



Media Culture

Polish cinema in the mirror of the Soviet and Russian film critics

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Abstract. The peak of the Soviet Union interest to Polish cinema took place in the 1960s. And this is understandable: in the first place, unlike the situation in the 1920s - 1930s, the friendship and cooperation between USSR and Poland actively supported at the state level in 1960s; secondly, the so-called "Polish Film School" was very famous in Europe for those years (the second half of the 1950s to mid-1960s), thirdly, Polish films had a significant share on the Soviet screens.

This explains why dozens of articles and five books about the Polish films have been published in 1960s. The emergence Polish films of the "moral anxiety" led not only to a decrease in the share of Polish films on the Soviet screens, but also to a decrease in the publications of Soviet critics about Polish cinema 1970s.

The collapse of the Soviet Union almost immediately resulted in the liquidation of the existing system box office. Russian film / video screens were filled with American film production. The Russian cinemas 1990s had no place not only for Polish films, but also for the Russian cinema. Polish films have failed to win a place on Russian screens in the XXI century... As a result, not so many fans see Polish films in the Poland cinema weeks, on satellite television or the Internet.

Keywords: film critic, film studies, film history, film, cinema, movie, Poland, USSR, Russia.

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Introduction.

The peak of the Soviet Union interest to Polish cinema took place in the 1960s. And this is understandable: in the first place, unlike the situation in the 1920s - 1930s, the friendship and cooperation between USSR and Poland actively supported at the state level in 1960s; secondly, the so-called "Polish Film School" was very famous in Europe for those years (the second half of the 1950s to mid-1960s), thirdly, Polish films had a significant share on the Soviet screens.

This explains why dozens of articles and five books about the Polish films [Chernenko, 1965; Markulan, 1967; Rubanova, 1966; Sobolev, 1965; 1967] have been published in 1960s. The emergence Polish films of the "moral anxiety" led not only to a decrease in the share of Polish films on the Soviet screens, but also to a decrease in the publications of Soviet critics about Polish cinema 1970s. For

example, I. Rubanova's books about documentary filmmaking in Poland, well known Polish actor Zbigniew Cybulski (1927-1967) and film director Andrzej Wajda (1926-2016) never reached the readers due to impediments censorship [see about this: Rubanova, 2015]. The situation worsened in connection with the attempt of the Polish "Solidarity" movement to oppose the communist regime: the many Polish filmmakers (including A. Wajda) became unstated corollary to the Soviet press until perestroika times ...

The short revival wave came in the end of 1980s is the beginning of the 1990s. It was a time when the Soviet press free from censorship. But ... the collapse of the Soviet Union almost immediately resulted in the liquidation of the existing system box office. Russian film / video screens were filled with American film production. The Russian cinemas 1990s had no place not only for Polish films, but also for the Russian cinema. Polish films have failed to win a place on Russian screens in the XXI century... As a result, not so many fans see Polish films in the Poland cinema weeks, on satellite television or the Internet.

R. Sobolev (1926-1991) and M. Chernenko (1931-2004) died, and Russian critics began to write about the Polish cinema less and less, although today there is a Russian film critics-polonists (including T. Eliseeva, O. Rahaeva, I. Rubanova, and D. Viren).

What was possible and what was impossible?

I. Rubanova, one of the best connoisseurs of Polish cinema, said with knowledge of the matter that Poland after 1956 was "territory allowed freedom... Censorship regulated films content very tightly, including specific topics (e.g., the relationship with the Great East Neighbor, as the current and historical), but poetics, stylistic decisions of Polish movies were given at the discretion of the artists" [Rubanova, 2000, 2015]. D. Viren [Viren, 2015, p.10] agrees with I. Rubanova. Moreover, D. Viren says (and I agree with him) that "Poland, in terms of censorship, was perhaps the most liberal (as that word is applicable in this context) the country (among socialist states – A.F.) for artists, and not only the filmmakers" [Viren, 2013, p. 98].

However, O. Rahaeva writes in this regard that the Polish authorities until 1956 "quite sharply reacted to the absence of the Soviet characters in the movies: the film *Forbidden Songs* (*Zakazane piosenki*, 1946) was adopted only after the amendments (including the show the leading role of the Soviet soldiers in Warsaw liberation). Wanda Jakubowska wanted to avoid censorship accusations of incorrect interpretation of the events in the film *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni etap*, 1947), and at once two Russian characters were in a concentration camp among the others protagonists. Another example is the movie *Unconquered City* (*Miasto nieujarzmione*, 1950), which, after long vicissitudes of the scenario, the attempts of Soviet soldiers establish contact with the insurgents in Warsaw 1944 were added to the plot. Sometimes the personal involvement of the Soviet comrades was the

correct ideological guarantee: Marshal Rokossowski was the consultant of the film *Soldier of Victory (Żołnierz zwycięstwa, 1953)* [Rahaeva, 2012, p. 227].

De-Stalinization and Khrushchev's Thaw have led to significant changes: "Polish cinema proved exceptionally creative semi-freedom conditions. Artificial framework imposed from above always leads to complication of the noble form, and the state censorship provides a complex shape connotation for hungering audience"[Gorelov, 2011]. In particular, this "semi-freedom" is well illustrated by I. Rubanova about how Poland censorship made preventive measures in relation to *Ashes and Diamonds (Popiół i diament, 1958)*: this film "released on the screens, but showing abroad banned. However, the then head of the cinematography Jerzy Lewinski, proud of the fact that Polish cinema has managed to create such an excellent film under his strict and flexible guidance, secretly brought it to the Venice festival... And the film began to march through the screens of the world and is now considered an ornament centennial history of world cinema" [Rubanova, 2000].

Features of Soviet cinematic censorship were different: both in movies and in film studies could not be:

- to have an alternative to official interpretation of the Polish-Russian-Soviet relations (for example, the Soviet-Polish war of 1920, the Second World War 1939-1945, the entire post-war period, including, of course, assess the "Solidarity" movement);

- a positive attitude to formal experimentation in the field of cinematic language and form;

- positive use of erotic, religious and mystical topics;

- favorably assess the creativity of Polish filmmakers who have emigrated to the West (or later: filmmakers who supported the "Solidarity").

USSR had such prohibitions until the beginning of "perestroika", but although at 1960s-1970s some Soviet film critics could barely get around (for example, they could write something positive about the mystical film *Lokis* by Janusz Majewski).

Fearing revisionism...

R. Yurenev's (1912-2002) article with the characteristic title *The influence of revisionism in the Polish cinema* [Yurenev, 1959] was perhaps the first prominent Soviet film studies work about Polish cinema. In spite of the supposed onset the political "thaw", R. Yurenev clearly manifested rigid ideological tendencies of the Stalinist era. He wrote about the key Polish films of the second half of 1950s and generally rendered them very strict sentence. For example, he rebuked Andrzej Wajda - the director of the most famous works of "Polish film school *Ashes and Diamonds (Popiół i diament, 1958)* – and then asked rhetorically, ideologically question: "Does Wajda read Lenin's article on party literature in which a conquering force proved that, trying to get out of the class

struggle, the artist inevitably sinking into a swamp of reaction?" [Yurenev, 1959, p. 97].

R. Yurenev was slightly warmer to A. Wajda's war drama *Canal* (Kanał, 1957), because "young director made many of episodes talented, sincere and strong". But the film critic remarked "deliberateness, the influence of expressionism, painful attention to the suffering, to the horrors of slow deaths" [Yurenev, 1959, p.96].

R. Yurenev was very strict to ironic film *Eroica* (1957) by Andrzej Munk. Standing at that time on the solid positions of socialist realism, film critic stated: "'For me, one thing is clear: a deliberate, conscious anti-heroism in this film objectively leads to slander of the Warsaw Uprising..."[Yurenev, 1959, p.94].

Turning to the analysis of contemporary issues in the Polish cinema, R. Yurenev was no less strict and vigilant, treating *The Eighth Day of the Week* (*Ósmy dzień tygodnia*, 1958) as "a film slanderously drawing Polish youth and Polish modernity. ... Communist Aleksander Ford, the recognized leader of the Polish cinematography, who created a series of strong and truthful films, embarked on the path of revisionism, naturally, albeit against his will, was used as a weapon in the struggle against their socialist homeland" [Yurenev, 1959, p.102].

R. Yurenev gave a poor rating for A. Munk's film *Man on the tracks* (*Człowiek na torze*, 1956), where the "international singing scene was just insulting" [Yurenev, 1959, p. 92] and for the drama *The Loop* (*Pętla*, 1957) by Wojciech Has where "modern Poland is the infinitely gloomy, sad and hopeless" [Yurenev, 1959, p. 100].

Thus, R. Yurenev's article, in fact, was a real verdict of the best movies of "Polish film school." And who knows, perhaps it is this publication and this particular opinion formed the basis for the adoption of "censorship conclusions", and *Eroica*, *The Loop* and *The Eighth Day of the Week* were not admitted to the Soviet screens at all, and *Ashes and Diamonds* although it came out, but after a long delay.

And I must say that the R. Yurenev was not alone in these charges. Well-known Soviet film critic J. Markulan (1920-1978) put it more crudely: Polish "Black Series" marked, in fact, an appeal to the aesthetics of naturalism" [Markulan 1967, p. 206].

Other prominent Soviet film critics spoke about Polish films of the second half of 1950s in a somewhat milder version, but equally ideologically loaded: "As is often the case in the dispute about the false and dogmatism of the past years, some filmmakers went to the other extreme - began to reflect only the negative side of life, and their films gave a distorted view of reality. No coincidence that many movies of that time were called "black"... Polish cinema in the late 1950s has experienced some influence of Western aesthetic concepts. We can find a number of films with motifs decadent philosophies, pessimistic view of life and human solitude"[Sobolev, 1967, pp. 17, 28].

"Many Polish feature films of the second half of the 1950s were determined by direct response to the schematic and smoothing the contradictions inherent in many movies of the previous period. In the heat of polemic film masters are now concentrated attention on the negative aspects of reality. ... The tragic hopelessness and death were the main dominant in the representation of war and occupation. It should also be noted that there have been several films in which a new reality in this period was to blacken. This is explained by the fact that at some time in the theory and practice of Polish cinema was to penetrate the effect of the reaction of the bourgeois cinema ... grim, one-sided view of the world, lack of faith in man... However, the defenders of the "black series" assured that this is the atmosphere of hopelessness it encourages the viewer to active combat, but it's not true. ... In some feature films this kind of influence could be seen then part of the bourgeois cinema fashionable existentialist themes: miscommunication, the individual's helplessness before the absurdity of life, etc. ... This topic was specific: the content of the "Polish film school" was a hopeless story, the tragic fate of Poles during the war and occupation, or depicted in exaggerated form the shortcomings of contemporary Polish reality" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, pp. 26, 45, 47].

It follows from the above quotations, the main targets of Soviet criticism of Polish films of the second half of the 1950s were "pessimistic", "hopeless," "darkness," "non-class approach", "slander," "libel", "revisionism", "exposure to Western influence" and other factors, perceived as extremely negative from the standpoint of socialistic realism. And I must say that official Soviet film critics accused in such sins and some of films created in the Soviet Union or with the participation of the USSR (*Eastern Corridor* by V. Vinogradov, *The Red and the White* by M. Jancso, et al.).

Andrzej Wajda as the central figure of Soviet and Russian Studies of Polish Films

Undoubtedly, some Soviet critics, who have devoted a considerable part of their works to the Polish film (I. Rubanova, M. Chernenko et al.), tried to protect Andrzej Wajda and his colleagues from the rough attacks. However, they were forced to act very carefully - within the framework of what is permitted by the censor.

In particular, they supported the official Soviet version of the alignment of political forces in the Poland 1939-1945 and the first post-war years:

"The falsity of the bourgeois order and official ideology, actively engrafted sanation masters of Poland discovered with the brutal certainty in 1939... Later, when it became impossible to count on the defeat of the Soviet Army, Armia Krajowa degenerated into armed gangs"[Rubanova, 1966, pp. 8-9].

"The political program put forward by the Armia Krajowa was determined in the early thirties, the slogan of "two enemies": Germany and the Soviet Union. In

fact, this slogan meant a focus on German Nazism against the Soviet Union" [Chernenko, 1965a].

"The war, heroism, duty and patriotism - these topics have become dominant in the Polish cinema. And most powerfully embodied in *Ashes and Diamonds*. This film tells on the tragedy of Polish young men, deceived reactionary underground, turning weapons against the Polish Communists and Soviet soldiers, their senseless deaths"[Chernenko, 1965b]. "The reactionary leadership of the Armia Krajowa, Polish government in exile in London sent hundreds of thousands of young men to a senseless death "[Chernenko, 1965a].

"Not without reason, "Ashes and Diamonds" is the highest achievement of Polish cinematography, the most complete expression of the Polish Film School. This talented product with extraordinary artistic power and integrity disclosed the basic conflict of so-called "Polish drama": doom, sacrifice in the name of false ideals of witnesses. ... The reason for the success was in the fact that the relentless and sincere Wajda's film said the first time the truth about those that had caused the death of these young character from Armia Krajowa, this film opened the anti-popular nature of the Polish government in exile, was selling the interests of Poland, made a deal with the Nazis and provoking fratricidal struggle" [Markulan, 1967, pp. 80, 91-92].

"Actor (Zbigniew Cybulski – A.F.) tried to translate the emotional biography of the generation to which he belongs, and of which he, with extraordinary clarity and completeness played in his best film - *Ashes and Diamonds*. ... The actor plays both guilty and innocent of his hero. This character is guilty, because it missed the story, because he was blind and deaf to it. But he is innocent, because using patriotic feeling, he had been deceived and betrayed by the bourgeois leaders of the movement" [Rubanova, 1965, pp. 136, 140].

In search of analogies, understandable and acceptable to the Soviet regime, M. Chernenko and V. Kolodyazhnaya tried to lean on the novel *And Quiet Flows the Don* by M. Sholokhov: "Maciek Chelmicki tragedy very close to the fate of Gregory Melekhov. Let the different circumstances of time and place, and different biographies of the characters, but they are united by the guilt in front of his people, which can only redeem death" [Chernenko, 1964].

"Maciek confused as Gregory Melikhov, turned out to be a victim of circumstances and people around him, vaguely feel their mistake and paid for it with life. However, Maciek is national Polish hero type, ready to do adventurous things without thinking about their practicality and their ideological meaning" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p.34].

R. Sobolev arose the same analogy: "The tragedy of death Maciek is the same obvious truth that he dies deceived and confused, although his true place is in the ranks of the builders of the new Poland. If we look for parallels, then the same tragic fate of Gregory Melikhov" [Sobolev, 1967, pp. 40, 43].

Disagreeing with their conservative opponents, the author of a monograph on the military theme in the Polish Film I. Rubanova rightly wrote that "*Ashes and*

Diamonds is the film is not only a political one. Its content is broader than just the specific analysis of the political situation. And this situation, and its interpretation away from history. ... And *Ashes and Diamonds* is historic film in the same extent that the modern" [Rubanova, 1966, p.112].

In the post-Soviet 1990s, M. Chernenko returned to the analysis of the most famous film by Andrzej Wajda: "*Ashes and Diamonds* immediately became a part of our cinematic culture in the late 1950s - early 1960s, and probably we cannot find a Soviet film director who would not see this movie in State Film Fund. And today many years later, we can see *Ashes and Diamonds*' quotations in many of Soviet and Russian films... We remember this wonderful plastic, the general atmosphere of the film, a striking mixture of sadness and hopelessness, despair and joy of biological life, inexorable historical destiny and chance of human choices..." [Chernenko, 1992].

T. Eliseeva appreciated *Ashes and Diamonds* with modern look, free of censorship "The main character, a brave young Pole, ready to sacrifice themselves "for the cause", who fought during the Nazi occupation for the liberation of his country, is faced with the fact that his homeland liberated people an alien ideology. Maciek belonged to the army, which was fighting for other Poland, ... He wants to live in the best Poland, and it's his right"[Eliseeva, 2009, p. 99].

As mentioned above, the *Canal* by A. Wajda generally been met Soviet criticism positively [Rubanova, 1966, pp. 89-99]. For example, it was noted that this work is "about people who were doomed from the first frame of the film, and the film did not cheat, he warned about it at once, in the credits, people who have lost everything except the human dignity that could not win and we knew it, but went to their death, because death was the only that he belonged in life that they can choose on their own, on my own. And they made this choice in the name of freedom, in the name of independence, in the name of the victory of those who survive" [Chernenko, 1974].

Soviet film critics paid attention to the figurative language of this outstanding work: Soviet film critics paid attention to the figurative language of this outstanding work: "*Canal* is tough and courageous film. Many scenes are solved here with the ascetic rigor, their strength - in the expression. There is no trace of admiration... Light, noise, mobility nervous camera, density and sharpness of darkness light accents, dissection of our attention, ... creation of emotional intensity of our feelings, a sense of extraordinary poetic power of the climate pattern. Screen image gives us not only the state of mind of the people of the doomed unit, but also as it materializes stuffy smelly canals, instability of each step on the slippery rocks, and infinite despair of this tragic labyrinth" [Markulan, 1967, pp. 77-78].

V. Kolodyazhnaya rightly wrote that *Canal's* acting was very low-key and subtle in expression brought to the extreme feelings. Plastic mode of action, documentary and sharp accuracy. Laconic and unusual expression of composition,

angles, beams of light aimed into the darkness, emphasized the tragedy of action, always reliable and often metaphorical" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p.33].

However, this positive assessment of *Canal* was sometimes with a spoon of ideological tar: "The Warsaw Uprising was adventurous action government in exile, which had the aim to return the power of the bourgeois-landlord circles" [Sobolev, 1967, p. 31]. Although the *Canal* and *Ashes and Diamonds* were delivered with talent, but "both films did not contain deep philosophical understanding of history, they have given more emotional reflection of the tragic fate of ordinary soldiers of Armia Krajowa. Political, economic and social aspects of the processes were without the object of analysis. Wajda touched these problems in passing" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p. 37].

Bright, emotional *Lotna* was met with a Soviet film studies even more critical: this Wajda's film was accused of formalism [Markulan 1967, pp. 102-110]. And even such a fan of A. Wajda, like M. Chernenko, wrote that "referring to Eisenstein, Wajda repeat the mistakes of this master, and, realizing this, he rushed to other side – to Luis Bunuel, saturating the film with bloody and violent images that lie on the edge of surreal nightmares. ... As a result, the movie was supercharged autonomous characters, stylistically fragmented, difficult to understand. [Chernenko, 1965a].

M. Chernenko not spared and Wajda's film on a contemporary topic, arguing that the "characters of *Innocent Sorcerers* (Niewinni Czarodzieje, 1960) are antipodes trilogy heroes. It is significant that Wajda in his first film about the present refers to characters that lie on the periphery of reality. It's clear. Wajda not comprehended artistically main problems of modern time, he was afraid to be false in the main. The falsity in the periphery it seemed less risky. For the first time Wajda afraid of risk. And inevitably loses. The character of *Innocent Sorcerers* for internal disorder, shutting among snobbish attitudes, could not be a hero of truly dramatic conflict" [Chernenko, 1965a].

But Soviet film criticism has positive reaction to the confessional Wajda's film *Everything for Sale* (*Wszystko na sprzedaż*, 1968): "Wajda, the most romantic Polish director, seemingly, forever doomed to search and find just the tragedy and defeat in the last of his people, even Wajda shoots in the late sixties the amazing self-criticism, ironically to himself film *Everything for Sale*, which exposes the ruthless revision of everything that was done to them for fifteen years in the movie, which brought worldwide fame: and he himself and the Polish cinema"[Chernenko, 1974]. *Everything for Sale* "became a film not only about Cybulski, but became a film about the cost of human individuality, gives himself to others, profess to people and for the people" [Chernenko, 1970].

And I agree with M. Chernenko: it is difficult for the artist "to overcome itself (success, style, drama, mental stereotypes)" To do this, Andrzej Wajda "had to turn himself inside out, to endure the death of Cybulski, to experience it as their own, to "pushed" by the tragic death of the co-author of his masterpiece, ... to

make a ruthless assessment of own temperament and intelligence, a brutal revision of ethics and aesthetics, emotional and artistic services" [Chernenko, 1971].

In this context, elegiac *The Birch Wood* (*Brzezina*, 1970) was perceived by the Soviet film studies as a kind of respite wizard: "*The Birch Wood* completely lost everything that made the strength and nerve of Wajda's movies: fierce, non-cancellable ownership painful problems of human history, its neuralgic points and nodes"[Chernenko, 1972]. "Private family history becomes for him a new occasion for reflection on the inseparable, inevitable, the absolute connection between man and his country" [Rubanova, 1972, p. 151].

It is worth noting that *Landscape after battle* (*Krajobraz po bitwie*, 1970) received also positively opinions from the Soviet film critics [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, pp. 51-55; Chernenko, 1971; 1972 1978].

Of course, Soviet censorship was hostile to the anti-stalinist social drama *Man of Marble* (*Człowiek z marmuru*, 1976) by A. Wajda, but soviet film critics could to write about the movies of Andrzej Wajda until the era of "Solidarity". For example, a large-scale drama *Promised Land* (*Ziemia obiecana*, 1974) by A. Wajda received a wide positive response in the Soviet press [Chernenko, 1977; Rubanova, 1977, p. 176].

But Andrzej Wajda actively supported the "Solidarity" movement, and the Soviet journal *Cinema Art* published an editorial under the characteristic title *Andrzej Wajda: what's next?* [Surkov, 1981]. And soon the name of Wajda was struck off for several years of the Soviet press.

I. Rubanova very precisely wrote about: "Andrzej Wajda was deleted away from the Soviet screen, it was forbidden to use his printed name of last ten years. And these events gave the myths. Two versions of the legend was most widely used: a popular and official. The first is that the creator of *Ashes and Diamonds* is poet of the generation historical tragedy... Version two: he is a demagogue, instigator, opportunistic, having exchanged his poetic talent at a flat politicking (see anonymous article *Andrzej Wajda: What Next?*, placed – alas, alas - in the pages of *Cinema Art*, 1981, n 10!)" [Rubanova, 1989, p.155].

Film critic S. Lavrentiev reminded of further developments: "The USSR had the revolution in cinema. Incendiary bold speech pronounced and the forbidden films one by one came out on the screens. The very dense reactionaries realized that Buñuel and Bergman, Coppola and Foreman were great masters. The debate about erotica on the screen already inflamed... But Wajda's question is not even raised for discussion. Wajda was guarded as the last besieged fortress... Many of his fans refused to believe in what he set foot on Moscow earth and November, 1, on the eve of the Master arrived" [Lavrenov, 1989]. But Wajda came, spoke in the debate, gave an interview. Thus began his return...

However, the films of the late Wajda called opposition not only from the Soviet officialdom. Even in the XXI century there are Russian critics who believe that "Wajda's speculative use stories from the recent tragic Polish past (*Korczak* and *Katyn*) were doomed to failure"[Kirillov, 2011]. As you can see from the

above text, M. Kirilov speaks sharply, categorically, however, not backing up (to my opinion) at least some convincing arguments...

D. Gorelov write more radically: "All Polish directors dived into the proletarian environment in the period of "Solidarity", and it was a massive betrayal of the idea of Polish cinema. ... Wajda, who is filming about the impact construction and shipyard, there are muddy prostitution matter, for people's power to do it, or against it" [Gorelov, 2011].

But maybe it is worth to listen to S. Lavrentiev: "After all, what is a *Man of Marble*? Equally masterful as it film research of detailed mechanism of infernal machine actions to transform the human person in the "cog". The more valuable that the object of diabolical experiments presented here as a worker" [Lavrentiev, 1989]. ... Mirrored the situation *Man of Marble*, *Man of Iron* told that at the present stage of development of society a person can to resist the diabolical mechanism, but also to survive in this struggle. People here believe that the direction of history may depend on their actions. ... No major and minor characters, famous historical figures and unknown citizens. Everything is important. At any moment the balance of power may change... Maybe I'm wrong, but the creation of such a film-image seems to me a manifestation of the highest skill of directing"[Lavrentiev, 1989].

Of course, after the "rehabilitation" of Wajda's film Soviet/Russian critics began to reflect without any censorship restrictions: "What does the *Man of Marble*? ... This film the opened space for the activities of Wajda's younger colleagues, and *Man of Iron* exhausted motives, character, style of "cinema of moral anxiety". Refusal of pathos, metaphorical peaks from multiple layers and multiple meanings of cinematic image, the rate on its direct sound direct manifestation of reality, which itself raised to the reality of the rank of historical..." [Rubanova 1989, pp. 158-159, 163].

M. Chernenko succinctly expressed the significance of the great Polish director for the Soviet audience: Wajda was alive, inflexible, intractable ... indication that somewhere very near, almost in the same conditions in the same suffocating atmosphere, there is the art of cinema, which is not simply engaged in a dialogue on an equal footing with the surrounding reality, as elusive as the opportunity to dream our filmmakers, but this reality imposes its own language, his manner of speaking, its own system of values. In other words, this is a dialogue with the past and present, with national myths and illusions, with lies and slander as a way of thought and life. And wins a victory, though not always those who seek to directly, but always making the next required, the next step is to target the ultimate and only to the freedom of every human person, because without it, as it is known, cannot be freedom for all the other"[Chernenko, 2001].

Russian film studies (and I think rightly) highlights the *Katyń* (2007) from all of post-Soviet Wajda's films: "One way or another, but we can admit that the 87-year-old patriarch of Polish cinema is the only one in the world cinema master who feels true the scale of the tragedy and has the gift to convey it to the audience" [Rubanova 2013].

Thus, despite all the inconsistencies, Andrzej Wajda has been and remains a major Polish Cinema figure for the Russian film criticism.

Wanda Jakubowska: Critical Consensus

Soviet film critic did not have any disagreements about movies of Wanda Jakubowska (1907-1998). W. Jakubowska was a member of the Communist Party, a former prisoner of Nazi concentration camp. Her drama *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni etap*, 1947) about the horrors of Auschwitz. Soviet film critics evaluated this film immediately and permanently positive [Sobolev, 1967, pp.10-11; Markulan, 1967, pp. 25-38; Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, pp. 6-7].

And while the rest of Jakubowska's films was without special films criticism interest, *The Last Stage* began in the Soviet Union as a benchmark of the Polish anti-Nazi film: "Jakubowska has the purpose: to show how people sneaking hope, retained the ability to fight through violence and abuse. Chronicle cannot afford to show the will of the people, their ability to resist non-decreasing. It could only make a feature film" [Rubanova 1966, p. 63].

Aleksander Ford: with a fair wind to the West ...

The situation with the work of another famous Polish director - Aleksander Ford (1908-1980) - was much more difficult. While he was a communist and was shooting *Boundary Street* (*Ulica Graniczna*, 1948), Soviet film critics praised him [Markulan, 1967, pp. 38-49]. On the other hand, A. Ford significantly tarnished its reputation in the eyes of official Soviet film criticism with "revisionist" film *The Eighth Day of the Week* (*Ósmy dzień tygodnia*, 1958). However, R. Yurenev's article containing harsh accusations against this film, has been published in highly specialized publications [Yurenev, 1959, p. 102] and, consequently, was available mainly to specialists. And most importantly: the next Ford's work - a large-scale color historical epic *Crusaders* (*Krzyżacy*, 1960) he returned to acceptable Soviet context.

This explains why J. Markulan, not even including the *Eighth Day of the Week* in her book *Cinema of Poland*, but noted with satisfaction that "at a time when there were anti-heroism trends was in the Polish art, Ford made the movie, frankly extols the heroism as an eternal category, enduring the most powerful" [Markulan, 1967, p.49].

Even a polemical sharp war drama *First Day of Freedom* (*Pierwszy dzień wolności*, 1964) by A. Ford received almost ecstatically evaluation: "Finally, one more victory. More than once we heard the voice of the end of the Polish school of full inflation of military themes. But A. Ford makes the film *First Day of Freedom* and turns the course of debate. Even ardent opponents recognize not only the legitimacy of recourse to "waste" the topic, but also an extraordinary freshness and modernity solutions military theme. Furthermore, even ardent opponents recognize

the philosophical and aesthetic kinship latest of this movie with the best creations of the Polish Film School" [Markulan 1967, p. 49].

R. Sobolev wrote about *First Day of Freedom* also in the positive context, noting the brilliant play of the Polish star Beata Tyszkiewicz: "Watch Beata game it is enjoy what you always get when meeting with genuine art" [Sobolev, 1966, p. 168].

But... J. Markulan and R. Sobolev published their opinions until 1969, when Aleksander Ford decided to emigrate to the West. But after 1969, according to the censorship tradition, Soviet film critics almost did not mention about A. Ford...

The discussion about the work of Andrzej Munk

Andrzej Munk (1921-1961) died in a car accident in early 1960s, so, unlike Aleksander Ford, he was persona grata for Soviet censorship. although, of course, the official Soviet criticism had the negative attitude to many of his films [Yurenev, 1959, p. 94].

But R. Sobolev, for example, liking all the movies of A. Munch [Sobolev, 1967]. M. Chernenko reacted positively to the *Bad Luck (Zezowate szczęście, 1959)*: "Polish filmmakers are able to look at the tragic past of the other eye, ruthless, not only the enemy, but also to their own weaknesses, absurdities, disadvantages" [Chernenko, 1974]. Soviet film critics wrote very positive and about last Munk's film *The Passenger (Pasazerka, 1963)* [Rubanova, 1966, pp. 165-178; Kolodyazhnaya, 1974].

The polemical A. Munk's film *Eroica* was the main point of contention in the Soviet film studies about Polish movies:

"*Eroica* is built in the image of the war and the not typical events and characters, or rather paradoxes on heroism" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p. 39]. "*Eroica* has not protest, not struggle, there is only a religious fanatic faith in a miracle, a legend, a myth, as the only deliverance" [Markulan 1967, p. 119]. I. Rubanova noted that the main miscalculation of the authors of the film "is not to rethink the historical realities. It is a complex phenomenon that history consciously them only in part, without taking into account connections and weaves disparate laws" [Rubanova 1966, p. 119].

And here is the opinion of the Russian film criticism of the post-Soviet era: "Munk raises questions that many times were set in the history of Poland: how to survive in captivity, how to cope with the humiliation, how to keep hope alive. ... And although Munk's film if the voice against mythologizing the heroism, it is not directed against the very heroism" [Eliseeva, 2009, p.25].

Wojciech Has: disappeared from sight...

Soviet film criticism as a whole negatively [Yurenev, 1959, p. 100] met W. Has' grim drama *Loop (Pętla, 1957)*, critics indicated relations to the so-called

"black series" of Polish cinema: "deeply flawed movie", "aggressive nihilism" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p.27]. A positive attitude to the *Loop* [Rubanova, 1966, pp. 146-148] seemed discordant in this background. However, the yield on Soviet screens W. Has' films *How to be loved* (*Jak być kochaną*, 1962) and *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa* (*Rekopis znaleziony w Saragossie*, 1964) did his work in the USSR is quite legitimate, therefore, Soviet film critics could write about this director with open sympathy.

Tragicomedy *How to be loved* was rated by the Soviet film studies particularly warm [Rubanova, 1966, pp. 148-151]. M. Chernenko wrote about this sad and ironic film like this: "If I were a historian, I would have to say that Zbigniew Cybulski played his role in this film as distinct parody of his role in *Ashes and Diamonds*. And the whole drama did not hide his parody in relation to the "Polish Film School". But then, after seeing the film, I remained a striking actress Barbara Krafftówna, poignant story of her heroine, sacrificed himself for the sake of love, she led survive in spite of all disappointments" [Chernenko, 1974].

A film critic J. Markulan summarized film director's artistic signature: "W. Has, perhaps, the most difficult director of Polish cinema. Not so easy at times to get through to the essence of his creatures, to understand the hidden meaning. Sometimes it seems that he mystifies the audience and issues of ambiguity, if not empty, then something is very elementary. And then comes the suspicion that he was just having fun form, with virtuoso dexterity builds stunning designs of cinematic construction materials. But it is difficult, sometimes impossible to understand what will be the structure. Consistently, a human stubbornness, knowing the truth, it creates a bizarre world, a little similar to the one in which we live and inhabit his people too strange, manic obsessed with one passion (no idea, namely passion). His characters are always put in the position of exclusive, most often they are isolated from the environment, they are deprived of the case and feel minimal communication with the public. W. Has' camera is like a microscope, a magnifying observation object to epic proportions, as if it is moving away from everything that does not belong to the lens" [Markulan, 1967, p. 208].

However, after the release of the *Doll* (*Lalka*, 1968), his subsequent works have disappeared from sight Soviet critics. The reason for this is well noted by D. Viren: "Surreal imagery grew from film to film in the works of Wojciech Jerzy Has" [Viren, 2015, p. 16], which was absolutely unacceptable to the Soviet censorship of the 1970s - the first half of 1980s. Only in post-Soviet times, after W. Has (1925-2000) death, T. Eliseeva published the first in the Russian film criticism review about Has' surrealist masterpiece - *Sanatorium under the Hourglass* (*Sanatorium pod Klepsydrą*, 1973): "It's a beautiful, elegant and picturesque ribbon, the protagonist of which is nostalgia for the departing time, outgoing and a vanished culture of the eastern regions of Poland, where it was already a strong Jewish element, but as a presentiment of impending terror era concentration camp crematoria..."[Eliseeva 2009, p. 123].

Jerzy Kawalerowicz (initially) the darling of the Soviet Box Office

In the Soviet films box office of the 1960s, Jerzy Kawalerowicz (1922-2007) occupied a special place: almost all of his work, set them up to 1966, were successfully shown in the USSR. Colored historical drama *Pharaoh (Faraon, 1965)* had the particular success with Soviet audiences.

However, not all Soviet critics treated with reverence to the films E. Kawalerowicz. So J. Markulan claimed that "*Train (Pociąg, 1959)* just a wonderful sketch. Poverty cannot be overcome by anything dramatic, and all the director's Herculean efforts broke on the script of emptiness, his sketchy and sometimes banal" [Markulan 1967, p. 195].

A. Sokolskaya wrote about *Mother Joanna of the Angels (Matka Joanna od Aniołów, 1961)* that this "film is without a doubt, is opposed to religious world. But it is not just about religion. It is all about the lack of freedom, of prohibitions, gravitating over man. About thirst of action, which is stronger than fear, on the nature of activity. One of the Polish critics called it a product of the modern Faust. About Faust, who is the devil and God in him." [Sokolskaya, 1965, p. 65].

J. Markulan supported Sokolskaya's opinion: "Ideological and aesthetic searching of Kawalerowicz led to the creation of monumental philosophical *Mother Joanna of the Angels*. In this complex film Kawalerowicz remained faithful to its basic principles: here there is "hunger feeling" that put their characters into a frenzy and rebellion, and here the richness and complexity of psychology expressed in terms of the actor, through the plastic, the music: the harmony of all the language components" [Markulan, 1967, p. 196].

Mother Joanna of the Angels is perhaps the case that the views of the Soviet and post-Soviet critics almost coincided. So, T. Eliseeva argues that there is "love and faith have faced in conflict. Kawalerowicz primarily concerned with the eternal problem of human freedom borders, the problem of human nature to the relationship undertaken voluntarily or imposed from outside prohibitions. There are the universal problems. Duration also conditionally ... that can happen anytime, anywhere. ... Picture is perfect, mature reflection on the conflict of faith and love, the nature of man, look at the madness and demonic as an attempt to revolt against the hypocrisy of the world"[Eliseeva, 2009, p. 71].

Since 1966, only one new film by Jerzy Kawalerowicz was in the Soviet screens. The reason for this can probably be found in the fact that "Kawalerowicz has a feature: each of his new film like cross out everything that has been achieved in the previous year. He is always on the lookout, because his every film can be called experimental"[Sobolev, 1967, p. 15].

And if his experiments of the 1950s - the first half of 1960s were allowed to for the Soviet censors, the postmodernist *Game (Gra, 1968)* and *Maddalena (Italy-Yugoslavia, 1970)* already does not fit into the aesthetics socialistic realism. Soviet

ensorship considered *The Death of the President* (*Śmierć prezydenta*, 1977) and *Austeria* (1982) too politicized.

Soviet censors did not forbid for Soviet film critics write something about E. Kawalerowicz, but his films after 1966 was almost unknown in the USSR...

Tadeusz Konwicki: outside the Soviet screens

None of the six movies of famous Polish writer, screenwriter and film director T. Konwicki (1926-2015) did not in the Soviet Screens. However, oddly enough, soviet film critics quite lively and in a positive context, were discussed about the first three of his films [see, for example: Markulan 1967, pp. 230-234].

The directorial debut of T. Konwicki - *The Last Day of Summer* (*Ostatni dzien lata*, 1957) had the special interest for Soviet film criticism. I. Rubanova wrote that "melancholy atmosphere of isolation, almost cosmic emptiness recreated in the film with great skill. The authors ascertain the alienation of characters, but they do not seek to explain it. And for this explanation they refer to the past" [Rubanova 1966, p. 137]. I agree: this is "one of the most poetic and lyrical works of Polish cinema, but it is perhaps also the saddest movie, in which the topic of loneliness sounded hopeless, hysterically" [Markulan 1967, p. 223].

V. Kolodyazhnaya clarified the cause of the Soviet film critics' interest to films of T. Konwicki 1950s – 1960s: "Konwicki pioneered new content and new means of movie expression, he reflect the complex intimate, lyrical world of man, the spiritual life of those areas that were previously considered belonging to only one literature." [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p. 63].

V. Kolodyazhnaya's article was published in 1974 when T. Konwicki has directed his chief, shrill confessional film *How far from here, how close* (*Jak daleko stąd, jak blisko*, 1971). However, V. Kolodyazhnaya preferred not even to mention the film. Similarly done and L. Muratov [Muratov, 1976], the author of the work of Gustaw Holoubek, did not mention *How far from here, how close* too, though this actor played a key role in this film. The reason for this, as is the case with E. Kawalerowicz's films *Game* and *Maddalena*, was also the aesthetic as "central pattern of the director." *How far from here, how close* "are fully consistent with the canons of surrealism: her action is based on the intersection of the past and present, dreams and memories, dreams and waking" [Viren, 2015, p. 17].

As a result, T. Konwicki's films of 1970s – 1980s was a phantom, not only for the Soviet public, but also for Soviet film criticism...

Jerzy Skolimowski: from criticism to taboo

No work of film director Jerzy Skolimowski was not in the Soviet screens. However, before his emigration to the West, which occurred in the late 1960s, Soviet critics eagerly wrote about his movies.

J. Markulan acknowledged that "Skolimowski is certainly a talented director. *Rysopis* is the film with amazing sincerity and accuracy of direction. ... Although *Walkover* appeared raid affectation, a sort of coquetry. ... A lot of vulnerabilities exist in Skolimowski's objectivism, in his view of character, as it were from the outside and, above all, the rejection of any kind of conclusions" [Markulan 1967, p. 235]. R. Sobolev was more positive: "The sophisticated viewer may notice that ... Skolimowski style - it's something stunning, unusual. Of course, his style has been prepared with all those quests of the past decade, what happens in the movie. Of course, Skolimowski has absorbed the experience of Polish filmmakers, and the French "new wave", opening Godard and Antonioni, instructive failures "verite" and more [Sobolev, 1967, p. 98].

E. Skolimowski's departure to the West, of course, radically changed the vector of critical statements of the Soviet critics. V. Kolodyazhnaya wrote that Skolimowski "lack of faith in spiritual values, including in the spiritual values of a socialist society", she asserted that "Skolimowski's characters live by Western existentialist schemes, they are deeply alien to the contemporary Polish life. Skolimowski ... trying to get in the position "outside observer", but there is no doubt that the spiritual poverty of characters, the lack of contacts between them and the tragic absurdity of life seem to him essential features of the universe" [Kolodyazhnaya 1974, p. 77].

This film expert position in strict Soviet censorship is not surprising. More surprising that this position finds support among some Russian film critics of the XXI century. For example, M. Kirilov and now believes that "the films representing in Poland the style of "new wave", filmed just two people: Roman Polanski and Jerzy Skolimowski. Skolimowski's movies were absolutely cosmopolitan... His characters are taken out of the environment, they live by their own laws, perpendicular to society. ... Skolimowski left "socialist paradise", which he deeply despised, but as a director simply degraded, taking worthless and devoid of fancy crafts" [Kirillov, 2011].

Roman Polanski: only one film

Debuting a series of short films, Roman Polanski has put in socialist Poland, only one full-length film - *Knife in the Water* (*Nóż w wodzie*, 1962). As "the first surrealist short film *Two people with the cabinet* (*Dwaj ludzie z szafa*, 1958), his feature debut, *Knife in the Water* is psychodrama with sadomasochistic break, this film differed sharply from the Polish film production in those years and were perceived in Europe as a socio-romantic Slavic exoticism"[Plakhov, 1999, p. 31]. This allowed R. Polanski after his emigration very fast (since 1963) to adapt the West ...

Hence, in general, it is clear why R. Sobolev negatively assessed the nominated for "Oscar" *Knife in the Water*: "This is not an easy film: something is undoubtedly truthful and analytic, and somewhat one-sided and narrow in thought.

Some people said this is a snobbish film. Maybe. However, first of all this film is made with cold hands, a film director can be very talented, but apparently indifferent to people's joys and sorrows. I have two indisputable conclusions after viewing *Knife in the Water*: a) the author despises people and b) people are contemptible"[Sobolev, 1967, pp. 88-89].

J. Markulan wrote about *Knife in the Water* in a similar vein: "All this can be understood in two ways. Whether the filmmakers are protesting against "small stabilization", ridiculed both sides of the middle class - a frank and disguised, or seriously consider the inevitability and universality of philistine dishonesty. The film looks like an elegant paradox, designed for amusement"[Markulan, 1967, p. 244]. V. Kolodyazhnaya echoed: "The main features of all the characters are selfishness, petty vanity, lack of spirituality... People were depicted insignificant in its nature and existence in general appeared as meaningless" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, pp. 76-77].

The verdict of the official Soviet cinema criticism was strict and merciless: "there was nothing surprising in the fact that Roman Polanski and Jerzy Skolimowski fled in the capitalist world. Here they began staging entertaining movies preserving the old philosophical essence. Both directors depict crime perverse biological nature of man and the tragic absurdity of the universe" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p. 78].

But here it is worth noting that in the XXI century Russian film critic M. Kirillov, in fact, remained faithful to the traditions of Soviet film criticism about the *Knife in the Water*: "Roman Polanski, as it turned out, was basically a stranger to whatever ideology. He was a skilled and talented impersonator, instantly adapts for the style that was in vogue in this particular moment. ... *Knife in the Water* has something common with Chabrol experiments, but the Polish director lacked the Frenchman's anger and sarcasm, he had only imitated the psychological thriller" [Kirillov, 2011].

But I like T. Eliseeva's view about *Knife in the Water*: Roman Polanski "is not just opposed secured layman and a representative of the younger generation, brought up in accordance with certain moral and social principles. He sarcastically proved that these principles are worth nothing, generating only envy and greed. Although the director has created a universal situation that exists outside of time, are not connected with any country or with the era, human allusions were read and learn easy"[Eliseeva, 2009, p. 82].

Krzysztof Zanussi and film of moral anxiety

Krzysztof Zanussi is one of the few bright examples of a positive assessment of Polish cinema from both Soviet and post-Soviet times' film critics. V. Kolodyazhnaya consistently praised his works at the beginning of his career [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, pp. 79-83], noting that "Zanussi showed himself a moralist

in the noblest sense of the word: it stands for good, for a deep comprehension of the meaning of life, for the ideals" [Kolodyazhnaya, 1974, p. 80].

M. Chernenko wrote about this outstanding master in a friendly manner, noting, for example, that in the *Hypothesis* (*Hipoteza*, 1972), "we can see the open ironic list of possible variants of human destiny, taken at the crossroads of Europe, the fate of the beginning of this century" [Chernenko, 1978]. M. Chernenko equally warm wrote about the *Khaki* (*Barwy ochronne*, 1976), one of the central dramas of Polish moral anxiety cinema: "Rather austere, purely rationalistic moral incidents, ... instead of "real European" cinema ... we can see a viper satirical film with well-cut plot, unexpected sense of humor, an elegant dialogue. ... debate about the immorality of the authorities, the hypocrisy and the arrogance of life owners, a general demoralization of society..." [Chernenko, 1990].

In fact, Krzysztof Zanussi, the physicist and philosopher, is a "rational Christian. His every utterance obviously religious and yet calibrated strict Western rationalism. Rationalist Zanussi often proving to be an idealist. ... His films have always talked about a special world. More precisely, the two worlds: the ordinary life with her sometimes unusual problems, and the questions of life and death, truth and freedom"[Rahaeva, 2007].

I totally agree with T. Eliseeva: "Zanussi thoroughly and dispassionately translates into the language of the cinema the most fundamental and complex problems of human existence, are essential for every human being: birth, life, death, intellect, conscience, soul, faith. For this director the modern world is the territory of moral conflicts and ethical dilemmas." [Eliseeva, 2002, p. 67].

In 1982, I wrote a rather voluminous article entitled *Polish cinema 1970s: "third generation" and the debut of the youth* [Fedorov, 1982] and tried to offer this text in the main Soviet cinema journals. I believe that censorship alarmed even the first line of my article begins: "In the 1960s Polish cinema has lost some of its leading artists of Polish Film School, and young film directors. Director Andrzej Munk became the victim of a car accident in 1961. Zbigniew Cybulski, Polish actor № 1, died under the wheels of the train in 1967.

Roman Polanski, "the child prodigy of the Polish screen", left to the West in 1963. Another young film director and actor Jerzy Skolimowski followed him later, in 1968. One of the best Polish cameramen Jerzy Lipman and film director Aleksander Ford, talented animators Jan Lenica and Walerian Borowczyk also moved to the West...

Films of well known directors such as Wojciech Has, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Tadeusz Konwicki very rarely appeared on the Polish screens 1970s... It was much less discussions around the new films of Ewa & Czesław Petelski, Stanisław Lenartowicz, Stanisław Różewicz, Jan Rybkowski, and other film directors of the older generation. Only Andrzej Wajda was very active in 1970s...

So, new Polish film directors came in 1970s, many of them were born after the war, the "third Polish cinema" started" [Fedorov, 1982].

Thus, the article was, as some people say, "out of time", and has been successfully rejected...

Krzysztof Kieslowski: metamorphosis

Soviet film criticism first became interested in the work of Krzysztof Kieslowski (1941-1996) after his satirical film *Amateur* (*Amator*, 1979) received one of the main prizes of the Moscow Film Festival. Although a little earlier I. Rubanova, trying to talk about his "moral anxiety" films in an acceptable for Soviet censorship form. She wrote that Kieslowski "endowed with an acute artistic vision, flexible mind of modern intellectual, allow little things to evaluate as part of a greater whole and does not attract attention" [Rubanova, 1978, p. 257].

As later noted A. Plakhov, "Krzysztof Kieslowski's international fame began with the Grand Prix film for *Amateur* at the Moscow Festival 1979. The prize was awarded because of the stupidity of Brezhnev's ideological censorship... It was a sharp reflection of the former documentarian for the dual role of cameras in general and in the socialist world of double standards, in particular" [Plakhov, 1999, p. 154].

The explanation of this softness of Soviet censorship can be found in E. Bauman's treatment entitled *The Story of a Hobby*. She wrote about the main character from the *Amateur*: "blows of fate rained on our simple-minded hero. And all because he, perhaps even unconsciously, felt his new occupation as a vocation in which he chose to be loyal only to his inner voice" [Bauman, 1981, p. 184].

After the *Amateur* Moscow triumph it was the time of "Solidarity", and the names of the supporters of this protest movement was in vogue in the USSR only in the "perestroika" era when "Kieslowski's triumph was the *Decalogue* (1988-1989)" [Plakhov, 1999, p. 154].

M. Chernenko wrote about *Decalogue*: "it is explosive aesthetic and ethical cocktail explains another director's properties so that it is unique in world cinema: thinking in cycles, a tendency to unusual, non-canonical epic mindset, the desire to expand their artistic world beyond the classical subjects and situations" [Chernenko, 1996]. For example, in *Short Film About Killing* (*Krótki film o zabijaniu*, 1987) K. Kieslowski "opens not revenge, not punishment, but an empty ritual and conceited, stubborn indisputable dogma consecrated by centuries, but not sacred, because for the director, a man of Catholic morality, Catholic ethics murder in the name of the law are as unnatural as murder is against the law, against man and humanity" [Chernenko, 1990].

At one time (during of the Moscow Film Festival) I was able to not only see, but also to talk with K. Kieslowski. And I totally agree with A. Plakhov: "Kieslowski does not fit into the classification of André Bazin, who divides artists to those who prefer reality, and those who believe in the image. He has no contradiction between physics and metaphysics. Kieslowski as artist immersed in the mystery of life, its horrors and its wonders. ... Kieslowski was one of the last

authors in a movie, who treated him not as an attraction or amusement, but as a moral message. He has overcome the cultural barrier between East and West, between Europe and America, between classic and contemporary cinema. He made people end of the XX century listen to yourself"[Plakhov, 1999, pp. 155, 151].

Juliusz Machulski: the darling of the Soviet Screen

If Juliusz Machulski filmed their naughty comedy in 1970s, they will likely never would have got to the Soviet screens. But ... J. Machulski's erotic fiction comedy *Sexmission* (*Seksmisja*, 1983), even in a censored version and with a much more innocent title *New Amazons* triumph came in the Soviet Screens in the perestroika times. Criminal retro comedies *Va Banque* (*Vabank*, 1981) and *Va Banque – 2* (*Vabank-2*, 1984) were the champions of the Soviet box office 1980s.

M. Chernenko aptly wrote that J. Machulski is not cinematic messiah, and social analytic, "in other words, he perfectly knows exactly his place in the movie, knows that this is the place is his own"[Chernenko, 1990].

Sexmission used "a wandering story about the kingdom of women, which are transferred from the present day, laced with so many urgent political allusions and associations" [Chernenko, 1990]. After the huge success of *Vabank* J. Machulski made *Vabank-2*, with "casual elegance and professionalism directing, ... the ability to build a magical adventure spectacle"[Chernenko, 1990].

Of course, the *Vabank* can be called "trifle" [Gorelov, 2011], however, this definition is probably gets most of the films of light genres. But the *Kingsajz* (1988) was the fantastic comedy with the clearly satirical components. This film was a parody of "a very familiar world in which we see things as they are: card system and the law on the prohibition of drinking alcohol in the workplace, as well as time off; session of Parliament, investigating traces of sedition in the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm; ideological struggle against spreading liberalism, claiming that there is... And if we would think that all this is too pessimistic, we will see the local rebels under the banner of "Kingsize for everyone" [Chernenko, 1990].

Unfortunately, *Kingsajz* became the last J. Machulski's movie has attracted interest from Russian film critics. Well, maybe *Squadron* (*Szwadron*, 1992) attracted some attention because it was "an attempt to look at the uprising of 1863 through the eyes of a Russian officer, who falls in love with a beautiful Polish patriot, but being the enemy, cannot count on reciprocity. ... an echo of the old Polish stereotype: Russian as passive slaves of the king; or is violent disruptors comprising faceless, hostile Poles mass or individual conscientious people who, however, did nothing to change the situation"[Rahaeva, 2012, p. 231].

About the "white spots" of Polish cinema

Many Polish films of the socialist period were almost out the analysis of the Soviet criticism due to censorship and political reasons. That is why it is so

important that in our time the Russian film studies enters into scientific names of Polish filmmakers such as Grzegorz Krulikevich. For example, D. Viren writes about key episodes (the murder of an elderly couple, in which the killers rented an apartment) of the his most famous movie *Bang Bang* (Na wylot, 1972): "Indeed, on the one hand, we are dealing with a documentary, or rather, mockumentary style, on the other hand, this episode is obvious pastiche of German expressionists' movies, which is mainly manifested in sharp contrast illumination, as well as some shots of the composition" [Viren, 2013, p.19]. And then - the shocking the director position to the main characters (which, apparently, was the reason that *Bang Bang* did not overcome the Soviet censorship): "the director tries to present this case objectively, but at the same time it's hard not to feel: his sympathies clearly on the side of the murderers (otherwise he probably would not even take on this topic)" [Viren, 2013, pp. 21].

Extremely interesting D. Viren reflections about the deconstruction of socialistic realist canon in the Polish cinema 1970s -1980s, when "there was a parody direction ridiculed the characteristics of life under socialism" [Viren, 2013, p. 98]: *Cruise* (*Rejs*, 1970) and *Sorry, there is someone to beat?* (*Przepraszam, czy tu biją?*, 1976) by Marek Piwowski. For example, thinking of a satirical, pseudo-detective nature of the film *Sorry, there is someone to beat?* D. Viren, in my opinion, leads a very vivid example of how the "game genre is gradually giving way to a place of social and psychological problems. At the fore as a result of out the most "moral anxiety", for example, in the episode, when one of the main characters - a policeman - utters the phrase: "Do not you understand there is no common ethics for all." The problem is very actual today, is not it?" [Viren, 2013, p. 98].

T. Eliseeva gives finally granted drama *Interrogation* (*Przesluchanie*, 1982) by Ryszard Bugajski, noting that he "broke into his belt conventional taboos: he created documented reliable, sinister and naturalistic picture of the functioning of the security forces unit and moral methods of physical and psychological destruction of people in the investigation time in Polish prisons in the late 1940s - early 1950s" [Eliseeva, 2009, p. 37].

D. Gorelov very convincingly writes about the influence of the Polish movies (even if they were a "white spot" for the ordinary Soviet spectators). For example, *Good-bye, see you tomorrow* (*Do widzenia, do jutra...*, 1960) was not in the Soviet screen, but this film show up for sure at Moscow Cinema Institute: the quotes from this movie can be seen in Soviet films *My Younger Brother* (1962), *I Walking the Moscow Streets* (1963), *Not a Good Day* (1966) [Gorelov, 2011].

Russian-Polish relations in the Polish screen and in the mirror of the Russian film criticism

It is clear that a strict code of censorship did not allow the Soviet film critics go into a discussion of what the image of Russia and Russian created the Polish screen. Research on this topic appeared only in post-Soviet times...

Attentive researcher O. Rahaeva convincingly wrote that the Polish cinema of the 1960s as a whole had a trend of creating a positive image of Soviet / Russian, especially in movies about the war: "The most representative of the opening theme of the military fraternity was the film *Where is General?* (*Gdzie jest general?*, 1964, directed by Tadeusz Chmielewski) and serial *Four tankers and dog* (*Cztery pancerni i pies*, 1966, directed by Konrad Nalecki). The film *Where is General?* presents (for the first time in military contexts) the topic of the Polish-Russian love" [Rahaeva 2012, p. 228] .

Of course, the Polish cinema trends to Russia and Russian has changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Poland from the Kremlin's attitude. For example, O. Rahaeva believes that the film *Ladies and the widows* (*Panny i wdowy*, 1991) by Janusz Zaorski follows that lines: "Russian dirty, drunken, brutal and filled with one sole desire - to have polkas. ... Once again, in 1920, we see abuse of Mother-Polka" [Rahaeva, 2012, p. 230].

Post-Soviet political situation collapsed and the main socialist era ban relating to screen reflection about the Soviet-Polish war of 1920. O. Rahaeva notes that the stories about how "hordes of Bolsheviks threatened to a free Poland, (*The Gate of Europe / Wrota Europy*, 1999, directed by Jerzy Wójcik, *Horror in Wesolych Bagniskach / Horror w Wesolych Bagniskach*, 1996, directed by Andrzej Baranski) ... the principle of enemies images is not moved away from the inter-war canons: they are wild, violent, and even if individualized (officer in the *The Gate of Europe*), are all signs of hostile masses" [Rahaeva, 2012, p. 231]. In fairness, I note that in the key Polish film on this subject - *Battle of Warsaw, 1920 (Bitwa warszawska*, 2011) by Jerzy Hoffman - this scheme is not so straightforward. Of course, new interpretations of the Polish-Russian relations in modern Polish cinema could not avoid the tragic events of 1939 and the next ten to fifteen years in the films *Scurvy (Cynga*, 1991, directed by Leszek Vosevich), *Ladies and the widows (Panny i wdowy*, by Janusz Zaorski, 1991), *The most important (Wszystko co najważniejsze*, 1992, Robert Gliniski), *Colonel Kwiatkowski (Pułkownik Kwiatkowski*, 1995, directed by Kazimierz Kutz). O. Rahaeva writes that "Soviet soldiers on the Polish screen were all the same as in the 1920s and 1930s (perhaps slightly less caricatured), but the officers are in their brutality more sophisticated (*Ladies and the widows, Scurvy*)" [Rahaeva, 2012, p. 231].

Russian military subject was also presented in the Polish-Czech *Operation Danube (Operacja Dunaj*, 2009), "where Soviet soldiers again look like the Bolsheviks in film from 1920s. They are senseless cruel, wild and drunk. Although

the Poles are not too idealized... At the same time it turns out that Poles and Czechs can perfectly agree, if they have a common enemy - Russian" [Rahaeva, 2012, p. 235].

O. Rahaeva clearly highlights the stereotypical Russian characters in Polish cinema of the 1990s - early 2000s: "the natives of Russia are a wild people from the wild country sinking in poverty; Russian are trying by hook or by crook to get to Poland - a transit point on the way to the West - and here to solve their (mostly dirty) business. The characters in the movie *Debt* (*Dług*, 1999, directed by Krzysztof Krauze.) are smugglers, criminals, murderers, gangsters and mafia. ... The prostitutes, pimps... In addition, the fate of Russian women in these films usually depend almost entirely on the Poles (a kind of symbolic revenge for historical grievances)" [Rahaeva 2012, p. 232]. In fact, the images of Russian women are shown in Polish cinema 1990s - 2000s much softer and warmer than images of men: *Sauna* (1992), *VIP* (1991), *Daughters of happiness* (*Córy szczęścia*, Poland, Hungary, Germany, 1999), *Love stories* (*Historie miłosne*, 1997), *Little Moscow* (*Mała Moskwa*, 2008)...

Analyzing the films of the past 15 years, O. Rahaeva [Rahaeva 2012, p. 233-234] notices that Polish cinema has a relatively new trend in Russian image - as the brave and slightly mysterious characters: in the films *On the edge of the world* (*Na koniec świata*, 1999), *Master* (*Mistrz*, 2005), *Persona non grata* (2005) and others.

Polish cinema: predictions for the future

Projections, as is well known, a thankless thing: they very often do not come true. For example, V. Kolodyazhnaya wrote in 1974, that "all the best in content and form was further developed in the Polish cinema of 1960s and early 1970s. ... A new fruitful stage began when the Polish cinema in general, freed from ideological vacillation, by lack of faith in man, from the existential loneliness and omnipotence of evil" [Kolodyazhnaya 1974, p. 47]. The "ideological vacillation" of Polish filmmakers not only continued, but also resulted in the late 1970s to a peak of "cinema of moral anxiety". Of course, this was a "fruitful stage" in the development of Polish film art, but I'm afraid, is not the same as V. Kolodyazhnaya had seen, standing on a clear socialistic position...

One of today's most well-known Russian film critics of the liberal wing – A. Plakhov did not become a better predictor of the trends in the Polish cinema in 1988. He wrote (just three years before the collapse of the USSR) about the generation of Polish direction, to declare itself in the period of "Solidarity": "Most of them went into the cinema in the second half of the 1970s, shortly before the Polish society has undergone an economic and political crisis. ... They have ... tones of skepticism and pessimism. At the same time, now it is possible to assert with confidence, they are for the most part did the ideological alliance with the extremist forces who wanted to orient the country to the West. The so-called films "under the sign of moral anxiety", which appeared in abundance on the Polish

screens of 1970s - 80s were not aimed at the denial of socialism as such, and in its criticism really manifested distortions and deficiencies" [Plakhov, 1988, pp. 169-170].

But the connoisseur of Polish cinema M. Chernenko wrote in 1989 more accurate text: "Of course, forecasts are always uncertain, especially far from the stability of the political and economic situation in Poland, but in the normal evolutionary course of events, it can be easily assumed in future of cinema a sharp turn to the events of recent history, in the pages of military and post-war life of the people who were under the censorship ban. First of all, we can expect a cinematic biography of "Solidarity" and the prehistory of this movement: from the workers' protests in 1976 and further, deep into the decades - to the events on the Coast in 1970, to the knowledge of the tragedy in 1956, to civil war of 1944-1948 years and massive repression... In any case, whatever the particular subject is likely to Polish cinema in the coming years will again become a historic cinema, just as was the historical cinema "Polish Film School" [Chernenko, 1989].

Russian film criticism and the Polish cinema: what next?

I counted about 60 works related to Polish cinema, published in the USSR from 1959 to 1991 [Antonov, 1972; Bauman, 1981; Bereznitsky, 1971; Chernenko, 1964; 1965; 1967; 1968 1970; 1971; 1972 1974; 1975; 1976 1977; 1978; 1979; 1980; 1984; 1985; 1987; 1989; 1990; Chizhikov, 1966; Frolova, 1976; Kolodyazhnaya, 1974; Lavrentiev, 1989; Markulan, 1967; 1968; Mikhalkovich, 1977; Molchanov, 1989; Muratov, 1973; 1976; 1978; Plakhov, 1988; Rubanova, 1965; 1966; 1972 1977; 1978; 1989; Rysakova, 1960; Sobolev, 1965; 1966; 1967; 1970; 1979; Sukhin, 1975; Yurenev, 1959, and others].

In the post-Soviet period (1992 to 2016) I found about forty publications Russian film critics a Polish movie [Chernenko, 1992; 1996; 2000; 2001; 20012; 2005; Elisseva, 1996; 2002; 2007; 2009; Filimonov, 2008; Gorelov, 2011; Kirillov, 2011; Kudryavtsev, S., 1995; 2003; 2014; Palamarchuk, Zubritskaya, 2007; Plakhov, 1999; Rahaeva, 2009; 2012; Rubanova, 2000; 2013; 2015; Viren, 2013; 2015; Zadorozhna, 2006, and others]. It seems to be a lot, but ... more than half of them are small encyclopedic articles belonging to the pen of T. Eliseeva. More or less mainstream press articles about Polish cinema came in the last quarter century a very little...

Of course, I have been taken into account (in the Soviet and post-Soviet period), mainly publication of film critics from Moscow. But if the socialist era Soviet regional newspapers published many film reviews on the current screen repertoire (including Polish films)... So, the list of modern Russian film critics, specifically writing about Polish movie is very short: I. Rubanova, T. Eliseeva, D. Viren, O. Rahaeva... Well, let's hope that is not a number, but the ability to...

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