manner. He recalled how the Soviet audience, like a little boy, for many decades “they tirelessly frightened with the predatory jaws of an unknown man-eating shark – with taste, they frightened on a large scale, so that even in Serebryany Bor it was scary to go into the water. Thanks to all the same kind uncles, departmental miracle heroes who defeated this movie monster even on the distant approaches to our territorial waters. And desperate hand-to-hand combat with bad King Kong! Only shreds flew from a primate alien to us. “There are sharks in Africa, gorillas in Africa... Don’t go, children, to walk in Africa!” ... And indeed: why lure into your cinema networks, picking up a reasonable price with a creak, representatives of their products are known, if they can be dealt with alone (after an intimate date in some secluded corner like Cannes or Venice) our valiant plenipotentiary taster in suede jacket, riddled with all sorts of *Godfathers*, our unbending exerciser, cheerfully exorcising the devil from the world’s movie screen, which came into his field of vision on duty, which is “both dangerous and difficult.” The plenipotentiary to this, of course, and the cards in hand: he is an initiate, after all, he knows both Fellini and Bergman, and Kubrick and Coppola like the back of his hand, and so sensibly stated everything about them in books with harsh titles, that in the films themselves the boy has just no longer needed. A convenient system, the boy thought: now I’ll buy guidebooks and I don’t have to go anywhere, and if I also get a cookbook, I can do without a grocery store with a restaurant. This boy grew up and received the proud name of a “mass viewer”, causing the quiet tenderness of film distributors because of his understandability and understanding” (Erokhin, 1987: 3).

As can be seen from this text, without naming specific names and surnames, the relatively young at that time film critic Alexei Erokhin rather caustically walked through the "elite", "ideologically consistent" film critics of the older generation (V. Baskakov, G. Kapralov, A. Karaganov, R. Yurenev and others), who regularly visited key Western film festivals, and, consequently, who then had the exclusive right to share their impressions of the films they saw there (inaccessible to the mass Soviet audience) in the Soviet press in the "correct way".

In the same 1987, a completely sensational event took place on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: in the December issue, an article by film critic V. Dmitriev (1940–2013) was published under the defiant title "Let's talk about erotica", and even accompanied by a photograph, where depicted, albeit rather modestly presented, but still a naked female body.

In his article, V. Dmitriev dared to break the taboo that had been held in the USSR for many decades, and declared the right of Soviet viewers to watch erotic films.

To "accelerate", V. Dmitriev began with a horror film, the beloved child of fighters against cinematic infection on the ideological front": , a mystical picture, although depending on the position of the author, it can be pathological and mystical, and a movie with monsters – fabulous, folklore, literary (Dmitriev, 1987: 20).

And then it was about the right of Soviet viewers to watch erotic episodes that have a plot and semantic character in the pictures (eroticism, used solely to raise the commercial potential of the picture, and we will not discuss pornography: their inadmissibility on our screens, I think, doubts does not cause). We are unlikely to achieve anything if we oppose [cinema erotica] sexless cinema and the sterile "purity" of relationships constructed in the silence of studio offices. And we can expect success if, calling on the help of the traditions of art, discarding cowardice and hypocrisy, we offer the audience high eroticism, which is high because it is based on morality. ... I vote for the right of our viewer to see on the screen the beauty of not only the soul, but also the human body. The term "eroticism" must finally be stripped of its veil of ambiguous mystery (Dmitriev, 1987: 20-21).

It is logical that this article (as well as previous articles about film distribution) caused a storm of opposite emotions among the readers of the *Soviet Screen*, many of whom later wrote letters to the editors of the magazine and personally to film critic V. Dmitriev.

Here are just a few quotes from readers' letters cited on the pages of the magazine:

"What would be the style of our museums if some "guardian of morality" had the idea to dress or smash the sculptures of Rodin, cut or paint over the "shameful places" on the canvases of Rubens?" (Y. Chernenko).

"Why do they decide for us: what we can watch and what we can't?" (A. Popov).

"Thanks for your article! I thought I would not live to see the years when they finally talk about erotica with respect".

"And you are talking about erotica! Disgusting to read! Let's talk about promiscuity! How can you not be ashamed? I despise you after that!" (A. Ovcharenko).

"Someone is rooting for production, another is struggling with various negative phenomena, but V. Dmitriev will now fight to ensure that there are as many naked women and sex scenes on our screen as possible" (O. Marfenko).

It is interesting that the readers, who bravely fought against sex on the screen, supported in many ways in his sarcastic feuilleton "Where is the sex? I don't see sex!", published in the newspaper *Soviet Culture*, journalist E. Grafov (Grafov, 1988).

Film expert V. Dmitriev decided to answer the readers. At first he noted that he was surprised by "the degree of frankness, enthusiastic or hostile, disproportionate, in my opinion, with a very modest task of publication", and then once again emphasized that cinematic "high erotica" is still not "artistically executed sexual acts", but the situation of the transition of sex from the biological to the spiritual, that state of sensual delight, which is familiar to any loving couple and which is a constant subject of depiction in art" (Dmitriev, 1988: 20-21).

One of the authors of these lines also joined this discussion: "I have long been convinced that filmmakers are very well aware of the real audience demand. ... for the sake of financial gain, they are ready to release in all cinemas without exception any picture that contradicts their views and aesthetic tastes. They just know the "market" well: what is interesting today and what is not interesting to the audience. As for erotic films, they are also different. And I don't think, for example, that after watching F. Zeffirelli's beautiful and sentimental erotic melodrama *Endless Love* (1981), bad inclinations will wake up in young viewers. And the beautiful erotic scenes in the films of L. Visconti, M. Jancsó, F. Mazelli? Undoubtedly, in other paintings – by I. Bergman,

M. Ferreri, P.P. Pasolini, D. Makaveev, the sexual sphere of human life is sometimes given in harsh manifestations. So what, to deprive these works of any significance, to brand them with "darkness"? Another thing is that these films are not designed for children and viewers with weak nerves ... And everyone is already tired of the bans – both viewers and filmmakers. ... The spring festival of Italian films in Moscow was held without full houses and queues. I remember that at one of the "stagnant" festivals, crowds of spectators who dreamed of "breaking through" to Fellini's *Sweet Life* were held back almost by mounted police. And in April of this year, in the capital's cinemas, where, in addition to *La Dolce Vita* (1960), there were *Satyricon* (1969), *City of Women* (*La Città delle donne*, 1980) and *Casanova* (1976), there were many empty seats ... Here you have the "forbidden" erotica in Fellini's films. Many viewers prefer the spicy clarity of *Emmanuelle* to his whimsical and ambiguous fantasy. However, why be surprised here – with the help of video, our viewers, who were sitting on a starvation ration, enter into a situation of choice that is normal for the rest of the world. Each of us chooses what he can do without, and what he can't do without..." (Fedorov, 1990: 10).

Film critic A. Plakhov continued the discussion about the "forbidden film fruit" on the pages of the *Soviet Screen*: "For the third year now, I have been watching how our domestic erotic business is getting on its feet. At first, only a naked female bust could be seen on calendars and posters, then tender buttocks, and now the most cherished frontal projection. So the title of the notorious novel *All Ahead*, imbued with a sacred horror of the power of pornography, turned out to be prophetic. They say that this is supposedly erotica, and pornography in our rule of law state is prohibited by law ... This, of course, can be consoled, forgetting for a moment that laws are powerless in front of the underlying springs that guide the course of life. ... All peoples who were lucky enough to taste the taste of totalitarianism are also familiar with its aftertaste, expressed in the suppression of normal sexuality, driven into the framework of rigid taboos. Religious precepts and national shrines, political doctrines and state-family moral codes were called to help. But the oppressed erotic energy, breaking through in underground ugly outbursts, was accumulating for a big explosion. It was experienced by Italy after Mussolini, and Spain after Franco, and Japan, which ceased to be a samurai reserve ... But the erotic boom fades faster than the generation that provoked it has time to grow old. And the faster, the more unconditionally the freedom granted to him. ... You might think that Western society is de-erotizing. Nothing happened. It simply passes into the next stage, when sex ceases to be a subject of public excitement, it becomes an individual affair of each person, free to choose any form of sexual behavior, except for violence. Violence is suppressed not only direct, but also indirect – psychological. Aggressive sexuality in magazines, on television, in films is not so much censored as localized, limited in circulation and distribution methods. ... On the other hand, we are afraid to hurt the feelings of the elderly and give the young what they should not be deprived of by definition – youth erotic films. In the West they are produced in abundance, they are not at all expensive to buy, and many of them are not in bad taste at all. These films are not vulgar, they are not "heavy porn" and could serve to increase the erotic culture of our youth. And maybe not only her" (Plakhov, 1991: 25-26).

At the turn of the 1990s, another article by film critic S. Lavrentiev was published in the *Soviet Screen*, where he summed up the results of the short campaign of the USSR Goskino to release some masterpieces of Western cinematography: An attempt to systematically familiarize the Soviet audience with the greatest achievements of world cinema, undertaken at the dawn of film perestroika, can, apparently, be considered complete. Our audience saw Fellini and Kurosawa, Renoir and Clair, Coppola and Foreman.. Well, that's enough! Cinematography has entered the era of self-financing. You need to make money, you have to buy commerce abroad. After all, people don't really look at masterpieces. While *Seven Samurai* is playing in the empty halls of our largest cinemas in the world, the box office of video salons is filling up, offering the people works like *Go, girl, take off your clothes* (Lavrentiev, 1990: 27-28).

But on the other hand, by the end of the 1980s, a system of "pirated" video rentals and private video viewings of recently banned Western film products arose in the USSR. Film critic S. Kudryavtsev wrote in 1988 that "you can't pretend all the time that the contingent of VCR owners is insignificant! ... Let's say roughly that there are 5-7 million video viewers in the country. ... But now, thanks to the "parallel" rental, the viewers also receive such outstanding films that were previously blatantly classified as pornographic, such as L. Bunuel's *Beauty of the Day*, B. Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, M. Ferreri's *Big Grub*, *Casanova* by F. Fellini, all films by P.P. Pasolini, starting with *The Decameron*; *The Night Porter* by L. Cavani, *Empire of the Senses*

by N. Oshima. And the viewer can now cleanse them himself of the husk that has stuck to them because of the preconceived interpretations of the prudes of art" (Kudryavtsev 1988: 22).

In addition, it turned out that it was at this time that "documents similar to the Methodological Recommendations of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs appeared in the USSR, in which films falling under articles 228 and 2281 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and corresponding to them in the Criminal Code of other republics) include such films of world classics, as *Last Tango in Paris*, *Beauty of the Day*, *The Godfather* or *Once Upon a Time in America* (Bolezni..., 1988: 16-17).

As V. Borev and A. Morozov wrote, such articles of the Criminal Code dealt with responsibility for distribution or storage for the purpose of distribution of objects of a pornographic nature, in particular video films, on the basis of which some Soviet video amateurs received real prison terms (Borev, Morozov, 1989: 22-23).

A milder measure to combat the "wrong" Western videos was their confiscation from Soviet citizens at customs inspections: in 1988, more than 80,000 video cassettes with recordings were checked at the country's customs when entering the USSR. About 9 thousand of them were confiscated (Morozov, 1989: 19).

In 1989, on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* was published a document entitled "Methodological recommendations for article 228 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR on the conduct of art criticism examinations of photo-film and television production", developed by several candidates of art history, philosophical and medical sciences (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

In these recommendations, the following signs of pornographic films were defined: Auto-attribution is the assignment of a film by its creators or distributors to the "x" category (porn). The anonymity of the filmmakers, the lack of a list of performers. Use of pseudonyms to refer to performers and directors. Significant features include the inherent value of showing sex scenes outside of any artistic task: the main screen time is devoted to showing in a naturalistic form of copulation; the absence of the concept of the film and the artistic principles of its construction; as a rule, the lack of plot, intrigue, context; purely conditional connection of individual scenes and episodes; detailed development and predominant use of close-ups and directional lighting, direct shooting angles when showing scenes of sexual intercourse (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

The editorial staff of the *Soviet Screen* magazine reacted ironically to these methodological recommendations: The description of the examination technology itself is of particular admiration. A picture is vividly drawn in the imagination: priests in white coats, sitting in easy chairs around a video recorder, look at various sexual acts "frame by frame" all day long, strictly comparing them with a "control group of artistic images", making sure that no more is seen than at Resting Venus – well, at the very least, at the very least – so that the video characters behave no more cheekily than the Romans of the Decline. Wow job! (Podsydimy..., 1989: 15, 29).

But the Soviet video amateurs sent on the basis of this kind of "expertise" probably had no time for irony ...

For example, in 1985, two video amateurs were convicted by the Leninsky People's Court of the city of Yaroslavl under Article 228 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR "for distributing pornography." The fact of the "distribution" of two videos: *Papaya*, *The Adventures of a Taxi Driver* and a *Plumber*, which the local expert commission recognized as pornographic, was established. My friends served their time – one and a half, the other two years (Pinsky, 1990: 24-25).

In addition, cases were recorded when a criminal case was opened for the demonstration and possession of so-called "anti-Soviet" films (KGB ..., 1990: 22-23).

However, the situation with video viewing changed very quickly in the USSR. Here is what film critic A. Zorky (1935–2006) wrote about this in 1991: "In the old village ..., next to the ruined Church of the Epiphany, there is a cinema, videos are playing: *Mad Max*, *Love Boarding House* (only for adults!), etc., erotica, adventure, horror. Here, film distribution services are practically dispensed with. Provincial grimaces? But even in the metropolitan cinema "Meeting" on the Garden Ring, formerly an elite one, famous for its brilliant repertoire ... now there are commercial video programs, only the first screening at 9.20 is given "for blazir" and an empty hall to some Soviet film. Today, for example, all day "Fanny Hill" (USA, erotica) with a moronic alert: "Children under 18 years old are not allowed". But back to Ples. On its compact cinema sites (4,500 residents plus tens of thousands of vacationers), a kind of battle between cinema and video takes place. Today, with Matveev's *Cup of Patience* competed *Love Passion and Ecstasy* and *Girls on Wheels*... Further more. Everything you want to know about sex, *Love by subscription*, *Queen of the*

Barbarians (everything was honorary, the fourth category of “sexual complexity”) was played in the video salon ... today you can burst from the belly” (Zorky, 1991: 18-19).

In the same 1991, film critic O. Goryachev echoed Andrei Zorky: “Video is seriously crowding cinema. He has something to offer the viewer. Another question is where these treasures come from. ... While we do not have a properly functioning box office, it was piracy that first provided our world's most disadvantaged viewer with the opportunity to choose. ... What genres are leading? – You still need to name the champions. The most popular genre so far is erotica. Erotic movies go wherever the owners want to squeeze the maximum profit out of their establishment, because erotica today is one hundred percent sold out. Full house in any situation and at any time of the day. In the video salon at the Moscow *Art Cinema*, for example, they start at ten: the box office opens at half past nine, and by noon there are no tickets. And so month after month. “We had different films,” they say here, “but the erotic ones last the longest: they played the *Greek Fig Tree* (*Griechische Feigen*, 1976), for three months, now the *Wild Orchid* has entered the third month. And they add, lowering their eyes: “The men are knocking down the shaft, they almost demolish the doors.” ... This is in the center of Moscow. And how many of these mini-pornosalonchikov huddle in different corners. Their posters are designed, in my opinion, for an exciting effect. Here is one that I rewrote in a working hostel: Video salon “Success”: 10.00 – 11 days, 11 nights. 12.0 – *Sex Star*. 14.0 – *Insatiable wife*. 16.0 – *Bangkok sex*. 18.0 – *Turkish fruit*. 20.0 – 6 *Swedes on the island of Ibiza*. 22.0 – optional. It is not difficult to imagine what this desire will be. There is no shortage of those who wish themselves” (Goryachev, 1991: 26-27).

Film scholar and culture expert K. Razlogov (1946–2021) argued with O. Goryachev on *Screen*: I will begin with a statement that may seem paradoxical: we know nothing about the video repertoire in our country. It only seems that the situation is insanely simple. All we have to do is use the “commercialization” picklock and we will get an unambiguous answer. One such answer is offered by my young colleague in the pages of this journal. He imagines that Satan “rules the ball” with the help of erotica and pornography. I categorically disagree: there is no pornography in video salons and video libraries at all. Perhaps it is shown clandestinely or, as in the rest of the world, it is preferred to be viewed at home. I am not one of those who consider this a criminal offense – I think that human curiosity about one's own nature is quite natural and should not be persecuted. But I repeat: knowing that there is an article in the penal code, pornography is not shown openly.

As for erotica, I don't think it prevails either. ... I don't think I would be wrong to say that it takes up less than a third of the repertoire.

But that's where the most curious thing comes in. Indeed, which erotic films (there are hundreds if not thousands of them) are the most popular with our viewers? At the first stage of the video business development this question could be answered more or less unambiguously. The most popular films were simply the first ones that caught our eye. An example of that was the famous *Greek fig tree* (*Griechische Feigen*, 1976), which for a while became an absolute bestseller on Russian video screens, and then ... *American Nine ½ Weeks* (1985)...

Let's look around and try to figure out what the structure of the rest of the non-erotic repertoire is. I don't think it would be wrong to say that American adventure films make up the lion's share of it. ... And, perhaps, the most important thing. In all current projects for creating a system of censorship and combating video piracy, one should always keep in mind that the elimination of the created video system is not only impossible in principle, but can also have fatal consequences from the point of view of cultural development. It is not necessary to demand bans, but to carry out persistent work to legalize the video market. If its repertoire expands, if critics regularly and skillfully write about video production, maybe someday in the future everything that happens in this very specific area will finally take civilized forms (Razlogov, 1991: 27).

A curious consequence of the Soviet video boom at the turn of the 1990s was the mass production of video catalogs, carelessly, with a huge number of errors, compiled by anonymous amateurs. One of the authors of these lines also wrote about this peculiar phenomenon on the pages of *Soviet Screen* (Fedorov, 1990: 22).

Articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR and reviews of Western national cinemas

During the “Perestroika” period in the *Soviet Screen* there were radical changes in the articles about international film festivals. Firstly, the usual scheme of the past decades was violated, when among the films shown at foreign festivals, “progressive works of cinematography” were singled out and the rest were sharply criticized. And secondly, the circle of “travelling” film critics has

changed: "ideologically consistent" film critics and international journalists of the older generation have been replaced by film critics of a "perestroika" orientation.

Of course, this did not happen immediately. For example, in an article by film critic N. Savitsky about the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1986, the ideological rules of the game in the presentation of the material were traditional: he praised the anti-war drama Bill Bennett *A Street to Die* (1985) and *Rosa Luxemburg* (1985) by Margaret von Trotta for revolutionary pathos and for the main "dignity – the image of the main character, unusually reliable and truly humane, completely devoid of "textbook gloss" (Savitsky, 1986: 20-21).

But already in the article of the film critic and film critic V. Demin (1937–1993), devoted to the West Berlin Film Festival, a departure from the previous ideological stereotypes was indicated. For example, it was emphasized that the West Berlin fest the main thing in character is reasonable efficiency. It was conceived not as a festival, but as an important cultural event, and then there was an analysis of the competition films, without any division into "progressive" and "reactionary" ones (Demin, 1987: 20-21).

There was no criticism of bourgeois cinema in the report of film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) from the 1988 Munich Film Festival (Andreev, 1988: 20-21).

And in the even more "perestroika" year of 1989 also film critic F. Andreev joyfully corresponded to the *Soviet Screen* from America: "Thank God, the time of tenacious, commonplace stereotypes has passed. ... I only went to three very different screenings of the long American summer. My friends joked that you can live the whole year practically without leaving the cinema, taking a break from viewing only during flights from one city to another. There is a lot of truth in this joke. Several dozen film festivals are held in the United States every year. Some of them deservedly won international fame" (Andreev, 1989: 28-29).

In 1989, the last censorship barriers at the Moscow International Film Festival practically disappeared. Due with which film critic Andrei Dementiev (1957–2023) described one of the sexual innovations of this festival as follows: "No, of course, it's wonderful that dogmas and stereotypes are collapsing. Only here you sometimes wonder at yourself: they collapse, collapse, but something still does not dry out. How many have accumulated there! ... Here is another one. I sit in a crowded festival hall and watch the American avant-garde short film *Hermes Bird*, that is, for ten minutes I watch the full process of erection, shot in close-up in rapid motion and in profile so that you can see it better. And on a dark background, so that nothing random distracts from the main content. Vague verses are spoken behind the scenes, something about closeness to nature, about the unity of all principles – I didn't make out, I was carried away by the main content. And after all, what is interesting: if I watched something like that at someone's house on video, I probably would not have paid attention, I would have forgotten right there – after all, anything can be seen on the video. Here, the very situation struck me, the very idea that this is being shown today at the Moscow International Film Festival. Here is the stereotype for you: "This is not allowed at our Soviet festival" (Dementiev, 1989: 3-6).

In the same 1989 in Moscow was organized retrospective of American erotic films. At the same time, there were almost no complaints about obscenity ... But disappointment was strongly felt that in most of the films the promised "strawberry" was not at all, or, in any case, in frankness, it was much inferior to the latest searches of Lenfilm, Mosfilm or the Gorky Studio . The rumor that in Moscow they show solid pornography turned out to be, to put it mildly, greatly exaggerated. Mostly serious films were shown, reflecting on the vicissitudes of the biological nature of man, and not just demonstrating its charms (Razlogov, 1989: 7).

Going to a foreign cinema adulation, film critic E. Tirdatova already gave her positive assessment of the title of her article: "Berlin: a symphony of a big festival" (Tirdatova, 1989: 28-29), and then there was also an analysis of the competitive and non-competitive program, devoid of any ideological bias...

E. Tirdatova retained the same positive approach to this festival a year later, when in the title of her article she reflected the significant political changes in then Germany: "The time when the walls are falling down. Berlin is an open city" (Tirdatova, 1990: 26-27).

This positive perception of the political situation in Germany could easily be felt at the very beginning of this article: "...The Berlin Wall has collapsed. Its remnants in the area of the Brandenburg Gate were already dismantled with us on one of the rainy days of February. Today, pieces of the wall are sold as souvenirs. And for the first time in the festival's forty years,

the program was shown on both sides of the former wall. It is not surprising that the jubilee Berlinale gathered a lot of people” (Tirdatova, 1990: 26-27).

Approximately the same positive perestroika moods of change towards a “common European home” were filled with an article by film critic E. Stishova: “It all depends on how soon we get over wall syndrome. The International Film Festival in Oberhausen, which chose the motto "The way to the neighbor" three and a half decades ago, has waited in the wings. The Berlin Wall is no more. In a physical sense. The wall syndrome is still there, and it will be for a long time, but it has finally become really obvious what close neighbors we are in our cramped European home. Oberhausen-90 retained its inherent dryish correctness. ... The spirit of the collapsed wall, the spirit of freedom, the rules are also in the competition program, placing the focus on works reflecting the theme of totalitarian despotism. There is nowhere to go – this theme has become the superplot of the festival” (Stishova, 1990: 27).

But in the report of the film critic V. Kichin, who visited the Montreal Film Festival in 1990, behind the ironic presentation, a bitter feeling of the crisis (or already the collapse?) of socialist "perestroika" was seen through. At the beginning of the article, it was described how “an Air Canada plane carried us across the ocean. He gave Irish liquor and Scotch whiskey to drink, he showed movies and made you listen to eight stereo music programs to choose from. The stewardesses smiled (we knew: fake), gave souvenirs all the time (we knew: for promotional purposes) – they did their business, unsuccessfully trying to lull people into a class instinct. But, of course, we did not compromise our principles. Although they ate, also for appearances, "brochette New Orleans." In the meantime, the World Film Festival began...". And after the end of the festival, it was good to “plunge into a comfortable Air Canada chair”. Put on fluffy bourgeois socks kindly offered by the stewardess – so as not to blow. Have a last drink of a bourgeois gin and tonic, watch some bourgeois nonsense on a video screen. The soul rejoices: home! Home, home, to empty shelves and native problems. To the unceasing debate about whether we are faithful to the holy ideas of socialism” (Kichin, 1991: 24-25).

Yes, film critic T. Khloplyankina (1937-2003) was right: Before, twenty years ago, we read reports from international festivals excitedly, trying to get some information about what was happening in the world from under the husk of cheap denunciations. movie. Now the situation has changed. The words "foreign film" or even "American action movie" do not excite anyone anymore. Films “from behind the hillock”, translated into video, bought many years late or almost new – a stream that is not always good quality, carrying a lot of garbage, but quite full-flowing, has finally rushed to us (Khloplyankina, 1991: 30-31).

And regarding the program of the Moscow International Film Festival in 1991, film critic E. Tirdatova reasonably stated that “gone are the days when the Moscow Festival had to provide its screen to friendly Zimbabwe or struggling Kampuchea. We are no longer afraid of the enemy's ideology. We ourselves are now hard to outdo in terms of anti-Sovietism; in eroticism, the world screen that has grown cold towards it will not overwhelm us either. So it became easier for the festival selection committee. But... The Moscow festival is not in the best shape. And, of course, it is impossible to imagine that Spielberg or Bertolucci would hold their new painting especially for him. What is left of solid Berlin, magnificent Cannes is coming to us, which is not reserved for luxurious Venice” (Tirdatova, 1991: 12).

Approximately in the same spirit, but with an emphasis on the motives of the belated, but still reaching the USSR, “sexual revolution”, film critic A. Gerber wrote about the same Moscow Film Festival: “They say that the screen of the festival shocked the volume of the bed theme. I think that he rather shocked the viewer not only with the looseness of love adventures, not only with vivid pictures for lectures of Freud, who was recently banned in our country, but now available (on all stalls) and therefore unnecessary. He, I am sure, helped many to liberate themselves, to discover their complexes, to look at sexual problems not with the curious eye of a dirty trickster who looked into the crack, but with the eye of an artist who knows that it is here, in the mysteries of love, that a person rediscovers himself every time. The whole mystery, everything in us is an abyss. To understand this, one had to at least spend the night with the films of Liliana Cavani. Agree, that after the ultimate openness of on-screen love, I wanted to dress her, love, take it in my hands, return it to spiritual purity. Such love came to us as a gift in the impeccable farewell film of Agnès Varda (in memory of her deceased husband, the famous Jacques Demy). The film was the closing chord of the festival” (Gerber, 1991: 2-3).

And the film critic V. Kichin was very strict about this event: “The festival passed, but no one noticed it. There was no usual national holiday, with fairs at the cinema "Russia", with posters: I change Buñuel for Spielberg. There were no full, and often half-full halls. Those who wish wandered from boredom – what do they give there today? France? Depardieu? Do we have time for the Vesti program? No? Then well, to hell with him, Depardieu, we'll see by the video. ... Except for a few outstanding retrospectives – Polanski, Russell ... – the program caused mixed feelings. They took what they gave. So there were no sensations” (Kichin, 1991: 4).

However, further on V. Kichin made an essential film/geopolitical, albeit also a very pessimistic reservation: “I don't think, however, that the lack of good cinema at the 17th Moscow International Film Festival is the festival's fault. This is the misfortune of today's cinematography, which is universally affected by anemia. Quiet period: there are no new Fellinis and Bergmans, the luminaries took a timeout, there are no past shocks, and our souls are not ready for them. In essence, this festival reflected reality better. He was a workhorse in the dull field of world cinema. Weekdays. But this is how most of the festivals of the planet live, in fact – they work, and do not rejoice at a visit to noble collective farmers. Cod lovers now back off. There remain people who are faithful to cinema, faithful both in joy and in a moment of hypochondria. ... And maybe what we, in our apocalyptic mood, take for agony, and there is a return to the normal state of our festival. When there is no shortage of tickets. When everyone can come without blat. And when it reflects not the brotherhood of progressive working people approved by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, but the real state of the film process. Of the abnormalities – only our native rudeness and unprecedented poverty. But these are typical birthmarks of socialism” (Kichin, 1991: 4).

To some extent, however, also on a sad note, film critic L. Dularidze tried to oppose these conclusions, who wrote that, in her opinion, the festival nevertheless took place. And if someone again says something about a feast during a plague, one can answer that if someone has a chronic plague, then cinema has nothing to do with it (Dularidze, 1991: 5).

As we can see, during the “perestroika” period, it was mainly film critics who traveled to foreign film festivals, who had previously been deprived of such an opportunity for one reason or another. But as is well known, there are exceptions to every rule. So in 1990, on the pages of the *Soviet Screen* was published an article by a festival regular of previous decades, a well-known film critic and one of the leading television *Cinema Panorama* G. Kapralov (1921–2010).

It was about the review of the films of the International Film Festival of Fantastic and Strange Films in Avoriaz.

It is clear from the text of G. Kapralov's article that at the turn of the 1990s he decided to completely abandon the party-ideological approaches familiar to him, the long-term head of the culture department of the *Pravda* newspaper, and to show that he was completely in the stream of “perestroika” changes.

What can we say, even the then leaders of cinema perestroika, the film critics Demin (1937–1993) and A. Plakhov did not dare by 1990 to write with such politically revealing pathos these lines: “For decades, the guilty rulers' guilty conscience, burdened by total suspicion that promised no one anything but the apocalyptic Gulag, in every fantastic picture they saw an ideological treachery, a threat to socialist virginity, which had never existed, and in the images of evil spirits the vampires of the party and state suddenly recognized themselves and protected the people from such destructive spectacles. As a result of this all-round care for the working people, we had no more science-fiction, let alone boots on the ground and so on. Cinema fiction became invisible: in all civilized countries it was seen firsthand, but in our country one could only guess by unverified rumors that it was still out there somewhere” (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

Further G. Kapralov gave an unexpected (for him and his past publications) high praise to a rather mediocre and now almost completely forgotten picture: “The Grand Prize in the fiction section was awarded to the picture *I, Madman* (1989) by the Hungarian-born American director Tibor Takács. An impressionable reader of novels about a homicidal maniac finds herself caught up in her own hallucinations from this reading, which tragically coincide with the sadistic crimes going on in the city. The film is elegantly and wittily constructed and directed” (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

And absolutely unexpected for the readers of the *Soviet Screen*, who are familiar with the previous publications of G. Kapralov, from year to year exposing bourgeois cinematography, along with its horror films that corrupt the consciousness of fragile spectator souls, were the following

lines: "I personally prefer Brian de Palma's *Carrie* – the prize of the same Avoriaz-77 – the best of the film adaptations of King's books, which our box office should have bought" (Kapralov, 1990: 26).

– short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral messages to "yellow" gossip).

The section of brief news of foreign cinema at the beginning of "perestroika" as a whole kept within the ideological framework of the previous decade.

So film critic E. Tirdatova wrote in 1986 that actress B. Bardo "managed to express in their screen images the ideals of a whole generation, to convey the atmosphere of the time. Her heroines are simple, natural girls, independent, often protesting against bourgeois morality. ... Unfortunately, the talent of the actress was mercilessly exploited by purely commercial cinema" (Tirdatova, 1986: 21).

And the film critic F. Andreev (1933–1998) noted Dean Reed's participation in mass anti-imperialist and anti-war demonstrations in front of the American embassies in Lima, Caracas, Santiago, Mexico City, the appearance in his work of new songs of protest against social oppression and inequality, songs calling for they led the unity of good people in the face of the threat of war, a nuclear catastrophe (Andreev, 1986: 22).

But at the turn of the 1990s, "yellowness" came to the news feed of the magazine (Braginsky, 1991: 30; Kokorev, 1991: 20-21, etc.).

Moreover, even the scandalous everyday details of the Moscow International Film Festival began to penetrate the pages of *Screen* (which had never happened before): Canadian director Atom Egoyan only knocked on the door. It was in a hotel, and Atom was confused by its many corridors. Immediately there were the security officers, who thought the knocking was too loud and that the person knocking was too much fun. Under the threat of physical violence, the Canadian was taken to the hotel basement. The only thing that saved him from going to jail was his foreign appearance – they would have taken ours there for sure... During a cruise on a motor vessel a famous actor from Georgia had a quarrel with a guest from Germany. The guest did not like our festival as well as the Soviet cinema and the Soviet nature surrounding the ship" (Scandaly..., 1991: 15).

4. Conclusion

Based on the content analysis (in the context of the historical, socio-cultural and political situation, etc.) of the texts published during the "perestroika" period of the *Soviet Screen* magazine (1986–1991), we came to the conclusion that materials on the subject of Western cinema on this stage can be divided into the following genres:

- ideologized articles emphasizing criticism of bourgeois cinema and its harmful influence on the audience (1986–1987);
- articles on the history of Western cinema;
- biographies and creative portraits of Western actors and directors (as a rule, with positive ratings);
- interviews with Western filmmakers (as a rule, with those who came to Moscow film festivals);
- reviews of Western films (here we can note a violation of the old tradition: if in 1986–1987 the magazine still often negatively evaluated some "politically harmful bourgeois" films, then later Western film production was evaluated without regard to ideological stereotypes, moreover, even received a positive interpretation films that were previously rejected for ideological reasons);
- articles about international film festivals and weeks of foreign cinema in the USSR, reviews of the current repertoire of Western national cinematographies (no longer divided into "progressive" and "bourgeois" cinematography);
- short informational materials about events in Western cinema (from neutral reports to "yellow" gossip).

As a kind of curiosity, but somewhat symptomatic, it can also be noted that a considerable number of employees or authors of the *Soviet Screen*, who often vividly exposed "bourgeois cinematography" on the pages of the magazine, eventually emigrated precisely to the countries of this most actively criticized Soviet press of the West: V. Matusevich (1937–2009), S. Chertok (1931–2006), F. Andreev (1933–1998), M. Shaternikova (1934–2018), I. Lishchinsky, V. Golovskoy, O. Surkova, I. Kokarev, O. Sulkin, M. Yampolsky and others.

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Appendix

The main dates and events related to the historical, political, economic, ideological, socio-cultural and cinematic context in which the publication of the *Soviet Screen* magazine was carried out in 1986–1991

1986

February 25 – March 6, 1986: XXVII Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

April 21-28: All-Union Film Festival (Alma-Ata).

April 26: Accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

May 13-15: The 5th Congress of Soviet Cinematographers, which proclaimed a course towards the restructuring of Soviet cinema.

May 29: meeting of the secretariat of the Union of Cinematographers, dedicated to the state of affairs in the *Soviet Screen* magazine, where there was sharp criticism of the editorial office and editor-in-chief of the magazine D. Orlov(1935–2021).

June 24-28: Eighth Congress of Writers of the USSR.

June: M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) announces the beginning of "perestroika".

June: a three-fold drop in world oil prices (from \$ 29 per barrel, noted the previous year, to \$ 10), sharply intensifying the economic crisis in the USSR.

July 7-10: visit to the USSR of French President François Mitterrand (1916-1996).

October 11-12: meeting of M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) and R. Reagan (1911–2004) in Reykjavik.

November 4: Opening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna.

November 19: The law "On individual labor activity" is adopted in the USSR.

December 23: Academician A. Sakharov (1921–1989) returns from exile to Moscow.

December: Yuri Rybakov (1931–2006) succeeds Dal Orlov (1935–2021) as editor of Soviet Screen. Y. Rybakov retained this position until 1990.

1987

January 13: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the procedure for the creation on the territory of the USSR and the activities of joint ventures with the participation of Soviet organizations and firms of capitalist and developing countries."

January 27-28: "Perestroika" Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, which decided to develop cooperatives and alternative elections.

February 5: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the establishment of cooperatives for the production of consumer goods."

March 28–April 1: British Prime Minister M. Thatcher (1925–2013) visits the USSR.

May 1: The "Law on individual labor activity" came into force in the USSR.

May 18-24: All-Union Film Festival (Tbilisi). The main prize was awarded to the film *Repentance* by T. Abuladze (1924–1994).

May 23: USSR cancels jamming of most Western radio stations on its territory.

May 28: 18-year-old amateur pilot M. Rust made an illegal flight from Hamburg (via Helsinki) to Moscow (he landed practically on Red Square).

July 6-17: Moscow International Film Festival. Gold Prize: *Interview* (Italy, director F. Fellini).

October 22: Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996) is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

November 7: The USSR solemnly celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power.

December 1-10: M. Gorbachev's visit to Washington. The signing of the treaty on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles.

M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) was declared Man of the Year in the West.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1988

March 8: The Ovechkin family makes an unsuccessful attempt to hijack and hijack a passenger plane from the USSR to the West.

March 13: The newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published a letter from N. Andreeva (1938–2020) "I cannot compromise my principles", in which she actually opposed "perestroika".

April 19-25: All-Union Film Festival (Baku).

May 15: Beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

May 29 – June 2: meeting of M. Gorbachev and R. Reagan in Moscow.

May: Boris Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* was published for the first time in the USSR.

October 24-27: visit to the USSR of German Chancellor G. Kohl (1930–2017).

November 25-26: visit to the USSR of French President François Mitterrand (1916–1996).

November 30: The USSR canceled the jamming of *Radio Free Europe* on its territory.

December 6–8: M. Gorbachev's visit to New York (UN). His statement about the reduction of the Soviet armed forces and the beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population, the desire of the most active part of it to emigrate to the West, now permitted.

1989

January 20: George Bush Sr. (1924–2018) becomes President of the United States.

February 15: End of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

March 26: the first in the history of the USSR alternative elections of delegates to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

April 9: A rally in Tbilisi was violently dispersed by Soviet troops demanding Georgia's independence.

April 18: The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR proclaimed the republic's state sovereignty.

May 23: Decree on the restoration of Soviet citizenship for theater director Y. Lyubimov (1917–2014).

May 25 – June 9: First Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) was elected to the post of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

June 4: A student demonstration in Tiananmen Square is dispersed in Beijing.

June 4: Solidarity wins parliamentary elections in Poland.

July 7–18: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Soap Thieves* (Italy, director M. Niketti).

July 28: The Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR proclaimed the republic's state sovereignty.

July: *Novy Mir* magazine, for the first time in the USSR, began publishing A. Solzhenitsyn's book *The Gulag Archipelago*.

November 9: Beginning of the destruction of the Berlin Wall.

November 10: The overthrow of T. Zhivkov (1911–1998) in Bulgaria.

November 24: Victory of the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia.

November 18: Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the restructuring of creative, organizational and economic activities in Soviet cinematography", which practically approved the previously given permission to create cooperatives, including cooperatives for the production and distribution of films.

November 26: The victory of the anti-communist opposition in the elections in Hungary.

December 12–24: II Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. The congress condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939), as well as the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the use of military force in Tbilisi on 1989.

December 14: death of academician A. Sakharov (1921–1989).

December: victory of anti-communist forces in Romania.

Numerous meetings of M. Gorbachev with Western leaders (including US President George W. Bush) and his statements about further disarmament.

Mass riots in a number of union republics.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1990

January 30: The USSR agrees to the unification of Germany.

February 27–28: The founding congress of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia.

March 25: Soviet authorities send troops to Vilnius to stop Lithuania from secession from the USSR.

April: Victor Demin (1937–1993) succeeded Yuri Rybakov (1931–2006) as editor of Soviet Screen.

May 29: B. Yeltsin (1931–2007) was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.

June 12: The Declaration on State Sovereignty of the RSFSR is adopted. The priority of Russian laws over all-Union legislation has been introduced.

July 2–13, 1990: the last XXVIII Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. During the congress, B. Yeltsin defiantly announces his withdrawal from the Soviet Communist Party.

July 14–16: The USSR agrees to the entry of a united Germany into NATO.

September 12: Signing of the German unification treaty.

September 18: The newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article by A. Solzhenitsyn "How can we equip Russia?".

October 15: M. Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Numerous meetings of M. Gorbachev with Western leaders.

Mass riots in a number of union republics.

The Union republics one by one declared their sovereignty.

World oil prices generally remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.

1991

January 16–19: War in Kuwait between the US and Iraq.

May 20: The Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted the Law "On the Procedure for Exiting the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Entry into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Citizens of the USSR", allowing free travel of citizens of the USSR abroad.

June 12: B. Yeltsin is elected President of the RSFSR. A. Rutskoy was elected Vice-President.

July 1: The elimination of the military bloc of the Warsaw Pact countries.

July 8–19: Moscow International Film Festival. Golden George: *Piebald dog running along the edge of the sea* (USSR-FRG, director K. Gevorkyan).

August 19–22: Failed coup attempt in the USSR.

August 24: M. Gorbachev resigned from the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and called on the Central Committee Soviet Communist Party to announce the self-dissolution of the party.

Mass riots in a number of union republics. A number of republics of the USSR declared their independence.

December 8: the actual dissolution of the USSR as a result of the "Belovezhskaya agreements" between the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR) and Ukraine as the founding states of the USSR, which signed the Treaty on the Formation of the USSR (1922).

December 25: voluntary resignation of M. Gorbachev (1931–2022) from the post of President of the USSR, transfer of power to B. Yeltsin (1931–2007).

December 26: Official liquidation of the USSR.

World oil prices remain low, which leads to a further decline in the economy of the USSR and the standard of living of its population.