

**Aesthetics, Innovation, and the Politics of
Film-Production at Lenfilm, 1961-1991.**

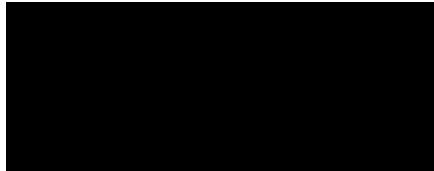
Alexander William Graham

UCL

PhD

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between Lenfil'm film-studio and the Soviet Party-state apparatus in the context of successive reformist projects and shifting repertory strategies pursued by filmmakers and executives. Drawing upon archival records, cinema-historical scholarship, professional testimonies, and feature-films, it demonstrates a studio-specific approach to the institutional relations that shaped late-Soviet cinema as an artistic process, an industry, and a political sphere.

In 1961, significant reorganizations of production at Lenfil'm assured an unprecedented devolution of executive responsibilities – commissioning, development, shoot-supervision – to new, cineaste-led production-units. These artistic cohorts were afforded sufficient license to shape their professional profiles around distinctive repertory policies, which reflected the artistic interests of their filmmakers, but were also compelled to adapt these proposals to the thematic categories fixed by late-Soviet cinema's central administrative structures.

This thesis asks how Lenfil'm cineastes negotiated ideological screening and pursued aesthetical innovation in filmmaking, towards which the administrative system was consistently suspicious or outright hostile. It then considers how the studio's repertory profile changed in response to resurgent official orthodoxies in the 1970s, only to incorporate renewed privileging of art-cinema into this response by the end of that decade. In the 1980s, with perestroika, attempts at democratization and market-focused reform found these production-units to be the irreducible professional nuclei of late-Soviet cinema. Their structures, artistic identities, and decision-making prerogatives persisted beyond all practicality of adherence to an inflexible administrative system and a collapsing film-distribution network.

Through production-histories, analysis of Communist Party policies, and detailed examinations of the reforms that modified studio-structures, this thesis argues that the final three decades of the USSR saw filmmakers and studio-level administrators develop heterogenous repertory innovations, despite the crudeness of official ideological oversight. Lenfil'm became the bastion of late-Soviet auteurism within an industrial system that ought, by its own measure, to have precluded this possibility.

Impact Statement

This thesis is a work of cultural, institutional, and political history: it approaches late-Soviet cinema as an artistic process, an industrial sphere, and a state-administered economic sector. In the study of Soviet cinema, it advances scholarly understanding of a relatively underexamined historical period and promotes the merits of sustained archival research as a methodological principle with the potential to impact the profile of this academic discipline's canons, and to shape approaches to teaching them. Its potential publication as a book and/or journal-based articles adapted from individual chapters would represent the first published English-language scholarship to examine late-Soviet cinema-production from an explicitly studio-specific perspective.

This thesis also addresses the specificities of Soviet cinema-production in multiple international contexts – aesthetical, political, and theoretical – and thus endeavours to benefit the wider film-studies community. Language-barriers, historical neglect, and difficulties accessing films and research materials continue to restrict cross-fermentation between Soviet and other cinema studies. The depth of focus on late-Soviet phenomena and the international frames of reference in this thesis will extend the relevance of its analysis beyond the confines of Soviet studies, inviting scholarly engagement across the boundaries that divide 'national' cinemas from other research areas in film studies.

Outside academia, this thesis aims to contribute to the international appreciation, exhibition, and protection of film-cultural heritage. Here, its potential impact is to encourage and to catalyse greater exhibition of historically significant cinema, particularly from a transnational perspective. In the internet age, filmic 'content' and materials pertaining to cinema's histories have never been more widely available: digital accessibility has immeasurably expanded opportunities for the

consumption of media. However, a deficit of curatorial investment – both in the rhetoric of online marketplaces and in the contemporary packaging of cinémathèque-based exhibition – has (temporarily?) marginalized archival programming, culturally ambitious retrospectives, and educationally focused seasons of underappreciated cinema. This thesis hopes to impact the present and future public dissemination of Russian and Soviet cinema by providing a resource for curators, film-programmers, and cultural-media professionals.

A broader ambition of this thesis concerns the promotion of cross-cultural inquiry and understanding at a moment of global political uncertainty. Over the period of time in which this research was conducted, conditions for independent scholarly activity and unhindered expressions of critical thought have significantly deteriorated in the Russian Federation. This situation overwhelmingly affects Russia-based scholars, who currently operate in an extremely challenging political environment, but it has also indisputably impacted on the access to research and the personal safety of foreign scholars and media-professionals. Against this challenging backdrop, and in the anticipation of further high-political retrenchments, this thesis represents an affirmative statement for the undiminished value of academic research, which engages directly with primary materials in politically sensitive contexts, to an informed critical understanding of Russia. In many regards, the institutional configurations and political cultures of the late-Soviet Party-state apparatus have informed the conduct of contemporary Russian policy-implementation and official public discourse. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that archival research in the Russian Federation remains possible for international researchers.

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Introduction

Late-Soviet Production-reforms in Artistic and Political Context

This thesis addresses a fundamental repertory tension in late-Soviet cinema. Between the early 1960s, when a new production-model was established, and the collapse of the USSR, *avtorskoe kino* [auteurist cinema] emerged as an artistic phenomenon whose existence contradicted the established thematic categories and plan-fulfilment economics of this film industry. Lenfil'm – Leningrad's only producer of feature films – experienced this uneasy accommodation uniquely. To understand how this occurred, we must trace a conceptual genealogy of auteurism as a category of theory, a historiographical model and a filmmaking practice. Its propagation changed the organization of post-war Western cinema production and shifted critical discussions of cinema aesthetics. However, auteurist discourses became highly contested in scholarship and different 'auteur cinemas' reflected artistic values that still resist univocal definition across different cultural contexts. This acknowledgment can help to approach late-Soviet *avtorskoe kino* as a repertory strategy and an institutional reality.

The history of auteurism contains fluid transnational shifts that are dominated by a teleological linearity in its appropriation from French into American intellectual culture. However, usage of the term quickly spread beyond this cultural axis and became problematically diffuse in relation to its 'original' precepts. The abiding impetus of auteurism concerned the insistence that decisive control over the production of artistically significant cinema reside with filmmakers whose work displayed a coherent aesthetics, and thus, evidence of a particularly cinematic worldview, rendering them 'auteurs'.

The most historically persistent discussions of auteurism are the *politique des auteurs* [auteurs' policy] in 1950s French criticism, and an 'auteur theory' first proposed in an American journal in 1962. A chasm of epistemic validity exists between a *policy* and a *theory*: the latter's implicit claim to systematicity cannot be taken for granted any more than the former's clarity of purpose can be mistaken for internal coherence. This point has been energetically debated since Dudley Andrew's mid-1970s insistence that auteur theory, 'properly speaking, is not a theory at all but a critical method' applied illustratively to already-recognized examples of auteur cinema, rather than demonstrating the 'systematic understanding of a general phenomenon' proper to theorizing.¹ For Andrew, auteur theory aspired to hierarchize artistically innovative filmmakers through discussions of cinematic forms. Revisiting the *politique des auteurs* established in *Cahiers du cinéma*, Andrew described its interest in a 'structure of inner experience made available to the critic' in the aesthetics of a film, and noted its fascination with the 'actual circumstances of production'.² Thus, interviews, memoirs, and discourses on production were also privileged as meaningful auteurist statements.

Even authoritative accounts of the transition from *politique* to 'theory' hold auteurs to be designated as such by this critical schematic, rather than constructed by an emergent professional rhetoric, whose logic was to concentrate artistic control in the hands of filmmakers. For example, Thomas Elsaesser writes that Andrew Sarris, the originator of 'auteur theory', simply imported his schematic from *Cahiers*, rather than embellishing its criteria in ways that have profound implications for our understanding of how aesthetically focused analysis of cinema developed historically.³ Restoring investment in the *conditions* of production to historical discussions of auteurism is an important step towards connecting this critical method to the emergence of Soviet *avtorskoe kino*.

Auteurism Between Prophecy and Method

Critical auteurism originated in Alexandre Astruc's 1948 article 'The Birth of a New Avant-garde: The *Caméra-stylo*.'⁴ Unlike the most influential manifestos of early filmic avant-gardes, like *photogénie* or Soviet montage, Astruc was not concerned with theorizing a 'cinematic specificity' inherent in the medium's technologies and representational systems. Rather, Astruc emphasized cinema's indexical and ethical connections to 'the real', identifying a post-war need to commit cinema to a realism that could elevate filmmaking to 'writerly' status [*écriture*]. Hence the metaphor of the *caméra-stylo* in Astruc's assertion, 'an auteur writes with the camera like a writer writes with the pen'.⁵

As Antoine de Baecque has argued, Astruc drew on the ontological realism developed by André Bazin, who founded the journal that became *Cahiers du cinéma*. Its mid-1950s cohort claimed auteur-status for its favourite filmmakers by presenting cinematic *mise-en-scène* as expressive 'writing'.⁶ A kernel of theory – the *caméra-stylo* – provided a manifesto's insistence to Astruc's text, which celebrates the individual expressivity of a small and stylistically incongruent selection of directors (Jean Renoir, Orson Welles, Robert Bresson, Henri-Georges Clouzot, among others). In a considered overview of auteurist theorization, Sergei Filippov has argued that Astruc's 'lucid, prophetic, provocative manifesto' now reads as 'more of a fantasy (though this consequently turned out to be surprisingly accurate)'.⁷

Beyond an 'accurate fantasy' of proto-auteurism, what is productive here for an understanding of how films are ascribed aesthetic innovation? The answer depends less on cogent argumentation than on Astruc's insistence on the filmmaker *as artist*. For Robert Stam, although abstract, the *caméra-stylo* 'valorized the *act* of filmmaking' by liberating filmmakers from subordination to pre-

existing texts, whether source-novels or original screenplays.⁸ If the literary metaphor of *écriture* was both a theoretical proposition and a political insistence on the cultural value of individual style, then we can begin to appreciate the logic of the *mise-en-scène* criticism that followed. For David Bordwell, *Cahiers* auteurism developed into ‘a connoisseurship that required a staggering knowledge of particular films’.⁹ Its schematic division between ‘auteur’ and ‘other’ cinemas also demanded specialized strategies for reading the hugely varied conditions of production in which filmmakers as diverse as Nicholas Ray, Ingmar Bergman, and Roberto Rossellini operated. The prophetic significance of Astruc’s article is not limited to its prediction of ‘aesthetical auteurism’ circa 1960, but also that it recognizes auteurs at work *across* different modes of production. Astruc’s proto-auteurism was not an alternative system, but instead, as Elsaesser suggests, a ‘parallel and complementary practice to that of the industry, rather than a competing or mutually exclusive one’.¹⁰

***Cahiers du cinéma* and Auteur Criticism**

This idea of ‘parallel practice’ is often occluded in histories of auteurism because of the polemical defiance with which *Cahiers* announced the *politique des auteurs*. This Rosetta stone of the French Nouvelle Vague [New Wave] coalesced Romantic artistic sensibilities and a purely aesthetical distaste for ‘tradition’ into a programme – imbued with cultural panache and intellectual ingenuity – for a complete overhaul of French cinema production. While this accounts for the artistic specificity of the Nouvelle Vague, it does not consider the uses and abuses of auteurism as a critical method. The schema and dogma of this *politique* merit consideration as both critical *policy* and cultural *politics*.

Cahiers criticism revolved around an auteur's signature codes, i.e. the persistence and ubiquity of stylistic motifs through the entirety of his/her oeuvre, even its marginalia. Aesthetically focused readings determined those markers of cultural significance which *Cahiers* critics deemed essential to an innovative contemporary cinema. These were: the primacy of *mise-en-scène* as an absolute artistic value, which trumped plot and socio-cultural 'messages' as the true subject of the film by turning conflict and disruption into diegetic qualities; the systematic defence of the auteur's right to *direct* the filmmaking-process at all stages, whether he/she is a credited 'author' of the screenplay or not; and the demand for public recognition of such cinema as an art worthy of the cultural status afforded in Europe to 'the arts', with their canons, legacies and legitimated critical frameworks.¹¹ This resembles less a clarion-call for a revolution in independent production (as New Hollywood Cinema would later celebrate), and more the privileging of an 'auteur-function' in production and an 'auteur-effect' in public life, which together determined the significance of an individual filmmaker's oeuvre *as art*.

When the *Cahiers* programme became a reality, it absorbed a cautionary response from Bazin. His objection to the *politique des auteurs* (as outlined with polemical effervescence by François Truffaut) was to counter its claim that auteurs can only be understood through their films, arguing instead that historical traditions and a sociology of production also surround and determine them as auteurs. Bazin also issued a more damning criticism of the taste-making entitlement expressed through *Cahiers*. In its pages, a supposed methodology of auteurism could be deployed to express wholly subjective preferences for the work of one filmmaker, who thus became an auteur, over another, whose lack of appeal to these critics saw him/her relegated to the status of 'director' [*metteur-en-scène*].¹² Personal taste, therefore, determined the critical agency of those who justified their support of a film on the basis that it had been made by a true auteur, who were frequently categorized according to no more dexterous a principle than the consistency

or development of their 'signature touch' from one release to the next. The glaring absence of any meaningful theory in this impassioned dogma is a long thread, traced from *Cahiers* to Sarris and beyond, that challenges the methodological validity of auteurism. However, we must heed Bazin's insistence on the importance of historical contexts to its conceptual development, in order to understand how new modes of production for art-cinema emerged in 1950s/1960s Europe.

Post-war European cinema was defined by shifting economic and cultural consensus regarding its status as art. This engendered what Elsaesser calls a 'contradictory inscription': the privileging of artistic self-expression for filmmakers, and the attendant subsidy of 'artistic' filmmaking by governments. 'Protected' national cinemas came to represent an ideological expression of the state's commitment to cultural renewal and individual artistic production.¹³ In countries like France and Italy, prolific industries thus reorganized according to new output-binaries, which opposed the economics and politics of 'art' and 'commercial' cinemas produced to coexist domestically with Hollywood .

Co-opting the principles of *mise-en-scène* analysis and signature codes from *Cahiers*, Sarris's appropriation demonstrated neither an original theory, nor the description of a mode of production, but rather, the postulates of a critical method for recognizing the films of an auteur. Sarris effusively determined a third hypothesis of 'interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art, [which]... is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material'.¹⁴ Sarris organized this 'theory' into three concentric circles of analytical significance: an outer circle of technique; a middle circle of personal style; and an inner circle of interior meaning. These categorizations did not alter the principles of the *politique*, but clearly embellished its hierarchies of artistic significance and personality to specialize auteurist criticism in the interpretation of 'interior meaning' as an aesthetically latent quality.

According to this Western interpretative framework, the late-Soviet auteurs par excellence were – and perhaps remain – Andrei Tarkovskii, Sergei Paradzhanov, and Otar Ioseliani. Their films demonstrated highly individual and innovative styles, receiving plaudits from international festival screenings and intellectual analysis from the close filmic readings of Western cinephiles.

Confusion arising from the imposition of this label has created a persistent lacuna in Russian scholarship. This is apparent in Filippov's otherwise rigorous overview, when he writes that, beyond the various possible interpretations of *un cinéma d'auteur* in its *Cahiers* usage, this term 'now, effectively, means exactly the same as our *avtorskoe kino*', without proposing any definition of its Russian meaning.¹⁵

How do we account for this indeterminacy? As partisan or tendentious as the insistences of *Cahiers* and Sarris may seem, auteurism has shaped some of our most basic assumptions about cinema's historical development. Elsaesser has argued that it provided the new discipline of film studies with a framework for establishing canons and traditions, thereby legitimating its critical discourses on heterogenous bodies of work that could be categorized according to the artistic styles of its leading representatives.¹⁶ Filippov concurs: 'we have grown used – not without the influence of auteur theory [...] to considering cinema-history as a history of auteurs, but at the time, this was far from self-evident'.¹⁷

Assessing Sarris's myth of systematicity for arrangements of *mise-en-scène* alongside Soviet cultural history, an unexpected intersection arises. Boris Groys has argued that socialist realism – temporally fixated on a radiant future, idealizing representations of labour, concentrating spectacles of vanguard Communist leadership and locating its master-discourses in the mythological 'personalities' of Vladimir Lenin and (temporarily) Iosif Stalin – is another theory

that analyses less than it exemplifies. This was not simply determined by its non-negotiable status of official doctrine, but also reflected its cultural conditions of existence. For Groys, all Soviet aesthetical theory exists as an integral component of whichever system of meaning it produces (e.g. montage, constructivism, socialist realism), rather than elaborating a critical meta-description of that system as a category of knowledge or output.¹⁸

This assertion is also pertinent to late-Soviet auteurism. In the 1960s, it became possible to identify Soviet-produced cinema with a new institutional logic at work *inside* its studio-system, without the corresponding filmmaking practices undergoing any cogent *external* description as a system of cultural values. Hence the confusion in Vladimir Baskakov and Valerii Fomin's attempt to explain the emergence of *avtorskoe kino* historically. When Fomin questioned Baskakov – a retired state administrator and a critic interested in Soviet and foreign cinemas – on how *avtorskoe*, genre and masscult cinema 'collided' in the early 1960s, Baskakov admitted inability to answer. Beyond agreeing that the subject required further research, he could only refer to Paradzhanov, Ioseliani, and Tingiz Abuladze as leading auteurs whose work displayed absolute aesthetical uniqueness.¹⁹

These filmmakers made all of their Soviet-era titles at 'republican' studios. Linguistically, culturally and politically, these were readily identifiable 'others' within Soviet cinema-production, as observed from the administrative centre. Russian-Soviet Republic (RSFSR) studios represented more complicated sites. Their larger production-scales, greater artistic diversity and more direct channels of political subordination to the central Party-state apparatus make analysis of their distinctive identities a question of studio-specificity, rather than of the inter-institutional configurations of semi-autonomy that made late-Soviet Georgian cinema, for example, a haven for aesthetical innovation. The professional cohorts of Lenfil'm (Leningrad), Mosfil'm and

Gor'kii Studio (Moscow) better resembled microcosms of Soviet culture's principal political powerbases. Additionally, officially managed communities like the Filmmakers' Union [*Soiuz kinematografistov*; hereafter SK] expanded the contestations of everyday studio-production into a forum for USSR-level professional advocacy and political manoeuvring. Addressing the formation and evolution of these structures, this thesis contributes to the excavation of base-level professional discourse as an underexamined aspect of late-Soviet institutional politics.

Western Auteurism in Soviet Criticism

In late-Soviet cultural production, ideological tension coloured the interaction between officially supported 'internationalisms' and bursts of transnational cross-fermentation, which saw outward-looking producers assert agency in regard to foreign styles and cultural politics. As Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker observe, 'transnational flows of information, cultural models, and ideas' transcended the capitalist-socialist divide energetically and sporadically in the 1960s, when popular music, youth (counter-)culture and attitudes towards sexualities globally fomented one of the twentieth century's most dramatic generational shifts.²⁰ However, as a society unable to openly acknowledge most of these developments in its public discourses, specifically Soviet receptivity to cross-fermentation was inevitably channelled into degrees of ideological alignment with the Party-state monopoly on public cultural dissemination. Western culture that fell beyond acceptable parameters was treated as symptomatic of capitalism's reactionary essence, or, with palpable paranoia, as a conspiracy to undermine the global expansion of state-socialist values.

With the successes of two Mosfil'm titles at the Cannes Film Festival – *Letiat zhuravli/The Cranes are Flying*, dir. by Mikhail Kalatozov (1957) and *Ballada o soldate/Ballad of a Soldier*, dir. by Grigorii Chukhrai (1959) – Soviet cinema's international prominence was momentarily

reconfigured. Subsequently, the USSR Ministry of Culture revived the Moscow International Film Festival (MMKF) in 1959 as a biennial event, with the aim of projecting Soviet excellence and the optics of cultural openness. Politically, however, this enterprise revealed a glaring disconnect between Soviet officialdom's encouragement of elite-level contact and its scandalized reaction to the enthusiasm with which innovative cinema was met. In 1963, Chukhrai headed the MMKF jury that awarded its grand prize to *8½*, dir. by Federico Fellini (1963). After unsuccessfully pressurizing foreign jury-members to vote against the film, the festival-organizers overruled this decision, but finally reinstated the original award after jury-members threatened a walkout and international exposure.²¹

There are few more celebrated examples of Astruc's *écriture* of directorial thought onto celluloid than Fellini's oneiric, episodic, and semi-autobiographical film. Publicly according *8½* recognition but denying it further exhibition made a latent struggle within Soviet cinema overt. Its reception of European auteurism occurred at the same historical moment as the establishment of a new production-model, from which *avtorskoe kino* emerged as a repertory designation. Although leading Soviet cineastes became more feted abroad than at any time since the 1920s, they remained relatively impoverished film-spectators at home.

Windows of opportunity for transnational influence were invariably opened and closed by successions of Communist Party (CPSU) leaderships or pronounced shifts in high-level foreign policy. Following the landmark Twentieth CPSU Congress (1956) and Khrushchev's resolution to reassert CPSU legitimacy by denouncing and then dismantling Stalin's legacy, a period of relative encouragement for international exchange ensued. In January 1957, the leading journal *Iskusstvo kino* [*Cinema-Art*] published an extensive feature on Italian neorealism that represented the first of this new era's critical discourses on European auteurism in Soviet print.²² This was an understandable choice: Josephine Woll has described the appeal of neorealism's 'permissible'

working-class narratives to official Soviet orthodoxies.²³ Articles pitting progressive Italian cineastes against the Catholic church, state-censors and bourgeois film-producers appeared consistently into the next decade.²⁴ Nonetheless, for the cultural professionals that constituted the readership of *Iskusstvo kino*, interest in neorealism was principally driven by its aesthetic specificities, realist ethics, and humanist narratives, as contributors to the 1957 feature demonstrate.

A continuation of this distanced appreciation followed in reports from foreign festivals, reviews of new films from ‘greats’ like Rossellini and even the publication of (highly edited) excerpts from the screenplay of *La Dolce Vita*, confirming Fellini’s briefly held status as the foremost progressive friend of the USSR among Western auteurs.²⁵ While this select cohort could only ever be *politically* justified, prominent Soviet cineastes and critics were determined – within prevailing boundaries – to critique auteurism as art. Neia Zorkaia’s review of *Les Quatre Cent Coups/The 400 Blows*, dir. by François Truffaut (1959) was built overwhelmingly around an assessment of the film’s narrative and formal innovations, paying only passing heed to the anti-patriarchal themes that allowed the film access to Soviet screens.²⁶ European auteurism never became the widely discussed stimulus that this cohort craved: it was often only able to view such films at ‘closed’ SK screenings. As for Bazinian influences, John MacKay has investigated how late-Soviet criticism focused almost exclusively on his writings about montage, and criticized the post-structuralist, Louis Althusser-inspired *Cahiers* of the 1970s for its alleged ‘deformation’ of his work.²⁷ Not until 1985 and perestroika could Nina Nusinova explicitly address Bazin’s criticism of the *politique des auteurs* without a hint of ideological varnish. For Nusinova, Bazinian auteurism expressed more ample aesthetic tastes and critical sensitivities than the ‘narrowness’ of his theorizations.²⁸ This judgment fitted the eclecticism of its historical moment. Not only were outward-looking Soviet critics increasingly able to research Western cinema without ideological filters, but *avtorskoe kino*

was also beginning to represent the USSR at international festivals, where Lenfil'm became its foremost brand.

Institutional Auteurism and the Cultural Mode of Production

The 'contradictory inscription of self-expression and state-subsidy' informs Elsaesser's theorization of the formation of West German *autorenkino* as a function of New German Cinema's 'cultural mode of production' in the 1960s. This approach acknowledges broader representational shifts in post-war European cinema, but differentiates carefully between the aesthetic strategies of *autorenkino* and the long historical shadows cast by its earlier French – and subsequent American – contexts. Elsaesser stresses 'the need to try and account for the logic of this production and provide a rationale for the diversity but also the unity of the films'.²⁹

For Elsaesser, in the cultural mode of production, West German *autoren* represented individual ideological positions within a system in which 'the client [was] ultimately the state buying culture'. On the one hand, these filmmakers projected artistic autonomy. On the other, they fulfilled the state's expectation that their auteur-function become a recognizable 'public institution' of culture.³⁰ Therefore, *autorenfilm* was distinguished from the 'transcendent category of value' often applied schematically to auteurs within more culturally legitimated cinemas like that of France, since, as Elsaesser argues, West German *autoren* were required to create the *conditions* for filmmaking before they could attract funding for production.³¹ This imperative informs Elsaesser's assessment of *autorenfilm* as 'a sort of turnstile between ideology and practice, an ideal and a dogma'.³² In binding individual auteurs to the state upon which they depended for subsidy, the ideology of the cultural mode of production is neatly expressed by Eric Rentschler's definition of *autorenkino* as 'institutionalized directorial autonomy'.³³

This institutionalization implied not only the promotion of a national film-culture (cinema as art), but also an ideological investment in ‘relentless commitment to self-expression’ as a societal value.³⁴ These were necessary cultural conditions for state funding-bodies to operate, for dedicated television slots to be allocated to experimental cinema, and for *autorenfilm* to codify into a ‘surrogate economic category’ of cinema that met the expectations of filmmakers, bureaucracies, critics and ‘engaged’ audiences.³⁵ Elsaesser argues that subsidy-systems protected *autoren* from commercial marketplaces ‘by withdrawing them partially from the circulation of capital and establishing a secondary circuit – that of cultural legitimation. They had to prove that the cinema was serious art and that they were serious artists’.³⁶

For Elsaesser, an opposition in the cultural mode of production – between ‘auteur-oriented’ (i.e. aesthetically innovative) and ‘issue-oriented’ (i.e. socio-politically themed) filmmaking – makes only superficial sense. Both must be considered ‘audience-oriented’ categories, insofar as they corresponded to a ‘more general condition of receptivity’ than could be reliably read through sociological analysis of reception for the 1960s, when *autorenkino* emerged.³⁷ This observation applies just as well to the USSR. Both cinemas addressed an educated and socially engaged intelligentsia in search of *bildung* and creative culture, at a time when both societies experienced a brief surge in the circulation of humanist (Soviet) or radical (German) reformist discourses, before ‘longer periods of conservative backlash and restoration’ took hold.³⁸ Certainly, the value of institutionalized auteurism to the West German state hinged on less paradoxical ideological equations than applied to Soviet *avtorskoe kino*. Nonetheless, neither state’s ongoing subsidy of aesthetically innovative cinema was a foregone conclusion. When reformist agendas acquired political currency, West German *autoren* and Soviet *avtory* had to create the conditions for the establishment of a ‘protected’ mode of production.

Recent Scholarship and Cineaste Reflexivity

In an important contribution to Soviet cultural history, Alexei Yurchak identifies a paradox ‘inherent in the very ideology of the revolutionary project’ from 1917 through to perestroika.³⁹ Yurchak argues that centralized Party-state control was incommensurate with the advancement of revolutionary consciousness through the ‘practice [of] an experimental, innovative aesthetics’. Rather, an ‘enduring tension at socialism’s core’ – between independent, radical creativity and conscious subordination to Party-state authority – surfaced persistently as a fraught negotiation of institutional power. Yurchak concludes that ‘the Soviet state’s constant anxiety about publicly justifying state control of cultural production while simultaneously attempting to promote its independence and experimentation reflected this paradox’.⁴⁰ This thesis considers late-Soviet reforms to cinema-production as an attempt to reconcile that paradox. Consequently, *avtorskoe kino* emerged through the ‘institutional logic of authorship’ enabled by these reforms. John Thornton Caldwell proposes this last concept as part of an ‘industrial auteur theory’, according to which studio-based production engenders ‘inherently protracted, collective, and contested’ modes of authorship.⁴¹ Late-Soviet auteurism negotiated institutionalization to pursue the protectionist strategies of a *cultural* mode of production within the ideological superstructure of a uniform *industrial* mode, with its centrally determined divisions of labour and professional nomenclatures.

The institutional architecture of late-Soviet cinema subordinated all feature-film and animation studios (five in the RSFSR, two in the Ukrainian Soviet and one in each of the thirteen remaining republics) to a central-state administration with the authority to decide which films these studios were permitted to make, which filmmakers were approved to direct them, and how extensive or

limited the distribution of any release would be. Whether as the Ministry of Cinema (until Stalin's death in 1953), a branch of the Ministry of Culture (1953-1963) or the State Committee for Cinema [*Gosudarstvennyi komitet soveta ministrov SSSR po kinematografii*, hereafter Goskino] (1963-1991), central administration was responsible for allocating funds and technologies, directing the plan-fulfilment obligations of studios, and enforcing the conformity of studio-output to current CPSU policies and prevailing official discourse on Soviet history. Across all levels of 'Soviet' (i.e. state) authority, from central ministries and sectoral administrations down to enterprises like studios, CPSU subdivisions supervised the implementation of these obligations. The Party also policed the ideological compliance and social conduct of employees from *within* enterprises. It did this openly, interrogatively and in surveillant concert with the Soviet security services, a separate and extremely opaque branch of state power, whose prerogatives were not always limited by policy directives. CPSU authority was supreme in this system: its political rhetoric shaped the thematic categorizations and artistic orthodoxies that state administrators imposed on cultural producers. Cineastes were required to heed official instructions in their output and encouraged to publicly perform ideological adherence, whether in the press, at professional assemblies or through CPSU membership, which offered material privileges, social welfare and career-prospects unavailable to non-Party members.

The famous maxim ascribed to Lenin – 'for us, cinema is the most important of all the arts' – was ritualistically repeated throughout the Soviet period because it reflected the persistent expectation in officialdom that feature-filmmaking could encode ideologically appropriate conduct. Doctrinal motivations and revolutionary artistic experimentation existed in dialogue and tension, even after Stalin asserted control over literature and the arts in the mid-1930s, when socialist realism became the official style for state-sanctioned cultural production. Underpinning Soviet cinema's ideological evolution are cultural foundations for the *kinds* of film that its cineastes produced.

From 1920s montage to 'domestic' dramas, 1930s political propaganda to war-epics, chauvinistic biopics to the baroque mannerism of 'grand style' [*bol'shoi stil'*] late-Stalinist art, Soviet cinema experienced radical aesthetical change, hypertrophied mythologization, and enforced artistic stasis in response to official demands and interventions. One consequence of this was that thematic categorizations effectively replaced genres in Soviet cinema's repertoire. Genres, which developed culturally and commercially in Western cinemas, were absent, taboo or idiosyncratically imitated. Prescriptive themes were ideological coordinates that anchored filmic output to the perpetuation of Party-state power and offered ostensibly positive characters for Soviet citizens to emulate.

Influential scholars have connected late-Soviet cinema's non-development of genre-strategies to its alleged logocentrism as cineastes' compensatory adjustment to official ideological expectations. It is not only that, as Nancy Condee argues, literocentrism is a dominant principle in the formation of Soviet cultural discourse, particularly from the mid-1950s onwards.⁴² It is also that aesthetics can be interpreted, associatively and symptomatically, in ways that deviate from explicitly ideological determinations. The difficulty of controlling or containing unpredictable identifications, desires, and fantasies made homegrown genre-cinema a stunted prospect for Soviet audiences, which received instead a cinema predominated by 'talking' social archetypes.

For Mikhail Iampol'skii, late-Soviet cinema's 'striving for total verbalization' was inherently bound to the regime's suppression of representations of 'threatening' human behaviour, as in its 'almost legislative forbiddance of sex and violence'.⁴³ This argument, though compelling, neglects the shifts by which aesthetical influences from other cinemas entered late-Soviet filmmaking. Lilya Kaganovsky identifies a Soviet 'New Wave' that 'participated in the cinematic renaissance of the post-war period' alongside neorealism and the Nouvelle Vague. These movements shared

aesthetical innovations, open-ended structures, interests in youth and alienation, and crucially, ‘a desire to get away from a kind of “logocentric” discourse [...] a discourse in the service of a governing idea’.⁴⁴ Gorsuch and Koenker expand upon Kaganovsky’s transnational argument, concluding that young Soviet cineastes ‘adopted the new *auteur* style and made it their own’.⁴⁵ This thesis contends that innovative cineastes’ artistic strategies and their anticipated thematic adherences to CPSU ideology ebbed and flowed throughout the late-Soviet period. *Avtorskoe kino* emerged from a conflict between an aesthetical orientation of cinema and its forced accommodation of the ‘governing idea’ (state socialism) which justified the existence of this industry as a branch of state-funded culture.

Chapter Contents

This introduction charts the reorganization of Mosfil’ m in the mid-to-late-1950s and considers the expansion of reforms to Lenfil’ m in 1961, when devolved commissioning imperatives and a studio-specific historiography informed the development of new repertory strategies. Chapter One then contrasts alternative visions of Lenfil’ m production at that precise historical moment: one, a classical literary adaptation, which became emblematic of the studio’s artistic resurgence; the other, a bold experiment in genre-cinema, which drew huge audiences but failed to foster a repertory continuation. As the artistic identity of Lenfil’ m consolidated in the mid-1960s, these reforms allowed cineaste-producers to commission *avtorskoe kino* which sat uneasily within established thematic categories. Through production-histories and filmic analysis, Chapters Two and Three address the aesthetical and institutional anomalies of Lenfil’ m auteurism within this system. The films discussed here demonstrate artistic dialogues with Western cinema and weave coded commentaries on the conditions of Soviet cultural production into their diegetic worlds. Official ideological clampdowns and attendant administrative purges spread professional concern

about this seemingly ‘un-Soviet’ experimentation, which nonetheless engendered films of astonishing artistic and political compromise.

After 1972, the CPSU and Goskino reasserted cultural orthodoxies, sending auteurism into strategic retreat at Lenfil’ m. Chapter Four acknowledges the studio’s repertory prioritization of ‘industrial dramas’ as a response to this conservative turn. It contextualizes the Party-led legitimization of ‘developed socialism’ in these films as a doctrinal justification for the central planning economy. Plan-fulfilment and ideological compliance were the ultimate operational criteria for late-Soviet studios, but their immediate political conditions differed markedly, depending on the configuration of power between local and central authorities. In the 1970s, Leningrad was an industrial powerhouse under one of the USSR’s most repressive regional CPSU organizations. This not only influenced thematic output at Lenfil’ m, but also subjected it to a distinct layer of ideological screening, separate from Goskino and driven by its own hard-line imperatives. Chapter Five interprets the role of CPSU directives in shaping this cultural politics, then excavates the 1978 plan-fulfilment crisis at Lenfil’ m, which precipitated a Leningrad Party intervention, just as aesthetically innovative auteurism was resurfacing as a repertory strategy.

Between 1978 and 1985, Lenfil’ m experienced a chastening period of lowered artistic standards, cultural marginalization, and technological impoverishment. Nonetheless, studio-level initiatives to reprioritize auteurist commissioning and reorganize production developed internally in these years. Chapter Six analyses a film from 1982 that depicts artistically mediocre late-Soviet filmmaking and its degraded professional milieu, encapsulating this transitional moment at Lenfil’ m. When this carefully coded protest was produced, new repertory directions were already gathering momentum. By perestroika, Lenfil’ m self-identified as the artistic vanguard among Soviet studios and made *avtorskoe kino* its brand. Bookending with this introduction’s focus

on structural reorganizations and macropolitical processes, Chapter Seven examines studio-specific reformist strategies conceived at 1980s Lenfil'm. It considers how aspects of perestroika-era production revisited initiatives from the 1960s, identifying these legacies as hitherto underappreciated sources for late-Soviet cinema's final, failed attempt at market-based reorientation.

Reform: 'Creative Units' as Authorial Cohorts

In 1961, the subdivision of Lenfil'm into permanent 'creative units' of production [*tvorcheskie ob"edineniia*; hereafter TOs] gave auteurist discourses an institutional base. If *avtorenkino* was defined by 'institutionalized directorial autonomy', then *avtorskoe kino* depended upon the institutionalized directorial bind of the TO. Henceforth, production at the RSFSR's studios was only possible within these units. Frizheta Gukasian – Editor-in-chief [*Glavnyi redaktor*] of the First TO at Lenfil'm in 1965-1983 and 1985-1989 – has called the TO a 'cohort of authors' [*sostav avtorov*].⁴⁶ By this, we may understand its artistic composition of film-directors, screenwriters, literary consultants, and editor-producers [*redaktory*] with artistic and ideological responsibilities, but also – as in Caldwell's 'industrial auteur theory' – its negotiations of filmic authorship as a collective, collaborative, and contested practice. At all stages, TO-output and performance was formally screened by the studio-executive, Goskino, and Leningrad's CPSU organizations. These assessments were conducted through official protocols, informal political pressure, and covert professional monitoring, none of which can be satisfactorily contained by the notion of 'censorship'. A key purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how such an institutional logic of production both created and challenged the conditions for repertory innovations at Lenfil'm.

Institutional Histories of Soviet Cinema

Maria Belodubrovskaya's analysis of Stalin-era production is the most rigorous examination of Soviet cinema from an institutional perspective. Considering the 1930s in particular detail, Belodubrovskaya argues that the Party-state's experiment to create a mass-propaganda cinema provoked the 'unintended institutional failure' of single-digit national output by the early 1950s because of unrealistic official ambitions and a refusal to countenance short-term artistic backwardness as an acceptable cost of allowing resilient repertory and production-management structures to develop.⁴⁷ This argument traces causal links between the Party-state's 'masterpiece policy' – with corresponding intolerance of artistic failure – and official attempts to make the elite 'masters' of Soviet cinema into a self-administering cohort.⁴⁸ Their repeated failures to satisfactorily fulfil this remit precipitated intervention by high-political offices, including Stalin, through post-production censorship. Belodubrovskaya concludes that this did not encourage artistic excellence or thematic innovation, but risk-aversion and weakened routine production-management.⁴⁹

Belodubrovskaya suggests that the artistic incentives of this system, in which elite filmmakers were privileged figures, contradicted its ideological imperatives. The stated aim of the Party-state – a mass-propaganda cinema that encoded desirable conduct for audiences to emulate – was at odds with 'cinema as art', a notion which Belodubrovskaya claims persisted throughout this period, when no generational shift occurred among active Soviet filmmakers.⁵⁰ Ultimately, Stalin-era administrators could not reconcile a contingently maintained model of director-centred production at studios to the prerogatives of Party-state control. By Stalin's death in 1953, Soviet filmmaking had all but collapsed. Its elites were left to conceptualize the terms under which desperately needed structural reforms could succeed.

Post-Stalin, Belodubrovskaya observes that the ‘basic institutions’ of her focus – ‘thematic thinking, director-authors, independent screenwriting, and post-production censorship’ – persisted as industrial realities, even as ideological requirements shifted and output increased.⁵¹ This assertion must be qualified by the acknowledgement that, by the mid-1950s reforms at Mosfil’m and the 1963 creation of Goskino, elite filmmakers and administrators alike had learned harsh political lessons from the recent ‘unintended institutional failure’. The formation of new and often-overlapping layers of production-management and ideological screening made high-level political supervision of these ‘basic institutions’ cease to be the main mechanism for regulating engagement between filmmakers and the Party-state. *Redaktery* exercising artistic and ideological supervision multiplied at studios and Goskino. ‘Hidden’ punitive measures like professional demotions, financial penalizations and the indefinite ‘shelving’ of unreleased films increased, while public humiliations, press-attacks, and worse criminal punishments for ‘culpable’ filmmakers decreased. All stages of screenplay-development and pre-production passed through state censor [Glavlit] screening, Goskino approval, and studio-level executive management. At the base of the institutional pyramid, TOs were the professional nuclei that had assumed responsibility for guaranteeing the artistic quality and ideological compliance of late-Soviet feature films.

Falling as they do beyond the historical span of her work, Belodubrovskaya is nonetheless interested in describing 1960s TOs – ‘production-units headed by directors and semi-independent from their host studios’ – as ‘a semblance’ of an idea mooted in 1936 to create independent, director-led production-enterprises, thus eliminating ‘fixed’ Soviet studios and the main branch of central administration.⁵² There is a perceptive, if strictly implicit, association between the establishment of TOs and ‘the Soviet version of director-centred auteur cinema

(*avtorskoe kino*), in Belodubrovskaya's claim that Soviet auteurism originated under the administrative leadership of Boris Shumiatskii in the 1930s.⁵³ Further research into connections between the TO-era and 1930s filmmaker-led initiatives could offer fascinating insights into the historical currency of this unexplored argument. This particularly concerns Lenfil'm, which my thesis and Belodubrovskaya acknowledge as representing an exception, in the 1930s, through its screenwriting department and semi-autonomous creative workshops.⁵⁴

Late-Soviet cinema inherited its thematic-planning practices from the pre-war era: cineastes internalized its conventions along with the exigences of state-monopoly and the public incontestability of CPSU-rhetoric. A studio's failure to fulfil centrally approved thematic production-plans was an exceptionally serious infringement that could result in the withdrawal of remuneration bonuses, CPSU-membership sanctions, and/or the removal of executives and *redactory*. Nonetheless, the so-called *templan* was not – and never became – a top-down programme for repertory development, since responsibility for generating proposals for film-projects resided with cinema-professionals, both under Stalin and subsequently. The crucial difference between these periods was the extent to which this delegation was formalized institutionally, rather than conferred to a small cohort of 'master' filmmakers with a direct connection to the 'birth' of Soviet cinema in the 1920s, and a direct line to Stalin and his Ministry of Cinema as the ultimate arbiter of a film's prospects.⁵⁵

Belodubrovskaya traces shifts in planning priorities across different Stalin-era administrative leaderships. The prescriptiveness of these lists – often publicly advertised – reflected early stages of film-industry development, during which the repertory landscape of Soviet cinema was still forming.⁵⁶ Films about collective farming, industrialization, Stakhanovite heroes, and ethnic minorities, for example, required establishment as thematic coordinates. By the late-Soviet era,

prescriptive lists were no longer published: administrators were acutely conscious of the damaging legacies of the late-Stalin-era ‘film-famine’ [*malokartin’e*], when thematic planning had collapsed. Goskino strove to avoid publicly exposing a similar disconnect between the Party-state’s disproportionate expectations from cinema and the reality of its production-capacities.⁵⁷

As Belodubrovskaya argues, thematic planning was less an effective mechanism for the regime’s control over output, and more a list of ideologically desirable ‘topic headings’, within and around which cineastes produced works of varied artistic tone and sophistication.⁵⁸ If late-Soviet authorities deemed cineastes to have inadequately populated a given category with ‘correct’ films, admonishments could be private or public, explicit or coded. However, by the late-1950s, exhaustive lists had disappeared from central-administrative circulars, to be replaced by the stressing of specific thematic and technological priorities.⁵⁹ Late-Soviet bureaucrats considered cinema’s thematic categorizations to be established and inviolable. Cineastes were thus expected to self-police the thematic adherences of studio-output through their on-the-record professional discourses.

As under Stalin, films on late-Soviet ‘contemporaneity’ were the most in-demand ‘units’: the ideological justification of Party-state power hinged on projections of societal development, economic growth, and political might. Archival holdings of Lenfil’m CPSU-branch meetings between 1960 and 1986 reveal ‘topic headings’ that recur frequently enough to be identified as typical thematic categories:

Contemporary Soviet life; remarkable contemporary archetypes;

Revolutionary history; events of 1919-1922;

Party-historical themes; Lenin’s life and work;

Military-patriotic themes; today's Soviet armed forces;
World War Two;
Industrial drama;
Working-class epics;
Leningrad's history, industries and culture;
Russian literary classics;
Agriculture; the peasantry; village-life; collective farming;
The lives of exceptional Soviet scientists, medics, scholars and athletes;
Space-exploration;
Coming-of-age/coming-to-political-consciousness stories;
Children's films.⁶⁰

Consistently, studios had difficulty fulfilling these expectations. Veteran cineastes protested against demands to write to order, and executives frequently complained that filmmakers willing to direct films on prioritized themes could not be found.⁶¹ Accusations of 'small-scale thematic triviality' [*melkotem'e*] hit Lenfil'm frequently, when films on domestic themes were held to deviate from the 'grand civic spirit' demanded of cinema by the regime.⁶² A non-category, *melkotem'e* threatened a studio's thematic obligations by risking the representation of social spheres and relations that resisted clear ideological determinations. By the late-1960s, faced with patchy fulfilment of contemporary themes, 'commemorative' filmmaking became particularly important to central authorities. Between 1967 and 1970, Goskino and CPSU leaderships pushed hard to meet the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and Russian Civil War, Karl Marx's 150th anniversary, and Lenin's centenary with suitably grandiose works. These ritualistic panegyrics replaced opportunities for films that cautiously addressed Stalinist repression, an opening created in the early 1960s that was closed by 1967.⁶³ Not until perestroika would official

thematic-planning fixities rupture irretrievably. Although successive political campaigns and sectoral five-year plans brought shifts in emphasis linked to CPSU policy, thematic categories remained essentially unchanged until 1986. The Party-state's mission-statement for cinema – to encode ideologically exemplary representations of Soviet history, labour, and citizenship – persisted uncompromisingly.

Goskino anticipated between fifteen and seventeen films from Lenfil'm per calendar year, requiring five or six *templan*-approved features annually from each TO.⁶⁴ Excluding the studio's eventual expansion into television, these figures remained consistent throughout the lifespan of the model adopted in 1961. This testifies to the public-facing stability of late-Soviet cinema-production. In 1968, an official brochure equated the capacity of each Lenfil'm TO with an entire 'national' studio of a Soviet republic.⁶⁵ In 1982, a *Soiuzinformkino* journal described annual Lenfil'm-production – still fifteen-sixteen feature-films – as approximately ten-percent of domestic output, making it the third most prolific base after Mosfil'm and Gor'kii Studio.⁶⁶

The publications of Valerii Fomin have guided much post-1991 research into late-Soviet production. His pioneering *Polka* series on 'shelved' films denied release between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s offers a coherent methodology for case-studies built upon sustained archival inquiry. For example, Fomin's symptomatic reading of a political scandal around the controversial Lenfil'm war-film *Operatsiia "S novym godom!" / Operation "Happy New Year!"*, dir. by Aleksei German (1971; released as *Proverka na dorogakh / Trial on the Roads*, 1985) gave unprecedented documental prominence to senior cineastes, administrators and consultants in defending the film, which was 'shelved' by Goskino.⁶⁷

Fomin's subsequent research on Goskino in 1965-1985 is notable for its detailed instrumentalization of archival sources in the service of an argument about creeping cultural 'stagnation' throughout the Party-state apparatus.⁶⁸ Its extensive interviews and institutional snapshots can usefully orientate fuller examinations of late-Soviet reforms, screening-practices, and circumstances of studio-based production. We still await an authoritative institutional history of Mosfil'm, though Fomin's publications attest to a consistent Moscow-centrism in their argumentation. Here, contextualizing reference to 1960s Lenfil'm production is conspicuously absent. Fomin's allusion to 'a bona fide crusade being prepared against a rebellious Lenfil'm in 1967' is cryptically framed in his introduction and remains unaddressed thereafter.⁶⁹ Despite this puzzling lacuna, Lenfil'm does figure through interviews with Aleksei German, Aleksandr Sokurov and Iurii Klepikov. Although these evocations of studio-specific practices do not surface in Fomin's analytical chapters, their anecdotes suggest important leads for further research.

In the study of late-Soviet institutions, longstanding tension between 'method' and 'memoir' is a perpetual challenge to researchers invested in unveiling the political processes behind the period's dominant, person-centred rhetoric. What can be read as highly codified political (auto)biography on the one hand must, on the other, recognize 'industrial self-disclosure' as a self-conscious mode of address. As Caldwell argues, the 'behind-the-scenes' reality is always constructed, always contested, and always contingent in its rhetorical presentation of industrial conventions and practices.⁷⁰ For specifically 'post-Soviet' cultural narratives, we may add the expectation that an ideological apologia form part of the 'inside-story' of Soviet cultural production in action. This notion permeates the memoirs of senior Goskino officials like Armen Medvedev and Boris Pavlenok, and is treated ironically by the former Lenfil'm studio-director, Vitalii Aksenov.⁷¹ *Kak stat' direktorom Lenfil'ma* (*How to Become Director of Lenfil'm*) is styled as part confession, part self-help manual for a prospective Soviet executive.⁷² This thesis seeks to 'decalcify' professional

memoirs that evoke specific production-processes, stripping away ossified anecdotal residue to better pinpoint the more malleable research materials of their archival contexts.

Late-Soviet National Cinemas in Recent Scholarship

James Steffen's monograph on the cinema of Paradzhanov is an important contribution to the study of late-Soviet cinema-production. Through incisive filmic analysis, it traces the artistic trajectory of Paradzhanov's oeuvre in relation to successive studio-contexts, while also framing his relationship to the Party-state with a multi-layered analysis of national identity and the politics of ethnicity in Soviet cultural policy-making.⁷³ Steffen's acknowledgment that 'ideological censorship' was integral to this system is qualified by a recognition of important regional political exigencies. As he writes, 'All three traits – state monopoly, bureaucratization, and aesthetic-ideological control – were inextricably linked. But [...] the system was not monolithic, and controls were neither absolute nor even consistently applied.'⁷⁴

En route to a valuable discussion of Soviet republics as semi-autonomous national cultures, Steffen acknowledges the TO and Artistic Council [*Khudozhestvennyi sovet*, hereafter *Khudsovet*] structures that occupy the historical foreground of this thesis. In contrast to a nuanced reading of Goskino editorial hierarchies, Steffen falls back upon Valerii Golovskoi's mid-1980s dismissal of significance for studio *Khudsovet*, before referring to a mid-1970s Soviet manual that describes TOs as units which 'allowed for the decentralizing of artistic-creative leadership, bringing it closer to the shooting crew', a status Steffen assesses as 'theoretical'.⁷⁵ At issue here is both the contestability of this position and its second-hand elision of those institutional structures that fall beyond the referential framework of Steffen's study. By following a trajectory of Paradzhanov's

work across successive republican contexts, this publication affords limited scope for *a posteriori* analysis of late-Soviet studio-structures as a common institutional sphere.

A more studio-specific approach is evident in Joshua First's *Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity During the Soviet Thaw*.⁷⁶ Despite this title, its almost exclusive subject is the politics of culture and ethnographic representation at the Dovzhenko Studio in Kyiv. First's methodology differs substantially from Steffen, to the extent that its theorization of Ukrainian 'poetic' cinema and discussion of aesthetics effectively feed into a broader discourse on the politics of Ukrainian cultural nationalism.⁷⁷ However, similar issues to those we encounter in Steffen arise here around the perpetuation of scholarly givens on the powers of studio-structures.⁷⁸ Any investment in unpacking 'custodial' scholarship like Golovskoi and Fomin falls beyond a thematically driven interest in Dovzhenko Studio output. This thesis motivates its original contribution against a relative dearth of comparably focused research.

Lenfil'm and Leningrad: Culture and Politics

Late-Soviet Lenfil'm is under-historicized as a studio and in the study of Leningrad culture. However, for silent-era cinema and the mythologized 'golden age' of 1930s Lenfil'm, the contrary is true. Its structures differed fundamentally in these respective eras, making studio-produced volumes on pre-war Lenfil'm published between 1968 and 1975 of greater historiographical relevance than direct referential worth to this thesis.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Naum Kleiman argues that the 'golden-age' narrative depends overwhelmingly on a rhetoric of dominant personalities, in which the 'cult' of 'Lenfil'm geniuses' like Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, Georgii and Sergei Vasil'ev, and Fridrikh Ermler is a selective appreciation of an established 1930s canon, which almost completely neglects other leading filmmakers like

Evgenii Cherviakov.⁸⁰ This historical imbalance has been somewhat addressed by Aleksandr Pozdniakov, in a site-specific history of the building on the ‘Petrograd side’ of St. Petersburg where Lenfil’ m production has been based since its earliest incarnation in 1918.⁸¹ Although Pozdniakov also investigates the significance of this building to the birth of cinema-exhibition in pre-revolutionary Russia, his focus on the 1920s is productively grounded in the broader contexts of Leningrad cinema-culture, updating the authoritative but impressionistic testimony of Sergei Bratoliubov’s Soviet-era volume on this subject.⁸²

No correspondingly detailed research into post-war Lenfil’ m has been published. Most recently, Dmitrii Ivaneev, a junior editor on the 1968–1975 volumes, has compiled significant dates from Lenfil’ m’s entire history into an indexical reference.⁸³ A smattering of 1990s articles and chapters by French historians aside, Lenfil’ m has commanded insubstantial attention in any language other than Russian.⁸⁴ A major forthcoming study of late-Soviet Lenfil’ m by Catriona Kelly will energetically redress this marginalization, in both the unprecedented depth of its research into the studio’s professional life and its foregrounding of Lenfil’ m in the political and cultural life of Leningrad.

For Blair Ruble, Leningrad’s ‘uncommon position’ among late-Soviet cities stemmed partly from its industrial prominence, and partly from its ‘symbolic presence’ in official histories of the Bolshevik Revolution and World War Two, when the Nazi blockade of Leningrad was one of the most protracted and traumatic episodes in the entire conflict.⁸⁵ Leningrad also witnessed successive pre-war political crucibles. Following the purge of the Zinov’ev group in 1926, the Central Committee (CC) of the Party under Stalin moved to weaken the Petrograd Soviet (the city council, subsequently renamed the Leningrad Soviet) by shifting local political authority and symbolic prestige to the office of Party First Secretary for the Leningrad region [*oblast’*]. This

realpolitik manoeuvre eventually afforded Leningrad a relatively anomalous position within the Soviet system of dual subordination to the Party-state. Consequently, considering Lenfil'm production in the 1970s, this thesis interrogates the dynamic of command, enforcement, and supervision between Goskino USSR and Leningrad's CPSU leadership.

In *The Soviet Prefects*, Jerry Hough contends that regional CPSU organizations operated similarly to the prefectures of the modern French Republics in relation to central government. Thus, the First Secretary of the CPSU Regional Committee [Oblastnoi komitet, Obkom] primarily coordinated infrastructural projects and brokered between the region's political elite and Moscow.⁸⁶

However, in Leningrad, official insinuations that managerial work would overwhelm the purely political in this office were not borne out by its powerful pre-war incumbents, Sergei Kirov (mysteriously assassinated in December 1934) and Andrei Zhdanov (widely considered a potential successor to Stalin, long-serving Politburo member and Obkom First Secretary during the blockade). In 1948, Zhdanov's sudden death precipitated a massive purge of the city's Party organization known as the Leningrad Affair, which ran for almost four years and saw 26 senior officials executed.⁸⁷ Despite this cataclysm, the existing balance of power in Leningrad's political offices persisted into the late-Soviet era. With a powerful Obkom First Secretary in charge, Leningrad's USSR-level political significance remained extremely high, making an understanding of these structures crucial to an institutionally focused study of Lenfil'm.

Alongside archival research into CPSU activity at and beyond Lenfil'm, late-Soviet Party literature informs this analysis of the studio's broader, inter-institutional political contexts.

Lenfil'm CPSU-branch operations remain the most opaque dimension of a studio-history that, for Jeremy Hicks, 'is still in flux and to be written'.⁸⁸ This thesis is one possible response to such a call. To date, scholarship has not addressed the institutional functioning of TOs – the longest-

lasting production structures in Soviet cinema-history, existing between the late-1950s and 1988 – or scrutinized their connection to production-reforms, repertory innovations and high-political campaigns. Cinema-administration was the most vigorously policed and layered bureaucracy of all late-Soviet cultural production. No art passed through more stages of ideological screening by the Party-state, and none saw its output face a busier intersection of governmental concerns, from the development of photochemical film-stock and the management of domestic film-exhibition to tentative international-festival and export agendas in the period that concerns this thesis.

Reform at Lenfil'm: Mandating a New Model

On 4 November 1961, the RSFSR Minister for Culture, Aleksei Popov, signed Order [*Prikaz*] 949 'On the Formation of Creative Units at Lenfil'm Film-studio'. For the administration of the Russian Soviet republic's cultural sector, the sequence number suggests a heavy workload and reflects the immediate political situation. High-level momentum was gathering behind limited experimentation in economic reform and unprecedentedly forthright condemnation of Stalin's legacy: these two big domestic themes animated the Twenty-second CPSU Congress in late-October 1961. The resolutions of this Congress proclaimed that the USSR would achieve a fully functioning communist system by 1980.⁸⁹ Although this notoriously fallacious blast of visionary rhetoric reveals the hubris in the CPSU leadership's public-facing discourse at this time, it also projects a very real executive prerogative. New rounds of ideologically motivated institutional reform were conceived to impact immediately upon industry. However, for late-Soviet cinema, Khrushchev's 'landmark' pronouncement was just one historical event in the context of reforms already underway, and not their catalyst.

Prikaz 949 and its attached Project-description [*Polozhenie*] mandated the subdivision of Lenfil'm production into three TOs. This system remained in place for 27 years. In contrast to Mosfil'm, where TOs eventually took names, Lenfil'm maintained a strictly numerical designation, without the titles 'First', 'Second' or 'Third' implying a qualitative categorization of output. A preamble contained a general revision of operational expectations for Lenfil'm, drawn up

With the aim of guaranteeing the high ideological-artistic level of released films, of heightening the accountability of creative and technical-engineering workers, and of improving the organization of creative and industrial-technical processes at Lenfil'm film-studio [...] ⁹⁰

To historicize these demands, it is insufficient to approach the reorganization of Lenfil'm as a straightforwardly sanctioned 'surface-effect' of that historical moment's dominant ideological imperatives. Woll pertinently remarks that the Twenty-second CPSU Congress marked a point after which 'filmmakers sought adequate and appropriate aesthetic means to probe the painful moral issues it raised' about Stalinism and societal change.⁹¹ This is true, but their subsequent artistic agency did not develop in a vacuum. We must be careful not to disregard the institutional channels that shaped filmmaking careers and through which their artistic probes were beginning to flow. These reforms did not originate with a top-down, monolithic bureaucracy, but rather developed within the filmmaking milieu, before receiving official assent as a consequence of political strategies pursued by leading reform-minded cineastes.

The *Polozhenie* for *Prikaz* 949 detailed the professional nomenclature of a TO, while the *Prikaz* itself named those appointed to posts of responsibility in Lenfil'm TOs, and gave Il'ia Kiselev, the studio's recently appointed executive director, a timetable for their formation. It continued:

Creative units are being formed at Lenfil'm film-studio with the aim of improving the management of the artistic-creative and industrial processes of filmmaking, of bringing management into closer proximity with the core cells of production – film-crews –, and of broadening the development of creative and industrial competition.⁹²

The primary function of a TO was to manage feature-film production. At all stages, it would link the artistic process to studio-management, which comprised an executive directorship, an editorial board [*Glavnaia redaktsiia*] for screenplay-development, and the heads of mono-functional 'technical' departments [*tsekhi*] like film-editing, sound-recording, and lighting. Within a subdivided studio, TOs would bear formal responsibility for the fulfillment of a predetermined contribution of completed films to the studio's annual thematic plan. The composition of these plans would be determined collegiately at Lenfil'm by the *Glavnaia redaktsiia* and TO-management.

This delegation of new powers was substantial. TOs were to become the base-level artistic generators that turned ideas for films into viable productions. They would commission screenplays and direct their editing towards pre-production. Artistic personnel would be chosen before a project's submission to studio-management for approval in TOs thematic, and subsequently, production plans, which then required formal approval from central administration on a film-by-film basis. To reach this level of assessment, four stages of formal internal review and screenplay-redrafting were required.⁹³ After release into production, TOs would become executive producers, monitoring the conduct of on-going shoots through written reports and

screenings of rushes, before finally convening their own collegial bodies to assess completed films and approve their onward submission for eventual release.

These decision-making responsibilities would reside with senior cineastes and administrators with responsibility for artistic supervision and production-management respectively. *Prikaz 949* named appointments to the position of artistic director [*Khudruk*], while the TO Production-Manager [*direktor tvorcheskogo ob"edineniia*] would be chosen once its artistic roster had been established. Two fundamental qualifications defined a *Khudruk*: longstanding experience of *acclaimed* film-direction at the studio and an active filmmaking career there. A *Khudruk* effectively staked his seniority, professional reputation, and political reliability on his TO's output (these were always men, without exception, at Lenfil'm as elsewhere.). The position was also emblematic: a *Khudruk* was the 'public face' of a TO beyond the studio, representing it before multiple levels of the Party-state apparatus and in the press. Curiously, the professional responsibilities of *Khudruki* were not outlined in *Prikaz 949*, but in an earlier Resolution [*Postanovlenie*], issued by the USSR Ministry of Culture (not that of the RSFSR), on 7 September 1961: 'On the Artistic Directors of Film-studios, Creative Units, and Individual Films'.⁹⁴ This suggests that the central authorities were using the reorganization at Lenfil'm to revise their general specifications for *Khudruki*, which were already established at Mosfil'm, but not elsewhere. Like the expansion of reforms, this timing reflected a rapidly changing relationship between the Party-state apparatus and Soviet studios.

Since 1957, the organizing committee [*orgkomitet*] of the officially sanctioned but as-yet-unfounded Union of Film-workers [*Soiuz rabotnikov kino*, SRK] had become – through its Mosfil'm power-base – a lobbying standard-bearer for the creation of TOs at other major feature-film studios. This was to begin with Lenfil'm, Gor'kii Studio and Dovzhenko Studio, before the

assessment of this model's suitability for smaller, 'republican' studios. However, the infrastructural and financial limitations of republican studios – wholly dependent on Moscow for subsidy – meant that, where working TOs could not be supported, these studios were permitted to appoint *Khudruki* to supervise individual productions on a one-off basis.⁹⁵

Another reason for these revisions was intensifying official criticism of Mosfil'm management, which established TOs in 1959 and was, by 1961, exclusively submitting films made within this model. During the transition, ministerial overseers were concerned by the unprecedented artistic and executive autonomy of these units. Ideological and budgetary discipline was understandably paramount, but anxiety about generational change and the declining activity of older 'masters', with whom the authorities were used to doing business, fuelled their complaints. Six days after Kiselev's appointment at Lenfil'm in May 1961, a USSR Ministry of Culture *Prikaz* was addressed to Mosfil'm, accusing its management of inadequate supervision of the studio's artistic cohort. It complained that 'leading masters' directed only nine of 50 Mosfil'm releases in 1959-1960.⁹⁶ *Khudruki* whose careers had markedly faded, such as Grigorii Aleksandrov and Sergei Iutkevich, were singled out for insufficiently guiding the work of young film-directors, cinematographers and set-designers.⁹⁷ This attack contextualizes a clause in the 7 September 1961 *Postanovlenie*, which stated that *Khudruki* must direct at least one full-length feature every three years. If absent for more than three months due to shooting commitments, studio-management could delegate *Khudruk* responsibilities to any 'higher' [*vysshii*] or 'first-class' film-director on the studio payroll.⁹⁸ These measures represented a bureaucratic counter-strategy to reassert control over the artistic elite of Mosfil'm, whose executive was permanently bound into close political manoeuvring with the central apparatus of Soviet power.

The authorities' appointment of a new Lenfil'm studio-director in May 1961 was meant to ensure that TOs would be in place before the studio's 1962 thematic plan entered production. The *Postanovlenie* of 7 September 1961 was thus circulated to all Soviet studios in time for the requisite appointments to be made at Lenfil'm before the year's end. This *Postanovlenie* distinguished itself from *Prikaz 949* by immediately foregrounding the ideological accountability of *Khudruki*, demanding a 'high level of ideological commitment in the political orientation' of a TO's collegial body, its *Khudsovet*].⁹⁹ Hence the secondary title it bestowed on *Khudruki*: 'Chairmen of the Artistic Councils of Creative Units' [*Predsedatelia Khudozhestvennykh sovetov tvorcheskikh ob"edinenii*]. *Khudruki* were held officially accountable for the ideological compliance and artistic level of all films that TOs produced, on an equal footing with the studio-director.¹⁰⁰ The *Postanovlenie* also stressed 'the full extent' of *Khudruk* accountability for these criteria alongside the actual filmmaker. Chairmanship of the *Khudsovet* demanded real political dexterity: this role required participation in a film's submission for release at all administrative levels, from the TO *Khudsovet* and studio-executive through – until 1963 – to the cinema-divisions of the RSFSR and USSR Ministries of Culture.¹⁰¹

The *Khudsovet* was both a collegial cohort and the name given to its regular meetings. Although this format was replicated at studio-level by a 'main' or '*bol'shoi Khudsovet kinostudii*', we must distinguish between their functions. Golovskoi has described the TO *Khudsovet* as a 'practical workshop' for ongoing productions, and the studio-level *Khudsovet* as a 'toothless, ceremonial body' able only to rubber-stamp completed films for onward submission.¹⁰² While this contrast assists entry-level orientation around a Soviet studio's executive hierarchies, in reality the interaction between TO-cohorts and studio-management was invariably more complex than this basic opposition maintains, especially concerning repertory policies and political troubleshooting. Unquestionably, however, the establishment of TOs threw the executive credibility of the studio-

level *Khudsovet* into problematically sharp relief at Lenfil'm. Its recurrent crises of seeming redundancy demand evaluation throughout the chronology of this study. It can be argued that *Khudsovet* were merely window-dressing for the pseudo-democracy of late-Soviet institutions. This position is sometimes advanced retrospectively by cineastes with post-Soviet ideological interests in presenting a solid binary between artistic freedom and institutional constraints, as does Igor' Maslennikov, the veteran Lenfil'm filmmaker and one-time CPSU-branch secretary.¹⁰³ Such dismissals of 'hollow' and 'performative' contributions from *Khudsovet* participants are overwhelmingly made without subjecting the language or conventions of *Khudsovet* to any contextual or interpretative discussion. In reality, the relevance of studio-level *Khudsovet* was more evident in its 'soft' function as a forum for political manoeuvring, than its formal authority.

More so than the 'hands-on' TO *Khudsovet*, studio-level *Khudsovet* discussions *did* frequently involve performative interventions 'for the official transcript' [*dlia stenogrammy*]. However, these were highly strategic moments in the defense of films to be submitted for release, especially for controversial productions. Their transcripts reveal layers of critical-reflexive discourse on the conventions that defined late-Soviet cinema-production. Their enduring worth for analysis is not simply to interpret conformity to official expectations or diversions into 'between-the-lines' resistance. *Khudsovet* conduct also had a 'self-ethnographizing' relationship to production: this was how late-Soviet cineastes conceptualized their praxis and (re)presented it to themselves and their peers, as a cohort, both spontaneously *and* in coded response to their challenging political conditions of existence.

Prikaz 949 details how the TO *direktor* (unit production-manager) was also executively accountable to studio-management for budgetary management and the supervision of each TO's film-production managers (*direktora kartiny*), assigned to manage individual films after their release

into shooting. According to Gukasian, a typical *direktor* was ‘educated but not always cultured’, specializing only in organizational affairs.¹⁰⁴ Unlike *redaktory*, *direktora* had no dedicated higher-educational route into cinema, and were not necessarily predisposed to appreciate the creative process of filmmaking. Nonetheless, the industrial specificities and synthetic intersections of production required that *direktora* be skilled negotiators, dexterous administrators, and firm diplomats. Their professional fates were ultimately anchored to the budgetary, scheduling and ideological compliance of films submitted for release by their TO. Accountable for the management of ‘state funds’, *direktora* were highly vulnerable to legal prosecution in the event of a production collapsing or being forcibly shut down by any higher office. In these respects, TO administrations were formed by thoroughly Soviet professional codes, political obligations, and institutional hierarchies.

Commission and Collaboration: TOs and Executive Production

The *Polozhenie* attached to *Prikaz* 949 details its most significant delegation, after that of actually commissioning screenplays: ‘the collegial development of viable creative plans for the unit and for each film-director in particular’.¹⁰⁵ This required TOs to form unit-specific repertory policies around filmmaker-focused proposals. To this end, an outward-facing instruction to ‘strengthen ties with writers/screenwriters / composers/actors’ encouraged professional diversity among TO cineastes, and hence, of its *Khudsovet*.¹⁰⁶ The inclusion of cultural professionals from beyond the filmmaking milieu in the *permanent* rosters of TOs, whether as consultants, editors-in-chief or *redaktory*, was an enduring innovation. Since the mid-1950s, the changing political climate had already facilitated greater involvement of literary and artistic consultants on individual productions. The 1961 reorganization institutionalized these collaborations within a new model, which assured hitherto unimaginable professional continuity between projects. These were the

conditions for the emergence of institutional auteurism as a reality of late-Soviet production. By forming a consistent body of repertory strategists, a TO could begin to conceive of itself as the *sostav avtorov* that Gukasian describes as the basis for developing a unit-specific artistic identity.

Although a limit of fifteen sitting members was imposed for any given TO *Khudsovet* meeting at Lenfil'm, the requisite professional capacities were framed generously ('film-directors, camera-operators, actors, film-dramatists, composers, and so on') and without insistence that attendees be either permanent staff of that TO, or even drawn from cinema-production.¹⁰⁷ This provided ample room to co-opt consultants and *redaktory* on the *Khudsovet*. Its mandated functions were:

- a) Preparation of proposals for the film-studio's thematic-planning board;
- b) Review and critical analysis of literary screenplays that have been prepared for the unit's film-directors;
- c) Recommendation of candidates for the direction of films;
- d) Review of directorial screenplays;
- e) Review of set-design sketches, costumes and other on-set props;
- f) Review of candidacy for actors;
- g) Systematic screening and assessment of working-material shot for films of the unit, with a quality-rating;
- h) The screening of the completed motion-picture film, its assessment, the preparation of a summary report with a recommendation for the pay-group for the motion-picture film and also an approval for the distribution of the full sum of the

performance-fee [*postanovochnoe voznagrazhdenie*] between the actors performing the leading roles.¹⁰⁸

This arch of *Khudsovet* activities must be read on a scale of relinquishing executive control. With the release of a screenplay into production, the collective supervisory authority of the *Khudsovet* lessened. Direct supervision became the task of the *direktor kartiny* for production-management, and the film's *redaktor* – operating under the guidance of the TO's influential editor-in-chief – for artistic and ideological supervision. Once in post-production, or when faced with extraordinary complications, the *Khudsovet* reconvened to steer the production towards a final cut, before a final *Khudsovet* assessed the completed film. This meeting also reflected upon the TO's performance and conduct throughout development and production. In practice, a Lenfil'm TO's conclusory representations on a film's pay-group category were more like strategic petitions than recommendations with meaningful institutional weight. Once submitted by the TO and prospectively recommended at studio-level, the final allocation of a 'category', which determined the remuneration of its producers and the scale of its domestic distribution, was – until 1963 – the exclusive entitlement of the USSR Ministry of Culture. Thereafter, Goskino inherited this crucial controlling mechanism along with its assumption of administrative power, as the institutional landscape of late-Soviet cinema began to take industry-wide shape.

The reorganization of Lenfil'm occurred squarely in the middle of this thoroughgoing industrial overhaul. Multiple reformist agendas had developed gradually and bred political tension between cineastes, administrators and political leaders. TOs were among their earliest innovations, and Lenfil'm doubtlessly benefitted from the earlier establishment of this system at Mosfil'm, the largest Soviet studio. For Mariia Kosinova, the acquisition of decentralizing powers at Mosfil'm catalyzed filmmaker-led reforms at USSR-level.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the establishment of Mosfil'm TOs

afforded an unprecedented degree of executive power to leading studio-level cineastes. As such, their formation contextualizes the political negotiations that made possible the expansion of this model to Lenfil'm.

The Louis B. Mayer of Moscow: Ivan Pyr'ev and Mosfil'm Reforms

The physical reconstruction of Mosfil'm was the biggest infrastructural project ever mounted in Soviet cinema, and the reorganization of production that followed was arguably the most ambitious. Between 1954 and 1961, Mosfil'm was rationalized and diversified by the creation of TOs, which were formalized in 1959, building on high-profile artistic successes under the directorship of Ivan Pyr'ev (1954-57).¹¹⁰ These reforms emerged from *within* the filmmaking milieu, responding both to currents of socio-political change and the desperately unproductive state of film-studios.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, the Party leadership unceremoniously dismantled the Ministry of Cinema. A Cinema and Theatre Division at the CPSU CC Culture Department monitored ideological compliance and the implementation of CC directives at studios, while central administration was turned over to a newly expanded Ministry of Culture. There, two main departments [*Glavnye upravleniia*] were created: one for supervising studio-level production-management, and another for film-distribution [*prokat*] and exhibition facilities [*kinofikatsiia*]. By 1956, in communiqués from Mosfil'm to the CC, the ever-acerbic Pyr'ev was openly decrying this arrangement as uncoordinated, bureaucratically territorial, and – especially in *prokat* – fundamentally unfit for purpose.¹¹¹

Pyr'ev's reputation for organizational nous and civic commitment had survived his removal from *Iskusstvo kino* (as editor-in-chief) in 1948.¹¹² Upon his appointment at Mosfil'm on 15 October 1954, output languished, filmmaking cadres were severely depleted and a new generation of cineastes had not emerged at any Soviet studio.¹¹³ A televisual project edited by Fomin claims that Pyr'ev and Mikhail Romm – another key Mosfil'm filmmaker and pedagogue – lobbied for reforms during an audience with the CC before the Nineteenth (Stalin's final) Party Congress in October 1952, the result of which was a commitment, in its resolutions, to increase the quantity of films being released.¹¹⁴ Subsequent reformist proposals were wrought from negotiations between leading filmmakers, senior mandarins, career-bureaucrats, and convinced ideologues of different political complexions, all of whom operated in perpetual adaptation to the factionalism and patron-client ascendancy that the *nomenklatura* system relied upon for its appointments and dismissals.

In the first year of Pyr'ev's directorship, the physical reconstruction of Mosfil'm entailed a 31% increase of serviceable studio-set space, more than doubling its energy-generating facilities and employing 935 new technical workers.¹¹⁵ Concomitantly, the Ministry of Culture insisted upon 'serious restructuring [*perestroika*] of working practices' to prepare for a massive upsurge in studio-production: a *Prikaz* dated 2 September 1955 projected that fulfillment of the centrally approved production plan for 1956 would require output to increase by almost 50% compared to 1955, factually doubling 1954 figures.¹¹⁶ The planned completion of 24 feature-films in 1957 and the 35-40 productions projected for 1958 (after further expansion of facilities) meant that the burden of artistic and executive supervision on Mosfil'm's director and its lone, studio-level *Khudsovet* had become completely unsustainable, even for current levels of productivity. In early 1956, Pyr'ev presented USSR Minister of Culture Nikolai Mikhailov (himself only in office since March 1955) with demands for reform. The *Polozhenie* attached to Pyr'ev's letter initiated the

process that led to the creation of Mosfil'm TOs, which established the model subsequently adopted at Lenfil'm:

It suffices to point out, on the basis of the current situation with the indicated quantity [25-30] of pictures in production, that the *Khudozhestvennyi Sovet* would have to convene no fewer than 80 meetings in a year, i.e. almost two a week. If the directorship is to regularly view working footage from film-crews, then almost every day it will have to put aside no less than 50% of its schedule for this.¹¹⁷

Here, Pyr'ev still avoided suggesting that commissioning responsibilities be delegated to cineastes. Instead, the proposal is pitched – rather politically – as an executive rationalization:

We have become convinced that the only suitable kind of new organization for production will be the creation of 4-5 independent creative-production units [*Proizvodstvenno-tvorcheskikh ob"edinenii*] within the system of our studio. These units (PTO), created on an entirely voluntary basis, should bring together workers from the leading creative professions and the organizers of production in one united, permanently operational collective, capable in many regards of independently solving both the artistic-creative and organizational-industrial issues of films made within a PTO-system.¹¹⁸

This proposal quickly became embroiled in antagonism between Mosfil'm and the Ministry.

According to Baskakov, Pyr'ev and Mikhailov had a strained relationship, an assertion confirmed

by archival documents covering their correspondence and several petitions – signed by Pyr'ev and leading Mosfil'm cineastes – that were addressed over Mikhailov's head to CPSU CC secretaries.¹¹⁹ From 1957, interaction between elite filmmakers and the central apparatus was partially mediated by the SRK *orgkomitet*. Its preparations to become a fully-fledged union for artistic cinema-professionals culminated only in 1965 with the foundational SK Congress.

Several acknowledgements are necessary in order to make sense of this political tableau. The first is that the momentum of the SRK *orgkomitet* was intrinsically bound to Mosfil'm's drive for the creation of TOs. Although Pyr'ev resigned the Mosfil'm directorship in December 1957, he remained active as a filmmaker and lead-chairman of the *orgkomitet*, where Romm was also prominent.¹²⁰ The *orgkomitet* became a focus for advocating reorganization at other studios and for greater studio-level artistic autonomy everywhere, while also drafting legislation to reform *prokat* and *kinofikatsiia*. In October 1958, a report signed by Pyr'ev, Romm and Iutkevich railed forcefully against officialdom's interference in Mosfil'm screenplay-development:

[...] despite the Party and government endowing film-studios and republican cinema-organizations with much-vaunted independence, film-studios are making insufficient use of their rights due to petty-minded micromanagement and constant meddling by workers from the central cinema-apparatus in all creative-production affairs. The fact that this meddling is not always open and not always official only makes matters worse, since instead of openly rejecting a screenplay, which requires precise phrasing, doubts towards it are expressed without any requirement for precise phrasing, and a studio will not, all the same, decide to release such a 'dubious' screenplay into production, since it

will fear subsequent complications. As such, on paper they have the right to independent release, but in actual fact – they are bound hand-and-foot. There then begins an editorial redrafting process for screenplays, during which the artistic, individual presence of the screenplay’s author and the film-director are completely ignored.¹²¹

For an official report produced by a committee under the supervision of a CC division, this was a bold reproach. It called for enhanced studio-level commissioning which would better reflect the artistic identities of cineastes and diversify repertory programmes. It concluded: ‘the very strongest studios, such as Mosfil’*m* for example, should obviously be divided into several cinema-units [*kinoob’edineniia*], workshops or smaller film-studios’.¹²² This report also held the ministerial apparatus responsible for obstructing infrastructural renewal across the industry. The physical reconstruction of Mosfil’*m* remained incomplete and republican studios urgently required improved facilities.¹²³

As early as May 1956, Pyr’ev and Romm were among the signatories of a collective letter that lambasted the Ministry of Culture’s inability to manage cinema as ‘not just an art, but a complex branch of industry’.¹²⁴ Two years later, an emboldened SRK *orgkomitet* was the key platform for Mosfil’*m* reorganization, after two highly productive shooting-cycles and a raised bar for artistic quality. This intensifying political powerplay was also bound up in Khrushchev’s consolidation of reform-minded leadership in the CC secretariat and Moscow CPSU organizations. In 1960, the widely criticized Mikhailov was removed and replaced by Ekaterina Furtseva, until then a CC secretary, Politburo member, and powerful Moscow leader, then on the broadly moderate flank of the CPSU apparatus, where what might be termed a ‘liberal’ political outlook can be understood not as advocacy for progressive ideological softening, but rather, a commitment to

rationality and anti-dogmatic rhetoric, as well as staunch opposition to tolerance of anti-Semitism within its departments. Furtseva was charged with downsizing the Ministry of Culture. Her strong working relationship with Pyr'ev dated from 1954, when he was appointed director of Mosfil'm and she became Moscow Obkom First Secretary. One of Mikhailov's last acts was to appoint his Deputy Minister, Vladimir Surin, to the Mosfil'm directorship, with Pyr'ev now pursuing 'full' union-status for the SRK. From the perspective of the *nomenklatura*, Surin's career-move was an effective demotion. However, it afforded him a second chance to achieve real prominence in Soviet cultural production by removing him from the state-ministerial apparatus, in which he had previously been demoted and ostracized under Stalin.¹²⁵

Mosfil'm TOs materialized, following Surin's arrival, in 1959: Pyr'ev, Romm and Aleksandrov were their inaugural *Khudruki*.¹²⁶ These new units needed to develop collegial practices for executive work, relying upon the political capital of the studio's 'masters' to facilitate and defend the reforms. As Belodubrovskaya observes for the pre-war era, and Gukasian confirms for the first late-Soviet decades, these elite cineastes occupied a privileged position in circles of power as artists of global stature and devoted institutional custodians of Soviet filmmaking.¹²⁷ By the late-1950s, the cultural legacy of their pioneering work had afforded them a 'revolutionary residue' from the very formation of Soviet cinema. Post-Stalin, this proved exceptionally valuable to the political cause of its artistic renewal.

Mosfil'm Reforms: Some Conclusions on Immediate Consequences

Mosfil'm TOs were operational *before* the restructuring of the USSR Ministry of Culture. Given the formal verticality of Soviet administration, this seems incongruent, unless we approach these respective developments as the result of two distinct but interlocking institutional processes. The

early-1956 communiqués referenced above contradict Baskakov's assertion that TOs appeared 'as soon as Pyr'ev became director of Mosfil'm' (i.e. 1954).¹²⁸ Is this inconsistency down to Baskakov's lack of familiarity with Pyr'ev's early tenure? This seems plausible, given that Baskakov's career in central administration did not begin until 1956, when he headed the CC Culture Department's Cinema and Theatre Division. Or is it rather that unsanctioned and outwardly undiscerned reorganization began in earnest with Pyr'ev's directorship, making the eventual establishment of this system the formal legitimization of an organically rolled-out structure? A satisfactory answer requires sustained research into the institutional history of Mosfil'm, which remains to be conducted. Nonetheless, the importance of Mosfil'm reorganization to cinema's transition away from the Ministry of Culture indicates the apparent political stakes in obscuring the studio-specific origins of these reforms.

In February 1963, just after the formal inauguration of Goskino, Pyr'ev addressed the SRK *orgkomitet* presidium with a wide-ranging, impassioned, highly critical, and eventually ranting speech on the state of Soviet cinema.¹²⁹ Pyr'ev summarized the achievements of the *orgkomitet*, asserting that, 'on the initiative of the union, creative units were formed at a selection of the biggest film-studios'.¹³⁰ This situates the origins of the TO-system in the period after his resignation as Mosfil'm director. Faced with the new centralized powerbase of Goskino, Pyr'ev assumed retrospective ownership of these reforms on behalf of the SRK. By attributing the reorganization of studios to the SRK rather than referring at all to his tenure at Mosfil'm, Pyr'ev was mounting a high-level political defence of the prospective union's right to exist. The amalgamation of all existing creative unions, and the liquidation of the SRK, would be narrowly averted in March 1963, when Khrushchev abruptly reneged on a Politburo decision to these effects, during one of four notorious 'meetings' between CPSU leaders and representatives of the 'artistic intelligentsia' over a turbulent few months.¹³¹

Given that Lenfil'm TOs appeared in late-1961 – a full two years after Mosfil'm and one-and-a-half years before the foundation of Goskino – it matters to recognize the continuous professional precarity described above as the real political backdrop to reforms that stalled, fragmented, and became perpetually vulnerable to interference, subversion, or outright cancellation. TOs were not programmatically imposed from above, but resulted from complex inter-institutional negotiations of power. Mosfil'm TOs were just one of this studio's attempts to shape industry-wide reorganization from within. In 1957, it inaugurated the two-year Mosfil'm Film-directing Courses.¹³² This experimental programme preceded the all-union Higher Screenwriting Courses (1960), which took definitive shape as the elite Higher Two-year Courses for Screenwriters and Directors [*Vysshie dvukhgodochnye kursy stsenaristov i rezhisserov*, VKSR] in 1964.¹³³

In 1965, backed by the economic reforms of Politburo member Aleksei Kosygin, the Experimental Creative Film-Studio [*Ekspperimental'naia tvorcheskaia kinostudiia*, ETK], was founded as a mobile production-enterprise without its own technological facilities (from 1968 until closure by Goskino in 1976, this was, however, formally based at Mosfil'm.). The ETK resulted directly from the professional and political rise of Grigorii Chukhrai, its *Khudruk* and joint executive producer alongside Vladimir Pozner, a returning *émigré* administrator with Hollywood experience. The ETK was a bold and unprecedented Soviet experiment in economically autonomous production-management. It trialed financial linkage between a film's box-office performance and funding-reinvestment principles, introducing film-by-film contractual relationships with technological departments at 'traditional' studios, and raising remuneration for filmmakers in the event of popular success. The ETK 'experiment' was financial and repertory, but not inherently artistic: Chukhrai promoted innovation with narratively strong genre-cinema that aspired to maximize audience-appeal.¹³⁴ The final chapter of this thesis considers this

experiment when addressing 1980s reformist proposals to revisit *khozraschet* [*khoziaistvennyi raschet*], the model of budgetary self-sufficiency sanctioned under Kosygin. The eventual amalgamation of the ETK into Mosfil'm as a 'standard' TO suspended these reformist initiatives until perestroika.

While Pyr'ev catalyzed Mosfil'm rationalization in the mid-1950s, Lenfil'm professionals initiated primarily *artistic* regeneration within existing structures. Their renewals were not enabled by political influence over the development of new production infrastructure, but rather were shaped by their demands for the promotion of repertory innovation by establishing *sostavy avtorov* for like-minded cineastes. This institutional auteurism, underemphasized in early Mosfil'm TO rhetoric, resonated with the historical and artistic specificity of Lenfil'm. Its 'continuity discourse' became central to new critical-reflexive practices at the studio as the TO-era approached.

Lenfil'm From Professional Renewal to Continuity Discourse

The year 1958 proved a watershed for Lenfil'm. Prominent academics and authors arrived, as editors and literary consultants, from the Leningrad branch of the Writers' Union and research institutes like Pushkin House. The SRK *orgkomitet* was pushing for 'root-and-branch reorganization of the whole system of writers in cinema' to 'guarantee highly qualified consultation and editing in screenplay departments, attract strong writers to this work, [and] broaden development of screenwriting workshops for young writers'.¹³⁵ Gukasian, who also became a Lenfil'm *redaktor* in 1958, recalls the arrival of Georgii Makogonenko, a specialist in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russian literature, and the third husband of the iconic Leningrad poet and sometime screenwriter, Ol'ga Berggol'ts. Georgii Berdnikov, a Chekhov

scholar, followed shortly afterwards.¹³⁶ Lenfil'm's renewed editorial board shifted its practices towards literary collaboration and developmental workshops before any structural reorganization of production had been implemented. This prepared the ground for the TOs: 'cinema as art' and director-focused commissioning once again became key principles of its repertory agenda.

The studio was also appraising its rich history. Nina Gornitskaia and Dmitrii Ivaneev, the editors of a four-volume history of pre-war Lenfil'm published between 1968 and 1975, referred in 2003 to the late-1950s as a moment when 'leading studio-masters began to talk more and more often about the need to gather material on studio-history, about films that were made, about the artistic work of those practicing today, and those who created the nation's cinema in the 1920s'.¹³⁷ A new office was created at Lenfil'm to direct the writing of this reflexive, self-ethnographizing series. For its luminaries, 'accountability before history' defined Lenfil'm 'continuity discourse' as a contemporary position.¹³⁸

The 'masters' were the essential link in this historical chain. Several of pre-war Lenfil'm's biggest names – Fridrikh Ermler, Grigorii Kozintsev, and Iosif Kheifits – reemerged artistically from the late-Stalin-era morass, albeit with significant losses. When Leonid Trauberg was hounded from Lenfil'm and Leningrad by fabricated vilifications during the repressive campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitans' in 1951, Kozintsev lost his longstanding FEKS collaborator to Moscow, where eventual rehabilitation came via a senior tutorial role on the VKSR.¹³⁹ Kozintsev's revival began with an adaptation of *Don Quixote* (1957) from a Evgenii Shvarts play, the first in his late-career turn towards literary classics that culminated with *Hamlet* (1964) and *King Lear* (1970), thus marking a retreat from late-Soviet contemporaneity that only his seniority and preeminence made permissible. Kozintsev occupied an iconic position at Lenfil'm and was an obvious choice for inaugural *Khudruk* of the First TO in 1961.¹⁴⁰ Gukasian describes his appearances at the studio-

level *Khudsovet* as a significant draw for studio-professionals.¹⁴¹ In the 1960s, Kozintsev's lengthy analytical discourses habitually opened any meeting that he attended, this 'right of first reply' reflecting the authority of experience and displaying unmistakable erudition, if often also dissatisfaction with apparent cultural degradation in late-Soviet society, and among cineastes.

Kheifits – born, like Kozintsev, in 1905 – was also forced into a 'solo' career after the departure of his constant codirector, Aleksandr Zarkhi, in 1950. Kheifits reemerged artistically in 1954 to direct three sensitively lyrical films on contemporary social themes and cement an influential position at Lenfil'm by the late-1950s.¹⁴² Thereafter, Kheifits deputized under Kozintsev in the First TO, a unit whose artistic identity would be inextricable from Kheifits' own until the collapse of the USSR. In 1996, Sergei Dobrotvorskii identified Kheifits as the key figure in the history of late-Soviet Lenfil'm, beginning his 'mature period' with an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Dama s sobachkoi/Lady with a Lapdog* (1960).¹⁴³ This film marked a major shift for Lenfil'm: its production 'changed the atmosphere at the studio', according to Gukasian.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, its aesthetic and production-history fit closely with the 'continuity' values of the studio's emergent historiography. As the next chapter demonstrates, *Dama* projected familiar artistic and cultural values onto a new and politically uncertain era.

The fourth edition of *Iskusstvo kino* from 1968 commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Lenfil'm. The previous ten years had been filled with political tumult and represented its most artistically heterogeneous period yet. However, its contents were heavily skewed towards the historiography of pre-war Lenfil'm. Some excerpts from TO-era transcripts do feature – a truncated *Khudsovet* discussion of the screenplay for *Dama* is proudly prominent – but Trauberg and Lutkevich wrote the most significant articles. Both veterans had politically complicated biographies but had long

been Moscow-based and maintained no active connections to ‘working’ Lenfil’ m. Nonetheless, their contributions were imbued with contemporary political significance.

Trauberg’s piece, ‘Dvadtsatye gody’ (‘The 1920s’), began in displaced reference to January 1935, when the Order of Lenin was conferred upon Lenfil’ m, and an All-union Film-worker’s Conference made socialist realism the official doctrine of Soviet cinema. Trauberg alluded provocatively to this notorious event, binding it implicitly to the ignominy of his own Stalin-era persecution:

Did those fiercely applauding people understand that, along with five individual studio-workers, for the first time in Soviet art, the Order of Lenin had been awarded to an entire collective?!

Maybe they understood. Or maybe not. A lack of understanding – someone’s, let’s not clarify just whose – is something that the subsequent history of the studio on Kirovskii prospekt has spoken about.¹⁴⁵

This cryptic assessment fits remarkably with the political situation in 1968. Baskakov’s testimony suggests that Trauberg may have been aware of a CC-level decision not to officially commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Lenfil’ m (Baskakov is, however, careful not to implicate Goskino):

In 1968, the Cinema-committee [Goskino] proposed Lenfil’ m studio for the award of an order to honour its fiftieth anniversary. The question was deliberated at the CC secretariat, M.A. Suslov chaired.

Obviously, the [CC] Culture Department had decided unfavourably, and at the meeting it was said that Lenfil'm had its merits before the war, but that now there was no reason to award it anything. When actually, the studio was on the rise... After this case, it became definitively clear that the highest 'authorities' were dissatisfied with cinema. It was then that the definitive and wholesale fine-tuning of the [August 1972 CC] *Postanovlenie* on cinema affairs began.¹⁴⁶

In this context, there was a pressing need to channel the prestige of 1930s Lenfil'm into a contemporary position, faced with an increasingly reactionary political apparatus following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Thereafter, the tone of these commemorations would be unthinkable, even in *Iskusstvo kino*. Its editor, Liudmila Pogoževa, was replaced in early 1969 by the mercurial Evgenii Surkov, an establishment 'fixer' and editor-in-chief at Goskino's screenplay-editorial board [*Glavnaiia stsenarno-redaktsionnaia kollegiia*, GSRK] in 1966-1968.¹⁴⁷

As with Trauberg, the politics of rehabilitation is an insistent theme for Iutkevich. This surfaces in a deeply personal tribute to Adrian Piotrovskii, Lenfil'm artistic director from 1928 until 1937, when he was arrested and executed during Stalin's Terror. Iutkevich insisted that 'in any film made at this studio, there is a vestige of his talent', claiming for Piotrovskii a posthumous legacy as a fountainhead of production-management innovation.¹⁴⁸ As a poet, playwright, translator of ancient classics, and energetic coordinator of pre-war Leningrad's cultural life, Piotrovskii loomed large at 1960s Lenfil'm as an intellectual ideal and professional prototype. Reflecting on Piotrovskii's innovations, Iutkevich describes an organic genealogy for TOs at 1930s Lenfil'm:

From the very beginning, Lenfil'm differed from all other film-production centres in that it united, within its walls, artistic cells that bonded with one another. This meant not only consistent film-crews, but a certain circle of like-minded people [*krug edinomyshlennikov*], at first intuitively and unconsciously, and then in the '30s, in theory and practice, underpinning a certain aesthetical platform [...].

The distinguishing feature of these debates, as of the studio's *Khudozhestvennyi Sovet* meetings in those years, was an insistence on the most exacting standards, from oneself, from one another, from art. It would be naïve to describe the atmosphere at Lenfil'm in those years idyllically... This compelled us to be even more exacting of ourselves. As such, frequent *Khudozhestvennyi Sovet* meetings (incidentally, unelected in those days, but where attendance was considered one's obligation among all the collective's leading creative workers), where film-material was routinely screened and assessed, became a kind of high tribunal: the fates of artists were determined here.¹⁴⁹

While the impact of ideological orthodoxy and Stalinist repression was only allusively suggested here, Iutkevich remained adamant that Lenfil'm production-management revolved around artistic *edinomyshlenniki*. This key term in the development of TO-era discourse resonates in Iutkevich's description of 1930s 'workshops', where shared repertory interests informed aesthetical experimentation. Expanding, Iutkevich emphasized the very qualities that Dobrotvorskii's review of Lenfil'm history praised in *Dama*, encapsulating its continuity discourse:

[We]... became convinced of the need for the onward evolution of cinema-language, [and] the stylistic developments that had already distinguished early Lenfil'm films. Indeed, lyrical, domestic [*kamernye*], and psychological intonations were always more unmistakably resonant in them, than the event-driven heroics that were appropriate to the epic dimensions of that era's masterpieces.¹⁵⁰

However subjective, Iutkevich's delicate euphemisms do not obscure his firm insinuation: Lenfil'm did not resemble other Soviet studios, even when bound by the same political and aesthetical codes. These legacies of self-organization and artistic specificity animated professional debates at Lenfil'm in 1958-1968, when new repertory strategies emerged from its structural reorganization.

Chapter One

Lenfil'm Production in Transition through Two Sequence-Analyses

On 3 May 1961, the replacement of Georgii Nikolaev (studio-director since only January 1957) with Il'ia Kiselev was the authorities' response to alleged mismanagement of production and finances in the period between the studio's editorial renewal and its establishment of TOs (1958-1961).¹⁵¹ That month, RSFSR Minister of Culture Popov ordered an investigation to promote 'higher material interest of filmmakers and film-studios in the creation of artistically and ideologically high-quality films and in the organizational improvement of film-production'. Kiselev was thenceforth authorized to approve budgets for all future Lenfil'm productions that would contribute to the fulfillment of the studio's annual thematic plan.¹⁵² The implications of this directive for *ongoing* productions only became apparent with another RSFSR ministerial *Prikaz*, 'On the Improvement of the Work of Lenfil'm Film-studio on the Preparation and Grading of Screenplays and the Deployment of Creative and Administrative cadres' (28 June 1961).

According to time-honoured Soviet convention, faint praise of the studio's recent notable achievements (including *Dama s sobachkoi*) was followed by harsh criticism of the outgoing administration. It stood accused of releasing 'weak' (unnamed) projects into production and demonstrating poor accountability for the paucity of viable literary screenplays assessed by the studio *Khudsovet* and screenplay-department.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the Ministry criticized studio-management's failure to fulfill repeated recommendations that Lenfil'm TOs be formed sooner.¹⁵⁴ Three instructions reveal the pressure under which Kiselev's directorship was immediately placed: to unconditionally fulfil the 1961 thematic plan; to accelerate the formation

of Lenfil'm TOs; and to launch two inquiries, one investigating recent budgetary 'recklessness', and another into a spate of artistically 'weak' releases.¹⁵⁵

This appraisal made no reference to ongoing Lenfil'm productions, a likely consequence of the serious budgetary and administrative crisis surrounding *Chelovek-amfibiia/Amphibian Man*, dir. by Gennadii Kazanskii/Vladimir Chebotarev (1961), resulting in the dismissal of the *direktor kartiny* and Chebotarev. Its logistically complex and technically ambitious location-shoot had exposed a disconnect between executive production-management and artistic cohorts at Lenfil'm, vindicating the Ministry's removal of Nikolaev shortly before the scandal erupted. Kiselev's appointment landed amid this production-crisis, which threatened the fulfillment of the 1961 thematic plan. Accordingly, this chapter considers *Chelovek-amfibiia* alongside *Dama* as key attempts to redefine the studio's repertory identity in the production-cycles immediately preceding the TO-era, whose reorganizations fundamentally altered the commissioning practices and artistic directions of Lenfil'm output.

***Dama* in Context**

The arrival of Georgii Berdnikov to lead the Lenfil'm screenplay-department rekindled Kheifits' long-harboured interest in a screen-adaptation of Chekhov. Kheifits later recalled that Berdnikov – himself a Chekhov scholar and system-loyal academic – proposed *Dama* to him in 1959 (this actually occurred in 1958).¹⁵⁶ Kheifits was the sole author of the screenplay, a highly uncommon position for this period. This commission was also bound to a typically ritualistic 'commemoration-culture': its opening credits celebrate Chekhov's centenary on 28 January 1960, when its premiere took place.¹⁵⁷

Then as subsequently, Chekhov was the most frequently adapted author in Russian and Soviet screen-history.¹⁵⁸ However, Kheifits' *Dama* was purposefully marginalized in the Chekhov commemorations of the Soviet cultural press, the exception being two supportive – if perfunctory – articles, one by *Iskusstvo kino* editor-in-chief Lidiia Pogozheva in *Sovetskaia kul'tura* and another profile in her journal, praising its poetic imagery and skillful deep-frame *mise-en-scène*.¹⁵⁹ Contrastingly, the editorially conservative *Ogonek* derided its psychological restraint, accusing it of insufficient class-criticism towards the petty-bourgeois world of 'unfaithful wives, marriages of convenience, holidaying husbands [and] pretty bribe-takers' which populated the literary journals that published Chekhov's early stories.¹⁶⁰ This struck even Fridrikh Ermler, a true-believing communist among Lenfil'm veterans, as 'excessively harsh'.¹⁶¹ Years after the USSR's collapse, hostile press-coverage of *Dama* still rankled Kheifits.¹⁶² *Dama* travelled to the 1960 Cannes International Festival and won two prizes, but received no mention in an *Ogonek* column celebrating the same category of award for Chukhrai's *Ballada o soldate*.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, in 1964, Ingmar Bergman counted *Dama* among his three favourite contemporary films, and once called it 'a deeply original, noble work'.¹⁶⁴ For Lenfil'm cineastes, the enduring legacy of *Dama* was as a culturally emblematic, morale-boosting production.

In the 1968 *Iskusstvo kino* commemoration of Lenfil'm, a December 1958 *Khudsovet* on Kheifits' directorial screenplay is edited into a three-way conversation between Kheifits, Kozintsev and Aleksandr Ivanov, who became *Khudruk* of the Lenfil'm Second TO. Kozintsev saw a challenge for Kheifits to construct the film-to-be against the grain of its narrative outlines, acknowledging sparseness and a lack of dynamism in the literary source's plot. Describing Chekhov's *Dama* as 'sublime' in the perfection of detail in its forms, Kozintsev considered these merits against the social themes through which 'we usually experience and pick apart a piece of work':

[...] it is not only the writer's thoughts and feelings that are essential, what is also important is the work's associative force, i.e. its capacity to arouse thoughts and feelings. Behind concision stands an enormous world of associations that arise in every reader. Understatement gives the reader potential to be creative. And this is the strength of Chekhovian prose. The form into which the work has been molded is so fine, that it cannot be undone. Above all else, this means laconicism in its picture of life [*lakonichnost' kartiny zhizni*].¹⁶⁵

Kozintsev's remarks are an interesting critique of auteurist signification: could a reader/spectator's *associative* reception ever be anchored to some irreducibly expressive *intention*? The metaphor of a 'laconic picture' intrigues as a possible solution, suggesting an interaction of sound and image that endows one compositional element with the qualities of the other. For Ivanov, the risky anachronism of an excessively 'literary' adaptation stemmed from thematic didacticism in Chekhov's social critique of adultery and bourgeois philistinism. Ivanov suggested that the source-material did not offer Kheifits sufficient scope to mark its dramaturgy with his *own* character-development, asserting that 'it's not *Dama s sobachkoi* that I've seen here, but that life shouldn't be lived this way [*tak zhit' nel'zia*]'.¹⁶⁶ Arguably, this class-focused perspective was not without performative fervour for the *Khudsovet* transcript, particularly where Ivanov commented on Chekhov's depiction of 'a way of life that is shown as genuinely horrifying, where there is no brightness... that turns one's stomach'.¹⁶⁷

In response, Kheifits encouraged the *Khudsovet* to 'recall the whole history of Chekhovian screen-adaptations [...] when we watch Chekhovian pictures, we are convinced that the plot remains, but the thoughts disappear' (the next chapter considers the polemical engagement of a later work

of 1960s Lenfil'm *avtorskoe kino* with Chekhov, in this regard).¹⁶⁸ To develop Chekhovian thought through 'a fitting poetics of cinema', Kheifits outlined episodes from his directorial screenplay.¹⁶⁹ A 'sleepy rhythm' would motivate editing-patterns for scenes on the Yalta esplanade; voiceovers and flashbacks were decisively rejected for risking excessive literariness and logocentrism; and associative *mise-en-scène* would be immediately privileged in a 'vignette for the beginning of the picture [*zastavka kartiny*] – the sea, which tosses a beer-bottle around, a contaminated sea'.¹⁷⁰ This image begins the opening sequence, which commanded Pogoževa's attention in her discussion of the film's aesthetic.¹⁷¹ Kheifits also reflected upon this sequence at length in his memoirs, where its description fits a strikingly similar language of visibility to the *Khudsovet* discussion, and reveals Kheifits' affinity with Kozintsev's position.¹⁷²

Familiar shores: Aesthetic Recognition and *Mise-en-scène* Values in *Dama*

Dama begins with a faint iris fade-in to a stationary shot of a calm shoreline. The tide laps against a rockpool and two empty canoes bob in the middle distance. The camera tilts slowly downwards, accompanied by repetitive string sounds, to frame an empty bottle floating. This shot holds for four seconds before cutting to another four-second stationary shot, which shows a goat with two kids on a pebbled beach in the foreground and the sea stretching to the horizon in the upper half of the frame. The faint strings are joined by subdued woodwinds that gently parody languor.

Next, a stocky holidaymaker (Iurii Medvedev) sits at a café table on an esplanade, dressed in pre-revolutionary summer attire. His face conveys exaggerated boredom as he lazily sprays water from a soda-bottle into a stemmed glass, on a table where a vase, two liqueur glasses and a mallet wine-bottle crowd together, providing multiple visual links to the bottle floating in the rockpool. As this man lowers his gaze, there is a cut to an open doorway onto the esplanade in long-shot,

through which walks Dmitrii Gurov (Aleksei Batalov), whose agency as a protagonist is announced when the camera pans in time with his movement towards the table where the holidaymaker and another man sit. They briefly exchange greetings before Gurov sits down at an adjacent table with a newspaper and is served a drink. The holidaymaker initiates a conversation with Gurov about the intriguing presence of an attractive young woman, who he has seen walking a small white dog along the waterfront, alone. As Gurov smiles faintly, an older man enters the café and joins the other two. He takes a seat and the group joke stiltedly about making the woman's acquaintance, ruing their boredom, until the sound of a yapping bark causes the holidaymaker to say, 'it's her', which prompts the visual disjuncture of a cut to Gurov, unresponsive, in mid-shot.

The three older men turn to look through a window over the holidaymaker's right shoulder. Their gazes follow the figure of Anna Sergeevna (Iia Savvina), who walks laterally across the background of the frame. The music established in the opening shot continues its repetitive strings, leading into sparse flute and clarinet melodies. In the foreground of the next shot, Gurov sits to the right, in profile, turning backwards to look through the open café door that frames Anna and her Pomeranian as she continues her left-to-right walk with a slow, rhythmic poise. As she passes, the strings take on a sentimental air, while the clarinet plays the same parodic notes. Visually, leaves in the clear glass vase on Gurov's table are obscuring all but the upper neck of the dark glass bottle standing behind it. As Anna passes, these leaves blow from a draught that gusts through the open door. Their movement is neatly accompanied deeper in the frame, where Anna's parasol ripples in the sea-breeze.

Finally, the third and last scene in this opening sequence begins with a cut to a stationary shot of the deserted esplanade. Between shots, the axis of Anna's walk has changed unusually: she now

moves on a diagonal along the promenade wall, coming from a bend in the lower right-hand depth of the frame and walking towards the 45-degree intersection of this wall and the bottom left-hand corner of the frame. This intriguing 'change' in Anna's direction perhaps implies the return-leg of a short walk but could also suggest a longer temporal lapse. This second possibility is confirmed when a short tracking close-up of the Pomeranian is followed by a mid-shot profile of the stocky holidaymaker standing on the pathway, having decamped to look out to sea through binoculars. Peering down at the oncoming Pomeranian, the man's nervous-looking gaze rises, before a cut to a carefully proportioned, painterly composition of him, Anna and the dog by an iron fence on the esplanade. A row of lampposts occupies the fore-to-middle ground and low-hanging mist rolls over mountains in the upper frame and background. Anna glides past the man, who briefly follows, but as the woodwinds replicate the sentimental strings from the last scene, he stops. This comically aborted pursuit is reminiscent of a physical gag from silent cinema: the emasculated 'little man' dejectedly shuffles back along the path. Next, a cut closer to the esplanade shows the last man to have earlier entered the café being weighed on some scales with his wife. Distracted by Anna's presence, the man is gently prodded by his wife with a parasol, before the camera lingers on Anna, passing, from behind. A cut then frames a high tracking-shot over her left shoulder as Anna turns, her face half in shadow, raises a gloved hand to her neck, and lightly touches her hair, as if instinctively guarding against the protracted gazing of the middle-aged men, before the sequence fades to black with a faint reverse-iris, inverting the opening shot.

There is a tidy completeness to the composition of this scene-setting, character-exposition and narrative-disruption. It establishes clear hierarchies of protagonist agency and demonstrates a carefully proportioned and pared-down classicism through satisfying pairings and shot-to-shot multiplications of objects, rhythmically even editing and exceptionally restrained camera-movement. The formal precision of this understated vignette on voyeurism and class-relations is

arguably so pronounced as to seem old-fashioned, like the world it depicts. Effectively, there is nothing aesthetical here to suggest that we could not be watching a 1930s film.

The 'feel' of 1930s Lenfil'm is most immediately apparent in the monochromatic tones and anthropomorphic perspectival patterns of the camerawork, credited equally to Andrei Moskvin and Dmitrii Meskhiev but under Moskvin's principal direction.¹⁷³ In a 1965 monograph on Moskvin, Gukasian linked low-saturation and narrow tonal ranges in the visual palette of *Dama* to Moskvin's camerawork on *Odna/Alone*, dir. by Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg (1931), describing the lines of the sea, embankment, sky, and tonal envelopments of Anna's clothing in *Dama* as like a shaded pencil drawing.¹⁷⁴ Visual comparison of these films is also fruitful when considering the opening of *Dama* alongside the 'Leningrad' sequence early in *Odna*, where the young teacher-protagonist (Elena Kuz'mina) wanders alone through Leningrad after receiving orders to relocate to far-eastern Siberia. There are similarities between their diagonal intersections of the frame, across which these lone female protagonists trace their steps between shots; in the shallow, geometrically taut shadows cast by a tall Leningrad building over an open square and of the low granite wall hugging the Yalta esplanade; and in a camera that could be occupying the voyeuristic perspective of a distant, unnoticed onlooker, observing an isolated woman in an implicitly populous but visually deserted profilmic location.

These affinities are reinforced by the soundtrack to the opening of *Dama. Odna*, one of the earliest sound-age Soviet feature-films, inscribed its transitional relationship to silent cinema through textual intertitles that link shots within many sequences, reserving its deployment of new sound technology for verbally led scenes of particular narrative and thematic import. Kozintsev and Trauberg also gave significant diegetic motivation to the score, written for *Odna* with operatic vocal passages, by Dmitrii Shostakovich. In the 'Leningrad' sequence, this includes a folksy

accordion theme, whose subdued minor key and jaunty pacing suggest a parodic commentary on the arrested domestic bliss of the complacent young teacher, similarly to the woodwinds in *Dama*. The influence of Shostakovich, who appears only to have not scored *Dama* due to illness, is also felt in the assured restraint of Nadezhda Simonian's chamber-orchestral themes.¹⁷⁵ Here, changes in music guide spectatorial responses to the action, with diegetic sounds sparingly deployed. The almost-imperceptible tide and the clinking scales on which the rotund married couple weigh themselves accentuate the film's extremely pared-down aural register.

Vaulting back historically over the colour epics and biopics of the late-Stalin era, the identification of *Dama* with Lenfil'm continuity is an effect of this comforting aesthetical familiarity. Its formulae resurface insistently – as in Iutkevich's 'unwritten memoirs' from 1968 and Dobrotvorskii's 1996 overview – as an artistic and ethical investment in realism, lyrical camerawork and psychologically subtle *kammerspiel*. *Dama* did not represent an artistic innovation, but rather encapsulated a moment of resurgence at Lenfil'm, as it embarked upon a reorganization that would advance the kind of self-generated, director-focused commissioning of which Kheifits' project was so emblematic.

On the one hand, *Dama* was the most resonant artistic success of the new screenplay-editorial cohort that had formed under Berdnikov and Georgii Makogonenko. For these academics, work in cinema represented, in the early-Khrushchev period, an opportunity to assume authoritative cultural positions beyond literary scholarship, where both men had been compromisingly embroiled in the expulsion of eminent scholars from the Philology Department of Leningrad State University during the 'anti-cosmopolitan' campaign of 1949.¹⁷⁶ On the other, Lenfil'm editorial boards were once again populated by prominent authors like Leonid Rakhmanov, Iurii German and Boris Chirskov, all of whom were screenwriters on canonical 1930s Lenfil'm titles.¹⁷⁷

Between these two strands, *collective* continuity discourse emerged in tension with *individual* stories of professional reemergence and political rehabilitation, casting shadows from Leningrad's turbulent post-war history over the reorganizing studio. For *Dama*, a clearer-cut narrative of professional continuity permeates its cast and crew. The legendary Moskvín's swansong 'passed the torch' to Meskhiev, who as the next chapter acknowledges, was soon considered the studio's most virtuosic camera-operator. For the male-lead Batalov and the husband-and-wife set-designer duo of Isaak Kaplan and Bella Manevich, *Dama* was the triumphant culmination to a series of collaborations with Kheifits that began with *Bol'shaia sem'ia* (1954, Batalov) and *Delo Rumiantseva* (1955, Kaplan/Manevich). *Dama* represented a landmark for Lenfil'm because of the intergenerational connections made possible by its production. It can also be considered a valedictory film for a pre-war Lenfil'm cohort whose historiography was just forming, and whose modes of production were about to pass definitively into history.

Uncharted Waters: *Chelovek-amfibiia* and New Repertory Directions

While the black-and-white classicism of *Dama* comforted cineastes with its cultural familiarity and formal rigour, *Chelovek-amfibiia* promised mass-audiences colourful and exotic settings enhanced by novel technological devices. Where the psychological dramaturgy of *Dama* respectfully synthesized Chekhovian language and prose-style, *Chelovek-amfibiia* approached its literary source – a once-popular but dated utopian science-fiction novel by Aleksandr Belaev (1928) – with contingent looseness towards plotting and characterization, as signaled by the qualification 'Based upon' [*Po motivam*] in the opening credits. The repertory conundrum that these coexisting productions reflected at Lenfil'm is as compelling a contrast as their obvious formal divergences.

From the outset, Lenfil'm editors operated cautiously around this risky project. Between August 1957 and May 1958, the original screenwriters Aleksandr Ksenofontov and Akiba Gol'burt submitted no fewer than five successive drafts of the literary screenplay to Lenfil'm, before receiving studio-level approval for the project. For researchers Aleksandr Ignatenko and Vasiliï Gusak, the engagement of the vastly experienced veteran screenwriter, Aleksei Kapler, who joined as cowriter in November 1957, was testament to the support that Lenfil'm management afforded *Chelovek-amfibiia*, even before its screenplay was approved by the studio *Khudsovet*. Kapler's name would bolster its claims in Moscow, where high-level approval was required for a film involving the proposed technical experimentation of underwater filming.¹⁷⁸

A serious question is why *Chelovek-amfibiia*, full of potential technical and artistic risks, warranted such executive interest at Lenfil'm. This screenplay aspired to become a 'spectacular' [*zrelischnyi*] action-adventure film of the kind which Soviet audiences did not encounter in domestic cinema. If *Chelovek-amfibiia* could combine a strongly plotted sci-fi adventure with the utopian fantasy of an alternative underwater republic from Belaev's novel, then Soviet cinema-administration might have a lucrative, homemade hit that matched the entertainment-value of Western cinema while remaining ideologically acceptable. Although this proposal suggests obvious domestic-exhibition potential, Ignatenko and Gusak emphasize official interest in promoting *Chelovek-amfibiia* as a marquee Soviet export.

Lenfil'm management steered its pre-production in response to interest from Soveksportfil'm, the state's international film-distribution agency. A letter from Lenfil'm director Nikolaev to the USSR Ministry of Culture's film-production division [*Glavnoe upravlenie proizvodstva fil'mov*, GUPF] requested support for shooting the underwater sequences as a co-production with more experienced French, Italian or Yugoslavian filmmakers, to guarantee the technical sophistication

necessary to enhance the film's international prospects.¹⁷⁹ While the complexity of this endeavour was not lost on Lenfil'm, Nikolaev's proposals and requests are remarkable for being submitted to the GUPF assistant director *before* Lenfil'm had even approved a definitive draft of the screenplay. During pre-production, another letter from the Lenfil'm screenplay-department gave feedback to the three authors on their redrafts. Editors expressed concern about anti-clerical themes: 'Taking into account the interest of the export-organizations in the making and release of *Chelovek-amfibiia*... is this necessary in a screenplay of your chosen genre, will it not hinder distribution in a range of countries?'.¹⁸⁰ Success was thus to be achieved by delicately balancing thematic and aesthetical priorities that seem ambitious for an untried, 'entertainment' genre, all while moderating the force of its social critique to keep *Chelovek-amfibiia* palatable for potential Western distributors.

Consequently, as pre-production ended in October 1960, the Lenfil'm *Khudsovet* demanded the removal from the screenplay of any reference to 'state support' for Doctor Salvator's project in the fictional country of *Chelovek-amfibiia*. The filmmakers were further instructed to 'remove excessively concrete details from the screenplay that could anchor its events to a definite country and time [...] the more contingent the scenery that Ikhtiandr [the young amphibian protagonist] inhabits, the less explanation will be required of it'.¹⁸¹ These cautious instructions impacted significantly upon the film's aesthetic and confirmed the extent of executive nervousness about 'explaining' any inadvertent political associations to the distribution agencies so invested in its international prospects.

Abroad, *Chelovek-amfibiia* made no impact beyond second prize at the Trieste Science-Fiction Film Festival in 1963, but instead became Soviet cinema's biggest domestic box-office smash to date, selling over 62 million tickets during its theatrical first-run and allegedly prompting Ekaterina

Furtseva, USSR Minister of Culture, to call it ‘a gift to the cinema-distributors’.¹⁸² For Lenfil’ m, this unprecedented success was a relief after the production’s multiple budgetary breaches and professional disputes. In the Soviet press, however, *Chelovek-amfibiia* aroused bewilderment and disdain.

Tacky like Tarzan: Critics on *Chelovek-amfibiia*

Oleg Kovalov observes that the film’s harshest critics were not cultural dogmatists, but rather, among the most intellectually engaging young writers on Soviet cinema.¹⁸³ Maiia Turovskaia called *Chelovek-amfibiia* a confusingly popular, ‘tacky’ film, when attempting to distinguish between new trends of ‘poetic’ and ‘prosaic’ Soviet cinema, without making subsequent reference to any formal aspects of the film.¹⁸⁴ Andrei Zorkii slammed its garish exotica, ‘carrot-coloured neon’ and ‘chocolate-wrapper costumes’ before lamenting infidelity to Belaev’s novel for turning the ‘original theme’ of human strength and spiritual loneliness into a cheap and derivative love-story.¹⁸⁵ One of Zorkii’s allegations – repeated in other highly critical articles – is that *Chelovek-amfibiia* became such a domestic success because it was a ‘rip-off’ of the imported American Tarzan films that had topped Soviet box-office charts in the 1950s. Zorkii punctuated his demolition with a now-infamous line: ‘Ikhtiandr? Not a jot of Ikhtiandr! Tarzan with fins!’¹⁸⁶

Further to these examples, Kovalov responds to an influential article by Stanislav Rassadin in *Sovetskii ekran*. Rassadin, who coined the generation-defining moniker *shestidesiatniki* [‘sixty-ers’] in December 1960, witheringly attacked *Chelovek-amfibiia* for redundant dramaturgy, inexperienced acting and bungled attempts to introduce weak socio-political tropes into the narrative.¹⁸⁷ As Kovalov remarks, Rassadin’s title, *Krasota ili krasivost’?* [‘Beauty or Prettiness?’] revealed a predominantly aesthetical disdain for the film’s production values that was informed

less by any sustained critique of its relationship to Western genre-cinema, and more by resentment of its existence as an object proper to that historical moment:

This is entirely understandable: the eyes of a 1960s person, who had adapted to neorealist aesthetics and multiple 'new waves', with their cult of naturalistic and unvarnished textures, were impossibly irritated by the very artificiality in the aesthetic of this deftly, attractively made, and moreover, outwardly eye-catching object. This was not simply about vulgarity, but a strategically dangerous digression from the 'truth-to-life' that art had fought to achieve in the 'age of Khutsiev'.¹⁸⁸

While one could debate the categoricalness of Kovalov's assertion about the apparatus of aesthetical tolerance in 1960s critical spectatorship, it makes a valid observation about the shifting artistic values that progressive Soviet criticism was reproducing under the influence of auteurism. However, unlike the critical consensus that deplored the very phenomenon of *Chelovek-amfibiia* as much as its apparent artistic shortcomings, Lenfil'm cineastes were most exercised by the confused genre-aspirations of a film whose audience-appeal they recognized and mostly valued. As Lenfil'm readied the submission of *Chelovek-amfibiia* for release, questions remained as to the worth of this experiment for a studio embarking upon wholesale structural reorganization.

***Chelovek-amfibiia*: Executive Production and Professional Reception**

Chelovek-amfibiia was screened, debated and approved for submission at Lenfil'm on 15 December 1961, following a production that the new studio-director Kiselev had earlier labelled a budgetary disaster and a hash of professional accountability from senior administrators and crewmembers. In

July 1961, two months into location-shooting, Kiselev removed Chebotarev and *direktor kartiny* Nikolai Semenov for gross financial and production-mismanagement.¹⁸⁹ Chebotarev's replacement was Kazanskii, an experienced studio-hand best known for the children's fantasy *Starik Khottabych/Old-man Khottabych* (1956), whose technical complexity and huge popular success doubtlessly motivated Kiselev's decision. Eduard Rozovskii, an influential leader among Lenfil'm camera-operators, seemingly only remained in place due to the complete dependence upon him for the film's challenging shoot, especially its underwater sequences.¹⁹⁰

While this reconfiguration focused minds on economizing, a September 1961 report from the new *direktor kartiny* insisted that it would be nigh impossible to both complete *Chelovek-amfibiia* and limit over-budget spending on labour and film-stock.¹⁹¹ An extraordinary meeting of the Lenfil'm Party Secretariat [Partbiuro] on 11 October issued serious formal reprimands [*strogie vygovory*] to Chebotarev, Semenov and Rozovskii (all CPSU members) for their 'deeply flawed working practices'. Party-supervision over all active Lenfil'm crews was also to be tightened following such serious professional dereliction.¹⁹² *Chelovek-amfibiia* eventually came in 100,100 roubles overbudget at 550,500, around 76,700 of which was incurred during filming.¹⁹³

Against this tense backdrop, the meeting on 15 December gathered senior crew-members, the studio-directorship and leading Lenfil'm cineastes, many of whom knew the film's predicament only, as Kheifits remarked, from 'corridor rumours'.¹⁹⁴ The aversion of a collapsed production, which would have prevented fulfillment of the 1961 thematic plan, was already cause for huge relief. As such, this discussion of a successfully completed film was devoid of the acrimony that blighted the production. However, this debate revealed widespread anxiety about the implications of its fraught production for the repertory direction of Lenfil'm.

Ermler was foremost among those worried about the executive redundancy of the meeting. If *Chelovek-amfibiia* would be submitted to Leningrad's CPSU organizations and then to GUPF, within days and regardless of the meeting's conclusions, was it not simply a talking-shop, performatively going through the motions of an 'old' *Khudsovet* without affecting hands-on production-management?¹⁹⁵ Probably, although the unusualness of this meeting, held in a month when the profiles of future Lenfil'm TOs were actively forming, was in its secondary purpose as a forum for critical-reflexive discussions of best executive-production practices. Without referencing the reorganization directly, Ermler imagined the editorial benefits that TO-level *Khudsovet*y would provide:

If we only exist to receive completed films, if we are only meant to assign grades, then these functions are not all that esteemed and not all that hard. If the board is meant to set the artistic policy of the studio – then that's another matter. I think it's probably the latter. And if that's so, then we're called upon to help the [studio] director not just to assign grades, but also to watch the picture before it's ready [...]
Therefore, if the board exists to help you make good pictures, then today we should agree to watch the picture, as a rule, at least twice during the production-process.¹⁹⁶

Although no such agreement was forthcoming (TOs would soon assume this function), Kiselev answered Ermler's concerns in his closing remarks. Under a fortnight from the deadline for fulfillment of the 1961 thematic plan, a typically late-Soviet, end-of-year cramming-period [*shturm*] was unfolding:

By virtue of the fact that the studio was working unrhythmically, we now have fifteen days to submit six films. Effectively, there will come a time when we should be able to actively invite board-members to watch [unfinished] pictures, even if during the completion phase.¹⁹⁷

This was a race against the calendar to avoid a serious ministerial reprimand, which would have doubtlessly weakened the studio's standing during the establishment of the TO-system. *Chelovek-amfibiia* was completed behind schedule and urgently required studio-level screening. The board's professional verdict was broadly positive, although for many, the final third seemed overlong and the unexpectedly tragic narrative resolution came abruptly, leaving flatness and pessimism behind, as Ikhtiandr (Vladimir Korenev) is definitively banished to life underwater, and not joined in love with the young Guttiere (Anastasiia Vertinskaia). Rather than flawed dramaturgy, Aleksandr Ivanov saw here the consequence of frantic adjustments to the shoot after Chebotarev's removal, explaining 'holes' in later sequences with an 'obviously rushed edit' and claiming to know just how much working-footage had been discarded.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, Kazanskii expressed surprise that, despite producing a 'long' film that he would gladly edit further, the final cut came in under the officially approved length of 2700 metres, the standard-bearing projection of acceptable film-stock expenditure for a one-part Soviet feature-film until perestroika.¹⁹⁹

Kazanskii considered two options: to tidy the cutting and redub the sound over the coming days (his preference), or, 'if this is impossible, then the only way out is to do [the same] in time-honoured fashion, having received all admonitions from Moscow'.²⁰⁰ Remarkably, this counter-strategy suggested that a (seemingly likely?) GUPF rejection of *Chelovek-amfibiia* could be used to improve its technical quality. Kiselev ignored this proposal, dubbing *Chelovek-amfibiia* a 'triumph' and enthusiastically inviting board-members to a screening for Leningrad CPSU committees that

same evening, a sign of confidence that it would be approved onwards to general release.²⁰¹

Chelovek-amfibiia premiered in Moscow on 3 January 1962, an extremely quick turnaround that Ignatenko and Gusak argue provided ‘humble’ advertising for its first-run release.²⁰² Nevertheless, as 1962 ended and *Chelovek-amfibiia* had grossed approximately 65.5 million rubles, GUPF revised the film-crew’s pay-category upwards from ‘second’ to ‘first’ in light of its astounding success.²⁰³

Genres and Audiences: Making Aesthetical Sense of *Chelovek-amfibiia*

At the Lenfil’ m board meeting, the veteran screenwriter, Boris Chirskov, spoke of how his pre-screening fears about *Chelovek-amfibiia* – its ‘unusualness in the work of our cinema’ – were allayed by its adherence to ‘a genre, according to whose laws this picture ought to be accepted’.²⁰⁴ Rather than name this genre, Chirskov immediately proposed an international context. In Chirskov’s view, *Chelovek-amfibiia* compared favourably to the ‘refined and psychologically sophisticated’ *Touchez pas au grisbi / Hands off the Loot*, dir. by Jacques Becker (1954). Chirskov reported having viewed the French gangster movie, not long before this meeting, at Dom kino, the SRK centre and showcase-theatre subsequently managed by the SK throughout the late-Soviet period.²⁰⁵ Chirskov deemed *Chelovek-amfibiia* a first step towards matching the ‘psychological precision’ of Becker’s film with a more humanistic theme than the polished but culturally bankrupt story of an ageing French mobster’s last heist. This opinion seemed to vindicate the earlier executive desire for a composite Western setting without a heavy-handed social critique:

When I read this screenplay (and I read one of the earlier drafts), I was scared by the gaudiness and the oddness of its concept and by its attempts to fittingly resolve this. The fact that there is no overloading and excessive complication in the ideological content of the picture, the

fact that the psychological resolution of situations in this picture fits its genre and is not overcooked, not treated in depth, is something I consider to be a merit of this picture, of its genre-proportionality.²⁰⁶

The 'genre-proportionality' of *Chelovek-amfibiia* did not, however, prevent Chirskov from speculating that, had the 'more experienced Americans or French' made the same film, the acting would have been slicker and 'directorially naïve' *mise-en-scène* would have been avoided.²⁰⁷ This delicate language could not obscure Chirskov's insinuation: to acknowledge Soviet inexperience was also to comment reflexively on an inferiority complex in relation to the West. Ivanov argued that Soviet cineastes were themselves feeding diminished expectations among domestic audiences by failing to innovate, all while protesting against their enforced professional impoverishment:

Let's come clean that the Americans, the French and other capitalist countries make pictures like this by the thousand, and not just lately, but for many decades. They have this kind of production coming out of their ears; they have the most enormous experience of working an audience in a genre like this. What about us? Let's take into account what our directors are able to see, to pick up on, from where they can borrow marvellous techniques. The trouble for all of us is that we don't see anything, we know nothing about all this and what we *do* know, we know only from those comrades who travel abroad more often and watch these films. Here, this kind of cinema-genre appears neither in print nor on screens, and if it exists at all, then it is of an entirely different order [...].²⁰⁸

A pattern began to emerge from these contributions. Lenfil'm veterans were not hidebound by snobbery or rhetorical *amour-propre*: more often explicitly than obliquely, they opined that films like *Chelovek-amfibiia* were needed in Soviet cinema. However, the artistic and technical shortcomings of *Chelovek-amfibiia* were too glaring to dismiss. Opening, Kheifits bluntly expressed a widespread relief and congratulated the filmmakers for salvaging the production:

Everyone thought that enormous sums of money had been squandered and that, as a result, we were looking at a total financial wipeout. And the fact that this endeavour turned out well is already cause for joy, even if there is still an element of rip-off to it all.²⁰⁹

Kheifits' subsequent commentary suggests a connection between his sense of a 'rip-off' and the 'rip-off' of genre in Zorkii's damning critique, albeit without replicating Zorkii's contempt for the very existence of *Chelovek-amfibiia*. Kheifits wryly referenced his own recent experience to argue that the Soviet press offered neither a meaningful gauge of audience preferences, nor any productive contribution to the repertory directions that Soviet cinema ought to embrace, on the basis of box-office success:

I'm very familiar with the thesis that you should be able to go to the cinema and relax. Incidentally, the shortcoming of my last film [*Dama*] was that a man goes to the cinema to relax but that it doesn't work out that way for him there. But here is another thesis, that if the whole of 1962 was made up of films of this [*Chelovek-amfibiia*] genre, then we would be hitting the pinnacle of fame and the public would carry us off on their shoulders. I can see the newspaper-headline: 'More Good and

Varied Films'. But we need to be more careful than this [...] as an artist of this studio, I'm honestly glad that this story of terrible menace hanging over the studio has finally ended [...] the public truly *are* going to watch this picture. There will be a tranche of people who will be genuinely swept up by what happens in it. But we just have to know where to draw the line with the quantity of such pictures, so that it really doesn't come about that the more we make of them, the closer we get to the pinnacle of our fame.²¹⁰

This warning succinctly captured a sense, among Lenfil'm cineastes, that studio-specific repertory renewal was an essential but as yet ill-defined project. *Chelovek-amfibiia* appeared thoroughly anomalous alongside the familiar mission-statements of Soviet cinema, but remained inseparable from the expediencies of its plan-fulfillment politics. No-one better encapsulated this precarious balance than Kozintsev, whose extensive critique of *Chelovek-amfibiia* set an imposing tone and exploited hesitancy over the film's artistic merits to initiate a discussion of the 'real' cultural purpose of late-Soviet cinema:

As a board-member and a film-director of this studio, it would be good if someone could explain a couple of things to me plainly. Why is it that a work of genius by Shakespeare has to be removed from the thematic plan, for *Chelovek-amfibiia* to be produced in its place? I really need this to be spelled out to me because otherwise it is hard for me to participate in the running of the studio. These are two works of roughly equal cost, let's say, and their crews were qualified to the same level, so why then is it that the Soviet people should not watch Shakespeare,

but instead watch a man with fins stuck onto him? This is hard for me to understand.²¹¹

The Shakespearian work was *Gamlet/Hamlet*, which Kozintsev would be approved to direct within a year, having lost out under Nikolaev. Once produced, it contributed a similarly classical aesthetic of literary adaptation to Lenfil's continuity as *Dama*. If the question of genre-cinema's cultural necessity was paramount, then Kozintsev's shift from indignation to analysis of *Chelovek-amfibiia* offered a generous – if bitingly deadpan – acknowledgment of the need to reconcile their shared institutional contexts:

Within the measure of my notions about ideological work and participation in the education of the people, I have no criteria that would allow me to grade this film, therefore my critique will be purely professional [...] Above all else, I think such films need to be made and that we need to be sociologists [...] A sociologist should answer as to why this picture achieves success with the masses not just anywhere, but in our country, and why in our country *Tarzan* achieved such great success.²¹²

By framing *Chelovek-amfibiia* alongside the box-office phenomenon of *Tarzan*, Kozintsev both anticipated the sneering press-reception and encouraged analysis of the devices by which genre-cinema operated on eager Soviet audiences. For Kozintsev, *Chelovek-amfibiia* had rhythm, a rich colour-palette and excellent music by Andrei Petrov, elements which informed his own tentatively sociological reflections: '*Tarzan* is particularly watched by young people not in the least because it's a very good film, but because it's fitting for young people to love agility, to love

man in nature, to love fantasy narratives'.²¹³ The test of *Chelovek-amfibiia* was whether its technological novelties, exotica and genre-plotting had cohered sufficiently, and it was here that Kozintsev took greatest issue with the material. Although well-lit and colourful, the *mise-en-scène* of the composite Latino city was only patchily convincing and greatly diminished by cheap-looking, 'unfilmic' costumes. Ikhtiandr's 'unfrightening' sea-devil outfit and the pseudo-colonial uniform of the city's police drew particular criticism.²¹⁴ Beyond inferior production-values, for *Chelovek-amfibiia* to have 'worked' artistically, it would have had to demonstrate better mastery of the most paradigmatic set-piece in 'action' filmmaking, the chase-sequence. Here, Kozintsev was unsparing:

In this genre, the Americans really wipe the floor with us. This chase is not worth a damn in comparison to any ordinary American picture, not only contemporary pictures, but one from 1914-1915. It's next to useless and here's the main thing: there's no motivation for a chase [...]

The camera-operator shot the chase well, but it has none of the twists and turns of a chase, the arithmetical challenge in hundreds of pictures of this genre has not been worked out here. It is incomprehensible to me why, having spent so much money and decided that this film is more important than Shakespeare from an ideological-artistic standpoint, they didn't do the chase properly.²¹⁵

The Pursuit of Genre-credibility in *Chelovek-amfibiia*

A close examination of the chase-sequence confirms the validity of Kozintsev's complaint. His cinephile's reference to American cinema of 1914-15 was made not only to emphasize the primitivity of *Chelovek-amfibiia*: these years marked the coming to feature-length maturity of the chase-film as a genre.²¹⁶ As Noël Burch argues, the 'linear framework' of chase-films was crucial to the development of continuity-editing and the spatiotemporal visual codes by which Hollywood cinema came to operate. Chases mirrored narrativity with a 'tripartite structure' for action (disruption – prolongation – resolution), extending the filmic experience for spectators and providing ample scope for tension, humour, physical dynamism and technical trickery.²¹⁷ As the device became more sophisticated, artistic exploitation of a chase's off-screen, '*elsewhere*' spaces hinged on editing-patterns that maintained the principles of spatiotemporal succession and relative proximity between actors. Adherence to this, Burch's '*physiologically rational ubiquity*' [all emphasis is in the original – AG], became the benchmark for a chase's diegetic plausibility, which Kozintsev held *Chelovek-amfibiia* to have failed.²¹⁸

Chirskov's more encouraging reference to *Touchez pas au grisbi* is also compromised here. Any appreciation of 'outward precision' in Becker's film cannot but have been inspired by its tense cat-and-mouse pursuits between Parisian gangsters, including the culminative car-chase, in which a crew led by Max (Jean Gabin) pursues the getaway vehicle of Angelo (Lino Ventura) and his henchmen. The 'loot' of the title eventually goes up in flames when a gunshot into the tyres sends Angelo's car crashing spectacularly into a ditch. Any reluctance to explicitly compare *Chelovek-amfibiia* to this sequence is understandable. While its biggest innovation – the underwater sequences – succeeded technically, the aspirations of *Chelovek-amfibiia* to genre-credibility were

damaged by its glaring misuse of the chase, a tried-and-tested device in Western commercial cinema.

The scene leading into the chase-sequence maintains internal coherence without motivating a chase. Having declared his love to Gutierre, Ikhtiandr overwhelms the villain Pedro Zurita (Mikhail Kozakov) in a physical struggle when Zurita intrudes on the young pair's intimate conversation. Thrown to the floor, Zurita reacts by hurling a stool at Ikhtiandr, who ducks the object, which smashes a wide, low-level window onto the street. The stool's impact on the windowpane creates a satisfying clang but is immediately dampened by jarring reactions to the smash by figures standing beside a newsstand deep in the frame. First, a peasant woman gives an inorganic-seeming jump before peeling away from an adjacent cart: her first movement occurs simultaneously to the smash, much too soon to convincingly portray shock or a reaction to danger. Unfortunately, this clumsy acting is underscored by the fleeting-glimpse of a man stood beside this woman with his back to the camera, who lags inexplicably after the smash before embarking on an identically inorganic, rightwards peel.

Next, a cut moves to a shot of an open doorway, through which leaps Gutierre's father, whose absence from the scene thus far makes the swiftness of his appearance seem strange. This disconcertion continues to confound as he looks into the camera – *Chelovek-amfibiia* is otherwise devoid of perspectival looks into the camera from protagonists in dialogue – and immediately shouts 'police!'. This cry is voiced quicker than it would be possible for anyone not closely observing the tussle between Ikhtiandr and Zurita to grasp what was happening. A further cut shows Ikhtiandr and Zurita grappling in the foreground, while Gutierre restrains her father and a small crowd in the background peers through the smashed window. Two policemen promptly arrive and enter the workshop. They are wearing the exaggerated Latin American uniform that

Kozintsev complained about: cream trousers, a beige military shirt with a tan leather holster and a pale orange necktie, topped by an ostentatiously wide-brimmed sombrero, on which the underside of the brim is the colour of the tie and the turn-up, a bolder orange with black striping, an evident 'police-style' that replicates the logo on the left breast of the shirt, an angular 'S' that sits aesthetically somewhere between the constructivism of El Lissitzky and Nazi SS insignia.

Although this ersatz exotica looks overblown amid the relatively lifelike pseudo-Latino city, its visual signaling primarily concerns the significance to the impending chase of the first policeman to enter the workshop. Advancing towards the camera and looking off-left, he remains on-screen long enough to be identifiable, unlike his nearest colleague, who enters closely behind but is barely glimpsed, before a shot of Gutierre encouraging Ikhtiandr to run. The next cut returns square-on to the smashed window, as Ikhtiandr dives athletically through the gap and onto the street, leaving the flustered, 'lead' policeman in his wake. The chase is now on. As a sequence, it will hinge on the attempt to convincingly spatialize a dynamic of pursuit and identity-recognition between this policeman and Ikhtiandr.

The aftermath of Ikhtiandr's dive disorients visually across three shots: the launch and flight of the dive; his fall into a forward-roll once through the window, where his body lands obscured by the watching crowd, shot from the perspective of the street; and the longest-held shot of Ikhtiandr, now on his feet and pushing two bystanders to the ground, then running a few steps towards the wide-angled, low camera, before finally taking off in the other direction. Non-visual signals combine well with this last shot to announce the chase: a shrill policeman's whistle, a high-pitched shriek from the crowd, the first notes of orchestral alarm in Petrov's suspenseful soundtrack to the sequence, and perfunctory but fitting cries ('some kind of madman!'; 'get him!') from the crowd. However, the measured layering of these elements barely diverts

attention from the visual implausibility that precedes them, as Ikhtiandr bursts forth and floors the bystanders. Although his lateral dive lands on the ground off-camera, by the moment of his entrance into the third shot, he is on his feet and moving with enough momentum to deliver a firm shove, suggesting that he has been running at this angle, rather than clambered to his feet at a further-flung point than the position of the crowd makes plausible in this third shot. In the next shot, Gutierre and her father look out through the window, as policemen give chase.

Thus far, problems arise from substandard editing and poor acting; Rozovskii's camerawork is proportionally framed and impeccably lit here. This changes, however, in the shot that follows the final, 'pre-chase' glimpse of Gutierre and her father, the man admonishing his daughter while he gathers up shards of glass. A high-angled tracking-shot pans quickly rightwards along the declining hill of a street, before a gradual, upwards-right tilt rises from a bend in this street, to bring a high, stonewall fortification and the far-off backdrop of the sea into the frame. The camera's movement is swift and even, the pan corresponding to Ikhtiandr's run and the tilt reflecting his slowing to a halt and subsequent change of direction, back up the other side of the street and towards the camera, as two policeman and another ununiformed figure emerge, from beyond the bend, to join the 'lead' policeman, who we have already seen chasing Ikhtiandr left-to-right.

Even at this pace and distance, the high camera-angle in both parts of the shot reveals a body-double of Ikhtiandr/Korenev, who is far too easily distinguishable from the actor we have already seen at such length. This is glaringly obvious from the beginning of the pan: his skin is too dark, his hair much blacker and shorter, his frame broader, and this all registers before the logistically inescapable glimpses of the body-double's facial features in both stages of his run, as he looks around for an escape. The next shot after the body-double's exit at the bottom-right of the frame

is a receding tracking-shot of Ikhtiandr/Korenev in close-up, running through a narrow street with his head up. A handheld camera then adopts Ikhtiandr's perspective in an advancing track, his split-second choice to duck into some alleyways underscored by faint wobbling of the advancing camera and by a slight lean into its successive turns around corners. These movements cause human figures in the side-streets to fall out of focus, conveying the intrusion and tension of these narrow spaces. Petrov's music enhances the camera's frenetic exploration: his theme breaks into a flourish of high-tempo drum-rolls and elongated brass punctuated by intermittent piano-stabs. This score is excellent for a chase-sequence, but it soon conflicts with the last rightwards turn of the camera around a corner, when the shot-structuring of the pursuit begins to collapse. Appropriately, the pace of camera-movement increases sharply here, lurching violently rightwards towards a stocky peasant who the camera has already passed, then whipping back leftwards to face the long, straight alleyway, as if suggesting a tightening squeeze on Ikhtiandr. However, the building impression of spatial strategy in this maze of alleys now falters when policemen again become visible figures, and not the off-screen pursuers whose proximity has been implied by Ikhtiandr's frenzied subjective camera.

Three figures run towards the camera, remaining visible just long enough to register, but insufficiently foregrounded to ensure that they are recognized as policemen. An abrupt cut follows, taking the action away from the alley with a one-second-long, receding tracking-shot. Here, we see the 'lead' policeman, who entered the workshop first and is the only individuated policeman we have yet seen. Placing this recognizable pursuer in a similar receding tracking-shot as that of Ikhtiandr (just before the camera entered the alleyway), the film links these men visually by replicating their running in comparable framing. So far, this has been a straightforwardly evasive pursuit, but with these last shots, a new disruption is signaled as Ikhtiandr's path is blocked by the distant figures in the alleyway. The cutaway to the policeman confounds the spatial

logic of this confrontation. Puffing his cheeks as if losing breath, he runs along a street that, for all we see of it during the one-second shot, is appreciably wider than the alleyways and shows facades that do not correspond to any street backdrop seen thus far. Furthermore, he is framed in isolation, whereas the tension of the chase has depended, until now, on ever more policemen being seen to join the chase and gain ground on Ikhtiandr. Instead, while the visible 'lead' policeman links back to the beginning of the sequence as a continuity device, we have no sense of where this man actually is, whether in relation to Ikhtiandr or to the unfolding profilmic topography of the chase.

From here, the subjective camerawork of Ikhtiandr's flight returns, breaking leftwards to scurry up an adjacent stairway. The pace increases and the soundtrack matches this with a horn crescendo, followed by a higher-pitched return to the musical theme. From the middle of an alleyway, the frame cuts to a new receding tracking shot of Ikhtiandr running, with no orange-brimmed sombreros visible in the background. A second shot of this format follows, showing Ikhtiandr's lower legs and shadow moving along the same directional path: the chase is still on, but the immediate risk of apprehension seems to have dissipated. We then cut back to the hapless, 'lead' policeman, out of breath as he continues along the same street from his last appearance, except that now he runs alongside a uniformed colleague, who we have not seen before, with a prepubescent boy following in perplexingly close pursuit on his other flank. In the next cut to a high-angled perspective of this street, we again see the glaring body-double running on a diagonal from top-right to bottom-left, before turning a corner as the camera's leftwards pan moves into a slight upwards tilt.

In itself, the physical dynamism in this shot is neatly conveyed. It directionally inverts the rightwards pan-and-tilt shown along the hilled street earlier in the pursuit, and from this high-

angle, the athletic body-double resembles a bull-runner at a Spanish *fiesta* in the narrow, sundrenched lane. However, by shifting from Ikhtiandr to the 'lead' policeman and then onto this shot of the body-double evading five unidentified pursuers (only two of whom are in uniform), there is a lapse of visual continuity. Somewhere in the unrepresented spaces between shots, this group of men has gained ground on Ikhtiandr to an extent that is completely unapparent from the directionless parallel editing between the receding tracking-shots of Ikhtiandr/Korenev and the 'lead' policeman respectively. This disarrangement is compounded by a further dismaying example of lacklustre direction as the shot ends. The pursuers, who have come within a few metres of Ikhtiandr/body-double as he turns the corner, inexplicably slow to a halt at this point of the street, allowing him to sprint off-frame at the same pace as throughout the shot.

In the next shot, Ikhtiandr/Korenev clammers up to a rooftop, from where the camera frames his hop over a ledge at the end of a short rightwards-pan. Next, a low-angled close-up shows a new policeman. To signal pursuit, this policeman blows his whistle and moves beyond the frame. Unlike the earlier spatial muddles, this development does not confuse because Ikhtiandr's run across the rooftop has introduced a new topography, so it is plausible that a policeman closer to him might take up the relay. However, inexplicably, this new policeman is never seen again.

The next shot shows Ikhtiandr climbing a knotted vine towards a higher rooftop. His broader frame again suggests the body-double, although the low-angled, axial positioning of the wall prevents this from glaringly registering. However, the following cut is deeply problematic. Ikhtiandr has made very little progress up the vine when a new shot comes, showing two unidentified policemen grappling with the vine in exactly the same position, which is immediately apparent from the advertisement painted on the wall. The concatenation of these two shots creates a clash that can only be explained by a temporal lapse between them, yet the lack of

upwards movement from Ikhtiandr in the first shot means that there is no indication that he has successfully evaded these policemen. The rooftop stage of the chase enters its end-phase as Ikhtiandr dashes and then dives between two buildings, the music again creating dramatic tension by cutting out during his flight, before resuming once the next shot, which shows him gripping a ledge, has ended.

This dazzling leap is the first indication that Ikhtiandr has the guile to outsmart his pursuers, an impression reinforced by the next, high-angled shot of two figures standing on the street below, looking towards him with bemusement and menace. Having not occupied the same frame since the struggle in the workshop, the 'lead' policeman now stands alongside Zurita. Possibly, Zurita has somehow been following the route of the chase. Nevertheless, the abrupt introduction of this narratively significant figure disconcerts, just when the pursuit is suspended in spatial reconfiguration.

Ikhtiandr's upper-hand is confirmed: a policeman falters on a nearby rooftop, then crowding bystanders swamp other policemen at street-level. Zurita stands still beside this crowd in an extreme high-angled shot, as one policeman breaks away and another struggles to emerge from its centre. There is nothing here to motivate the resumption of an urgent, on-foot chase, yet all orientation of the viewer in relation to this prospect is instantly shattered by the next cut. The bystanders and Zurita continue to look up – suggesting that Ikhtiandr is atop an off-frame roof – but what follows is a shaky, receding tracking-shot of the 'lead' policeman with a colleague following quickly behind. This shot is uncannily similar to the first of this format from earlier in the sequence. The street backdrop is similarly wide, the angles are consistent and the lighting even, making this appear like an unused fragment of that earlier tracking-shot. Further confusion ensues: the 'lead' policeman now sprints at full-stretch, whereas earlier on, amid the gathering

chase, his fresher legs did little more than plod. This counterintuitive pacing throws the tension of the chase into terminal jeopardy as its spatial coherence receives a final, bewildering blow.

Between two continuity-driven tracking-shots of the sprinting 'lead' policeman, a stationary shot of Ikhtiandr is sandwiched: he bounds down a street-level stairway towards an alley, unpursued and diegetically unobserved. Two shots later, emerging from deep in the frame into a wide street, Ikhtiandr is sprayed by a passing water-tanker that is cleaning the streets. Ikhtiandr looks around for an exit, then climbs a ladder onto the moving tanker and stands atop it, before jumping down a hatch into this tanker as it crosses a deserted square. The 'amphibian's' escape is thus sealed poetically by 'returning' to the water of the tanker. However, the sequence does not end here, but instead attempts to bind this resolution to its beginning. Next, two figures run into the left of the frame from an alley, as a rightwards pan shows the water-tanker advancing towards the camera. Where we might expect the 'lead' policeman and the colleague alongside whom he has just been seen running, we see instead the 'lead' policeman and Zurita. These figures did not move off in the same direction from their last stationary positioning together but were both present when the chase began. Improbably, they are now together again, pursuing Ikhtiandr, with whom this pair has not shared any on-screen interaction.

This logic-defying alliance achieves even greater confusion when the policeman leads Zurita from the alley into the street being cleaned by the tanker. Looking rightwards and noticing nothing, the policeman then dashes purposely leftwards, as if giving chase, when in fact there is nothing visible in the frame but the oncoming tanker. Clearly, the resolution of the sequence requires the visual comeuppance of a soaking for its prime villains. They charge headlong into the spray, and while the viewer satisfyingly knows that Ikhtiandr is safely ensconced inside the tanker, the pair's emergence from the alley and turn towards the *oncoming* vehicle irredeemably exposes the spatial

misconstruction of the chase. They have not been seen to come from the same direction as Ikhtiandr, nor has there been any visual indication of them setting out together to intercept him, yet the shots compiled suggest that they have idea enough of where he is to have themselves ended up at this junction. As Kozintsev justifiably lamented, the entire sequence has failed to cohere into a tense or even plausible chase, instead relying illusively on fast-paced cutting and varied camera-techniques to approximate a hot pursuit.

Conclusion: New Repertory Conundrums, Old Production-politics

For all the professional consensus that *Chelovek-amfibiia* merited formal, studio-level approval, it confused and disappointed cineastes by exposing late-Soviet inexperience with action-adventure filmmaking. The politics of film-submission engendered contradictory discourses: Kozintsev criticized the chase-sequence as a glaring artistic failure, all while insisting that the overall viewing-experience was neither boring nor devoid of the spectacular appeal that would eventually attract such colossal audiences. Nevertheless, its lacklustre ‘dynamic’ sequences, its performers who ‘generally look good but act poorly’ and the hasty assemblage of the final cut all dampened professional relief at having averted disaster with a sobering deliberation on ‘where to draw the line’ between cinema-as-art and box-office appeal, as Kheifits warned Lenfil’ m must.²¹⁹ The vastly experienced Mikhail Shostak (Lenfil’ m studio-director in 1932-1933) anticipated the film’s popularity, but remarked: ‘The consolation that the takings will be enormous and that people in search of pretty and pleasant leisure will fill the cinemas and say thank you – this is a very real consolation, but not for a conversation around such a table as this’.²²⁰

The question of which conversations *should* be conducted there preoccupied Ermler, who prefaced his analysis of *Chelovek-amfibiia* with insistence upon his opposition to it from the very

beginning along artistic, ideological and financial grounds, as had the recently appointed Lenfil'm editor-in-chief, Irina Golovan', an authoritative former *redaktor* on *Pravda* newspaper.²²¹ Ermler assured the meeting that without Korenev and Vertinskaia's freshness and beauty, 'there would be no film' (ironically, the next cinematic role for the then fifteen-year-old Vertinskaia would be Ophelia in Kozintsev's *Gamlet*).²²² The virtually unanimous conclusion of the meeting was that that the acting ensemble appeared so disorientated in relation to the dramaturgical register of *Chelovek-amfibiia* as to turn the utopian plotline into a risible afterthought.²²³

Such criticism of *Chelovek-amfibiia* demonstrates the transitional dilemma of Lenfil'm in December 1961. The TO-system had been mandated but its new editorial structures and commissioning imperatives were not yet established. Instead, an all-consuming *shturm* required the hasty convening of this provisional Lenfil'm board, which Ermler recognized had more discursive agency than an 'old' studio *Khudsovet*, but not the production-management agency promised to the forthcoming TOs. This complicated production had proved instructive. Its organizational shortcomings exposed the studio's need for executive reorganization, while its evident artistic flaws demonstrated the urgency of establishing closer supervisory structures for editing and artistic direction.

The supreme irony of this astounding domestic box-office success was that, post-release, Lenfil'm was almost entirely disengaged from the phenomenal takings of *Chelovek-amfibiia*. Not until the Chukhrai-Pozner ETK in 1965 would new contractual terms reward late-Soviet filmmakers materially for exceptional box-office performance. At Lenfil'm, this link would remain unestablished until perestroika, when its command of such audiences had irretrievably disappeared. In 1961, Lenfil'm cineastes struggled to articulate how wildly popular genre-films reflected the studio's evolving artistic identity or the ideological requirements of thematic

planning, despite how obvious the box-office appeal of *Chelovek-amfibiia* was to them. For Lenfil'm cineastes, it was less the fact of *Chelovek-amfibiia* as a work of entertainment that was problematic, and more the worrying professional implications of the slap-dash aesthetic that had survived its tortuous production saga.

The major (RSFSR-based) late-Soviet studios were both too monolithic and too diverse – bound at once to central thematic management and studio-level commissioning – to *not* be riven by artistic divisions. However, as the respective productions and professional receptions of *Dama* and *Chelovek-amfibiia* demonstrate, critically perpetuated notions of ‘elite’ and ‘mass’ cinema were not yet considered grounds on which to advocate mutually exclusive repertory policies at Lenfil'm. Rather, the lure of affirmingly familiar artistic triumphs and the promise of future genre-credibility appeared to overwhelm the present-moment repertory uncertainties of these transitional years, as cineastes strove to consolidate recent executive-production gains.

Consequently, *Dama* – the familiar effort – succeeded artistically but suffered critical neglect, while *Chelovek-amfibiia* – the untested genre – was awkward and second-rate but became a fondly regarded favourite among excitement-poor Soviet cinemagoers. In 1993, filmmaker Avdot'ia Smirnova reassessed this aborted genre-experiment: ‘all the same, a very timely film! It was essential to pass through this and recognize that we don't need [Ikhtiandr], we just don't know what to do with him. Or how [to do it]’.²²⁴ This acknowledgement was anticipated by aesthetically confused, if politically relieved, Lenfil'm cineastes. In the TO-era, the steering of the studio's repertory directions by its *sostavy avtorov* would reconfigure around the professional culture encapsulated by *Dama*, where continuity discourse and proto-auteurism met to privilege directorial primacy over the adoptive mastery of genre.

Chapter Two

Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn': The Impossibilities of Soviet Auteurism

An airfield. This isn't a sudden idea. If it – is possible at your end – then at Lenfil'm's end – very, very much – at the end of the day, screw Lenfil'm (like it screws us) – but we – that's for sure – like obvious kindred spirits – would compose – and shoot our own – cinema – even more so, I am – by a twist of fate – the only international cine-auteur (for the USSR) – there is such an auteurist cinema.²²⁵

(Gennadii Shpalikov, *Letter to Viktor Nekrasov*)

This passage, written in the inimitable staccato that permeates Gennadii Shpalikov's correspondence, concerns two projects. The opening 'idea' stalled, while the conclusory 'cinema' was to be Shpalikov's only directorial work. Although no collaboration with his venerated friend ever materialized, we can believe Shpalikov's insistence that the 'establishing shot' of an airfield had not come suddenly. It recalls the beginning of *Ia shagaiu po Moskve/Walking the Streets of Moscow*, dir. by Georgii Daneliia (1963), when a young male protagonist gaily responds to the happiness of a stranger – a woman awaiting her husband beside a runway – by exclaiming, '*tak ne byvaet!*' ['that doesn't happen!'], i.e. 'no way!']. The huge success of this 'lyrical comedy' (a subtitle-credit typical of the newfound Soviet drive for genre-credibility) afforded Shpalikov – so prodigal of song, verse and unpublished prose – the broadest public recognition of his life.

Dmitrii Bykov insists that Shpalikov ‘was the only Soviet screenwriter whose brilliance almost nobody doubted, and whose professional existence almost nobody needed’.²²⁶ Debuting at 23, Shpalikov wrote screenplays – some produced into films that rank among the most emblematic releases of the Soviet 1960s – which dealt in aspects of human experience that Soviet cinema struggled to accommodate. Interiority, childhood fantasy, social marginality, existential crises, drifts into the natural world, romantic love, and eroticism are their territories. Shpalikov’s work also addresses complicated tensions between the war-generation and his own. Unlike most of his artistic peers, Shpalikov’s investment in this theme was heavily influenced by a family background in high-level military service. He only came to study at VGIK [*Vsesoiuznyi-gosudarstvennyi institut kinematografa*, the All-union State Film School] after discharge from an officer-cadet academy in Kyiv due to injury.

Shpalikov cut an unusual figure. His contemporary, Bella Akhmadulina, called him ‘a born poet’.²²⁷ However, no verse or lyrical prose was published in his lifetime. Rather, as another generationally iconic lyricist and eventual Lenfil’ m screenwriter, Bulat Okudzhava, observed, ‘Shpalikov wrote poems as if ‘for himself, for close friends, *mezhdú delom* [in between times]’.²²⁸ This obscure body of work fuels the mystique that surrounds Shpalikov’s biography, from the prodigiously talented young writer to the professionally excluded, homeless and broken alcoholic who committed suicide in 1974. At least eleven unrealized screenplays exist, four of which were completed between 1970 and his death, the year of Nekrasov’s sudden emigration. Shpalikov’s tragedy encapsulated the brutal effect of the Soviet system’s exclusionary mechanisms on overtly nonconformist artists in what came to be called the ‘period of stagnation’ under Brezhnev. One modest and hard-fought, posthumous publication, *Izbrannoe* (Selected Works, 1979), aside, Shpalikov’s work was critically reconsidered only during perestroika, when the artistic

preoccupations and social outlooks ascribed to his generation were dismissed – often angrily – by younger writers.²²⁹

Shpalikov's most visible contribution to late-Soviet culture was in cinema. Akhmadulina lamented his 'dependency on cinema, that horrifying, cursed *Sovkino* ['Commie-film'], with its ideological codes and punitive professional conventions.²³⁰ This chapter argues for the appreciation of more layered meanings in this 'dependency'. In Shpalikov's work, dependency on cinema informs an impassioned poetics – cinephilia – as much it defines his constrained professional predicament. The undated letter to Nekrasov (circa 1969) is uncordially disposed towards Lenfil'm.

Nonetheless, hope of future work there remained, years after the release of *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* / *A Long, Happy Life*, dir. by Gennadii Shpalikov (1966).²³¹ The USSR's 'only international cine-auteur' refers implicitly to the Grand Prize that this directorial debut won at the 1966 Bergamo Film Festival.²³² Beyond enviable Western recognition, Shpalikov's jocular self-proclamation asserts a revealing claim to innovation. Indeed, for 1960s Lenfil'm, this film was unique as both a production and a cinematic statement.

None of Shpalikov's screenplays had actually been released as films when he signed a script-contract with the Third TO at Lenfil'm in August 1963: work continued on three other projects that would appear before 1966.²³³ Apart from representing an astonishingly productive period, this situation reflected the political uncertainties of the historical moment and epitomized Shpalikov's singularity within the new TO-system, where inter-studio screenwriter mobility had become increasingly common, but changes of artistic roles had not.

Production in Context

In January 1966, speaking as First TO *Khudruk* at a meeting of a newly formed *Rezhisserskaia kollegiia kinostudii* [studio film-directors' advisory board], Kheifits highlighted the problematic coexistence of unit-generated commissioning and Lenfil'm as a brand:

The dialectic of our production gave birth to the *ob"edineniia*. In my time, I was an impassioned opponent of these units; it seemed to me that they partitioned the studio into separate, mutilated parts. On the whole, life bore this conviction out locally. I now believe that the units have brought big benefits, to a certain extent. On the other hand: no less damage [...] Sometimes I'm called upon to meet viewers, and when they ask what's happening at Lenfil'm, I only answer about my unit. But that's only half the misfortune. The units are somehow strangely threatening to degenerate into group-formations [...] Labels have even appeared and are being stuck onto the units. The First is the intelligentsia's unit; the Second is the conformists' unit, and so on.²³⁴

If this ideologically commendable 'dialectic' was a euphemism for the counterbalance between institutionalized creative autonomy and CPSU control, then we can appreciate Kheifits' cautious equivocation. Most revealingly, however, these concerns about cultural labeling omitted one Lenfil'm TO entirely. This was not coincidental: the artistic identity of the Third TO was proving very difficult for studio-executives to classify in 1966. Several of its recent productions had created problems at Leningrad-Party level. Among these were *Druz'ia i gody*/*Friends through the Years*, dir. by Viktor Sokolov (1965) – a socio-political saga dealing boldly with Stalinist

repression, metropolitan careerism and intergenerational conflict between 1934 and 1960 – and *Mal'chik i devochka/A Boy and a Girl*, dir. by Iulii Fait (1966) – a tale of unplanned teenage pregnancy resulting from a holiday-resort fling. The former survived ideological screening to receive limited distribution; the latter was 'shelved' immediately following its premiere.

By 1966, the Third TO did not fit Kheifits' cultural binary because its output was diverging significantly from the social realism – whether confrontational or cautious – that had defined its earlier years. Its *Khudruk*, Vladimir Vengerov, belonged to the generation between the studio's 'masters' and the Muscovite *shestidesiatniki* from whom he had begun to commission work, like Shpalikov, Fait, and Okudzhava. The latter wrote the screenplay for *Zhenia, Zhenechka i "Katiusha"/Zhenia, Zhenechka and 'Katiusha'*, dir. by Vladimir Motyl' (1967), a tender wartime romance between Soviet soldiers framed as a Quixotic 'legend' in the imagination of the male protagonist. Concomitantly with Shpalikov's problematic debut, *Zhenia* drew further criticism of the Third TO for the aesthetical liberties it took with the sacrosanct theme of the war, as in a damning review entitled 'Proshchet' ['Misjudgment'] by Mikhail Bleiman, the veteran screenwriter and establishment critic.²³⁵ Beyond promoting underrepresented young talent, Vengerov's Third TO supported repertory experimentation with Soviet thematic conventions: his transition into *Khudruk* and LOSK [*Leningradskoe otdelenie Soiuza kinematografistov*, the Leningrad Filmmakers' Union branch] stewardship has been deemed more significant to the artistic development of Soviet cinema than his own filmography.²³⁶ The 1963 recruitment of Shpalikov was a major coup for an ageing Lenfil'm directorial cohort. In 1966, this debut represented the Third TO's boldest aesthetical statement yet.

On 7-8 March 1963, Shpalikov's professional screenwriting debut collided with major political shifts during notorious gatherings of elite cultural intellectuals hosted by CPSU CC leaders at the

Kremlin. There, Khrushchev subjected Shpalikov and Marlen Khutsiev to severe, if incoherent, criticism over *Zastava Il'icha/The Il'ich Gate*, dir. by Marlen Khutsiev (1962; released as *I Am Twenty/Mne dvadtsat' let*, 1965), the eventual fate of which now depended on wholesale reworking at Gor'kii Studio.²³⁷

Clearly, this process still preoccupied Shpalikov in December 1963, although Nataliia Riazantseva – his wife between 1959 and 1962 – described his participation at Gor'kii Studio as minimal, after the official hammering in March.²³⁸ Shpalikov signed the Lenfil'm contract in August, yet wrote to the Third TO on 28 December, requesting a two-month extension for the first draft and citing the Gor'kii reedit as justification.²³⁹ The screenplay submitted in February 1964 differed entirely from the proposal [*zaiavka*] received six months previously. Instead of *Neskol'ko istorii iz zhizni Leny Avdeevoi/A Few Stories from the Life of Lena Avdeeva*, with its outline of gallant *shestidesiatniki* social engagement, came the melancholic *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*.²⁴⁰ Although we cannot conclude that the scandal around *Zastava* alone determined this thematic *volte-face*, the protracted ordeal doubtlessly had a profound impact.

Shpalikov's Cinema of Impossibility

In 2005, Naum Kleiman described films made from Shpalikov's screenplays as conveying 'an impossibly unearthly way of life... the workaday world awaiting a miracle'.²⁴¹ Kleiman's reflection on the work of his erstwhile VGIK classmate resembles a definition of poetic realism, both as a lyrical cinematic style and an impassioned, neo-Romantic address. For Kleiman, Shpalikov's 'impossible' yearning for enchantment aspired to transcend the compromised public negotiations of everyday late-Soviet life. What Kleiman also calls 'the miracle waiting to happen' is a mood and an atmosphere in Shpalikov's *realized* works, but it is equally important to

acknowledge this preoccupation – impending yet unfulfilled personal transformation – as a thematic current that permeates his entire screenwriting oeuvre.

Shpalikov measures the alienation of late-Soviet young people from the possibility of romance and intimacy. In *Ia Shagaiu po Moskve*, protagonists' hapless advances and public dances of emotional awkwardness and are swept up in the film's warm and rather throwaway mood. While bittersweet deflation envelopes these partings and lost relationships sweetly, it is from this point that we can identify Shpalikov's increasingly despondent preoccupation – developed to much bleaker effect in *Zastava* – with social alienation and the thwarted sexualities 'forbidden' by Soviet life. In *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*, this concerns an aborted one-night dalliance that unravels without becoming an affair, never mind the love that its couple claims to aspire to. This workaday world, in which the miracle pitilessly fails to happen, is a socially transient realm where chance encounters bring people together and the exposure of latent ineptitudes keeps them apart, their personal dramas remaining unresolved, and their longings unsatiated. The standalone debut of Kira Muratova, *Korotkie vstrechi / Brief Encounters* (1967), mined strikingly similar territory from a female perspective. The gendered alienation, class interests, open-ended structure and transitory spaces of *Korotkie vstrechi* pair these films as complex meditations on sexual politics and social malaise, at a moment in the Soviet 1960s when culturally progressive perspectives were being marginalized in cultural production.

There is an argument, advanced by Fomin, that Shpalikov himself became an impossibility for Goskino.²⁴² Professional marginalization deepened in the early 1970s, when his final screenplays dealt frankly with social problems and taboo historical events.²⁴³ Amid the failed escapes of their protagonists, these works contained increasingly harsh and confrontational social vignettes. For screenwriter Pavel Finn, Shpalikov's late, de-poeticized realism endeavoured to 'lie as little as

possible about Soviet life [...] so as not to feel ashamed'.²⁴⁴ These were chronicles of social oppression that Bykov responds to, when he asserts that Russians spent '20 years *living* in [Shpalikov's] screenplays'.²⁴⁵ As with this entire oeuvre, *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* is concerned not with morality tales or high-political questions, but with removing archetypal dimensions from individual late-Soviet characters and showing them an exit. Only in the early 1970s, when *shestidesiatnichestvo* had culturally retreated, did the political in Shpalikov's screenwriting come to the fore in visions of total societal breakdown and crisis for the values that had underpinned progressive Russian culture in the 1960s.

Composition: Style and Subversion

A chance conversation on a coach-trip begins the acquaintance of Lena (Inna Gulaia) and Viktor (Kirill Lavrov), two characters that go unnamed in the film, where several Lenfil'm cineastes found them appearing significantly older than anticipated from Shpalikov's literary screenplay.²⁴⁶ In this aborted romantic encounter, the on-screen dynamic of casual drifting begins in the film's second sequence. Its uniqueness – in a Soviet context – concerns Dmitrii Meskhiev's camerawork, which plays inventively with the conventions of shot/reverse-shot editing.

Shot/reverse-shot is the most basic compositional arrangement to originate from classical Hollywood visual style. Its premise is the manipulation of profilmic space to produce visual continuity by directing the viewer's attention to the same area in the frame from one shot to the next. The typical scene is built around dialogue between two people, who are supposed to be facing one another, along a 180-degree axis to the camera, with framing anywhere between close-up and stationary mid-shot. The verbal exchange conventionally determines the rhythm of the visual cut, which consists of a perspectival alternation. In shot 1, subject A is on the right of the

frame, facing the camera and addressing subject B, the back of whose head is visible on the left-hand side. In the next shot, subject A remains on the right, but is now shot from behind, while the face of subject B, who is verbally replying, is visible on the left. By maintaining this split across shots, the viewer's perception is guided towards an uncomplicated focus on the face of the talking protagonist. This perspectival reversal thus gives the illusion of a stable unity of profilmic space determined by verbal interaction and bodily proximity.

Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn' is constructed around such dialogues. However, Lenfil'm critical assessments never mentioned this technique. On the one hand, shot/reverse-shot never embedded itself aesthetically in Soviet cinema: not since Lev Kuleshov's formative montage praxis in the 1920s had Soviet filmmakers engaged creatively with formal methods of American cinema. On the other, critical deconstructions of continuity-editing first surfaced in the 1960s, fuelled by the polemical imperatives of the Nouvelle Vague and the early films of Jean-Luc Godard in particular. Announcing this concern in his debut, *A Bout de souffle/Breathless* (1960), Godard's critique subsequently developed into an insistent politicization of continuity editing's spatial constructs as expressions of gendered alienation under capitalism. As *Une Femme mariée/A Married Woman* (1964) and *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle/Two or Three Things that I Know about Her* (1967) demonstrate, the complication or denial of reciprocal camera perspectives in male/female dialogue radically subverted conventional compositions of gendered looking, emphasizing instead a formal estrangement that drew attention to the social constructedness of cinematic images. Observing European auteurist polemics from the sidelines, Shpalikov adapted these formal preoccupations to depict a gendered power-struggle whose social resonance challenged the established ideological parameters of romance (and its opposites) in Soviet cinema.

Vertical divisions of screen-space reflect the shifting emotional dynamics of Lena and Viktor's brief encounter. Every stage of their acquaintance involves framings that would fit quite conventionally within the shot/reverse-shot structure, were it not for the array of perspectival subversions and background contrasts that are repeatedly introduced into the 'reciprocal', reverse-shot part. This camerawork goes beyond visual support for substantive dialogue between protagonists: it expresses a dissonant register of meaning, a 'different reaction' that critiques the verbal exchange *spatially*.

When Viktor boards the coach, a panning shot draws attention to the vertical partition to follow. The camera points frontally outwards from the coach to the road. Viktor crosses the split-pane windscreen twice before climbing aboard, when his significance is immediately announced by central positioning and pronounced key lighting. He self-confidently asks for a lift, before a cut between him and a group of seated passengers. After an exterior shot of the driver, we see Lena sitting in front of this group. Camerawork suggests the possibility of attraction when a rightwards pan brings Viktor into the frame alongside her: the movement imitates Lena noticing Viktor while looking in his direction before the pan begins. This configuration – Viktor on the left, Lena on the right – establishes the pattern to be manipulated as the plot develops.

A fleeting interruption to this neat exposition anticipates the visual subversions to follow. Viktor and Lena flirt: she breaks the ice and responds gamely to his joke about being a spy. Rather than alternate visually, the following shot shows a young woman sat behind them now occupying the frame (thus far, she has been visible between Viktor and Lena in the background). Looking directly into the camera, her enigmatic gaze – of one intruded upon – interrupts the flirtatious connection, providing the first of several cutaways to onlookers and 'echoing' pairs that will momentarily re-situate the intimate space developing between Viktor and Lena.

The next cut returns the earlier compositional principles: the protagonists are now framed diagonally, accentuating their bodily closeness. As Viktor talks, a slow zoom towards his face replicates Lena's seeming captivation. When the zoom finishes, the foreground has receded to the classic shot/reverse-shot perspective, pointing towards Viktor over Lena's left shoulder. Viktor is also accentuated by pronounced side-lighting, foreshadowing a shadier dimension to his character. When the perspective shifts in the next shot, it does not alternate to sit behind Viktor, but views the pair from off-left: he occupies the centre of the frame, she – the far-right. As Lena talks, this subtle discontinuity makes Viktor's facial expression less available than during his earlier dialogue. The subsequent zoom towards Lena is much quicker and shallower than that of Viktor in the earlier shot. This contrasting camerawork conveys the sense that the protagonists are paying different kinds of attention to one another.

While Viktor dominates the frame to the exclusion of background detail, during Lena's response we clearly see their enigmatic neighbour from the earlier cut-away, fixing Viktor intently from the seat behind. Lena's attentiveness to Viktor is thus opposed to the partnering image of his gaze upon her, in which, revealingly, another young woman figures. These are spatial foundations for a structure that develops with the stories that Viktor and Lena then exchange in this scene. As they open up, it is significant that Lena tells the overly intimate story of her first love (depicted in an overwrought, melodramatic flashback), while Viktor replies with the tale of a risky off-piste ski descent from his youth (shown as anonymous, travelogue-style action).

Earlier, Viktor tells Lena that he is a geologist, a profession around which a veritable cult of appreciation was established in the press, arts and literature of the Soviet 1960s. The male lead in *Korotkie vstrechi*, Semen Semenovich (Vladimir Vysotskii) is also an itinerant geologist. The gentle

poking of fun at this archetype in Viktor's chat-up is as close as *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* gets to any specifically Soviet cultural phenomena. Remarkably, there is neither a single official representative, nor mention of the state or CPSU, in the film. Instead, Viktor's unexplained drifting and opportunism towards Lena depend upon anonymity, transience and marginality. The literary consultant, Leonid Rakhmanov, approved of the subtle doubts that this sequence cast on the authenticity of Viktor's self-representation.²⁴⁷ In contrast, identifying as a 'simple-minded' viewer, Kiselev complained that Viktor 'has an interesting job – so show me this, and not alpine skiing'.²⁴⁸

A subsequent sequence, set in the diegetic present, sees shot/reverse-shot orthodoxies fully respected for thematic effect. After sneaking into the building where Lena's tour-group is watching Chekhov's *Vishnevyi sad/The Cherry Orchard*, assisted by a ticketless teenage boy, Viktor abandons his brief glimpse of the performance from the wings for the bar. There, he meets Pavlushka (Pavel Luspekaev), who drinks alone while the woman of his unrequited affections watches the play. Here, the consistent reciprocity of the reverse-shots fulfills the expectations denied in the earlier scene. Pavlushka speaks impassioned about his unhappy attachment and is gently mocked by the urbane-seeming Viktor, who appears on the left throughout. Twice, Viktor's voice is disembodied during longer shots of Pavlushka, which momentarily estranges Viktor from the emotional impact of the dialogue. However, consistent positioning ensures that, although strangers, these men 'know where each other is coming from'. Their contrasting emotional states remain anchored to stable perspectival alternations.

This interlude reactivates the visual patterns to be subverted when Viktor and Lena's acquaintance resumes and intensifies. Intercutting between scenes from *Vishnevyi sad* and the men in the bar is followed by a dance-party in the lobby during the interval between Acts Two and Three.

Although Viktor sees Lena from afar first, she ultimately approaches him. Until now, Viktor has always occupied the left of the frame. However, after an initial continuation, this changes as they begin to dance, announcing closer intimacy. The effect is powerful: their default positions alternate six times during the first lateral mid-shot alone. When Viktor flirtatiously asks cryptic questions about Lena's readiness for serious companionship, they pause, laughing and leaning in different directions, as if accentuating the alternation. Another shot with five positional turns ends intriguingly with Lena on the left for the first time. The switch suggests a new phase of disruption. Lena's agency now drives their connection, since she finds Viktor and invites him to dance, before confessing straightforwardly how much she likes him. From this moment onwards, the protagonists' bodies are caught in tension between mutual attraction and a seeming will to dominate the frame. The seductive spin of their dancing becomes a positional power-struggle, in which alternations represent attempts to persuade and coerce. Where their initial exchanges hinged on back-and-forth flirtation, a spatial tussle of presumption and refusal exposes cynicism and conflict in their encounter during the remainder of the film.

Viktor joins Lena in the auditorium as *Vishnevyi sad* resumes with Act Three, where the dancing performers immediately resonate with the previous lobby sequence: a central pillar divides the on-stage space vertically as actors duck towards one another in two lines, before pairing off. Lena now sits on the left, confirming the shift in their relationship. Cutting between shots of the play and the protagonists, the couple soon appears closer together by occupying only half of the frame. There is heightened erotic tension here: persistent leaning and glancing compels Viktor to take Lena's arm and suggest they leave. In the lobby and coulisses, their positional alternations continue as they talk and eventually embrace. The sole subversion of shot/reverse-shot perspectives in this sequence comes when Viktor bluntly rebuffs Lena's question about his interest in theatre, saying, 'what does that matter? Not one bit. What matters to me just now is you, and

you know that full well'. Strikingly, there is no shot of Lena's reaction during a pronounced pause in Viktor's speech here. Later, she expresses confusion about why she is sharing her feelings. The subsequent reversal is not perspectival, but instead flips the axis of the scene, placing Lena on the left and Viktor on the right as they lean on a piano. This reversal redirects the emotional flux of the dialogue towards the denouement of their cat-and-mouse game. Viktor pursues Lena and wants to woo her with words, 'but nothing interesting is coming into [his] head'. Eventually, when the long tracking-shot of their walk outside sees Viktor twice try to persuade Lena to spend the night with him, a low-angled head-shot of her reaction expresses unambiguous, if restrained, consternation.

Back at home, having promised to visit Viktor another time, Lena is alone in the dark before a mirror. She speaks, wishing them both the long-lasting happiness of the film's title. A disconnect between this heartfelt but naïve speech and the visual composition estranges Lena's utterance from that which occurred at their parting. Lena addresses herself in the shot/reverse-shot position: the back of her head is just visible on the extreme-left and her mirrored reflection appears on the right. Lena has retreated from Viktor into a dialogue with herself that seems to underscore the absence of emotional reciprocity, even answering her own question in the mirror-image: '*A ne slishkom li mnogogo khochu? Net. V samyi raz.*' ['am I not asking for too much? – No. Spot on']. The next morning, Lena takes her young daughter Liza to Viktor's dormitory. Her forthright manner is bossy and overfamiliar until, after an uncomfortably long silence, she suggests breakfast, leading to the outdoor café sequence in which the plotline abruptly collapses.

This grim scene has a farcical, tragicomic feel. The couple load a preposterous amount of food onto their trays; the canteen-girl munches, observing them expressionlessly; and Liza sings along tunelessly to a record about a woman's absent love, the ambient soundtrack fading at one point to

show a worn-looking Viktor one-on-one with the bleating child. Liza's hapless, disruptive presence incarnates Lena's maladroit pull towards her newfound companion and becomes the displaced object of Viktor's irritation after his rejected proposition. This triangle is an uneasy suspension of the adult engagement, in which Lena has forced Viktor's hand after the previous evening's ardent pronouncements.

When first Viktor, then Lena sends Liza to request a song, their breakdown in communication seems irretrievable. Lena attempts small talk and Viktor mumbles curtly in reply. Next, a saccharine pop record accompanies a close-up of Lena, who smiles unguardedly before persisting with Viktor. That the following shot does not reverse this perspective is by now unsurprising, but the frame is unusually deep, with Liza dancing by the café counter. In the foreground, Viktor occupies his default position on the left against the backdrop of a nearby river, while the back of Lena's white headscarf faces the camera, estranging her to the viewer. Viktor says he needs to make a call, and when Lena consents, he rises and swiftly exits the frame to the left.

Appropriately, their final moment together is the harshest denial of shot/reverse-shot reciprocity in the film. The camera lingers at length on the back of Lena's slightly bowed head, before cutting to Viktor walking along the riverbank. We do not see Lena's face again in the film: the visual denial of her reaction precludes any cathartic narrative resolution. Instead, just as Viktor escapes Lena, so the film breaks free from the ruins of its plot into an unexpected coda-sequence.

This celebrated coda is much referenced, but little analyzed. For Natal'ia Adamenko, it is a straightforwardly 'poetic' climax to the film's everyday realism, which cathartically relieves the failed relationship. Adamenko reads this ending as an invitation to emotional reflection, a spectatorial free-association liberated from the film's dismantling of formal and thematic conventions.²⁴⁹ The drift of this sequence through disconnected and unspecified provincial

settings – from an autumnal, industrial environment to a rural idyll, then back to a widening, semi-urban river – does break radically from the film’s earlier visual constructs. Its departure is also supported by the wistful music of Viacheslav Ovchinnikov. The theme progressively reduces from orchestral swells to a lone accordion that, in a striking image, an adolescent girl plays while sitting on the barge. Meskhiev’s camera eschews any anthropomorphic perspective here, suggesting instead a carefully determined distance from the landscapes and their inhabitants. On the basis of Shpalikov’s dedication of this sequence to the memory of Jean Vigo, the cinephilic attachments of *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn’* have long been taken as a filmographic given.²⁵⁰ However, beyond that celebrated reference, this ending is also the culmination of the film’s critical subtext on the precarious relationship between art and social reality in the Soviet mid-1960s.

One short scene directly preceding the café sequence is crucial to this register. An old dockworker and a younger man in an overcoat down glasses of vodka by a bleak quayside. They then take leave of one another, and as the dockworker gathers up his effects, he shouts hoarsely, ‘*Khoziaika! Konchai plavanie vpolniat’ . Seichas nachnem tvoi balagan svorachivat’*’ [‘Missus! Stop your sailing. We’re about to pull your open-air stage down’]. The next shot reveals the addressee as the canteen-girl. The dockworker’s line feels like a blast of working-class sarcasm about the makeshift structures in this grim setting. Considered poetically, these words also concern patterns of spatial arrangement for action throughout the film, especially in scenes that anticipate the drift of the final sequence by cutting away from the plot to fleetingly observe such anonymous background characters as these. As well as denoting an open-air performance space, *balagan* is the name given to travelling shows (carnies) and a genre-term for low farce, slapstick or Punch & Judy-style fairground booths. As the film progresses, *balagan* reflects disparate performative modes in each of these applications: the perfunctory, provincial tour of *Vishnevyyi sad*; Viktor and

Lena's trite assignation in the coulisses; and the buffoonish morning exercises on the dormitory-boat, where comically diverse bodies jog, silhouetted behind opaque windows, as a pianist plays a jaunty accompaniment. This spectrum of human theatrics is not the limit of the term's suggestiveness. All of these scenes occur in spaces that open unexpectedly onto a populous diegesis – the stage and the auditorium; the lobby and the coulisses; the dormitory-corridors and the boat-deck – in which bodily movement *through* and *around* the ostensible 'performance' interrupts the continuity of its narrative.

Svorachivat' is also implicitly ambiguous here. One obvious meaning is the termination of 'pulling down': we soon see the man in the overcoat winding up a canopy behind Viktor and Lena. Early in the barge-sequence, there is an intriguing cut-away to the far bank of the river, where an outdoor *balagan* is being dismantled while men carry chairs away from its stage. The dismantling of this *balagan*, the physical stage for an unknown spectacle, could be interpreted as an allegory on the film's abandonment of its own spatiotemporal unities. Thereafter, the barge provides a culmination for the visual motif of transport, which fleetingly diverts the camera away from plot foci throughout *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*. In this sense, the directional meanings of *svorachivat'* – to swerve, to turn off from, to displace – encapsulate earlier patterns of vehicular movement in the frame.

Lena first appears in a series of tracking-shots during the opening sequence, as her excursion group returns to its coach. A narratively unmotivated series of shots, taken from and of this coach travelling along a forest highway, forms the second sequence. It overtakes motorcyclists; is itself overtaken by a military truck; Meskhiev's wide-panning camera sweeps around a distant campfire and, deep in the frame, fixes a giant bale of hay, atop which sits a young couple (the girl leaps up and performs a loose-limbed dance for the passing camera). These fleeting glimpses of anonymous

diegetic presences create an uncertain sense of direction in the film, before there is any plot to speak of. Kozintsev admired these compositions yet dismissed them, in the context of the story, as ‘Turgenev landscapes’.²⁵¹ Presumably, this criticism implied that the sequence was basking in the refinement of its own impressionistic visual style, rather than motivating the background action. This judgement seems warranted in principle, but categorically misguided: Kozintsev’s literary reference contends that this mobile camera wants to describe landscapes, without acknowledging the visual framework of its movement *through* them.

The penultimate sequence, leading into the ending with the barge, reprises the second sequence’s interplay between foregrounded anonymity and background digression. Having fled, Viktor boards a bus. A pensive young conductress stands nearby; Viktor’s gaze falls upon her but is not returned. The next shot shows the conductress from Viktor’s perspective with her eyes averted: through the window behind her, a barge passes laterally rightwards and Ovchinnikov’s melancholy theme begins. The enigmatic, accordion-playing girl then accompanies the barge downriver, until the third-from-last and penultimate shots of the film, when we see the raincoat-clad adolescent who snuck Viktor into *Vishnevyi sad*, standing on a high iron bridge. The girl looks up and smiles as she passes underneath, before the camera sweeps upwards and zooms towards the boy on the bridge. A cut shows him whistling enthusiastically in close-up, but the camera denies any further exchange, showing neither figure again. Instead, it dips from the bridge towards the empty river, before the film ends on a long-shot of the barge sailing into the distance.

The missed encounters that bookend this sequence have parallels elsewhere in the film. The conductress replaces Lena as the object of Viktor’s roaming gaze, and though her apparent immersion in thought resists implication in his story, the barge’s subsequent occupation of this scene leaves open (or behind) the possibility that romantic misadventure between strangers might

begin afresh. At a Third TO *Khudsovet*, the influential author and screenwriter Vera Panova enthused about the conductress and accordion-player, describing these shots as ‘a purely aesthetical pleasure’.²⁵² However, in providing visual relief from thematic disappointments, this is not as straightforward an equation as beautiful faces trumping ugly behaviour in the poetic fantasy of Shpalikov’s cosmos. It is fitting that the callow provincial adolescent is the final character that we see. Unseen since his earlier pairing with Viktor, he is transposed into the poetic coda as an impassioned observer, who might represent Shpalikov’s ideal spectator, having cheekily overcome his exclusion from Chekhov and drifted to the bridge. The boy’s whistle to the accordion-playing girl seems akin to Panova’s approval, in its recognition that this drifting sequence has cut through the bathetic farce of the plot. Its abandonment of narrative raises the question of how these unexpected aesthetical pleasures function in the context of a tawdry story.

Cinephilia

The homages of Shpalikov’s barge scene to *L’Atalante*, dir. by Jean Vigo (1934), are easily traceable. The vessel itself replicates the *Atalante*, the barge on which the newlyweds of Vigo’s film sail; the accordion-playing girl emulates the free-spirited ex-sailor, Père Jules (Michel Simon); the pop records, quayside and rugged background characters of the café sequence evoke the hungry impoverishment and proletarian carnivalesque of Vigo’s film. Even the dockworker invokes *L’Atalante*, his cry of ‘*khoziika!*’ echoing ‘*La Patronne*’, the title bestowed on Juliette (Dita Parlo) by Père Jules.

In Shpalikov’s unrealized screenwriting debut, *Prichal/The Wharf* (1960), plotting and dramatic action is entirely beholden to *L’Atalante* for its romantic mood and marginalized, rough-and-tumble atmosphere. A barge-skipper is engaged to be married to a young woman who doubts his

commitment to her over his roving life and earlier entanglements. During the barge's tug down the Moscow-River, he disappears into the city, kidnaps his son from a previous relationship, and vagabonds through the night with the small boy, leaving his fiancé Katia to abandon the barge and the grizzled sailor Pavlik to search for him. During this time, Katia has a series of eccentric encounters with demobbed soldiers, a lion-tamer and an aeronautical engineer. Besides gendered role-reversals and the substitution of parodic late-Soviet exotica for French cultural motifs, anyone familiar with *L'Atalante* would be deeply struck by the transposition of Vigo's story into this forlorn love letter to nocturnal Moscow, where improbable adventures lurk behind every corner for the woman in search of her unreliable companion. For the skipper, who cannot handle the reality of their situation, there is only a succession of grim confrontations with his troubled past, until ducking and diving into a cinema to kill time with the small boy before they can return to the barge.²⁵³

Prichal was released into production at Mosfil'm, but immediately closed following the suicide of its approved director, Vladimir Kitaiskii.²⁵⁴ Re-engaging with aesthetical and thematic strategies from that aborted project, *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* can be framed as Shpalikov's more mature emulation of what Riazantseva calls his affinity with the 'magical cinema' of Vigo and Marcel Carné.²⁵⁵ *L'Atalante*, a pillar of Western cinephilia, is an inherently political object of study. Its mythical production, enforced re-cutting, and troubled journey to restoration speak historically of how auteurism was first accommodated within a major feature-film industry, which deemed this artistic practice ideologically inimical.

L'Atalante is a romance of 'love lost and miraculously found' with a tripartite denouement that Michael Temple frames as the 'union – disunion – reunion' of Jean (Jean Dasté) and Juliette.²⁵⁶ It commences with their marriage procession, is disrupted by their separation after an argument,

and resolved by Juliette's return to the barge for reconciliation with the disconsolate Jean. This linearity is deceptive: *L'Atalante* begins *in medias res*, with a wedding rather than an acquaintance, and ends with a kind of mirrored ceremony for this 'new' beginning. The lovers embrace, before an aerial shot quickly overtakes the sailing barge, as the earthly plot is overtaken by a brief flight along the shimmering surface of the Seine.

Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn' uncomfortably implies that this cannot succeed in a late-Soviet setting. Instead, what remain are glimpses of emotional disenchantment from this 'workaday world'. When Lena beams at the heroic fireman in her flashback story, the arresting image of her rapture resembles Juliette's face appearing in fantasy before Jean as he swims underwater. However, Lena's affections belong to a shattered past. Her subsequent flight and dive into the sea appears to allude to a suicide-attempt. The point is not simply that Shpalikov's lovers fail while Vigo's succeed against all odds. It is that the poetic subversion of romance in *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* is a contamination of the late-Soviet scene, infecting its bleak diegetic world with an enchanted lyricism, yet ultimately denying the possibility of lasting connections.

In places, *L'Atalante* itself has a distinctly 'Soviet' feel, most strikingly in the low-angled shots of its Russian-émigré cameraman, Boris Kaufman. Its isolated, looming human figures against huge skies recall *Zemlia/Earth*, dir. by Oleksandr Dovzhenko (1930). The documentary *Vesnoi/In Springtime*, dir. by Mikhail Kaufman (1929) – the brother of Boris – shows Kyiv 'thawing out' and features several highly poetic sequences of river-traffic, moving vehicles, and observations of nature, all evocative of the earthy, lively and industrial backdrops to Shpalikov's, and Vigo's, films. Bernard Eisenschitz calls Vigo 'one of the first cineastes to feed his art with a knowing cinephilia', before giving a description of this film's 'Sovietness' that could easily stand in for all that is considered Vigo-like in *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*: '*L'Atalante* opposes the old and the new,

the rural village and industrial ports, as only Soviet cinema had done, having liberated the image from the city and from nature'.²⁵⁷ Beyond these aesthetical affinities, Shpalikov's identification with Vigo is also a protest against the ideologically motivated cuts to which both filmmakers' work was repeatedly submitted.

L'Atalante was a compromise brokered by Vigo's independent producer and financial backer, Jacques Louis-Nounez, with Gaumont studio. After the scandalous banning of *Zéro de conduite/Zero for Conduct* (1933), Louis-Nounez hoped that a newly commissioned romantic screenplay would encourage Vigo to work within genre-parameters that would appeal to the powerful network of French distributors and theatre-owners. These potential buyers are said to have reacted with such hostility at the notorious trade-screening of *L'Atalante* that Gaumont's representatives decided to recut and rename the film, removing key sequences and layering a popular romantic ballad over many scenes.²⁵⁸ The result of this process, executed as Vigo lay dying from tuberculosis, was an edit named after the ballad: *Le Chaland qui passe/ The Passing Barge* (1934) had a limited theatrical run before disappearing from French screens.

Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn' suggests that this history was not lost on Shpalikov. There is a different Soviet connection to that which Eisenschitz advances. We do not know which version of *L'Atalante* Shpalikov saw: the partial, 1940 restoration produced by former Gaumont executive Henri Beauvais that so excited post-war Parisian cinephiles, or the early 1950s edit of that cut, supervised by Henri Langlois at the Cinémathèque française.²⁵⁹ However, we know that Sergei Iutkevich – promulgator of 1930s Lenfil'm continuity discourse, Francophile and VGIK tutor in the 1950s – attended the aforementioned trade-screening of *L'Atalante*, alongside the director of Sovkino.²⁶⁰ Iutkevich's lifelong contact with the French filmmaking milieu makes his detailed 1970s account of the film's compromised production unsurprising. Accordingly, it is possible that

this important production-history figured in the VGIK curriculum, alongside the rare privilege (even by Western standards) of access to the film.

That this affinity dates from Shpalikov's (relatively recent) VGIK days is supported by the remarkable fact that nobody at Lenfil'm mentioned *L'Atalante* during or post-production. Rather, the most repeated name was, justifiably, Michelangelo Antonioni, one of Western cinema's foremost innovators with visual composition and non-linear narratives, and an intellectual leader of Italian cinema's post-neorealist critique of late-industrial capitalism. This focus permitted surprisingly detailed discussion of Antonioni's much-lauded, post-1960 work by leading Soviet critics, who could be entrusted with *Iskusstvo kino* articles replete with formal analysis, provided that they parachute the requisite orthodox Marxist orthodoxies into these readings.²⁶¹ Unlike Vigo's lost masterpiece, Antonioni's influence did not escape Lenfil'm cineastes, whose SK memberships permitted attendance at occasional, 'closed' screenings of significant foreign art-cinema. A film as seemingly European as *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* spoke back to Antonioni's aesthetics clearly enough to register, but its thematic cross-fermentation was harder for the studio's luminaries to address or accept.

The oft-deployed critical diagnostic *nekommunikabel'nost'* – the breakdown of communication between individuals and the unnameable anxiety of their observational positions in the world – has since become an intellectual cliché for describing in Russian the uneasy existential condition in Antonioni's films. However, it was riskier for cineastes to sanction *nekommunikabel'nost'* in depictions of late-Soviet society than for criticism of 'Antonionian' motifs to be applied symptomatically to Soviet films that seemed to actualize this mood. The studios adopted this attitude towards Shpalikov's debut and *Iul'skii dozhd' / July Rain*, dir. by Marlen Khutsiev (1966), the most recent film of his collaborator on *Zastava*. Rather than recognize Antonioni's influence as

a fresh aesthetical prism through which to examine societal change, many critics discerned – with varying insightfulness – a liberal sprinkling of flashy devices and inorganic tropes.²⁶²

Thus, Kozintsev again objected to derivative *mise-en-scène*: ‘*uzhe prielis’ loty gorodskikh peizazhei* [we’ve had our fill of urban landscapes]. We’re not talking about imitating Alain Resnais or Antonioni. [...] Better to live in art by your own wits, though there’s nobody who doesn’t live by the shared tensions of culture in his time’.²⁶³ He then expressed knowing caution: ‘what you absolutely don’t need is the following kind of suggestion: ‘the relationship between these people is morally vulgar because the surroundings in which they live are morally devastated.’ [...] I’m speaking directly and harshly about this because I don’t want your first work to take a big hit in its unguarded parts’.²⁶⁴ In contrast, Sokolov stumbled while comparing Lena to Antonioni’s heroines: ‘it just seems as though she’s pinned him down. [...] even in *L’Eclisse*, Monica Vitti wouldn’t have acted like this’.²⁶⁵ This was misguided: in each of her collaborations with Antonioni to date – *L’Avventura/Adventure* (1960), *La Notte/Night* (1961), *L’Eclisse/Eclipse* (1962) and *Il Deserto rosso/Red Desert* (1965) – it is very much Vitti’s characters that are pursued by male protagonists.

Nonetheless, it is hard *not* to think of Antonioni – however vaguely – during the denouement of Shpalikov’s film. There, Shpalikov even registers the influence of Vigo on Antonioni. Juliette’s forlorn walk through the dockyards of La Villette anticipates Giuliana’s (Vitti) confused wandering with her young son by the factory gates in the opening sequence of *Deserto rosso*. This is reproduced in turn by Lena’s visit to Viktor’s dormitory boat with her daughter, clad in coats that recall Giuliana’s stylization, as they walk to the café. Thereafter, its final two sequences are so evocative of *L’Eclisse* as to become central to the politics of Shpalikov’s cinephilia.

L'Eclisse ends by radically abandoning its plotline: Vittoria (Vitti) and Piero (Alain Delon), having begun a casual sexual relationship, arrange to meet later the same day. However, as this scene ends, Vittoria descends a staircase to the street and, looking away purposefully, walks out of the frame and the film entirely. Neither she nor Piero (who is also not seen again) keep their rendezvous. Instead, the camera shoots the arranged meeting-place and the depopulated settings of significant earlier scenes. *L'Eclisse* thus empties its narrative in favour of a structural estrangement. All trace of their relationship dissolves into cinematic past time, replaced by architecturally uncanny shots of geometrically framed construction-materials and familiar, yet uninhabited, locations.

In its own coda, *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* shares the thematic preoccupations of its 'emptying' estrangement – sex and societal change – with *L'Eclisse*. However, an independent Vittoria asserts autonomy by walking out of a film and a relationship that her partner also relinquishes, whereas Lena is humiliated by Viktor's misogynistic rejection and abandoned with her child. The sex happens in Antonioni's permissive Italy, but is thwarted in Shpalikov's oppressive USSR, and yet both films deploy *nekommunikabel'nost'* to collapse their narratives of a couple's ostensible attempt to overcome the emotional and societal distance between them as individuals. Accordingly, Shpalikov's cinephilia is inseparable from his socio-political outlook: artistic strategies that evoke European auteurism are also those that shape a social portrait of Soviet youth throughout his 1960s screenwriting. The impromptu dance-parties, dialogic refrains from lyrics, courted young divorcees and uneasily hovering masculinities are recurrent motifs that define Shpalikov's auteurism as a cinematic style and a worldview. It was not only that Shpalikov's deeply personal experiences determined this aesthetics, but also that macro-questions of societal transformation and generational change were impossible to approach directly or resolve in officially acceptable narratives, as the outraged denunciations of *Zastava* demonstrated. This required a more oblique

register. While Shpalikov's cinephilia met its newfound Soviet contexts self-referentially and subtextually, *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* developed a more overtly confrontational polemic with the cultural values inherent to the developing Lenfil'm model of institutional auteurism through associations between its diegetic staging of the everyday and the social archetypes in *Vishnevyi sad*.

Vishnevyi sad

A touring performance of *Vishnevyi sad* by MKhAT (*Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi akademicheskii teatr/Moscow Artistic Academy Theatre*) is directly juxtaposed with Viktor and Lena's unfolding acquaintance. This fragmented view of a familiar work produces intertextual associations as rich as Shpalikov's cinephilic allusions. However, unlike those filmic references, this approach proved highly controversial among Lenfil'm cineastes with contesting cultural attachments to Chekhovian drama and/or contemporary theatre. Shot from the stalls, these brief episodes document the aesthetics, language and politics in a late-Soviet staging of Chekhov, while establishing thematic dialogues with the film's plot and social perspectives. This combination is at once sensitive and iconoclastic. Shpalikov's highlights reveal a careful reading of the play, yet the film's episodic shifts in mood and expressive register seem purposefully jarring in sequences like the incongruous dancing in the lobby between acts, followed by Viktor and Lena's abrupt exit from their seats just after Act Three has begun.

Characterization in the film dialogues with parallel themes of chronic miscommunication, emotional inadequacy, cynicism and naïveté in *Vishnevyi sad*, historically reigniting the play's social portraiture of cultural stagnation, economic collapse, class mobility and spiritual redemption. It is temporally ironic that *Vishnevyi sad* appears within this filmic 1966. As John Tulloch observes, this more than any Chekhov play is concerned with social mobility and dramatic societal change,

two characteristics that Woll associates with this precise historical moment in Soviet cinema.²⁶⁶ While the provincial estates in Chekhov's earlier dramatic works function as 'historically typical but timeless' Russian settings, Ranevskaia's property is threatened by the 'modern' capitalism of Lopakhin and the revolutionary agenda of Trofimov.²⁶⁷ Reading the landowners' denial and inability to adapt to the new order as Chekhov's most pointed critique of societal transition in Russia, Tulloch argues that 'the mood is elegiac, compounded of an intensely human crisis of identity at the personal level and a distancing, comic inconsistency of interaction'.²⁶⁸ This distinctly Chekhovian *nekommunikabel'nost'* ripples throughout *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*. The MKhAT footage demonstrates how the play's direct representation is motivated by its tragicomic treatment of personal and societal breakdown. *These* sequences are not elegiac, but riven by immediate pressures in the dramatic action. Shpalikov deploys Chekhov's socially oblivious subjects ironically, both as immutable cultural archetypes and as displaced markers of the film's contemporary malaise.

Our first glimpse of *Vishnevyi sad* emphasizes its degradation in this performance. A slow, rightward tracking-shot moves across faces of audience-members, tilting in steady zigzags before arriving at Lena and her girlfriend. Portentous percussion rumbles over this visual wave: only from subsequent dialogue can we situate the scene around the end of Act Two. This lag complicates our adjustment to the action, which remains unseen until Ranevskaia calls for the gathering to return home. MKhAT has substituted the 'sound of a string snapping', Chekhov's famous contrapuntal stage-direction and an instantly recognizable cultural marker of stagnant, provincial melancholy, for this percussion. By foregrounding this deviation from the dramatic text, the film makes *its* audience strain to identify the action through a provocative mirroring of the concentrating spectators at the MKhAT performance. Shpalikov's ambivalence is thus announced indirectly. This shot ingeniously imitates another celebrated moment from *Vishnevyi*

sad, too harsh to be explicitly aimed at fictitious or real Soviet auditoriums in 1966. These are Ranevskaia's lines to Lopakhin from earlier in Act Two: '*Vam ne p'esy smotret', a smotret' by po chashche na samikh sebia. Kak vy vse sero zhivete, kak mnogo govorite nenuzhnogo*' ['Instead of going to see plays, you should take a good look at yourself. What a drab life you lead, what a lot of nonsense you talk'].²⁶⁹

A tipsy tramp's approach to the roadside gathering of protagonists, shaken from their introspection by this unsettling class-outsider, is the first shot of the rather mawkish MKhAT performance. Although faithful to this tension, its performers seem to overact stiltedly, each utterance lending the scene a vaudevillian air that detracts from the shock of the confrontation. In the play, Ranevskaia's excessive generosity is not simply a kind-hearted gesture, but also an alarming signal. Duped by a crooked lover and unable to manage her estate, she appears to give gold coins to the tramp as much from nervousness as empathy. However, the filmic sequence skews this moment towards the theatre-audience's reaction. Overlaid with the soft xylophone chimes that accompanied Lena's captivated reaction to Viktor's tale on the coach, we see the stirred faces of spectators as Ranevskaia reacts endearingly to Varia lamenting this feckless gesture. What the play frames as a tragic alarm, the film subjects to an apparent misreading by this provincial audience: of benevolence, of solidarity, of the Russian philanthropic ideal that Chekhov himself described as having 'such an arbitrary quality'.²⁷⁰ This scornful deformation highlights the cultural impoverishment of the contemporary production, and in so doing, exposes a reductive and trite reading of Chekhov's politics. The audience's ideologically compliant reaction feels like a gesture to appease official screening of this uncommon inter-organizational sequence and thus deflect attention from the film's problematic contemporary marginalities.

The exposure of MKhAT as a ‘tawdry’ institution (according to Iakov Rokhlin, the Third TO editor-in-chief with a background in theatre) is not the only nod to the politics of Soviet theatrical production here.²⁷¹ When Viktor and the adolescent enter the auditorium, they hear Trofimov’s speech to Ania about the intergenerational burden of serf-ownership and the need to atone through suffering and exertion. Initially, Viktor seems amused by the ‘arcane’ language and intrigued by the spectacle, but his laughter is also a self-referential jibe: the first Chekhovian role of Kirill Lavrov’s stage-career was in 1965 as Solenii in *Tri sestry/Three Sisters* at Leningrad’s Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr.²⁷² There are obvious parallels between Viktor’s assertive sweet-talk with Lena and Trofimov’s impassioned but priggish discourse to an inspired Ania. However, Trofimov’s speech fades when Viktor exits towards the authentic confusion of Pavlushka’s unrequited love in the bar. The MKhAT performance has struggled to engage its audience, a failure reinforced structurally when the dancing in the theatre’s lobby – first raucous, then romantic – segues into the parlour-party scene in Ranevskiaia’s house at the beginning of Act Three.

This provocative juxtaposition was hotly debated at the Lenfil’ m *Khudsovet*. When Kiselev lambasted its basic premise – ‘in no Soviet theatre is there dancing during the intervals of Chekhov’ – Shpalikov replied acerbically that the film is set not in a theatre, but a *dom kul’tury* [cultural centre], where ‘these things happen’.²⁷³ Desecrating the contemporary Soviet packaging of high culture seems closer to Shpalikov’s true position than the more repeated accusation that this film attacked Chekhov as a paragon of the literocentric intelligentsia values that became sublimated into the ideological system of 1960s Soviet narrative cinema. The unsurprising basis for this argument was the dissonance created by such clashing dramaturgical registers. Sokolov discerned artistic intent behind this but refrained from naming it: ‘the capaciousness of Chekhov’s phraseology is such that it’s killing your text. Here, there’s obviously some kind of polemical

obstacle being erected, which personally I didn't get'.²⁷⁴ The only attempt to define this polemic came from Fait, who hovered uneasily in the Third TO after the completion of *Mal'chik i devochka* and was soon to be dismissed from Lenfil'm in the wake of its politically scandalous 'shelving'. For Fait, Chekhov's 'art of the phrase', while undeniably deep and precise, could only underscore the artificiality of the play as a study of societal change, whereas, 'nearby, everyday life is being spoken, [...] which works in favour of the characters in the film'.²⁷⁵

Neither of these readings acknowledged that the target may not have been Chekhov's phraseology, but its reductive contemporary staging. With recent Lenfil'm history in mind, we can productively approach the Chekhovian detour in *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* as a polemical response to the continuity classicism of *Dama s sobachkoi*. A literal continuity between these productions invites comparative aesthetical analysis. By 1965, Meskhiev was highly regarded: Kiselev went as far as calling him Lenfil'm's best cinematographer, when informing Goskino that he would shoot Shpalikov's debut.²⁷⁶ This reassuring ambition was vindicated by the praise that met Meskhiev's work, here, especially from Kozintsev.²⁷⁷ However, there was no acknowledgement of the obvious parallels between Viktor and Lena's escape from the auditorium, and the flight of Gurov and Anna to the coulisses during the intermission at the Saratov theatre in *Dama*. Although this reference seems to pay homage to the virtuosity of Moskvina, it also appears like an iconoclastic challenge, in the context of Shpalikov's systematic intertextual subversions of romantic narratives. Two contrasting visions of Lenfil'm auteurism were at stake: one grounded in the reverential cultural politics of an old guard taking pragmatic refuge in literary adaptation; the other, looking towards European art-cinema for aesthetical means by which to critique late-Soviet culture's complicated relationship with the experiential realities of the USSR.

This flight is the most melodramatic moment in Kheifits' pointedly restrained film. Anna's confession of unhappiness and Gurov's quiet ardency combine at the end of a striking shot-sequence. Despite multiple changes of direction *within* the frame, the couple's movements are contained by a series of steady rightward tracking and crane-shots, which link across cuts as if pulling the protagonists towards seclusion. The bannisters and shaded arches of this space are evoked when Viktor and Lena reach *their* coulisses; the faint diegetic strings from *Vishnevyy sad* recall the swelling love theme from *Dama*; and Lena's admission about her ex-husband – '*On – chelovek neplokhoi [...] Skuchnyi on chelovek. Ne glupyyi, a skuchnyi*' ['He wasn't a bad man [...] He was a boring man. Not stupid, but boring'] – replicates Anna's bitter reflection about *her* provincial husband: '*mozhet byt', on – chestnyi, khoroshii chelovek, no ved' on... lakei*' [maybe he's an honest, good man, but he's... a lackey']. This proximity comes close to direct visual quotation, when Viktor embraces Lena and kisses her neck, just as Gurov and Anna, a movement reflecting the anxious passion of the reunited lovers in *Dama* but occurring as a fumbling grab here. There is a stark contrast between the former's elevated feelings and the latter's awkward intimacies and banal conversation. However, both encounters are interesting responses to the question of how representations of sexuality can be dissociated from the late-Soviet requisites of compliant plotting. Although the Saratov theatre-setting is akin to the conventional reproduction of bygone gentility in MKhAT, the uninhibited emotionality of this sequence contrasts with the stiltedness of that theatrical performance. By removing his protagonists to an almost identical position for their most intimate moment, Shpalikov at once privileges the cinematic Chekhov of Kheifits over the MKhAT staging and counters the romantic narrative of *Dama* with a liaison that unravels cheaply.

Studio Screening and Aesthetic Anxieties

Such comparisons were not made during studio-level assessments. Only after the Bergamo award did a Lenfil'm CPSU Committee-meeting [Partiinyi komitet; Partkom] link these films, contrasting 'the clearly defined anti-bourgeois position of *Dama s sobachkoi*' to 'Shpalikov's film, [which is] devoid of this clarity, this auteurist position. This is an elliptical film [...] with skimpy content'.²⁷⁸ Confusingly, this statement then praised *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* artistically, but also referred to earlier concerns around its ideological compliance. Its screening had particularly alarmed Kiselev, who wondered aloud how it could have been made by the same person who wrote *Ia shagaiu po Moskve*.²⁷⁹ However, the only official discussion of ideological concerns was the first (and seemingly, only) sitting of the new *Rezhisserskaia kollegiia* on April 8 1966, convened by Kiselev and Lenfil'm editor-in-chief Golovan' in advance of the film's submission to the Leningrad CPSU Obkom. As noted, leading filmmakers' negativity towards the main *Khudsovet* and the evolution of the TOs had posed stark questions, that January, about the adequacy of Lenfil'm's executive-production model. By April, the imminent submission of such a challenging film brought these anxieties into urgent focus.

Its stated task was to advise studio-management on whether to proceed with submission or demand wholesale changes from Shpalikov. Strikingly, this debate occurred on the same day as the completion of the Twenty-third CPSU Congress in Moscow, meaning that the executive agenda of Brezhnev's administration was being formally ratified at the very moment when the fate of Shpalikov's debut was being decided. Kiselev had already insisted (oxymoronically) that the board's decision would be a 'mandatory recommendation for the filmmaker'.²⁸⁰ However, 'corridor rumours' suggested a pressing crisis. *Khudruk* Vengerov immediately demanded a definition of the complaint:

We must ask the question: is 'sadness' [thematically] forbidden to us? No, and we must not fear it. But it will always be an 'emergency' when we have an original, poetic, sharply individual picture. It's definitely an 'emergency' when it's original and a debut to boot, and we must all participate in [fixing] this, rather than ending up as people with divergent opinions who are concerned about nothing but how to get the film through submission.²⁸¹

This gloomily sarcastic prognosis countered the suggestion of an 'emergency' caused by a story of loneliness and strained sexual politics. The film's glaring absence of Party and state representatives only deepened the uncertainty of Lenfil'm cineastes in attendance. Unexpectedly, the most artistically orthodox veteran present turned out to be its most sensitive professional viewer. Aleksandr Ivanov firstly offered a pragmatic definition of the predicament:

I understand your situation, comrade-managers, when after the Party Congress, after *what* was said there about the tasks facing the arts, and *how* it was said, you are required to appear before the Regional Committee [Obkom] with a film like this. What is the Regional Committee? It is the people who will bring the resolutions of our Congress to life, who will monitor what we do, of course, in correspondence with the instructions and tasks that were specified at the Congress, and this film will probably be chalked up against you not as a plus, but a minus.²⁸²

At the time of the Twenty-third CPSU Congress, the urban cultural intelligentsia was reeling from the recent imprisonment of Andrei Siniavskii and Iulii Daniel', convicted of 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' for publishing writings abroad in February 1966. The Congress provided an opportunity for grandstanding on their conviction. A snarling attack by the writer Mikhail Sholokhov on these 'rogues with black consciences', alongside his programme for an authentic, Party-led Soviet literature, gave seasoned observers like Ivanov – who had adapted Sholokhov's epic *Podniataia tselina / Virgin Soil Upturned-Harvest on the Don* in three parts (1959-1961) – little doubt of the deteriorating political climate. There was no vocal counterbalance to Sholokhov's enthusiasm for 'the memorable 1920s, when they handed down judgements without leaning on the strictly defined Criminal Codex'.²⁸³

Lenfil'm required the strategic counsel of influential, CPSU-aligned filmmakers to navigate this changing atmosphere. Sergei Gerasimov, the pre-war Lenfil'm luminary who oversaw the reworking of *Zastava* into *Mne dvadtsat' let* at his Gor'kii studio powerbase, was growing in USSR-level political stature as a CPSU Congress delegate. In 1965, Gerasimov was appointed 'Goskino *Khudruk*' of Shpalikov's debut: this does not suggest artistic involvement, but rather, the authority of a high-ranking guarantor in Moscow for a production that was not without political risk, considering the scandal around *Zastava* in 1963. Although Lenfil'm did not formally invoke this insurance-option, it appears to have protected the TO, and Shpalikov, during production (Vengerov wrote in panic to Gerasimov just before the April meeting, asking for support).²⁸⁴ Shpalikov's own letter to the Obkom Culture Department in June 1965 – an extremely unusual address from a non-Party filmmaker to a regional CPSU organization – confirms this motivation. This letter closes with reference to the appointment of Gerasimov, who 'warmly supports the screenplay and all orientations of our work'.²⁸⁵ We neither know if this really was Gerasimov's position, nor if he shared Ivanov's concerns regarding the film's political fate. However, at

Lenfil'm, Ivanov defended the innovations of *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* as Gerasimov had supported those of *Zastava*. For Ivanov, the barge sequence was the aesthetical cipher in this '*kartina razdumii o zhizni*' ['movie of meditations about life']:

I think that I wouldn't have felt this *vzvolnovannost'* [agitation] if the thing had ended on the bus, but then the river flows, the barge floats by, and the music attuned me, somehow, so that I watched all this and felt its shattering bitterness, and I wasn't in the least shocked at how many times the barge floats by or how often the girl with the accordion is shown, how it plays out. I don't know, maybe I'm insufficiently coldblooded in my evaluation of all this, but precisely the *obilie etikh kadrov* [abundance of these shots] has affected me incredibly.²⁸⁶

To paraphrase Ivanov, the 'shattering bitterness of abundant shots' is essential to this film's poetic structure. Its background panoramas, cinephilic allusions and subverted reverse-shots all challenge the inherent primacy of plot with alternative, aesthetical registers of meaning. This fuelled Kiselev's criticism of 'directionless talent', 'empty' characters and 'gloomy' landscapes: 'the film is about nothing at all'.²⁸⁷ His only concrete demands were for an unambiguous explanation of Viktor's escape and a fuller affirmation of his 'interesting job'.²⁸⁸ This new, hastily convened board proceeded like the much-lamented studio-level *Khudsovet*, its so-called 'mandatory recommendations' offering little more than suggestions for marginal tinkering.

At this meeting, Kheifits was particularly challenged by Shpalikov's predicament, perhaps not only around their unaddressed Chekhovian intersection, but also because of the distance between his impassioned public defense of *Mne dvadtsat' let* and his negative reaction to this new work.²⁸⁹

Whatever its merits, Kheifits saw no repertory viability for Shpalikov's *avtorskoe kino*. His simultaneous artistic critique and political defense suspected the alternative poetics of cinema towards which *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* gestured:

If we're asking: should we go on making such pictures? Absolutely not.

Should we advise Shpalikov, so that his skills, his purely directorial abilities, might be directed towards something more meaningful?

Absolutely yes. Can a movement of some kind be formed on the back of this picture? It cannot, in the conditions of our studio and Soviet cinema. But I repeat, I see nothing anti-artistic, nothing opportunistic, nothing bungled – which really would have been an emergency – in this film.²⁹⁰

These judgments encapsulate the true rationale for the *kollegiia*, whose purpose was entirely at odds with its outcome. The veteran filmmakers simply recorded their artistic objections as a precautionary insurance against accusations of encouragement for such experimentation at Lenfil'm, should the film be rejected. Meanwhile, executives and masters alike professed the desire to retain Shpalikov in the Third TO, which was, however, set on the repertory course that Kiselev feared and Kheifits suspected. Typically, there was little sense of what this *kollegiia* had achieved. No concrete decision on the film's thematic safety was reached, and Shpalikov came under no real pressure to effect changes. However, the prospect of submission amid such political uncertainty still provoked palpable nervousness.²⁹¹ Shpalikov was in a dismayingly familiar position. As at any *Khudsovet*, the final word was left to the filmmaker, who provocatively suggested: 'I know what's needed. You're asking [me] to erase the film's meaning.'²⁹²

Conclusion

Shpalikov's resigned defiance came from being censured, but not censored. Within a month, *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* received a Category Two rating and the confused approval of Goskino's deputy chief-editor, who called it a 'sad but kind film about purity of feeling', but expressed discomfort about 'the barge, which for the viewer floats agonizingly and for too long'.²⁹³ It seems that a subsequent calamity caused *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* to become so critically disregarded. Liubov' Arkus refers elliptically to an infamous mass-walkout at the film's Leningrad *Dom kino* premiere, claiming that 'the nerves of [Shpalikov's] contemporaries did not hold up' when faced with this 'short, nasty plot' and its poetic abandonment.²⁹⁴ Thereafter, the enforced stagnation of Shpalikov's career began as soon as his directorial debut appeared. This was a lament for a workaday world that no longer awaited any miraculous recovery and could not withstand the realism left behind in its place. Fomin's potted archival research into Shpalikov's 1970s screenwriting draws exclusively on the quiet rejection of his proposals at Mosfil'm.²⁹⁵ As in his letter to Nekrasov, Shpalikov's correspondence with Golovan' in 1970 reveals the ambition – by now, irretrievably thwarted – to continue directing films. However, this letter expressed an impossible desire to make his filmmaking an expression of pure auteurism, divorced from the constraints of collaborative production:

Any screenwriting work, even the most delightful, is all the same not yours [...] Moreover, I have been composing pictures, not preparations for them [...] As for all the rest, in the time that's left, I want to make only my own cinema, mine for myself, like novels are written, – and not get involved with anyone else again.²⁹⁶

This appeal to the counsel of Golovan' may simply confirm Shpalikov's total maladjustment to the political realities of Soviet filmmaking. Here was a part-entreaty, part-protest against the passing of the brief moment in which Shpalikov's *avtorskoe kino* had, in fact, been possible at Lenfil'm.

After 1966, the ideological grip of Goskino management tightened and Kiselev reacted with the studio's first structural reorganization since 1961. *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* marked the beginning of a slide towards the liquidation of the Third TO for serially excessive artistic risk-taking in 1970. The immediate *political* anxiety it provoked cannot be compared to the fallout from *Mal'chik i devochka*, *Zhenia*, or even Goskino's scandalized rejection of the Second TO's *Interventsiia/Intervention*, dir. by Gennadii Poloka (1968; released 1987). Artistically, however, it indicated more clearly than any other Lenfil'm *avtorskii fil'm* that the studio's repertory investment in aesthetical innovation would require stricter thematic parameters than were enforced upon Shpalikov. Accordingly, the next significant engagement of Lenfil'm auteurism with Western artistic material developed in cautious correspondence to more overtly 'Soviet' tropes.

Chapter Three

Burning Ambition: Authorship, Reflexivity, and Plotting in *Nachalo*

– To the stake! The stake! Burn her!

WARWICK (*annoyed*): Stupid! It's stupid. This *mise-en-scène* is the last thing we needed!

[...]

BEAUDRICOURT: We can't end it like that, my Lord!

We haven't played the coronation! We said that we'd play it all!

It's not fair! Jeanne has the right to play the coronation, it's in her story!²⁹⁷

(Jean Anouilh, *L'Alouette/The Lark*)

The 1970s began amid deep uncertainty for the ongoing viability of Lenfil'm TOs. Kiselev formally liquidated the Third TO in January 1970, provoking 'deeply indignant' protests from senior cineastes directly to the CC secretary for cultural affairs, Petr Demichev.²⁹⁸ In its place came a televisual film unit [TVO], whose artistic direction remained the responsibility of Lenfil'm cineastes and management, but whose *redaktery* reported not to Goskino, but to Gosteleradio [State Committee for Television and Radio]. As the decade progressed, this inter-institutional configuration provided TVO filmmakers with unique opportunities to exploit executive disconnects during production. They also took advantage of commissions that were generally more lucrative, longer lasting and less vulnerable to the annual *shturm* that so commonly marked the fulfilment of the studio *templan*. At the outset, however, the TVO enjoyed only an informal designation. Only with the Goskino reorganization of 1972 could Lenfil'm formalize its status.²⁹⁹

The TVO unit enhanced the studio's repertory profile but also conveniently erased the experimentally inclined, and politically risky, Third TO. This was the assessment of editor-in-chief Rokhlin, who reminisced that a mendacious Kiselev 'finished us off' under the pretext of an economizing drive.³⁰⁰ In September 1970, Kiselev wrote to Baskakov to request formal approval for the TVO. Lenfil'm then had ten TV films in production simultaneously, meaning that the two surviving TOs were responsible for fulfilling these and the feature-film *templan* 'under a very heavy production-load and often unsupervised'.³⁰¹ This was a crude gambit – in October, Kiselev wrote a grovelling letter to Goskino deputy, Boris Pavlenok, detailing how seriously production-management had been tightened at Lenfil'm – but nonetheless, the recent inactivity of many senior filmmakers was inauspicious in the context of intensifying production-schedules.³⁰²

The absence of artistic leadership in the Second TO was perhaps the starkest predicament. Its *Khudruk*, Aleksandr Ivanov – aged 72 in 1970 – had been effectively drafted from retirement to steer the filmmaking debut of theatre director, Evgenii Shiffers, *Pervorossiiane/Pervorossiisk Natives* (1967), a radically pared-down adaptation of an Ol'ga Berggol'ts poem, which commemorated a Petrograd workers' commune established in the Altai mountains in 1918.³⁰³ Beyond this deeply divisive film, innovation was in short supply.³⁰⁴ When Kiselev wrote to Baskakov to petition for a personal salary for the Second TO *direktor*, Igor' Karakoz, he referred to the fact that all Second TO films of 1969 had received no lower than a Category Two release, implicitly acknowledging their ideological safeness and aesthetical compliance.³⁰⁵

Against this grey backdrop, Lenfil'm management invested hope in the two most promising debutants of the period between Shpalikov's film and the closure of the Third TO: Il'ia Averbakh (First TO) and Gleb Panfilov (Second TO). Kozintsev professed 'great joy' and no small relief at their emergence, describing these debuts as the artistic benchmark for historical-revolutionary

films (Panfilov's Civil War drama, *V ognе broda net/No Ford through Fire*, 1967) and contemporary stories about leading scientists (Averbakh's adaptation of an eminent surgeon's memoirs, *Stepen' riska/The Degree of Risk*, 1968).³⁰⁶ It was harder to openly acknowledge that Panfilov's debut had been Lenfil'm's only critically successful *and* politically acceptable contribution to the panoply of 'anniversary' films released between the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution (1967) and Lenin's centenary (1970). The editorship of the Second TO, led by the orthodox literary academic, Dmitrii Moldavskii, had frequently suffered executive criticism over inattentive screenplay-supervision and lacklustre artistic standards.³⁰⁷ Grievances around the anniversary obligations also became familiar refrains. It was widely accepted that the much-lambasted *Zalp "Avrory"/Salvo from the Aurora*, dir. by Iurii Vyshinskii (1965), had been forced on Lenfil'm at the personal insistence of Goskino Chairman Aleksei Romanov.³⁰⁸ Amid such mediocrity, Panfilov's uncommonly assured debut was a beacon of hope that established the 33-year-old as a serious prospect and eventually won the USSR's first Pardo d'oro [Golden Leopard] at the Locarno Film Festival in 1969.

A chemical engineer and Gorkom-level Young Communist [Komsomol] secretary, Panfilov began filmmaking at a Sverdlovsk amateur film-studio, which he helped to establish in the late-1950s. Unlike those Lenfil'm cineastes about to begin their journeys in televisual filmmaking, Panfilov was part of the birth of professional broadcasting in the USSR, working on Sverdlovsk TV in the early 1960s before enrolling at VGIK on the camera-operation course. When applications first opened for the *film-directing* VKSR intake in 1963 (the screenwriting VKSR having existed since 1960), Panfilov abandoned engineering to join perhaps the most sophisticated programme of elite film-education ever offered in the USSR, under the auspices of the SK and the Ministry of Culture.³⁰⁹ Graduating a year after Iurii Klepikov and Averbakh from the screenwriters' course, Panfilov and his friends bolstered the paltry ranks of graduate cineastes at Lenfil'm in 1966.

Panfilov was a Party-member with proven administrative experience, now working in a studio-collective where pitifully few filmmakers – young or otherwise – ever joined the CPSU. After his successful debut, Panfilov sat on the studio Partkom and, by 1969, had become an untenured *instruktor* [advisory consultant] of the Obkom and a LOSK branch secretary.³¹⁰ Unusually among cineastes, Panfilov was also personally acquainted with Filipp Ermash (then head of the Cinema Division at the CC Culture Department and Goskino Chairman from 1972): the two shared a formative period at the Sverdlovsk Gorkom Komsomol. Although it has been suggested that Panfilov received no overt favours from his powerful acquaintance, intrigue swirled around the influence of ‘Sverdlovsk solidarity’ on official positions towards him in Moscow during the 1970s. Panfilov’s turbulent professional fate may have been steadied, eventually, by the leverage of Ermash and the latter’s connections to the prominent CC secretary, Andrei Kirilenko.³¹¹

Nachalo/ The Debut (1970) represents a compromise between an ambitious filmmaker and a studio under intense pressure to produce a higher standard of ideologically on-message output. As well as a reflexive depiction of late-Soviet film-production, *Nachalo* contains this sole filmic trace of Panfilov’s unrealized ambition to adapt the life-story of Jeanne d’Arc, in what counts among the most obfuscated of all Goskino rejections. In screenplay-development, *Nachalo* became the story of a factory-girl’s unexpected acting debut in the role of Jeanne d’Arc. This compromise was an ill-fated attempt to earn the political capital for *Zhizn’ Zhanny d’Ark/ The Life of Jeanne d’Arc*, which was included in prospective screenplay-plans at Lenfil’ m in the 1970s, but never made.

Screenplay-development: Masters and Maturity

Ol'ga Kovalenko writes that there are three years between *V ognе broda net* and *Nachalo*, but a half-century between their events.³¹² This description hints at an epochal dividing-line between their productions. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 impacted profoundly upon on cinema-production, distribution and festival-participation, as upon other all institutionalized cultural production in the USSR. Previously stable and lucrative (if artistically unsubstantial) co-productions with other socialist-bloc countries declined markedly between 1968 and 1970. *Nachalo* emerged from this uncertain suspension of planning at Lenfil'm, first permitting Panfilov to develop a Jeanne d'Arc story, then incorporating aspects of that plot into a pre-existing screenplay-proposal for a contemporary drama through a strategic screenwriting-realignment. Evgenii Gabrilovich, the veteran screenwriter, novelist and journalist, had a contract at Lenfil'm to script a coproduction with a Hungarian studio on the life of the revolutionary writer, Máté Zalka. In correspondence with the Second TO in May 1968, Gabrilovich expressed doubt over this project, whose 'long-term fate is unknowable due to circumstances beyond your or my control'; for this reason, he had refused to take an advance on the script.³¹³ Despite Karakoz's early-June confirmation that Máté Zalka was locked into Goskino's centrally approved plan and awaiting confirmation in Hungary, no more was heard of this project at Lenfil'm.³¹⁴ Nonetheless, Karakoz approved another contract for Gabrilovich, with a view to produce a screenplay for Panfilov, based on a new *zaiavka* from Gabrilovich in May 1968.³¹⁵

This move renewed their first collaboration on *V ognе broda net*. Gabrilovich ran Klepikov and Averbakh's VKSR class, and Panfilov's progression from VKSR to Lenfil'm was largely facilitated by this partnership. VKSR graduates did not direct a diploma-film like their VGIK counterparts, but rather took a graded *postanovochnyi proekt* [film-direction pitch] to a fully-fledged 'destination'

studio, as the basis for their debut.³¹⁶ The professional clout of Gabrilovich's co-authorship, which Panfilov had actively solicited, made the development of *V ognе broda net* remarkable by contemporary standards.³¹⁷

Gabrilovich's *zaiavka* was entitled *Semeinaia zhizn' Pashi Stroganovoi / Pasha Stroganova's Family Life*. As cautious as such documents usually appeared, it clearly outlined plots and contemporary setting that are recognizable from *Nachalo*. It conveyed Pasha's character with the illusory domesticity of her love affair with Arkadii, sharp contrasts between gayness and seriousness in its everyday melodrama, and fictional Rechensk, 'a small, central-Russian town on a big river, with old churches and new, large factories'.³¹⁸ Gabrilovich's second draft had a subheading – 'An experiment in cinema-comedy' – beneath which an even more radical aspiration to genre-bending survived from the first draft.³¹⁹ Having introduced Pasha through her affair with Arkadii, the dramaturge insisted, 'however, the essence is not in the *fabula*', or life-story. Instead, meaning would emerge from *siuzhet* [plotting] built on 'a range of questions, thoughts, reflections [...] that depart far beyond the boundaries of the *fabula* and touch on the most diverse aspects of politics and civic life'.³²⁰ We can only speculate what this social panorama might have engendered in a Panfilov film. Nonetheless, Gabrilovich's insistence on a narrative unanchored from the linear presentation of diegetic events had profound implications for plotline-parallelism between the filmic worlds of Pasha and Jeanne in *Nachalo*.

The full extent of the screenwriters' collaboration during pre-production is unknown. However, the momentum behind Panfilov's ambition is clear from the submission of a first manuscript, entitled – much to the disapproval of Moldavskii – *Jeanne d'Arc*.³²¹ However, the editorial consensus at the Second TO was favourable. The contractually formal co-authorship agreement that followed appears to have been procured as a strategic bargaining chip for Panfilov, rather

than to bolster an active partnership. The TO requested a second draft from Gabrilovich by 5 October 1968; in reply, it received two late messages. The first was a telegram – ‘Panfilov expressed a desire to complete work on the screenplay alone [stop] notify if you agree gabrilovich [sic]’ – the second, Gabrilovich’s request for an extension until December due to illness.³²² These contradictory notices – both approved by Moldavskii – appear to confirm that Gabrilovich was stepping back to give Panfilov full practical authorship. Panfilov’s final draft gave the contemporary frame-narrative – under the working-title *Devushka s fabriki / The Factory Girl* – its definitive shape: the *mise-en-abîme* of a feature-film about Jeanne.

Production: Reflexivity Contextualized

Nachalo begins as if it was a sequence from *Jeanne d’Arc*. The veil only lifts after virtuosic camerawork shifts from a distantly framed establishing shot to a moment of heightened tension during Jeanne’s trial, encapsulating the spirit of her story within one take. A Pasolini-esque long-shot of a bare rural landscape recedes into a reverse-zoom through the window of a medieval turret, then becomes a multidirectional pan that tracks the constable Cauchon (Evgenii Lebedev) as he reads charges to a captive Jeanne (Inna Churikova) before an audience of soldiers and churchmen.³²³ Next, the camera settles on Jeanne as the two exchange defiant accusations. The shot holds, intensifying their weighty pronouncements. There is no discernible cut; if one occurs, it is masked by a prolonged zoom into the black of an open doorway, when Jeanne is taken into a torture chamber to see the instruments of the Inquisition. Otherwise, the impression is of one continuous take, remarkably orchestrated over almost six minutes.

When a voice-off shouts ‘cut!’, the rupture is a double layering of effects. A flash instantaneously engulfing the frame indicates that a reel of exposed celluloid has ended; the next cut is from

Jeanne in mid-shot to a wide-angled view of a film-set, across which a man walks and twice exclaims, 'Cinex!'. He shakes the hand of Pasha/Jeanne before the flash occurs again: we immediately see Pasha, whose expression breaks from the traumatized solemnity of the scene into a wide smile. These disorientating cinematic effects introduce the explanatory visual support of the film-set. If, at first, this scene appeared as the a-chronological opening of a film about Jeanne d'Arc, it is then revealed as a chronologically indeterminate point in the shoot of that film, offering an engrossing glimpse of one of its centrepieces.

Here, another register of meaning hinges on the authenticity with which film-production is represented. A Cinex was a test film-strip, produced on-set, by a printer of the same name. These short strips were composed of adjacent frames from a given shot, arranged sequentially and with different exposure-settings for each frame. Their purpose was to gauge the lighting levels appropriate to the desired aesthetical effect, when the celluloid is developed. Hence, camera-operators received Cinex strips with the daily rushes on a shoot.³²⁴ The two flashes inscribe this production-technique and reveal the film-within-a-film: the director's exclamations instruct the crew to hold their positions while the operator of the Cinex printer registers the shot that has just ended.

The depiction of production in *Nachalo* also anchors those working on the Jeanne film to recognizable figures and motifs from late-Soviet filmmaking. Foremost among these is the film-director, Ignat'ev, played by Klepikov in his acting debut. This was a remarkable casting, not least because of Klepikov's background and highly problematic position at Lenfil'm.³²⁵ Despite widely acknowledged directorial ambitions and a screenwriting talent beyond dispute at the studio, Klepikov was never to direct a film.³²⁶

The Second TO screen-test assessments reveal ideological anxieties over this character. From the literary and directorial screenplays, Ivanov feared a caricature, telling Panfilov: ‘your director looks like directors on newsreels: his main function is to look intense and shout ‘action!’ – you yourself know it’s not like that’.³²⁷ On the surface, this concerned not pandering to ‘negative stereotypes about our profession among the general public’.³²⁸ However, the film-director’s character was also central to themes of conflict and defiance in the creative process, both in the tumultuous director/lead-actor relationship and in a (cautiously) oppositional framing for the film-director/studio dynamic.

Three candidates auditioned: Klepikov, the actor/director Rolan Bykov, and the former Third TO *Khudruk*, Vengerov. These were very different visions of a late-Soviet cineaste and each would have been a politically charged choice, though only Bykov had a troubled enough relationship with Goskino to cast real doubt over his approval. For Panfilov, the actor in Bykov predominated to the extent of deforming the envisaged role, which suited Klepikov ‘by his age and biography’.³²⁹ Ivanov saw in the older Vengerov a projection of on-set authority that could render the scripted conflict between director and studio implausible, and Panfilov agreed, admitting: ‘they wouldn’t come [on-set] to check up on him’.³³⁰ However, the coded language of *Khudsovet* members regarding Klepikov’s candidacy seemed to refer as much to his own short and troubled career as to the screen-test. *Redaktory* were split. Irina Tarsanova found in Klepikov ‘fidelity to these times [*tochnost’ vremeni*], which is very important’.³³¹ Aleksandr Zhuravin preferred Vengerov’s ‘humour and adult understanding’, before making a stark judgment about Klepikov’s own predicament: ‘There is a sense that this man is a little aggrieved with life, with failure, and is self-absorbed [...] Despite his exterior appropriateness and inner strength, he is very aloof. Think about that’.³³² ‘Aloofness’ [*zamknut v sebe*] corresponds precisely to a long-standing formula in reactionary official condemnations of Soviet cultural producers whose work was deemed too

rarefied. The insinuation was obvious: Klepikov was all too recognizable as a late-Soviet auteur, whose professional woes were bound to the work of Goskino officials responsible for assessing this film.

The political riskiness of a standoff between this filmmaker and the authorities was eliminated from *Nachalo*. As late as the screen-tests, the studio *redaktor* Ignatov remained as a character that challenged the filmmaker over the casting of Pasha. This character grew out of the literary screenplay's 'Stepan Stepanovich from central administration [*iz Glavka*, i.e. Goskino]'.³³³ In *Nachalo*, this character splits into two roles: a single line of dialogue reveals that one of these men is the film's screenwriter (Iurii Vizbor). This change is significant: the line – 'as author of the screenplay, I insist on her being replaced' – is an overdubbed addition to the completed film, one of six 'corrections' to *Nachalo* insisted upon by Goskino after submission.³³⁴ The professional conflict is thus displaced from the administration and onto the artistic cohort.

Without this insertion, neither figure's profession is apparent. Stepan Vital'evich (Viacheslav Vasil'ev) ushers Stepan Ivanovich (Vizbor) through a police-line separating the shoot from a large crowd, so it appears that the latter is unaffiliated with the film-crew and that the former might be a *direktor kartiny*. Effectively, *Nachalo* denies professional specificity to all apparent representatives of executive production that are glimpsed. This contrasts markedly with the fictional film-crew, which is radically self-representational in a late-Soviet context. The camera-operator of *Nachalo*, Dmitrii Dolinin, plays this role for the Jeanne film, and Panfilov's assistant director, Gennadii Beglov, replicates that post in a significant supporting role. These go beyond cameos: Panfilov's closest on-set collaborators have a performative agency that references their artistic significance to *Nachalo* as a hybrid work. In parallel with the 'unveiling' function of the film's opening sequence, Dolinin's camerawork shoots the episode of Jeanne praying to the saints in a remarkable rupture

of the formal division between the embedded production and the diegesis, without, here, any supporting device like the Cinex effect. In the shoot, several takes have been squandered due to Pasha's nerves. Dolinin is shown giving positional instructions while setting up the shot at his lens. After shots of Pasha practising her lines on-set, Klepikov/Ignat'ev joins Dolinin to give directorial commands. Following the clapboard and 'action!', there is a cut to a carefully composed long-shot of Jeanne, churchmen, soldiers and a crowd before a castle. This is Dolinin's perspective within the diegesis. Although the stationary camera seems to have reassumed the formal properties of the fictional film as this shot begins, it becomes a slow leftwards pan as Jeanne's prayer continues, shattering this illusion by showing cast-extras, set scaffolds, and a sound-truck, before finding Pasha's girlfriends, who have broken through the police-line and the onlooking crowd.

The rupturing effect of this pan is enhanced by an audible crackle as it passes the sound-truck. Panfilov seems to have insisted on a deliberate incongruity for stylistic effect. This outdoor scene would have been recorded directly onto celluloid with boom microphones, a point made worriedly by Ivanov when commenting on the corresponding episode in the literary screenplay.³³⁵ This shot poses an interpretative challenge when read alongside the gesture to authenticity in the opening sequence, its functional partner. Both examples of single-shot movement from the embedded film to the diegesis disorientate aesthetically. They also accentuate the chronological disordering of these intersecting stories. The shoot, which we first observe at an unspecified stage of work, wraps with the successful completion of this scene of Jeanne's prayer, which episodically precedes her trial in that film. In both instances, the technological specificities of Dolinin's camerawork on the 'Jeanne' film are first replicated, then exposed as an estranging device, revealing the diegesis and momentarily suspending the principle of episodic parallelism in *Nachalo* by collapsing spatial boundaries between the two spheres. Thus, in the latter sequence, what

begins as the self-referential signposting of Klepikov and Dolinin becomes a subversive motif, as if *Nachalo* had first willed the 'Jeanne' film into unfettered parallel existence at its beginning, only to round off the embedded film-shoot in a jarring acknowledgment of the inauspicious conditions of production for Panfilov's ambition.

Throughout *Nachalo*, Beglov's performance is anchored subtextually to Pasha's acting debut. As Odinokov, the assistant director – a frustrated martinet and occasionally unsettling voyeur – his interactions with Pasha are among the film's most comedic scenes, alongside its grotesque subversions of domestic melodrama in Pasha's affair with Arkadii (Leonid Kuravlev). The comic fallacies in Odinokov's character speak to the 'in-joke' of Beglov's casting. Pasha treats him dismissively: he cannot prevent her from fleeing after the screenwriter trashes her performance in the projection-suite. Odinokov is then made to hold a small reproduction of Viktor Vasnetsov's painting *Bogatyri* (1898) for Pasha to focus on as she performs Jeanne's prayer. The demeaning humour of these scenes reflects the deepest self-referential irony in *Nachalo*: it was Beglov that Panfilov sent to scout Churikova for casting in *V ognе broda net*.³³⁶ The character of Odinokov thus refers *Nachalo* back to its own genealogy of production.

The boundary between fiction and the real becomes most permeable in the sublimation of Churikova's biography into Pasha's story. The opening sequence – Jeanne's trial – links into Pasha's first non-acting appearance at a dance in Rechensk by a series of seven still photographs, which show Churikova from infancy into adulthood. The second of these features 'Inna' etched on the wall of a cabin and the seventh is lifted from the screen-tests for *Nachalo*.³³⁷ As the film progresses, biographical references surface as plot-points that, although rendered specific to Pasha, paradoxically resist cohesion in her *fabula*, or life-story. Two incidents exemplify this: Ignat'ev and Odinokov's 'discovery' of Pasha on-stage, and her enquiries at the film-studio about

further work there, after the 'Jeanne' production has ended. In the first instance, Pasha plays the fairy-tale character, Baba-Iaga, in her factory's amateur-dramatic troupe as a pantomime villain, and the cineastes are in the audience. Assessing the directorial screenplay, confused Lenfil'm *redaktery* asked how an energetic but hammy fairy-tale part suggested that Pasha could take on the role of Jeanne. Glib responses to this question came during subsequent *Khudsovery* in vague ruminations on the mysterious nature of 'talent', but a meaningful answer can only be found in Panfilov's determination to inscribe – and overcome – received wisdom about Churikova as an actor. Prior to artistic collaboration with her future husband, Churikova progressed from theatre – once playing Baba-Iaga in Evgenii Shvarts' *Dva klena/Two Maples* at the Moscow Young Spectators' Theatre (TiuZ) – to secondary roles in genre-films, including as the ugly sister, Marfushka, in an adaptation of the fairy-tale *Morozko*, dir. by Aleksandr Rou (1965).³³⁸ *Nachalo* alludes to this artistic biography by flipping Churikova's earlier typecasting around with the playful inclusion of a magical-tale character in her bravura performance as Pasha/Jeanne.

However, Pasha's enquiries at the film-studio channels authentic grievances about Churikova's career trajectory and broader casting practices in late-Soviet cinema. *V ognе broda net* had not made Churikova a bona-fide star – *Nachalo* would confer that status – but it announced her arrival as an exciting lead-acting talent. The New Year's Day edition of *Ogonek* in 1969 opened with a feature entitled 'You Know Who They Are', which asked ten of the previous year's most celebrated names in the USSR to answer five questions about coping with fame. Churikova was the lone representative of the arts, and the blurb accompanying her responses confirmed that a screenplay had been written 'especially for Inna'.³³⁹ However, this glowing press belied tensions at Lenfil'm and beyond. While discussing the 'studio' sequence in the directorial screenplay, Ivanov referred directly to the rumoured existence of an 'unwritten instruction' [*neglasnyi ukaz*] at Goskino: a secret, unofficial blacklist of actors whose casting in lead roles was to be opposed by

its *redaktery*.³⁴⁰ Ivanov did not name Churikova, but few present could not have known that her name was widely understood to figure on this blacklist, alongside Bykov and Maiia Bulgakova, who appeared in *V ogne broda net* in a small secondary role.³⁴¹

Nachalo refers explicitly to one aspect of the rumoured blacklist that posed an operational question for the casting of Churikova – her appearance. The earliest *zaiavki* and second working title for the screenplay suggested that Pasha is supposed to be unattractive. By the time of the completed film, her dialogue refers instead to feeling ‘plain’ [*neeffektnaia*], a playfully leading comment rejected immediately by Arkadii as they dance. Casting Churikova opposite Kuravlev – very much a ‘leading man’ in looks and range – is one of the film’s most obvious comedic and dramatic achievements: her nuanced expressivity interacts rewardingly with the effeminacy and innocence of his character. But while *Khudsovet* contributors recognized the motivation for Arkadii’s attachments and philandering as part of a relevant-feeling crisis of masculinity brewing in the Soviet 1970s, Pasha’s social identity is profoundly impressionistic.³⁴² Her innate specificity as an actor overwhelms any investment in explaining her job or background *fabula*.

‘Specificity’ is the operative term, for this provides the fictional studio’s acting department supervisor with a reason to rebuff Pasha: ‘*a na vas net zaiavok [...] vy ochen’ khorosho porabotali, rol’ u vas poluchilas’... no vy ochen’ spetsifichny, takie poka ne trebuiutsia*’ [‘there are no pending offers for you [...] you did a great job, the role really came off for you, but you’re a very quirky type, there’s no demand for that at the moment’]. Remarkably, this deflating euphemism quotes Ivanov’s comments on Churikova at the *Khudsovet* for the literary screenplay. There, Ivanov took issue with this episode: ‘Why make a drama out of her lack of offers? What’s so ‘strange’ about it? [...] Will they offer her something? Probably, if she’s a talent’.³⁴³ Panfilov’s defence argued that, ‘if we’re being consequential, then Inna Churikova, who played the role of Tania Tetkina

outstandingly at this very studio, has not been offered a single role [since]'. To Ivanov's response – '*ona spetsificheskaiia aktrisa*' ['she's a quirky actress'] – Panfilov insisted, 'my film speaks about exactly that'.³⁴⁴ Repeating Ivanov's words as dialogue is a wry critique of these professional constraints. One of Pasha's few direct 'fourth looks' into the camera occurs at the beginning of this sequence.

At Lenfil'm, Pasha's rejection by the film-studio was also interpreted as a comment on late-Soviet cinema's 'actors' problem'. However, it remains unclear as to which of the system's issues with informal lay-offs and chronically inactive staff-acting cohorts this scene was held to evoke.³⁴⁵

Nachalo offers other, usefully contrasting examples of how 'real' late-Soviet cinema-acting represented a privileged profession. Vizbor and Kuravlev were artistically unlike but both riding a wave of popular fame and favour along a broad spectrum of Soviet filmmakers. The former appeared here in one of five film-performances in 1970 alone, four years after debuting with a deeply self-referential cameo in *Iiul'skii dozhd'*. Kuravlev – described by Ivanov as 'one of the most talented young actors of our time' – starred in seven films that year.³⁴⁶ In-demand Soviet actors often seemed to be everywhere at once in this period, when early-career and even debuting directors at RSFSR studios could cast established stars in a manner unthinkable for a commercially driven production-system. This peculiarity also speaks of the shallowness of the late-Soviet talent pool at the highest level, where lead actors were less likely to sit on a film-studio's payroll, than to move back and forth between cinema and theatre, where work was generally considered more stable and artistically empowering.³⁴⁷

For Pasha, the role of Jeanne does not appear to have opened the doors to such a career.

However, the representation of the embedded film does not end with the production's completion, or Jeanne's execution, or even Pasha's celebrations with friends on returning to

Rechensk. Rather, we see Pasha and leading crew-members rapturously applauded at a gala premiere, before end-credits roll over the final shot of *Nachalo*. At a busy urban intersection, a huge poster advertises the film – *Zhanna d'Ark* – with an illustration of Pasha in a suit of armour, holding a sword and a banner-pole, and beaming widely (a screen-test photograph of Churikova, wearing Jeanne's haircut, corresponds very closely to this pose).³⁴⁸ This ending confounds on several levels. Firstly, there is no narrative resolution to Pasha's story beyond the chronological suspension provided by the poster, which signposts the release of the Jeanne film. Secondly, several *Khudsovet* viewers remarked that the premiere felt jarringly grand, while others objected to the poster, which seemed wholly at odds with Jeanne's sombre story.³⁴⁹

On one level, these incongruities may be read as sly digs at the incompetence of late-Soviet *prokat*. Accordingly, the poster would be a grotesque, typically second-rate misrepresentation of the film's subject matter by the exhibition agency. This was certainly how Rakhmanov and Kiselev interpreted it.³⁵⁰ The exchange between Ignat'ev and the theatre-manager in the lobby at the premiere supports this suggestion. When the filmmaker asks nervously how the screening is going, the manager answers perfunctorily, 'excellent – I've never seen anything better', to which Ignat'ev wearily replies '*poniatno*' ['right']. Lenfil'm executives did not acknowledge just how reflexive their implied suggestions of late-Soviet *prokat* officials' ignorance might be, but they proved unsurprisingly adept readers of the film's hinted, industry-focused criticisms.

On another level, the premiere, the incongruous poster and the ending's chronological suspension are the culmination of a structure that unsettles the internal coherence of the film's two interwoven plotlines. Jeanne's execution *does* encapsulate the same defiance in the face of authoritarian cruelty as the opening sequence, and the penultimate sequence of Pasha's final, anguished assignation with Arkadii *does* provide a form of closure to their meeting in the second

sequence. Nonetheless, until the premiere, the a-chronological, parallel plotting in *Nachalo* has been exploiting disjunctures between three ‘time-systems’ – Pasha’s story, the ‘Jeanne film’, and the viewer’s experience of these dimensions interacting – to form a radically open-ended structure, in which meaning hinges on associative juxtaposition rather than linear resolution. A deconstruction of this approach helps to understand the function of Jeanne d’Arc in *Nachalo* and the place of *Nachalo* in Panfilov’s ambitions for *Zhizn’ Zhanny*.

Plotting: Siuzhet and Fabula

Chronological divergences between the embedded film and the diegesis reactivate Gabrilovich’s assertion about the ‘essence’ of Pasha’s story in his *zaiavka*. In *Nachalo*, plotlines function through the interplay of *siuzhet* and *fabula* components. It is useful to reaffirm that ‘cinema-production’ is both *how* the embedded film is revealed, and the rationale [*motivirovka*] that makes a-chronological presentation cohere in *Nachalo*. A film-shoot, whose running order does not mirror the eventual collation of the material, implies a practical reordering of scenes that Panfilov expands into an artistic principle through parallel intercutting.

However, the integrity of the ‘production’ time-system is further destabilized in juxtaposition with Pasha’s story: we see the shoot wrap with the scene of Jeanne’s prayer *before* the sequence in which she is burnt at the stake, which cuts in turn to the gala premiere’s culmination, and the implied ending of the ‘Jeanne’ film as a text. We are no surer of the execution’s actual position there than that of the trial, which opens *Nachalo*. This scene of indeterminate ordering from the embedded film appears in place of exposition for the frame-narrative. A key device of Panfilov’s Soviet-era work originates here. From the chronological reordering of significant incidents in *Proshu slova / A Word from the Floor* (1975) to the potted biographical genealogies of *Tema / The Theme*

(1979; released 1987), complications of linear perception indirectly suggest psychological causation in protagonists and plant oblique thematic resonances in the body of the films. *Nachalo* challenges viewers to navigate its parallel dimensions as separate plotlines, whose textual coherence depends on their rationale in the other part of the film. The role of Jeanne ‘reveals’ and embellishes the life-story of Pasha. Her presentation is entirely delimited by a performative relationship to the life-story of Jeanne, whose plotting parameters are predetermined, in turn, by an established body of historical and literary sources.

Interpretation of this system can productively consider Robert Belknap’s definition of *fabula* and *siuzhet* components of formalist literary theory in terms of the interaction between *life* and *story* in the organization of narrative. Both terms translate as ‘plot’, insofar as both constitute ‘ways of relating incidents to one another’ in ‘purposeful arrangements of experience’, but are distinguished as different time-systems in their presentation of fictional material.³⁵¹ Belknap calls *fabula* ‘the relationship among the incidents in the world the characters inhabit’.³⁵² This multidimensional construction creates sequences in the time-system of characters’ lives: its totality, and each of its incidents, has ‘a primary mimetic structure; it imitates the ordering of events in the life that nonfictional people live’.³⁵³ In contrast, the *siuzhet* establishes ‘the relationship between the same incidents in the world of the text’.³⁵⁴ This manipulation is how the author generates narrative as a representation encountered in the time-system of the reader. For Belknap, chronological relationships in plotting exploit the fact that ‘the *siuzhet*, like time itself, is one-dimensional’.³⁵⁵

Pasha and Jeanne’s interdependent and parallel plotlines recreate what Belknap calls the ‘paradox of logically prior elements’ between *siuzhet* and *fabula*, even for plots that unfold in a unified spatiotemporal system. ‘The reader can only come to know the *fabula* through the *siuzhet*, and the

author cannot imagine a *siuzhet* without some *fabula* to express; an account has to be of something'.³⁵⁶ This theoretical departure point frames the chronology of the 'Jeanne' film in *Nachalo* as a purposeful *rearrangement* of plotted experience. Rather than have the 'framing' *siuzhet* track Pasha's *fabula* to provide a narrative resolution, *Nachalo* creates a form of 'function rhyme', whereby motifs and themes in Pasha and Jeanne's lives/stories relate associatively in each *siuzhet*, but remain redundant in both *fabula* systems.

Thus, the *life* of Pasha unfolds in total dependence upon the film-shoot's textual rationale for locating the *story* of Jeanne in late-Soviet contemporaneity. The *life* of Jeanne – beyond her preparation for death – is unexplored here; Panfilov still harboured ambitions to tell that story. *Nachalo* collates its Jeanne material in a chronological fold, moving back from the trial to short inserts of Jeanne with troops, then showing her prayer to the saints and culminating in her execution. It remains unclear how the embedded film's *siuzhet* sequences these reordered *fabula* incidents: the material presented here limits its *siuzhet* focus to her trial and execution. The abrupt juxtaposition of these episodes with Pasha's story produces narrative and aesthetic discontinuities, which connect Jeanne's ordeal and Pasha's drama as parallel plots moving in different directions. There is no explicit trigger for the transition from Pasha and Arkadii's comically sumptuous dinner to a shot of Jeanne on horseback leading troops over a windswept moor, then back to Pasha doting on Arkadii as he shaves. Rather, associative meaning depends here on viewers connecting themes that underpin both plots at this stage in their exposition. Single-minded determination and short-lived triumph motivate the implied outcomes of both scenes.

This interplay goes beyond thematic convergences to associate the functional positions of the split protagonist. Pasha tells Arkadii that she will become a great actor, an assertion that the preceding

shot of Jeanne suggests could be a premonition of destiny on a par with Jeanne's devotional calling. As earlier, when Pasha spends the night at Arkadii's apartment while his wife is there but he is not, there is dramatic irony because the *siuzhet* has outpaced the *fabula*: we know that Arkadii will get his comeuppance when he lies to his wife and discovers Pasha in their home, just as we know that Pasha will become an actor because we have seen her in the role of Jeanne before learning anything else about her.

The rationale of the film-shoot frames this parallel structure. If the ending of *Nachalo* frustrates the expectation that Pasha's personal and professional dramas will be resolved, then its beginning indicates how the 'Jeanne' plotline will render these resolutions insignificant to the *siuzhet* of Panfilov's film. The pull of the opening sequence depends on *curiosité*, a device which, for Belknap, 'puzzles readers as to what is going on at the present moment rather than what will happen next, which is the domain of suspense'.³⁵⁷ This distinction is important here, since from the moment that Cauchon pronounces Jeanne's name in the opening line of dialogue, suspense subsides in this plotline, given the reasonable assumption of viewers' knowledge that Jeanne will be condemned and burned at the stake. The paradox of immersion in a dramatic incident that contains the seed of its own narrative redundancy is solved by a reinforcement of *curiosité*, when the director shouts 'cut!' and the film-shoot is revealed, linking Jeanne to Pasha for the first time.³⁵⁸

Elsewhere, Panfilov diversifies the presentation of the embedded film to create immediate associative links. Unlike the trial or Jeanne's prayer, fragments showing Jeanne on the march and her execution are not framed by the film-shoot. Abrupt intercutting heightens their impact: they appear as if from the embedded production but are also striking as aesthetically contrapuntal vignettes, which reflexively imagine how the story of Jeanne d'Arc could look and sound. As

such, their a-chronological reordering in *Nachalo* does not so much disrupt the reading of the Jeanne plotline, as use the narrative redundancy of this historically familiar *fabula* to delimit investment in Pasha's *siuzhet*.

Early on, Pasha tells Arkadii of her amateur-dramatic performances as Baba-Iaga. Here, the *fabula* outpaces the *siuzhet*: we see Pasha on-stage, where Ignat'ev and Odinokov discover her, only after her conversation with Arkadii as he shaves. The cineastes go to Pasha's dressing room and invite her to screen-test for the role of Jeanne. This could require a suspension of disbelief by viewers: we might instead side with the *Khudsovet* member, who argued that *Nachalo* did not demonstrate how Baba-Iaga revealed Pasha's capacity to play Jeanne. This objection is valid, not least because of the contrast between the histrionic pantomime and the restrained film. Admittedly, there is a superficial convergence between the mythological femininity constructs of these two characters. Jeanne is a virginal peasant-girl accused of witchcraft by the church for her claims to hear divine voices emanating from the saints, while Baba-Iaga is a 'genuine' sorceress, casting spells on people of Jeanne's social level and occasionally taking the form of a maiden. However, this connection seems too obvious to be anything other than a decoy for the rationale behind Baba-Iaga's deployment as a *kind* of character. Baba-Iaga is a gendered archetype in subject matter, but in narrative terms, she represents an important folkloric motif and function of plotting.

Panfilov's Baba-Iaga succinctly illuminates Belknap's discussion of Vladimir Propp, the philological theoretician whose morphological analyses of magical tales focused on the kind of comparative typologies of character at play in *Nachalo*. Belknap's purpose is to situate Propp's position on the units of narrative construction that can form a plot (i.e. *siuzhet*) in relation to formalist theory. Effectively, this question concerns the best way to describe the functional relationship between a motif and a plot. Boris Tomashevskii has argued that 'the plot of an

irreducible part of a work is called a *motif*. Basically, every sentence possesses its own motif'.³⁵⁹ Thus, the basic unit of a plot is, in itself, a plot. Thus, the 'irreducible plotlet' (in Belknap's words) – Pasha plays Baba-Iaga in a pantomime – exists in relation to the whole scheme for *Nachalo* at the opposite end of 'a spectrum of plot sizes', rather than as a qualitatively distinct narrative structure.³⁶⁰ For Propp, however, this unit of action is not an irreducible logical whole. Although its motifs are applicable to particular plots, its possible variables could not allow Propp to arrive at generalized conclusions about the rules that underpin folkloric plots. For this, Belknap observes,

Propp must isolate himself from particular folktales and deal with 'functions' that can be reduced not to sentences like 'Raskolnikov killed the old woman,' but to abstractions like 'interdiction, interrogation, flight,' whose very bloodlessness makes them applicable to many tales. He defines a function as 'an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action', and adds that the functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled.³⁶¹

In *Nachalo*, Baba-Iaga operates in precisely this way: it is no coincidence that her figure is so integral to Propp's analysis in *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki (The Historical Roots of the Magical Tale)*.³⁶² Pasha's performance has no narrative agency in the pantomime fragment. Instead, her song is a declarative list of pure folkloric functionality, an 'act of character' that affirms magical capacities typical of her behaviour throughout many tales, rather than in relation to any specific plot. By isolating Baba-Iaga as a motif, Panfilov circumnavigates narrative plausibility – how does this performance suggest Pasha's potential to play Jeanne? – to arrive at a typological association

between Churikova's three characters in *Nachalo*. Baba-Iaga sings of her ability to literally morph; in turn, the transformational aspects of Pasha and Jeanne's stories are integral to our understanding of the relationship between their parallel plots. Rather than allegorize by mapping one plot onto another, *Nachalo* positions Baba-Iaga as a causal link in the whole schema for the film, between Churikova's biography, Panfilov's plotting, and Propp's functions of character. The film is more interested in one plotline's functional significance to the other as a *siuzhet* than in resolving the dramatic *fabula* of any narrative strand.

In this light, the incongruous movie poster is as much about character reconciliation as an implicit critique of late-Soviet *prokat*. We know that the smiling illustration of Jeanne is at odds with the embedded film's themes, but it also provides an ill-fitting culmination to the story of Pasha.

Having seemingly triumphed in her acting debut, she experiences a bittersweet return to Rechensk, with no offer of further work at the studio and the realization that her relationship with Arkadii cannot continue. From their final assignation, *Nachalo* cuts abruptly to the harrowing scene of Jeanne's execution, the premiere, and finally the ending. Pasha's *fabula* remains unresolved, replicating for viewers her own frustrated expectations as a character.

Ending the film with this chronological suspension made Pasha's story ideologically problematic. If Kiselev and Rakhmanov reasonably inferred that the poster exposed a typically Soviet problem of second-rate promotional advertising for cinema, then the same diagnosis is valid in terms of the film's dramatic conclusion. Soviet cinema of this period had serious difficulty making film-endings ideologically compliant, especially where the protagonists that drove narrative agency did not demonstrate either the most orthodox notions of 'heroism' or everyday behavior that late-Soviet audiences could straightforwardly emulate. Obviously, *Nachalo* could not end with the parallel negatives of Jeanne's execution and Pasha's disillusionment, but the poster seems to do more than

protest – grotesquely – against these officially imposed ideological expectations. We might also describe it as an attempt to end *Nachalo* with an associative motif, whose enigmatic form diverts the film away from problematic overdeterminations of plotting, which are left unresolved. Thus, the poster becomes a de/reformed Mona Lisa, compounding the trope of an archetypal, pre-modern female iconography with a similarly disconcerting gaze back onto Soviet contemporaneity. Equally, however, ending on this ‘public’ advertisement for the embedded film can be interpreted as a hopeful announcement of an *actual* forthcoming release. *Zhizn’ Zhanny* would be written, proposed, and negotiated, but never produced.

Staging Jeanne: *L’Alouette* and *Nachalo*

Over the centuries, the story of Jeanne d’Arc has inspired countless artistic retellings, most of which either draw on common historical sources to create a biography or focus episodically on her military campaigns and/or trial. Panfilov and Lenfil’ m were keenly aware of this canon: pre-production assessments were peppered with references to high watermarks of early-twentieth century adaptation, from George Bernard Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (1923) to *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc/The Passion of Joan of Arc*, dir. by Carl Theodor Dreyer (1928).³⁶³ In this pantheon, the most important source for Panfilov was the radical theatre of Jean Anouilh’s *L’Alouette/The Lark* (1953). Described by Henry Knepler as a clarion call of resistance for the post-war intelligentsias of the Allied powers, *L’Alouette* immediately resonated with political and cultural conditions in each country where the play was staged.³⁶⁴ Although briefly alluded to by a peripheral member at one pre-production *Khudsovet*, the full extent of its influence on *Nachalo* remains unappreciated.³⁶⁵

L’Alouette was a major event for the Soviet cultural intelligentsia in the early 1960s. Amid keen interest in Western experimental theatre, the Iskusstvo publishing house – then and subsequently, a bastion of outward-looking intellectual pluralism – published a new translation of the play to

coincide with a high-profile tour by the troupe of the left-bank Parisian Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in 1960.³⁶⁶ The Moscow run was a success: Suzanne Flon as Jeanne received especially glowing reviews.³⁶⁷ While it is unclear if Panfilov saw this performance, it has been recognized as the catalyst for Soviet repertory theatres to bring the play eventually to regional cities.³⁶⁸ At this moment of transnational openness in the USSR, Anouilh's work appealed in its formal inventiveness and radical tone. One contemporary American critic wrote of the 'outspoken and matter-of-fact' language running through *L'Alouette*, with its 'acrobatic mixture of sophistication and studied anti-climax'.³⁶⁹ Indeed, its irreverent violations of the dramatic unities would likely have excited an audience of artistic professionals. However, a broader appeal emerges from the play's pared-down orchestration and language that occasionally strays knowingly into defiant contemporary anachronism. One established critical approach to the Parisian first run and Lillian Hellman's celebrated Broadway adaptation has read *L'Alouette* as a political allegory.³⁷⁰ Thus, the occupying English forces and collaborating French churchmen execute Jeanne – a resistance leader – in a seeming allusion to Vichy rule and Nazi occupation. Somewhat toning down the original's anticlericalism, the staging directed by Hellman – herself blacklisted in Hollywood for refusing to provide information to the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1952 – accentuated the dramatic conflicts at the heart of Jeanne's trial. In 1955, *L'Alouette* seemed a very live indictment of the ideologically paranoid witch-hunts of McCarthyism.³⁷¹

The historical resonance of these themes for late-Soviet audiences need hardly be made explicit. The play's fatalistic anticipation of Jeanne's martyrdom is accentuated by its signposted subversions of chronology and verisimilitude, devices which complement the accumulation of bitter sarcasm and mocking irony in its language. This spirit of angry Humanist affirmation permeates Anouilh's work. Il'ia Kukulin has linked Panfilov's Jeanne in *Nachalo* to an aesthetics of 'post-traumatic Humanism' in late-Soviet cinema's relationship with pre-renaissance visual

culture, connecting the execution scene to a lineage of allegorical, politically motivated presentations by Lenfil'm cineastes, from Kozintsev's contemporaneous *Korol' Lir* (1971) to Aleksei German's *Trudno byt' Bogom/Hard to Be a God* (2013).³⁷² Kukulin's notion of post-traumatic Humanism could also connect the French, American, and Soviet contexts of reception for *L'Alouette*.

Jeanne is a character of deeply contrasting temperament in *L'Alouette* and *Nachalo*, although the *Zhizn' Zhanny* screenplay subsequently realigns Churikova's restrained solemnity much more closely with Anouilh's rambunctious, earthy and quick-witted protagonist. Rather, the structural meta-drama of *L'Alouette* informs reflexivity in *Nachalo*. Anouilh presents the trial – the centrepiece of *L'Alouette* – explicitly as a theatrical play, in which characters discuss the roles allocated to them and question one another about the re-enactment of episodes from Jeanne's life, in accordance with the evidence given. These episodes appear a-chronologically, with the further estranging effect of ironic commentary from presiding characters. A smiling Cauchon tells Count Warwick to 'be reassured, Milord, that we are not so numerous as to be able to play the battles'; shortly afterwards an unidentified figure asks who will play the voices of the saints, to which Jeanne replies, 'Me, of course'.³⁷³ The play thus balances serious articulations of theological dogma with irreverent lapses into farce, as when Jeanne replies to the Inquisitor's question about her 'state of grace' at that precise moment, countering, 'at which moment, Sire? We don't know where we are anymore. We're mixing everything up'.³⁷⁴ Panfilov transposes this disorientation to the embedded film-shoot, itself a form of conscious re-enactment. *Nachalo* also begins with Jeanne's trial, eschews her military battles and features breakdowns of performativity that are discussed by protagonists, as where Pasha complains to Ignat'ev about not being able to deliver her lines in the scene of her prayer to the saints, which becomes risible with Odinkov holding up

Bogatyri. In the second sequence of Jeanne's defence at trial, *Nachalo* reproduces entire lines from *L'Alouette*, when she affirms the self-sacrifice and salvation of which man is capable.³⁷⁵

Moreover, *Nachalo* replicates the subversion of narrative finality at the end of *L'Alouette*, confirming Anouilh's influence on the embedded film. In the play's final scene, Jeanne's execution precedes an omitted episode: Beaudricourt arrives and shouts to Cauchon that the performers have forgotten the coronation of Charles VII, having 'promised to play everything'.³⁷⁶ Jeanne – who has already burned to the satisfaction of Count Warwick – is then dismounted from the stake to take her place at the front of the coronation-procession, before which the assembled characters kneel. The play closes with stage directions that position Jeanne as the only standing protagonist, 'supported by her banner, smiling to the heavens, as in an illustration'.³⁷⁷ This orchestration almost perfectly describes the movie-poster in *Nachalo* and goes far to explain the significance of that seemingly incongruous ending. Anouilh's merciless sarcasm finds its voice in this closing scene through the blundering ignorance of Charles, who delivers a panegyric to Jeanne before proclaiming, 'the real ending of Jeanne's story is joyful. Jeanne d'Arc is a story with a happy ending!'.³⁷⁸ In a late-Soviet context, Panfilov also needed a perfunctory happy ending, which no more reflects the aborted conclusion of its tragicomic frame-narrative and sombre 'Jeanne' material than Anouilh's grotesque celebration fits the substance of his play.

These endings are the strongest parallels between reflexivity in *L'Alouette* and *Nachalo*. Françoise Meltzer calls Anouilh's staging of Jeanne's trial a 'simulacrum of a simulacrum', and describes its estranging dialogue as 'a form of *recusatio*'.³⁷⁹ This chapter identifies Panfilov's adoption of an equivalent structural premise in the a-chronological rearrangement of fragments from the embedded film. *Recusatio* is a term of classical rhetoric that refers to a poetic mode of address in which the author inscribes in a text his/her inability or disinclination to write the work as he/she

had intended, before proceeding in a different style. This artistic strategy sits alongside two other rhetorical terms for describing authorial practice that, as Belknap acknowledges, bear significantly on the development of *fabula* and *siuzhet* as concepts. *Inventio* designates ‘the discovery of raw literary material’; while *dispositio* concerns ‘how the author organizes that material in the new text’.³⁸⁰ *Recusatio* enters this equation as the ultimate manipulation of source-material in the service of a new plot, whose originality hinges on the author’s departure from the ‘primary mimetic structure’ of the *fabula/inventio*.

Thus, Anouilh’s characters ironically feign constraint in the face of preordained destiny. Cauchon asserts that the players cannot intervene in the re-enactment of the infant Jeanne’s beating at the hands of her father, because ‘we know Jeanne only from the trial. We can but play our roles, each to his own, good or bad, as it is written and in turn’.³⁸¹ For Panfilov, the very presentation of the embedded film in *Nachalo* – pared-down, elliptical, fragmentary – amounts to just such a *recusatio* in relation to Jeanne’s story. Here, too, ‘destiny’ is crucial to the fictional reproduction of authentic conditions of production. The inauspicious Pasha feels herself destined to become a great actor, just as Churikova insisted that her artistic destiny was to play this role fully in *Zhizn’ Zhanny*.³⁸² If the *recusatio* of *Nachalo* was an avowal of Panfilov’s inability to make *Zhizn’ Zhanny* in 1969, then the further history of this project at Lenfil’m indicates the political rationale for this earlier approach, as well as subsequent strategies by which filmmaker and studio sought, unsuccessfully, to realize his ultimate ambition.

Zhizn' Zhanny: Mismanaged Martyrdom

Since perestroika, historians have largely portrayed the thwarted auteurist project of *Zhizn' Zhanny* as a personal standoff between Panfilov and Goskino leadership.³⁸³ While this perspective reflects the sense that Goskino appears never to have seriously countenanced its approval, nowhere in scholarship is it acknowledged that Lenfil'm approved and proactively advanced Panfilov's screenplay for release into production in the 1970s.

The hardest question to answer satisfactorily is just how Panfilov and Lenfil'm hoped to succeed in pitching *Zhizn' Zhanny* so soon after the release of *Nachalo*. Goskino *redaktery* had raised concerns about 'the real danger that the Jeanne storyline be perceived as an independent historical narrative' in the first submitted screenplay of *Nachalo*, subsequently demanding a clear demonstration of Jeanne's 'functional significance' to the frame-narrative in the next draft.³⁸⁴ The most persuasive conclusion is that Panfilov envisaged the *fabula*-driven structure for *Zhizn' Zhanny* as sufficiently distinct from the elliptical glimpses of Jeanne in *Nachalo*. However, the literary screenplay approved by the Second TO in March 1972 must be understood not only as the blueprint for a future film, but as a negotiating tool and palimpsestic text, which reproduces lines and entire scenes from both *Nachalo* and *L'Alouette* as part of its revised framework. Therefore, we might consider Panfilov's continued reliance on those earlier works as part of a strategic dramaturgical outline to be modified during a future production, rather than imagining that the eventual film would have faithfully replicated such episodes. Nonetheless, the inclusion of these scenes is striking: it confounds the historical given that *Zhizn' Zhanny* was a distant ambition, rather than a live project that was formatively shaped by *Nachalo* and *L'Alouette*.

Thus, the opening sequence of Jeanne's trial from *Nachalo* is repeated at a chronologically appropriate point near the end of the screenplay. Elsewhere, the scene in which Jeanne orders deserters to be hanged is modified, giving some of her lines to other characters, while retaining the essential dramatic structure. From *L'Alouette*, Panfilov directly replicates the Inquisitor questioning Jeanne's state of grace and adapts lines from her first encounter with Charles as Dauphin. For characterization, the screenplay reveals a dependence on Anouilh's tone that is undetectable in the austerity of *Nachalo*. As well as Jeanne's proto-proletarian directness, Charles and his court are a familiarly blundering farce, while Jeanne's impoverished family closely resembles Anouilh's submissive mother and volatile father. Early in his initial screenplay *zaiavka*, Panfilov signposts his thorough historical research into Jeanne's story from documental sources.³⁸⁵ While this assertion is supported by authorial references to Jeanne's travels and battles at the end of several episodes in the screenplay, this text reveals Anouilh as the primary filter for the *inventio* of Panfilov's *fabula*. As editors of a contemporary publication of Anouilh's French text, Merlin Thomas and Simon Lee confirm the playwright's admission that Volume Five of Jules Michelet's *Histoire de France* (1841) provided the main historical source for *L'Alouette*.³⁸⁶ However, assessing Anouilh's modifications – 'all made for dramatic reasons of simplification and emphasis' – Thomas and Lee also point out that Richemont, and not La Trémouille, was Constable of the court at Chinon.³⁸⁷ The fact that Panfilov replicates this historical inaccuracy by Anouilh in the screenplay suggests that the originality of the former's research did not supersede the narrative selections of his foremost literary influence.³⁸⁸

In the *zaiavka*, the ideological requirements of late-Soviet production were a counterweight to these unacknowledged influences. Panfilov's dramaturgy also depended on 'simplification and emphasis', not for dramatic effect, but to plant sufficiently clear Marxist-Leninist principles into a pre-modern folk narrative with overtly religious themes. Panfilov attempted this by populating

the screenplay with supporting characters from the people [*narod*] that do not feature in Michelet or Anouilh; these connect Jeanne's crusade to a broader 'class' context, in response to Goskino demands after submission of the first draft.³⁸⁹ Beyond encoding a popular response to Jeanne as the rousing leader of a national uprising through these characters' dialogue, Panfilov sketches a picaresque assortment of socially marginal types that hardly corresponds to an ideologically compliant Soviet schema. Rather, their distance from the masses and their points of contact with Jeanne create echoes of a harassed, vulnerable intelligentsia surrounding her inspirational persona. The apothecary scholar Teofrast and his two pupils move among the people for work, but Teofrast has been banished from Paris into internal exile for healing the sick and is met with suspicion by Jeanne's peasant father when they meet.³⁹⁰ By contrast, in a scene as blackly sarcastic as anything in Anouilh, the common-folk are manifested in Jeanne's executioner, who whispers to her as the crowd bays for her death, 'Fare thee well! Whatever those priests say about you, as for me, I am convinced, my Lady, that you will be in heaven!' before lighting the pyre.³⁹¹

Against this backdrop, St. Michael is Panfilov's most significant concession to downplaying religious agency and finding an ending that stressed the role of the people in taking up Jeanne's cause. Rather than have him appear before Jeanne as a celestial vision or disembodied voice, the author introduces him as 'a stranger', before appearing – through intermittent interaction with Jeanne – as a wandering monk whose worldly perspicacity predominates over any suggestion of spiritual intervention. This offers catharsis at the ending, when he blends with the crowd and victorious French army at Rouen after Jeanne's death, having blessed the dying Cauchon, who is tormented by the memory of the trial.³⁹²

The intellectual defence of *Zhizn' Zhanny* was launched pre-emptively: Panfilov's initial *zaiavka* was submitted alongside a historical endorsement by Sergei Skazkin, head of medieval history at

the Soviet Academy of Sciences. For Skazkin, St. Michael is Panfilov's key achievement in this 'first ever Marxist-Leninist take on the story': 'these were the plebeian ranks of the priesthood, closest to the people and sharing its worldview. In this milieu you could find, in Engels' words, 'the theorists and ideologues of the broadest popular movements'.³⁹³ Although eloquent, Skazkin's assessment feels more like an intuitive stretch than a genuine response to the proto-revolutionary potential of St. Michael. This also comes across in Panfilov's own carefully composed and unusually long *zaiavka*, most especially when addressing the tricky issue of Jeanne's faith in the voices she hears. At first, the defence seems confident:

Essentially, the voices of the saints that Jeanne heard were only saying things that she herself already knew and understood full well. They always expressed the ambitions of her heart and rational mind, and were no more a form of mysticism than the inspiration of Michelangelo making his David or Newton's moment of clarity.³⁹⁴

Rounding off this assessment, Panfilov contrasts Jeanne's faith with the institution of the church by replicating familiar ideological formulae from authoritative CPSU discourse: 'As a person of her times, Jeanne believed in God, but did not share the abstract humanism of the churchmen, their pacifism'.³⁹⁵ In the face of Goskino warnings, this gesture – at odds with both the narrative drive and philosophical nuance of the subsequent screenplay – feels more speculative than hopeful. In *Nachalo*, logocentric snapshots of Jeanne's trial and her ideologically convenient 'abandonment' by the voices safely contained the potential religious overtones of the embedded film. Tellingly, the only correction to the final cut demanded by Goskino that did not involve 'sanitizing' Pasha's Rechensk milieu was an overdubbed insertion of dialogue in Ignat'ev's first meeting with Pasha, when he calls Jeanne a '*narodnaia geroin'ia*' ['heroine of the people'] in

response to her question, 'who is she, a Frenchwoman?'.³⁹⁶ By contrast, Panfilov's literary screenplay would fail to overcome the suspicions of Goskino *redaktory* towards 'religious mysticism and the cult of self-sacrifice' at the thematic heart of its plot.³⁹⁷ They objected to a lack of 'fully fledged historicism' in its critique of religion and the 'almost complete absence' of heroic patriotism in its depiction of Jeanne's personal deeds.³⁹⁸ Although the June 1972 rejection reflected negative attitudes at Goskino towards the screenplay itself, its tenor suggests another possible layer of preemptive hostility. This assessment casts Jeanne in a light not dissimilar to Tarkovskii's *Andrei Rublev* (1967; released 1971). Indeed, Panfilov later suggested that the long shadow cast by the international scandal around the suppression of *Rublev* must have been a significant factor in dissuading Goskino from a project with comparable motifs.³⁹⁹

In this regard, Lenfil'm repertory strategy was glaringly at odds with official attitudes. In March 1972, Kiselev pitched a possible Franco-Soviet co-production on the scale of a marquee film; the alternative – a Lenfil'm-only production – had an estimated budget of 2.5 million roubles at this stage, equivalent to around six one-part features.⁴⁰⁰ Despite Kiselev's opportunistic alignment of the project with a recent partnership-building visit to France by Brezhnev as proof of its 'political actuality', these plans were scuppered by a lack of central leverage. This reluctance was likely motivated, in part, by the impending, USSR-wide purge of studio-level executives that summer and autumn, when Kiselev would be removed from his post.⁴⁰¹

The very Sovietness of Panfilov's package worked to its detriment when the terms of a potential coproduction were informally sounded out. This had nothing to do with intellectual parochialism and everything to do with the paradoxes of a filmmaking model that was bureaucratically inflexible and politically repressive, yet remarkably free of executive or artistic coercion at the level of the everyday realities that governed the commercial marketplaces of studio-based cinema

in the West. The Ukrainian-born French film-producer, Georges Cheyko, conveyed harsh truths when Sovetsportfil'm officials solicited his opinion on the screenplay, making two categorical criticisms. The first concerned the eternally problematic issue of endings. *Zhizn' Zhanny* could not, as Panfilov wished, culminate in the liberation of Rouen, but 'absolutely must end with the episode of the heroine burning', an insistence incompatible with Panfilov's artistic motivations and the 'positive' historical contextualization demanded by Goskino.⁴⁰² Furthermore, a redrafted screenplay would merit consideration only if Jeanne was to be played by a 'global movie-star'. The conclusion was blunt: 'Mr. Cheyko saw *V ognе broda net*, *Starshaia sestra* [1966] and *Nachalo*, and feels that global film-spectators will not be persuaded of the grounds for the actress Churikova to be cast as Jeanne'.⁴⁰³

Kiselev promptly replied, confirming Lenfil'm and Panfilov's readiness to accept Cheyko's conditions, but this desperate attempt to keep the project alive floundered in the wake of that year's executive purge.⁴⁰⁴ The final official references to it came in 1976, when Goskino wrote off initial costs related to the screenplay's assessments, just as Panfilov was preparing to leave Lenfil'm for Moscow.⁴⁰⁵ Off-the-record rumours from the intervening period continue to generate intense speculation that is unlikely to abate without the discovery of new archival sources. Panfilov's remains the principal version of events: after 1972, despite apparent opposition in high-level CC circles to the project, Ermash allegedly 'promised' Panfilov a push for official approval to make *Jeanne*, if he was to first direct a contemporary, 'compromise film' about a 'dynamic leader' of modern Soviet socialism.⁴⁰⁶ The resulting depiction of Churikova as a dedicated provincial mayor and true-believing communist in *Proshu slova* is rumoured to have so enraged Grigorii Romanov (the conservative hardliner appointed Leningrad Obkom First Secretary in 1970 and a full Politburo member between 1976 and 1985) that it is claimed he ordered that Panfilov and Churikova would never work in Leningrad again.⁴⁰⁷

We may never know the political machinations that kept *Tema*, Panfilov's next, Mosfil'm-produced feature, 'shelved' until perestroika. It is again believed that Romanov exerted pressure on Goskino leaders to bury the film.⁴⁰⁸ Nevertheless, archival evidence shows that the Lenfil'm cineastes remained aware of Panfilov's ongoing work on 'Jeanne', even after 1975. Nataliia Riazantseva wrote home to Averbakh from a 1976 promotional tour to France, where she reported Panfilov 'misleading everybody' (i.e. French journalists and producers) about the prospects of a coproduction.⁴⁰⁹ Later, Aleksei German told the 1979 Lenfil'm Artistic Conference that Panfilov had left for Moscow to 'compose himself' after his last film, leaving open the possibility of a return that German nonetheless deemed unlikely.⁴¹⁰ As the following chapters demonstrate, Panfilov and Churikova's departure occurred during the most politically challenging period for Lenfil'm in the late-Soviet era. Where *Nachalo* wrote the history of its own production into the film and demonstrated an ingenious but insubstantial approach to Jeanne d'Arc, Panfilov's subsequent 1970s films saw these motifs dispersed sparsely. Churikova's characters speak French eloquently to foreign visitors in two scenes from *Proshu slova* and *Tema* respectively. In these forlorn echoes, there are residual allusions to the kinds of lasting professional grievances that other filmmakers at Lenfil'm – whether long-embedded like German or emerging from internal exile like Muratova – would inscribe as tropes in their own works later in this period. For the studio, auteurist repertory strategies retreated amid the intensification of the CPSU's conservative turn in 1972. Goskino responded with renewed insistence on the development of contemporary, 'Soviet' themes, of which the initial proposals that became *Nachalo (Devushka s fabriki)* were an embryonic expression.

Chapter Four

Best-laid Plans: The Industrial Drama of Developed Socialism on The Screen and in The Factory

Nachalo was the last artistically significant Lenfil'm release before an industry-wide administrative purge in 1972 redefined the repertory course of Soviet feature-filmmaking for a decade.

Historically, 1970s Lenfil'm is habitually defined by a resurgent *proizvodstvennyi fil'm* [industrial drama] and the so-called *Leningradskaia shkola* [Leningrad School], a critical reframing of Lenfil'm auteurism that is as artistically contestable as it is culturally persistent. This chapter analyses the political conditions that informed these repertory developments and reassesses the cultural significance of the industrial drama as an encodement of 'developed socialism', the CPSU doctrine that determined the production of these films.

Lenfil'm became the leading Soviet producer of 1970s industrial drama as a consequence of significant ideological retrenchment at Goskino. Four years of behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring culminated in summer and autumn 1972 with a CC *Postanovlenie*, 'On measures for the further development of Soviet cinema', and the attendant replacement of Goskino chairman, Aleksei Romanov, by Filipp Ermash, until then the CC Culture Department secretary in charge of its Cinema Division. Fomin has examined this 'bloodless purge' and the drafting of the *Postanovlenie* in detail, affording important insights into the machinations of the central apparatus. However, he stops short of discussing the substantial impact of these processes on the management of major Soviet feature-film studios.⁴¹¹ The executive directors of Lenfil'm, Mosfil'm, Gor'kii Studio, and Dovzhenko Studio were all replaced in late-1972. No charge sheet was brought against Il'ia Kiselev in response to ideological infringements around specific films:

instead, official criticism of ‘serious managerial shortcomings’ reflected high-level displeasure towards Lenfil’ m repertory policies since the mid-1960s.⁴¹²

The appointment of Viktor Blinov as studio-director shifted the artistic orientation and local political standing of Lenfil’ m. Blinov entered cinema from the Leningrad Party apparatus with a strong background in industrial relations: his previous post as First Secretary of the Vasileostrovskii Island CPSU District Committee [Raionnyi komitet, Raikom] involved supervising a municipal authority with major shipbuilding and heavy machinery facilities. Effectively, transfer from such responsibilities to Lenfil’ m was considered a demotion. Gukasian supported this view, but felt it assuaged by the positive impression that Blinov made during his introductory meetings, where Gukasian claims that he committed to overcome his professional unfamiliarity with filmmaking by espousing closer collaboration between management, senior cineastes, and *redaktery*.⁴¹³ In 1978, when Blinov’s own tenure was terminally threatened, prominent filmmaker and TVO *Khudruk*, Vitalii Mel’nikov, tempered his frustration at recent budgetary inefficiencies by praising Blinov’s collegiate approach. The atmosphere of a ‘provincial theatre’s backstage gossip’ under Kiselev’s directorship had given way to canner strategic defences of Lenfil’ m cineastes in the face of official intervention.⁴¹⁴

In this sense, critical notions of a 1970s ‘Leningrad School’ cannot be disassociated from Blinov’s directorship, although this connection remains unacknowledged in scholarship. For Elena Stishova and Valerii Golovskoi, a label that could unite filmmakers of such disparate styles and thematic preoccupations as Panfilov, Averbakh, Aleksei German, Dinara Asanova, and Sergei Mikaelian, essentially connoted an implicitly ethical commitment to ‘truth-telling’. This perspective contrasted with the Goskino-sponsored ideological orthodoxies of 1970s Mosfil’ m, dominated aesthetically and politically by the historical epics of Sergei Bondarchuk and Iurii Ozerov. Stishova

summarized the Lenfil'm artistic ethos as 'nonconformity during years when objective conditions were predisposed to brown-nosing'.⁴¹⁵ For Oleg Kovalov, the same peripherality that made the 'Leningrad School' a 'thorn in the side of government ideologues' hinged on a shared poetics, which unsettled the authorities by treating Soviet contemporaneity with a 'photographic estrangement' frequently decried as excessively 'naturalistic' (especially for German and Asanova).⁴¹⁶ In this analysis, even the most exemplary protagonists became the uncanny agents of a broken and obsessive revolutionary pathos. From this period, perhaps the most striking example is Elizaveta Uvarova (Inna Churikova) in Panfilov's *Proshu slova*, a fish-out-of-water Bolshevik idealist in a Brezhnev-era world of political cynicism and endemic corner-cutting.

Both critical perspectives are valid inasmuch as they are borne out by directions in Lenfil'm repertory development under Blinov. A more prosaic but historical argument might call the 'Leningrad School' those artistically atypical directors whose young careers were revived, defended or begun at Lenfil'm between 1972 and 1978. Only after Blinov's appointment was Asanova approved to direct her feature-length debut, while German's rehabilitation with *Dvadsat' dnei bez voiny / Twenty Days without War* (1976) was realized in collaboration with the influential author Konstantin Simonov, a deal brokered by Blinov.⁴¹⁷ In 1975, releases were secured for Mikaelian's *Premiia / The Bonus* and Panfilov's *Proshu slova* under intense regional CPSU pressure. Furthermore, as the following chapter demonstrates, the repertory resurgence of Lenfil'm auteurism was strikingly indicated by the 1977 arrival of Kira Muratova to direct her first film in seven years. Muratova's *Dolgie provody / The Long Farewell* (1971) was among the most heavily lambasted 'shelvings' to accompany the 1972 CC *Postanovlenie*.

Developed Socialism: Doctrine and Rhetoric

As the major doctrine to emerge from the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress in April 1971, developed socialism maintained the longstanding principle of centralized economic planning built around the fulfilment of annual output-quotas. However, its rhetoric shifted towards an optics of modernization that extolled promising new industrial conditions, while simultaneously excusing the evident inadequacies in the existing economic model. The concept that encapsulated this paradoxical posture came from beyond the lexicon of Marxism-Leninism but sought legitimization as the Party's contemporary repackaging of historical-materialist development, when Brezhnev announced the USSR's entry into the 'swiftly expanding scientific-technical revolution' [*nauchno-tekhnicheskaiia revoliutsiia*, hereafter NTR]. Brezhnev called the NTR the main lever for the formation of a material base for communism: the 'historically significant' challenge facing the CPSU was to 'organically combine the NTR with the advantages of socialist economic management'.⁴¹⁸ An alternative interpretation of this statement would acknowledge its desire to make dynamic modernization visible while keeping the authoritarian rationale for command-and-control decision-making obscured behind a master rhetoric of societal rationalization.

For Donald Kelley, developed socialism represented 'a revised statement of political and social legitimacy' for the Party-state apparatus.⁴¹⁹ The 1970s witnessed the growth of 'management as social technique' in Soviet governance, as technocratic principles became increasingly important to the unwritten social contract between state and individual that would characterize this decade in revisionist histories from perestroika onwards. For Kelley, three ideological themes epitomized the ambitions of this doctrine. Firstly, it announced the emergence of 'new social elements' related to the economic 'techno-structure': this rhetorical position effectively amounted to a managerialist revision of the *novyi chelovek* [new man] figure in Soviet anthropological propaganda.

Secondly, it advocated a ‘scientized role for the Party’ as the vanguard agent of technological rationalization *as a socially desirable end in itself*. Thirdly, it established ground-rules for the ‘selective containment of conflict’, where changes in social relations were forecast as a potential consequence of this programme.⁴²⁰ This last theme posited a theoretical innovation on addressing ‘non-antagonistic conflicts in society’ through ‘a tacit political formula linking the ground-rules of administrative politics with the high politics of the regime in the Brezhnev era’. Developed socialism, therefore, emerged as a contingent amalgam that Kelley qualifies as ‘old-fashioned Leninist centralization with new-fangled systems and management-by-objectives theory – or more broadly – a sophisticated version of social engineering’.⁴²¹ An appreciation of the political currency enjoyed by these themes in the 1970s permits a detailed reading of the most significant Lenfil’*m* industrial dramas in this chapter.

Established critical responses to these films overwhelmingly stress their strict adherence to official dogma and their failure to reveal the social, psychological and emotional experiences of individuals living under state socialism. Vladimir Semerchuk writes of *Premiia* and *Nochnaia smena*/*The Night-Shift*, dir. by Leonid Menaker (1971) – the first 1970s Lenfil’*m* industrial drama – as a ‘neoconservative restoration’ of the ‘workers’ myth’ after the 1960s, when the quantity and ‘monumental’ scale of these films had declined.⁴²² Semerchuk views the *kamernost’* of interior spaces in these ‘factory films’ as evidence of their cultural artifice, without further discussing their cinematic forms or acknowledging the significant influence of theatrical staging on many realized screenplays, which adapted successful plays on industrial themes.⁴²³ Moreover, this *kamernost’* represents the working and personal lives of managers and supervisors in offices much more attentively than it idealizes working-class characters and shop-floor labour. The workers of 1970s industrial dramas are mostly secondary figures in the denouement of narratives built around the decision-making prerogatives of white-collar protagonists.

Here, Mikhail Iampol'skii criticizes a failure of psychologism and hollow codes of genre in the motivation of individual protagonists as proof of a disregard for the interests and preferences of viewers, making the late-Soviet industrial drama 'not a commercial genre, but neither [...] an 'artistic' construct of cinema'.⁴²⁴ This position depends upon a self-confessed desire to read *into* the industrial drama a range of strictly delimited themes that Iampol'skii believes *were* acceptable to those responsible for producing this 'non-genre': war, individual sacrifice, collective responsibility and attachment to the project of building communism over emotional or physical contact. Like an inverted CPSU *Postanovlenie*, Iampol'skii does not address specific examples, but rather calls for a 'thorough psychoanalysis' of Soviet cinema.⁴²⁵ Elaborating, the theoretician dismisses industrial dramas as the epitome of late-Soviet repression by homing in on what he takes to be their defining motif:

Back to our factory-foremen: I do not know if industrial affairs are so emotionally debated in real life. But [in these films], the telephone symbolizes an absence of physical contact, and the hysterical scream seems to drown out the absence of normal human relations. It seems to me that there are fewer actors screaming in all the films of the world than in a dozen second-rate [Soviet] industrial dramas.⁴²⁶

Without dismissing symbolic or psychoanalytic approaches to *mise-en-scène* interpretation, this chapter situates industrial dramas in different political contexts than those animating Iampol'skii during perestroika, a moment of angry critical vengeance towards the supposed orthodoxies of Brezhnev-era culture. Iampol'skii mounts a vague critique of sublimated hysteria in unspecified acting performances that supposedly reflect the Soviet regime's distaste for representations of

prudence or violence, acknowledging no shade or nuance in these films' depictions of human contact. This approach entirely discounts interpretation of the materiality and actual power-relations invested in the objects that Iampol'skii names as symbols. Telephones, for example, were instruments in the hierarchical exercise of institutional power, in all its authority and physical inaccessibility, which defined the conditions by which late-Soviet industrial relations were networked. The ideologically driven representation of these power-relations may or may not have appealed to audiences, but it indisputably relied upon these audiences' recognition of the social implications behind its fictional conflicts. From this perspective, late-Soviet industrial dramas command attention as 'instructive anthropologies' of developed-socialist politics, which the CPSU projected rhetorically to legitimate its authority and historicize its prerogatives of social engineering.

Leningrad in Industrial and Political Context

Leningrad was ideally placed to occupy the vanguard of developed socialism. Substantial impetus for corresponding repertory developments at Lenfil'm came from Leningrad's CPSU organizations, which promoted Leningrad as an industrial powerhouse at the forefront of NTR-driven industrial consolidation in the USSR. This image was reinforced by internal propaganda and Western scholarship. Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann identified a 'Leningrad approach' marshalled from the early 1970s by Obkom First Secretary, Grigorii Romanov, who became a fully-fledged Politburo member in 1976. In their perestroika-era assessment, Romanov's programme 'stresses technology, machinery and industrial discipline', and, of all late-Soviet efforts to rationalize central planning, was 'the only one, incidentally, to show real results to date'.⁴²⁷ Heavy machinery and shipbuilding defined the image of Romanov-era Leningrad as a tightly managed constellation of industrial behemoths, supervised by Party-state cadres for whom,

as Geoffrey Hosking reminds us, a military spirit of 'hierarchy and command [was] the air they breathed'.⁴²⁸ To this assessment, we may add that, by the mid-1970s, Leningrad's CPSU vaunted the city as the USSR's leading centre for the training of higher and mid-tier educated cadres in the industrial sector.⁴²⁹

Accordingly, a cinema of industrial narratives produced in Leningrad aspired to credibility on the basis of the city's economic might and the status afforded to it in official political discourse. In the decade up to 1972, cinema-production and heavy industry moved towards this moment along strikingly parallel arcs in Leningrad. Ten years previously, newly created Lenfil'm TOs produced their first films, while in the same year, a model of 'concentration and specialization' took effect in Leningrad industry with the creation of *proizvodstvennye ob"edineniia* [industrial associations], which formed conglomerates on the existing bases of large plants.⁴³⁰ Unlike the *ob"edineniia* of film-studios, where decision-making was devolved to encourage efficiencies in production, these conglomerates were created with the aim of maximizing output through ever-greater centralized command. Consequently, this 'Leningrad approach' consolidated the disciplinary functions of *edinonachalie*, which, with Jerry Hough, we must understand not as an ideological accommodation of 'strong-man' political power, but rather, as a one-man managerial system for routine decision-making at large enterprises.⁴³¹ Enhancing the permanently implicit obligation for employees at state enterprises to obey any order or instruction coming from his/her formal administrative supervisor was a means by which to free central planning agencies from a mass of secondary decision-making processes, a point emphasized by Romanov in his speech to the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress.⁴³² For this consolidation, it was unacceptable to solder new technologies and heavy industrial practices onto smaller enterprises already in existence. In a sense, this was the *real* industrial drama of the NTR in late-Soviet society, as research institutes and large plants were merged in a drive to accelerate advances in areas like computerization, motorization and atomic

energy. For Denis Khriukin, the changing managerial landscape of this economy determined the thematic preoccupations of Lenfil'm industrial dramas. One model depicts a zealous *novyi chelovek* at odds with an entrenched collective, while the other frames a portrait of the industrial enterprise-director, whose ethical and professional leadership amid uncertain sectoral conditions is held in tension with an unsettled personal life.⁴³³ In both scenarios, these protagonists struggle to maintain any work/life balance: their work-ethic sacrifices relationships and respite to a greater societal construction-project.

A conservative political drive for cultural production to reflect industrial consolidation declared itself in 1966, when the Leningrad CPSU City Committee [*Gorodskoi komitet*, Gorkom] initiated instructional seminars for literary and artistic figures to direct their work on contemporary industrial themes.⁴³⁴ Thereafter, the Obkom Culture Department adopted an unprecedentedly hands-on approach to directing the publication of a series of commemorative books on Leningrad's most famous plants and factories in 1968.⁴³⁵ In 1969, Lenfil'm began screenplay-development on two industrially themed films that were conceived in response to these local political initiatives. To this end, Lenfil'm dispatched playwrights Ignatii Dvoretiskii and Aleksandr Gel'man respectively to research-residencies at major industrial sites in Leningrad.

Both writers came from industrial labouring backgrounds. The older Dvoretiskii was sent to Izhorskii Factory, one of Leningrad's oldest industrial sites.⁴³⁶ This project was commissioned as a flagship for the industrial drama's renewal in late-Soviet cinema, but due to an extremely fraught production history was released only in 1973 as *Zdes' nash dom/Our House is Here*, dir. by Viktor Sokolov. These circumstances made *Nochnaia smena*, written by Gel'man with Tat'iana Kaletskiaia (his wife and occasional collaborator), the earlier of the two films to reach Soviet screens in 1971. During its development, Gel'man continued to work as a journalist on the Leningrad workers'

newspapers *Smena* and *Stroitel'nyi rabochii*, having previously held metallurgical scalper-operator and traffic-superintendent posts on major industrial sites. What both projects boasted in terms of experiential authenticity, they resolutely lacked in coherence for rendering their new industrial dramas cinematically. *Nochnaia smena* was also artistically and politically premature: it was completed before the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress but premiered in June 1971, after the leadership had issued its rhetorical blueprint for discussing industrial subject-matter. After this 'false start', the challenge for Lenfil'm was to encode the ideological themes that Kelley associates with developed socialism into convincing artistic representations of this most contingent doctrine, in practice.

Zdes' nash dom

Reviewing the decade at Lenfil'm in 1979, Izol'da Sepman called *Zdes' nash dom* a flawed foundation-text for the new industrial drama, insisting that 'for the authors, it was important to lay out its principles in their purest form'.⁴³⁷ This assertion indirectly acknowledged how a protracted production had fostered a tentative artistic response to the new political programme. For the first time in the TO-era, the 'authors' credited were neither the *sostav avtorov* as a repertory cohort, nor the strategic partnership between a film-director and screenwriter negotiating the screening processes of production. Rather, *Zdes' nash dom* found Lenfil'm trying out different cineastes and authorial combinations for a production that became mired in readjustment between the directorships of Kiselev and Blinov. This executive overhaul determined the film's development to a much greater extent than the politically vulnerable Lenfil'm TOs, which were under intense pressure from the Leningrad Party to demonstrate that their younger film-directorial cohorts were fit for feature-length filmmaking.⁴³⁸ Sepman's 'authors', then, were a disparate body of writers and prospective filmmakers, enlisted to deliver

the flagship project of a studio in urgent need of political favour. However, reluctance among cineastes to voluntarily accept ‘top-down’ political commissions was a chronic feature of late-Soviet Lenfil’ m production. Thematically prescriptive and highly exposed to Party-led interference, such projects frequently became the domain of cineastes unable to demand artistic autonomy or negotiate better terms.

By late-1970, Dvoretiskii and Lenfil’ m were at loggerheads over *Zdes’ nash dom*, whose literary screenplay was approved by Goskino in July. After six months without communication on the search for a candidate film-director, Dvoretiskii unexpectedly adapted the screenplay for the stage and approached Lensovet Theatre in Leningrad to put this new play, *Chelovek so storony / The Outsider*, into production there, without consent from Lenfil’ m.⁴³⁹ This decision began what Khriukin calls the ‘phenomenal burst’ of industrially themed Soviet theatre in the 1970s, to which Gel’ man eventually made the most substantial contribution of original works.⁴⁴⁰ The *kamernost’* that Semerchuk associates with 1970s industrial dramas originates with this production standoff, which had a decisive bearing on the *mise-en-scène* and aesthetics of subsequent Lenfil’ m industrial dramas whose screenplays were adapted from plays.

For Lenfil’ m, the stakes in this dispute were high: the two-part feature with the working title *Inzhener [The Engineer]* was a crucial unit in the 1972 *templan* with a projected budget of 900,000 roubles.⁴⁴¹ Affronted, Kiselev wrote to Lensovet executive director, Aleksandr Nesterov, and artistic director, Igor’ Vladimirov, demanding a halt to the theatrical production on the basis that Lenfil’ m’s ‘specially commissioned’ work must not become ‘just another adaptation from theatre’ whose prospects would be predetermined by the fate of the play.⁴⁴² Decisive agency resided with Dvoretiskii and Vladimirov, who renewed their contract with Lensovet and brought *Chelovek so storony* to the stage in early 1971. At Lenfil’ m, while development on the directorial

screenplay continued without the participation of Dvoretiskii, *Chelovek so storony* achieved success in Leningrad.⁴⁴³ Soon, the preeminent theatre director, Anatolii Efros, took the play to Moscow, sealing its reputation as one of the most significant Soviet theatrical works of the period and subsequently creating a TV film from this production in 1973.⁴⁴⁴ This acclaim shifted the stance for negotiation at Lenfil'm, especially since Boris Pavlenok at Goskino had just rejected the studio's approval of Grigorii Nikulin to direct the film.⁴⁴⁵ Pressurized, Kiselev sought a safe pair of hands that might suit both local and central authorities. However, neither Kheifits nor Panfilov – the two preferred candidates – would touch this orthodox literary screenplay without other writers coming on board to redraft, a move categorically opposed by the newly influential Dvoretiskii.⁴⁴⁶

In April 1971, Kiselev reached a tentative solution, informing Goskino that the Leningrad Gorkom and Obkom were not opposed to the candidature of Vladimirov, who had directed the original Lensovet stage-production of *Chelovek so storony*.⁴⁴⁷ Vladimirov had made seven televisual films and played the main role of Vasilii Gubanov in Iulii Raizman's *Tvoi Sovremennik/Your Contemporary* (1967), a Mosfil'm release that Khriukin describes, without elaboration, as 'proto-industrial'.⁴⁴⁸ The atomic research scientist Gubanov's exemplary Party conscientiousness and antagonism towards corruption bridges a chronological gap between the 'moral' communists of 1950s/1960s Party-focused films and the *novye liudi* of the 1970s. *Tvoi Sovremennik* was an early example of cinema's incorporation of the micro-level of 'economic management supported by Party principles' into the macro-level of Soviet institutional politics, bringing into its diegesis a constellation of research bodies, enterprises, industrial ministries and regional-level CPSU organizations with economically decisive authority. Moreover, Raizman's film – screen-written by Panfilov's mentor, Gabrilovich – was a sequel to his own *Kommunist/Communist* (1957), the story of Gubanov's young father, who dies while working on an early post-revolution

construction site, in what is truly the kind of epic ‘workers’ myth’ that Semerchuk appears to have in mind.

Kiselev lauded this recent filmographic credential of Vladimirov in an effort to convince Goskino of the studio’s readiness to develop the industrial thematic.⁴⁴⁹ However, irreconcilable conflict erupted between Vladimirov and Dvoretiskii over the former’s directorial screenplay, with Dvoretiskii accusing both director and studio of mounting a falsely theatrical reinterpretation of the play and dampening the political significance of his literary screenplay.⁴⁵⁰ Finally, Viktor Sokolov – a director with well-known disciplinary issues and in need of artistic rehabilitation after the closure of the Third TO – was approved to direct the film in January 1972.⁴⁵¹ We can see how Sepman’s indeterminate reference to ‘authors’ retrospectively euphemised the convoluted process that permitted Lenfil’ m to regain control of its own commission, now in response to the success of *Chelovek so storony*. The play had announced a reboot of the *novyi chelovek* for the NTR era with its single-minded protagonist, Aleksei Cheshkov.

Cheshkov (Vladimir Zamanskii) embodies the ‘new social element’ of technical management in developed socialism. *Chelovek so storony* and *Zdes’ nash dom* are structured around the disruptive impact of this ‘young’ engineer (thirty-two in the play but clearly over forty in the film) arriving from a provincial factory to take over an underperforming foundry at the giant Leningrad metallurgical plant that has headhunted him. The key conflict in both play and film hinges on his progressive methods versus the backwardness of the proudly traditional Leningrad plant, which represents a microcosm of Soviet heavy industry. This acknowledgment is crucial to the film’s reconciliation of Kelley’s third and most opaque theme, the tacit link in developed-socialist rhetoric between the high politics of the regime and the administrative ground-rules for dealing with ‘non-antagonistic conflict’ in society. With Cheshkov and the plant’s ‘elite’ at odds over

management style and plan-fulfilment priorities, only the election of a new Partkom secretary at the plant – a process engineered from outside by the Gorkom secretary for heavy industry – enables the retention of Cheshkov, whose methods had hitherto been stymied by the inflexible plant directorship. Thus, the local CPSU *nomenklatura* becomes the supervisory ‘sponsor’ of rationalizing reforms that reflect the ‘scientized role’ of the Party as the steward of modernization.

Dvoretiskii’s screenplay *zaiavka* positions developed socialism on the ‘right’ side of historical-materialist progress with a revealing qualification. ‘This plant invited an outsider from the provinces with the utmost deliberation and carefulness. But growth [*razvitiie*] dictates its own laws, where there is no room for emotions’.⁴⁵² As a *novyi chelovek*, Cheshkov appears coldly ahistorical alongside the gregarious war-veteran executives at the plant, but his self-avowed ‘greater interest in the future than the past’ makes this generational division a project of communist renewal. Depicting Cheshkov as a loner within an entrenched patron-client system endows this outsider with diagnostic powers for a sterner critique of late-Soviet industrial conventions than had been articulated previously in cinema. Dvoretiskii’s determination to hold economic growth and emotionality in tension created the split that Khriukin identifies in the manager-figure’s unwavering commitment to fighting backwardness at work, while his/her personal life remains troubled. In Sokolov’s tentative reconciliation of this split, *Zdes’ nash dom* merely hints at broader social contexts which could link the personal and political motivations behind the economic mobility of a figure like Cheshkov. The film’s doctrinal anthropology could not fully retreat from binding his character to the emotive sociology of growing divorce rates, struggling single-parent families, intractable housing crises and endemic stress-related illness as ever-present elements of Soviet modernity.

For all its programmatic purpose, *Zdes' nash dom* is the first industrial drama to directly address the gap between functioning productivity and formal plan-fulfilment in the late-Soviet economy. In Lenfil'm industrial dramas, plan-fulfilment criteria are not just arbitrarily composed and open to politically motivated abuse. Astonishingly, they are also repeatedly presented as a sham of obfuscation, unreliable data and institutional inertia in films that offer no narrative resolution to the unfulfillable plans that drive their conflicts. Instead, they expose everyday manipulations of planning conventions, which hide in plain sight at late-Soviet enterprises. On the one hand, these films required aspirational protagonists with impeccable professional credentials and unwavering ideological commitment to the stated growth-by-gross-output imperatives of the Soviet regime. On the other, these exemplary managers could not exist in an idealized vacuum, beyond a system of corruption that James Miller calls 'Brezhnev's 'little deal'', the primary aim of which was 'the reallocation by private means of a significant fraction of Soviet national income according to private preferences'.⁴⁵³ Filmmakers had to reconcile doctrinal CPSU rhetoric to the informal 'rules of the game' that the regime implicitly encouraged to assure its own stability, whether legally or illegally. The result was that industrial dramas retreated from narrative resolutions for the intractable systemic contradictions they depicted, preferring instead to settle for 'snapshot' exposures of sectors ostensibly in the early stages of economic reforms.

The professional ethics of plan-fulfilment became the focus for these Lenfil'm productions. In the mid-1970s, when the industrial drama had established a repertory foothold, emphasis shifted away from professional anomalies such as Cheshkov in *Zdes' nash dom*, and towards moral opposition to corruption and vested interests as an anomaly in itself, as in *Premiia*. Of that film's literary screenplay, Gukasian wrote to Goskino: 'we have the chance to produce an extremely topical film, one urgently needed by our spectators'.⁴⁵⁴ By contrast, *Zdes' nash dom* and, almost simultaneously, *Starye steny/Old Walls*, dir. by Viktor Tregubovich (1973), depict unsanctioned

practices as an aspect of developed-socialist industry that the Party-state apparatus was opposing programmatically with managerialist rhetoric. It was thus unsurprising that Blinov and Golovan' nodded performatively to this official discourse, in their conclusive assessment of *Zdes' nash dom*, by quoting Brezhnev back to Goskino *redaktery*: 'at the coalface of communist construction, *nauka pobezhdat' - eto po sushchestvu nauka upravliat*'' ['the science of victory is, fundamentally, the science of management'].⁴⁵⁵

The industrial output-plan was the thematic pivot around which conflicts could develop between the formal enforcement of compliance and endemic, informally tolerated infringements. *Zdes' nash dom* challenges this tolerance with Cheshkov's rationalizing mission, but curiously makes neither plan-fulfilment nor tangible improvements to labour discipline at the plant the object of narrative resolution. Rather, the film is more interested in an anthropological anatomy of labour-relations between management, workers and the local CPSU organizations, than in fulfilling the promise of the *novyi chelovek* mythology that Cheshkov incarnates. To this extent, the film, while less widely discussed than *Chelovek so storony*, merits appreciation as a pointed exposé of the planned economy's shortcomings. In the assessment of Golovskoi, *Starye steny* is a more 'human' counterpoint to the doctrinal programme of *Zdes' nash dom* in the emergence of the Lenfil'm industrial drama.⁴⁵⁶ However, both films disengage narrative resolution from thematic conflict to such an extent that they may be approached as similar expressions of artistic hesitance towards developed socialist orthodoxies. For their managers, the choice is between prioritizing the successful fulfilment of misleading output-plans or addressing the chronic productivity problems that blight Soviet industry. Crucially, neither film resolves this conflict dramaturgically. Unfulfilled plans and productivity shortfalls remain suspended at the end of these industrial snapshots, while their managerial stewards of reform are sternly tested, but never accorded the measure of success or failure.

In *Zdes' nash dom*, a panoply of undesirable systemic issues is highlighted and challenged, but not actually overcome by the film's end. This somewhat confounding outcome is only explainable if we read its denouement politically. When Cheshkov inherits the Twenty-sixth foundry of the plant, the predicament he encounters is not an isolated case of plan-padding or false reporting, but a culture of inertia and cheating that runs through the entire enterprise. Immediately, Cheshkov discovers inadequate workflow-assessments, poor discipline among supervisory workers and ineffectual managers resigned to the prevailing wastefulness. However, the foundry's planning cover-ups become the issue that prevents Cheshkov's rationalizations from succeeding. Gramotkin (Oleg Zhakov), the former head of the foundry dismissed after *three* unfulfilled annual plans, requests a meeting with Cheshkov, who then demolishes the figures that have been provided to him. 1,000 tons of raw metal castings are missing from their changeover inventory as a consequence of Gramotkin's attempts to shore up previous quarterly plans through deferrals and internal bartering.

Cheshkov's initial assessment had already concluded that Gramotkin could never have succeeded in fulfilling the ambitious output-plans because the incomplete foundry was opened prematurely. Gramotkin admits that this demonstrative launch, for which he received official decorations, was required by the plant directorship to happen by the date of a significant public holiday. Consequently, Cheshkov must fight to have the earlier shortfall removed from the balance-sheet. Gramotkin pursues this with the directorship in the hope of a new appointment, while Cheshkov struggles to fulfil the current plan amid chronic inefficiencies and managerial resistance. When it becomes clear to Cheshkov that the projected output-plan cannot be met, the production-department chief who engineered Cheshkov's appointment, Poluetkov (Vasilii Merkur'ev), exerts pressure for plan-fulfilment at all costs by a round-the-clock drive (*shturm*). However,

Cheshkov explicitly opposes ‘pointless cramming’ (*shturmovshchina*) and objects in principle to the managerial dressings-down (*nakachka*) and political window-dressing (*paradnost’*, *pokazukha*) that prevails under the existing executive.

For the directorship, plan-fulfilment is the sacred criterion of industrial performance. It views the intransigent Cheshkov with suspicion and complains that he is driving much-needed professional cadres away from the enterprise as a result of his uncompromising style and professional stringency. The Twenty-sixth foundry’s difficulties threaten the plant’s overall output-plan, and hence jeopardize the all-important *premiia* [bonus-payment] due to all employees at a plan-fulfilling state enterprise. When the conflict deepens, the plant’s CPSU organization convenes a crisis Partkom meeting and compels the Gorkom secretary for heavy industry to mount an inquiry. As the plant-director’s inflexibility, political face-saving and inefficient track-record become apparent, Gorkom secretary Kriukov (Ivan Solov’ev) pushes to promote Riabinin (Petr Vel’iaminov), the plant’s young chief engineer and an antagonist to the director, to become Partkom secretary, with the aim of consolidating the Party’s supervisory direction of the plant’s modernization.

By the film’s end, the director’s power is severely diminished, but he remains in place. A confrontation with Riabinin is postponed when the ending coincides with the director’s work-trip abroad. Despite the Gorkom’s intervention and widespread discontent among underperforming managers, Cheshkov also survives with the explicit backing of Riabinin, who acknowledges the enormity of the task ahead but – channelling Dvoretzkii – endorses Cheshkov as ‘our kind of outsider’ [*chelovek s nuzhnoi nam storony*]. Cheshkov immediately resumes his ‘impassioned’ advocacy of rationalization: there is no indication whether the output-plan has been fulfilled or adjusted downwards in order to be met. Instead, Cheshkov is shown striding away from the

foundry and turning to survey the site, having walked past a billboard bearing images of boardroom gatherings and photographic stills from the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress. Barefacedly avoiding the film's core industrial dilemma, this ending nonetheless remains thematically true to the NTR programme. *Zdes' nash dom* may question the timeliness of Cheshkov's 'advanced' methods, and challenges his steely professional comportment, but it unambiguously supports his vision of rationalized progress, whether late-Soviet industry is ready, or not.

Portraits of the Enterprise-Director

The pre-production of *Starye steny* was a late-Soviet industrial drama in itself. Anatolii Grebnev fulfilled a screenplay-contract with Chukhrai's ETK in 1972, but there was no room in its 1973 production-plan, so the literary screenplay was offered to Lenfil'm on the condition that Grebnev's chosen candidates, Pavel Kogan and Petr Mostovoi, be approved to direct.⁴⁵⁷ However, further screenplay-development and Kiselev's imminent removal bolstered Goskino's insistence, in September 1972, that Lenfil'm appoint a more highly qualified filmmaker.⁴⁵⁸ By late-October, the relatively inexperienced but recently lauded Viktor Tregubovich was approved to direct alongside camera-operator Eduard Rozovskii, prominent in each of the studio's major artistic shifts since the mid-1950s.⁴⁵⁹ This swiftly organized production learnt the lessons of the protracted process that caused *Zdes' nash dom* to premiere in February 1974, only one month before *Starye steny*.

Starye steny responded to the earlier film's nakedly doctrinal positions with more nuanced social relations and represented the kind of artistic progression that would afford this film praise in studio-level presentations throughout the 1970s. Although Grebnev also eventually adapted his

screenplay for theatre, this proved secondary to its significance as a Lenfil'm industrial drama.⁴⁶⁰ Beyond NTR rhetoric, the old textile factory in *Starye steny* evokes two other Soviet films about women in industry. The film was shot in the same Noginsk factory as *Svetlyi put' / Tanya*, dir. by Grigorii Aleksandrov (1940), which combines a romantic Cinderella transformation with plan-fulfilment prowess in the journey of Tania Morozova (Liubov' Orlova) from peasant housemaid to Stakhanovite textile-worker. *Starye steny* intersects ironically with this ideological fantasy: the site of Stalin-era 'worker's myth-building' becomes the scene for a frank managerial grapple with socially recognizable challenges of everyday late-Soviet labour-relations. In this regard, *Starye steny* is uncannily as if Gabrilovich's *zaiavka* for *Semeinaia zhizn' Pashi Stroganovoi* developed into the kind of social-realist drama (also built around a textile factory) that this proposal promised before it was subsumed into Panfilov's *Nachalo*, a film that overtly challenges the Cinderella fantasy of *Tanya*.

While *Nachalo* eschews any representation of its factory, *Starye steny* demonstrates how post-1972 industrial dramas aspired to the authenticity of on-location shoots at real industrial sites. However, these films are linked by irreverent inscriptions of their productions in the body of the film. Gennadii Beglov (assistant director, as on *Nachalo*) again appears as a mid-tier factory-administrator in several sequences, while Rozovskii plays a schmaltzy hotel-resort crooner – introduced by Tregubovich himself, in the role of compere – at a dance in the film's opening sequence, a humorously ironic casting given the greater complexity of camerawork during the resort sequences than in the rest of the film. *Starye steny* incorporated these playful details into a more artistically surefooted industrial drama than *Zdes' nash dom*, which hastened the decline of Sokolov as a prominent Lenfil'm cineaste. However, *Starye steny* engages with the same doctrinal positions too directly for these films to be so starkly contrasted as Golovskoi maintains. Rather, where Sepman writes that the 'real protagonists' of Leningrad industrial dramas are not those

born into the NTR epoch, but those psychologically complex characters who must adapt to its demands, the critic implicitly privileges the factory-director from *Starye steny*, Anna Smirnova (Liudmila Gurchenko), over the *novyi chelovek* of her factory's chief engineer, a figure whose disruptive agency remains a political given.⁴⁶¹

Starye steny is the original 'portrait of a director' that Khriukin describes as one of two models for the industrial drama. There is no sequence in the film that is not orchestrated around Anna's attempts to reconcile the authority of her office to her civic engagements and domestic life as a widowed single parent. Although the film's social panorama centres consistently upon the factory, the drama of plan-fulfilment foregrounded early in the film nonetheless falls away from the conflicts that are initially exposed through this question. At a board-meeting, Anna challenges factory-foremen on their forecasts for meeting monthly output-plans. When one supervisor blames absenteeism and poor discipline for leaving his section with 120 tonnes of fabric to produce in the eight working days that remain, the 'Cheshkovian' chief engineer, Viktor Petrovich (Boris Gusakov), lambasts the 'sticking-plaster policies' and 'misleading prosperity' of plan-chasing. Viktor argues that leaving the plan unfulfilled, although regrettable, would at least allow the factory to establish professional responsibility. Once again, the *shturmovshchina* of plan-fulfilment is exposed, but not resolved. Although Viktor later complains that the centrally mandated plans are neither 'serious' nor grounded in analysis of the factory's production capacities (as in *Zdes' nash dom*), we never learn if Anna's factory meets its obligations or adapts its working practices, after conflict erupts between the labour force and the chief engineer. Instead, the *managerial* opposition between Anna and Viktor becomes a discursive performance of opposing worldviews. NTR rationalizing imperatives retreat into a frank acknowledgment of the extent to which employee-welfare and material prosperity were determined by the socially corporative functions of late-Soviet enterprises.

Starye steny bears out Geoffrey Hosking's observation that late-Soviet workers saw themselves in a 'total relationship' with their employers. Anna is not only an enterprise-director, but a civic delegate with responsibility for brokering deals with Party-state offices and responding to the petitions of employees living in a community defined by the presence of her textile factory. Hosking compares this to a 'company town' in nineteenth century America, where the main enterprise owned and allocated housing and funded local infrastructure from its profits.⁴⁶² When *Starye steny* removes Anna from unresolved boardroom wrangling, it unsurprisingly dwells on the perpetual Soviet housing crisis as a flipside to the planned economy's tacit social contract. *Starye steny* does not advocate the 'shock therapy' rationalization of *Zdes' nash dom*, but shows instead how late-Soviet labour-relations were managed by *political* powerbroking, rather than by the adaptation of performance-indicators that would reflect the 'real' production capacities of an enterprise.

Regardless of the tension between collective responsibility for plan-fulfilment and the desire to project positive change through manager-reformers, the peculiarity of these films is that they cannot obscure the system's lack of incentivizing stimulus for workers. Anna is frustrated and ultimately powerless in the face of textile-workers who are reluctant to take on extra shifts, or who resign to work elsewhere, having first exploited the factory's corporate housing provisions. As Hosking argues and *Starye steny* confirms, low standards of workplace-discipline were the cost of low pay and the 'de facto prohibition of strikes', which allowed *shturmovshchina* to coexist with chronic underproductivity and an annual labour turnover of 20%-30% at enterprise-level. As such, the tacit entitlement to move on from a stagnating job was the most valuable freedom that an individual late-Soviet worker could exercise.⁴⁶³ This applies not only to the textile-workers that *Starye steny* casts as self-interested or cynical; it is also the alternative outcome of Anna and

Viktor's conflict, which originates not in the diagnosis of the factory's plan-fulfilment quandary, but in the formulation of a viable managerial response. Tellingly, no such response is offered in *Starye steny*. As in *Zdes' nash dom*, the flight of managerial cadres is a constant threat assured by the irreconcilable differences of these senior executives. Crew-members on *Starye steny* have also spoken about the blanket refusal of frightened workers from the shoot's on-location factory to act in the episodic roles offered to them by Tregubovich. Once they had read their proposed lines about pay disputes, plan-fulfilment failures, and their lack of decent housing, these workers allegedly feared the exposure of these 'documentary-seeming' scenes (from necessity, *Direktor kartiny* Vladimir Semenets consequently played a self-interested worker resigning his post.).⁴⁶⁴

Viktor advocates labour-discipline over Anna's holistic approach to welfare, asserting that 'I am not a tutor [*vospitatel'*], I am an engineer'. Replying, and polemically engaging *Zdes' nash dom*, Anna does not believe that 'a *novyi chelovek* will come and that a new life will begin, we have heard that all before'. In the film's open-ending, these conflicting social agendas are no more resolved than the factory's plan-fulfilment challenge. None of the economic indicators that were fundamental to the exposition of their conflict have been either met or missed. Instead, Anna insists that late-Soviet labour-relations can no longer be determined by social engineering. The genuine influence of enterprise-directors in the centrally planned economy concerned political bartering, which brings about the tangible benefits for the corporation-community that Anna highlights in *Starye steny*: new housing, recreational facilities and workers' access to employers for individual petitioning and the resolution of disputes. These ideologically commendable details project economic growth but are also unambiguously framed by Anna's *edinonachalie*: collective welfare depends upon the political conduct of this one-woman manager.

The most politically sophisticated film to develop this theme is *Den' priema po lichnym voprosam / A Day of Appointments for Personal Matters*, dir. by Solomon Shuster (1974). As with *Starye steny*, Goskino directed this project to Lenfil'm immediately following the CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema. In November 1972, Pavlenok sent the 'well-regarded' VKSR graduation-screenplay of Petr Popogrebskii to Golovan' and the recently appointed Blinov, who allocated Popogrebskii's professional debut to Solomon Shuster, also directing his first feature after switching from documentary filmmaking.⁴⁶⁵ With *Zdes' nash dom* reaching completion and *Starye steny* still in production, the desire to produce each Lenfil'm industrial drama as a flagship project is apparent in the support provided to debuting filmmakers by First TO *redaktory* in assembling an exceptionally strong acting ensemble for *Den' priema*.⁴⁶⁶ First-class actors and a distinctly 'European' visual aesthetic facilitated its ambition of scale, focusing on the management of a Moscow-based *trest* [multi-corporate enterprise] of greater national significance than the respective *zavod* [plant] and *fabrika* [factory] in the two preceding titles.

The action unfolds over the final day of the business-year's second quarter at Energomontazh Corporation, whose director, Boris Ivanov (Anatolii Papanov), wrestles with quarterly plan-fulfilment obligations that require its electric power-stations to meet output-targets made challenging by defective machinery and inconclusive testing of new turbines. The title also refers to the schedule at Energomontazh's Moscow headquarters: Ivanov's office opens to employees petitioning for assistance with the allocation of housing and other welfare concerns. However, this schedule collapses due to urgent action required to fulfil the plan. Ivanov fights to compel a powerplant-director to sign off on a new turbine that threatens to break down, while attempting to defer less significant output-objectives to the third quarter. Manoeuvring politically, Ivanov barter for reserve energy-supplies to help meet the plan with the sectoral Glavk [ministry-level

administration], whose chief agrees to this transfer in return for a cut of the new housing that Energomontazh has built for the very cadres Ivanov is scheduled to meet in his office.

The pressure on Ivanov mounts and he argues vociferously on the telephone with the powerplant-director and threatens the chief engineer – whose research-specialism resulted in the production of the precariously installed turbine – with dismissal. However, when the turbine becomes fully operational before the end of the day, saving the output-plan of the *trest*, Ivanov remains working at his desk after all others have left. When he leaves, we see red banners of excellence for excelling in the ongoing five-year plan, hanging in the lobby. Although it remains unclear whether the young chief engineer plans to resign of his own accord, it is clear that Ivanov is unsettled by the personal predicaments of the employees with whom he has intersected during the day. In the final sequence, Ivanov bravely telephones the Glavk chief to withdraw ten units of new housing from their earlier bargain, so as to provide the employees from his appointment-schedule with apartments. The film concludes with the sense that these hard-gained concessions and narrowly averted disasters are to be resumed again in the next quarter as permanent features of executive work.

Den' priema is unique among Lenfil'm industrial dramas for more than the profound anomaly that, here, the quarterly plan is actually fulfilled in its narrative. The film emphasizes the interrelated operation of high-level networks of Soviet power – both literal (electric) and political. Ivanov has a direct line to the ministerial-level Glavk chief, and both men attend meetings at the USSR's state-planning agency [Gosplan] in the course of the day. Exposure of the bartering and coercion that resolves this predicament is hugely significant to cinema's representation of the NTR: *Den' priema* marries the political management of industry to new high-technological research in close adherence to the rhetoric of developed socialism. Energomontazh runs a network of powerplants

and must deliver several projects in this quarter but is hindered by energy shortages from independently guaranteeing plan-fulfilment. To prioritize short-term targets, immediate bargains must be cut with, and quarterly deferrals approved by, the Glavk. This institutional configuration frames Ivanov's last-ditch negotiations as a politically credible salvage-job.

An appreciation of late-Soviet departmentalism and sectoral autarky is crucial to the understanding of these practices. The plan-fulfilment drama in *Den' priema* exposes the informal room for manoeuvre afforded to enterprises under the direction of Soviet industrial ministries, which David Dyker describes as 'the operational focus of the cult of the gross'.⁴⁶⁷ A tension exists between NTR modernization – the *trest* optimizes electricity supplies to the Soviet energy-grid – and state-administrative authorities that evolved through sectoral specialization in the 1930s and 1940s. Crucially, the output-plans that are the shared objective of the *trest* and Glavk originate not with either entity, but with Gosplan. Dyker argues that this division of labour between formulation and implementation, established in the 1930s, led to many inconsistencies in the planning system as new technological practices were introduced into Soviet heavy industry. Since central agencies planned sectoral output 'all the way down to product level', there was no adaptive flexibility worked into the planning models that ministries and Glavki implemented 'often with an extraordinary degree of arbitrary power'.⁴⁶⁸

This split between formation and implementation is the factor that both squeezes Ivanov's plan and permits him to fulfil it, after an adjustment – sanctioned arbitrarily – by the superior with whom he barter over housing. Dyker observes that Glavki could wield this arbitrary power for two reasons. Firstly, they maintained 'non-plan reserves' in anticipation of enterprises bidding for these resources to fulfil their plans. Secondly, 'Gosplan [was] so perpetually overburdened with current production-plans that it [could not] grapple with the medium and long-term dimensions'

of gross-output planning as the benchmark for economic growth.⁴⁶⁹ This is an important acknowledgement when considering why an industrial enterprise such as Energomontazh could be expected, in one quarter, to launch multiple new facilities in the face of untested machinery and an unreliable energy-supply. The answer that *Den' priema* cannot explicitly articulate, but that Dyker elaborates, is that the late-Soviet economy was mired in a crisis of systematic overbidding for investment and resources.

In 1970, Dyker claims, Soviet industry had two-and-a-half/three times more investment-projects underway than the economy could handle.⁴⁷⁰ Therefore, excessive investment-spread and grossly exaggerated lead-times became tactical manoeuvres for ministries that wanted to have *some* projects that could be completed, given chronic uncertainties around supply to production. In practice, this caused ministries and Glavki to tend towards the kind of sectoral autarky that could allow their organizations to develop their own networks for components and materials. This was 'a primary condition of survival' in an 'overcentralized and inflexible system'. However, it also bound entire sectors to speculative projections of growth: 'He who does not overbid may end up with very little. Since everyone else overbids, Gosplan is forced to try to make an across-the-board allowance for the practice, which automatically penalises honesty', concludes Dyker.⁴⁷¹ In the networks of power where Ivanov operates, the shuffle of systemically overspread resources is an unavoidable game played for political advantage and executive favour. When he withholds the housing that he had promised the Glavk chief, he commits a politically risky move that actually solves an entrenched problem, thus casting his directorship in a moral light. Nonetheless, the price of successful plan-fulfilment is the perpetuation of a patron-client system beholden to speculative economics and the opportunistic politics of barter and betrayal.

Aleksandr Gel'man: from Moral Protest to Rebellious Fantasy

Dyker's description of late-Soviet planning as a system that automatically penalized honesty is a crucial motivation for the political screenwriting of Aleksandr Gel'man, who became the most prolific and sought-after Soviet author of industrial dramas for screen and stage in the 1970s. The centrepiece of Gel'man's oeuvre is *Premiia*, which aroused political controversy for Lenfil'm, yet quickly became the most emblematic of all its industrial dramas. As noted, Lenfil'm first commissioned an industrial drama from Gel'man in the late-1960s. However, *Nochnaia smena* was a premature return on this investment, largely as a consequence of its completion before the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress announced its NTR programme.

In *Nochnaia smena*, the young traffic-superintendent and research-postgraduate, Zhenia Gribov (Gennadii Korol'kov), battles laziness among low-to-middle ranking labourers in a 'brigade' once led by Pavel Ponomarev (Iurii Tolubeev), an inspirational, paternalistic construction worker, whose health is failing badly. Gribov discovers the existence of a crude and illegal procurement racket, which diverts cement and pipes to the roadbuilding projects of Kovalenko (Iurii Vizbor), a charismatic and unscrupulous manager on the same huge industrial site. Far from any idealization, the worker's brigade is an object of barely concealed scorn: it is at odds with Gribov and a lone peasant-woman crane-operator in its attitudes towards labour and social relations, aping authoritative CPSU discourse on a spectrum from ignorance to knowing cynicism. Later, particularly in *Premiia*, Gel'man's class-perspective would evolve in more sophisticated tension with the systemic paradoxes of late-Soviet economics. However, at this stage, its contradictions and inertias are bound to individual protagonists as *inner*, moral conflicts, which are only resolved by thematically inorganic means. Gribov's desperate attempt to block a traffic-control barrier to trucks that are illegally diverting cement only succeeds when the drivers are shamed by the tearful

intervention of a 17-year-old peasant-girl; the brigade only recognizes its earlier short-sightedness when Ponomarev falls ill and dies on night-watch in their cabin.⁴⁷²

The hostility of *Nochnaia smena* towards working-class protagonists is caught between an essentialist assumption – that these men only need positive leaders and iron discipline to reveal their predisposition to hard work and mutual solidarity – and the tacit allowance that this brutalizing system has made them deeply cynical towards reforms from above. The men disparage Gribov as a ‘tin-pot little boss’ [*nachal’nichek*] when he attempts to assert his authority, with one particularly uncouth worker overturning the fetishizing language of officialdom by countering, ‘I believe that our working classes are never to blame’. When Gribov lambasts the truck-drivers topping up their meagre salaries with illegal cement-running, he rages: ‘Ponomarev came to work ill! He doesn’t think any of you amount to much as men! Would you really sell all of this off for a quick rouble?’. This entreaty remains unanswered: it is implicit that such practices are endemic. Rather, the conflict between upright enforcers like Gribov and exploitative cheats like Kovalenko is displaced to the ethics of workers’ response to these contrasting managerial poles. Cast straightforwardly as a villain, Kovalenko cynically replicates Party discourse to explain his corruption: ‘in our time, all roads lead towards communism. Take the war: what were people fighting for? Correct: the motherland. And now what does a man fight for? Material prosperity’. *Nochnaia smena* diagnosed the regime’s informal tolerance of illegality in industrial management but arrived too early in the development of the industrial drama to propose an effective and exemplary protagonist to combat it.

These two conditions come together in *Premiia*, an unprecedentedly confrontational critique of industrial mismanagement and dysfunctionality for late-Soviet cinema. Gel’man (universally considered the leading artistic driver of the film) and Mikaelian opted for tight, almost

claustrophobic staging.⁴⁷³ After the first ten minutes establish the setting by showing different locations on a construction site, the remainder of *Premiia* is set entirely in or on the threshold of one office-interior. This *mise-en-scène* combines *kamernost'*, as summarized by Semerchuk, with the ensemble-casting typical of Soviet repertory theatre productions of industrial dramas. Formally, restrained and dialogue-driven editing patterns predominate, reflecting the increasingly influential aesthetics of late-Soviet televisual plays. Narratively, an exclusive concern with one workplace-dispute makes *Premiia* more usefully comparable to the Polish 'cinema of moral concern' [*kino moralnego niepokoju*] from the second half of the 1970s, than to any Soviet antecedents.⁴⁷⁴ Earlier Lenfil'm productions related the industrial thematic to broader societal contexts than the world of production, seeking support in romantic, domestic, and communitarian subplots. *Premiia* was a stripped-back experiment that eschewed these counterpoints entirely.⁴⁷⁵

Conflict in *Premiia* hinges on the link between plan-fulfilment, managerial authority, and workers' remuneration, along the lines of the popular joke that Hosking reproduces in his discussion of late-Soviet industrial conditions: 'they pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work'.⁴⁷⁶ On payday at a large construction-site, a brigade of cement-masons refuses the bonus-payment awarded by the enterprise for fulfilling the output-plan, despite the substantial supplement to basic wages that this represents. Confounded, site-supervisors confront the brigade-leader, Vasilii Potapov (Evgenii Leonov), demanding compliance. However, Potapov refuses to explain this decision to any lesser body than the enterprise's Partkom, insisting that it convene to hear his complaint. This Partkom is overwhelmingly comprised of managers that are openly condescending towards Potapov as a working-class labourer, with only the Party Secretary maintaining relative neutrality. It quickly transpires that the refusal is a protest against mismanagement. Despite a massively inefficient loss of man-hours over days of enforced idleness due to supply failures and substandard

materials, the brigade was awarded a bonus for 'overfulfilling' an annual output-plan which was, in fact, revised significantly downwards, after the original plan had been declared unattainable.

Potapov's complaint is straightforward: how is over-fulfilment possible under such desperately unproductive conditions? Officially, the site has been awarded third place in the sector's table of 'socialist competition' [*sotssorevnovanie*] between enterprises, but in reality, essential work is not progressing, and its workers are disadvantaged by a system of remuneration that distributes bonuses while limiting overall take-home pay as a consequence of frequently idle work-days. Potapov cites the example of the young mason who accompanies him to the Partkom: this worker has lost 400 roubles in wages that year but received a bonus of 40 roubles for over-fulfilment. As the meeting progresses, it emerges that, with the help of an enterprise financial officer who teaches brigade-members mathematics at evening-classes, Potapov has discovered that the initial plan could have been successfully fulfilled. However, the director and chief planner revised expectations downwards as a tactic for long-term bartering engagement with the Glavk, stretching out the duration of the construction-contract for this site, which, by the eventual admission of the director and his nemesis, the construction-department manager, should never have been even commenced without better supply lines and materials. The meeting splits between those persuaded by this truth-telling and those determined to protect their positions and privileges, when Potapov proposes a vote that the site's entire labour-force return its 'undeserved and consequently, illegal' bonus to the USSR's Gosbank. Unexpectedly, word reaches the meeting that seven of the brigade's nineteen workers have relented and taken their bonuses, breaking the unity of Potapov's stand and causing him to leave in humiliation. However, the Party Secretary, who increasingly defies the coercive enterprise-director as the meeting progresses, upholds the vote on Potapov's proposal. This is ultimately carried when the shamed director realises his defeat and casts the deciding vote in favour, effectively assuring his own dismissal and

precipitating a serious production crisis for the Glavk by exposing the reality of chronic mismanagement at his enterprise.

By 1974, all doctrinal assertions of 'non-antagonistic conflict' in the informal late-Soviet social contract were stretched so far beyond credibility that *Premiia* appeared as an idealistic fantasy of redress. Potapov's improbable protest overturns the system's inevitable penalization of honesty by disrupting the culture of managerial impunity for the flagrant plan-fulfilment infringements that were a fact of everyday life. As a whistle-blower, Potapov was repeatedly lauded for exemplary civic spirit and 'correct' class-consciousness in the increasingly ritualistic presentations of artistic workers on Lenfil'm repertory policies in the 1970s. However, when discussing the production and cultural impact of *Premiia*, the studio's cineastes were more cautious. In studio Partkom assessments from this moment, Gukasian is widely recognized as having played a substantial role in guiding *Premiia* through ideological screening, both beyond Lenfil'm and supervising Gel'man during screenplay-development.⁴⁷⁷ Between its release and the end of the 1970s, most discussions of *Premiia* at studio-level CPSU meetings were qualified by mentions of how politically fraught this process had proved. According to Gukasian and Aleksandr Karaganov of the SK, these allusions reflected rumours – as yet uncorroborated – that a USSR-wide release for *Premiia* had not prevented several CPSU Obkomy from issuing informal regional bans on its exhibition.⁴⁷⁸

In January 1976, Blinov informed the Lenfil'm Partkom that the previous day's Goskino editorial board meeting had highlighted a screening of *Premiia* in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. 'At one of the factories whose collective watched our film, they refused their bonuses because the situation that had taken root at their factory was almost a carbon-copy of that shown in the film'.⁴⁷⁹ This institutional configuration is revealing. Between the studio's CPSU organization and Goskino, the exemplary

impact of *Premiia* can be celebrated, when this occurs at sufficient distance from the political sphere of influence that directly governs the work of either body. In a late-Soviet context, the alleged anxiety of Obkomy – that *Premiia* could potentially expose illegal practices in their regions or arouse a similar workers’ reaction – was fuelled by awareness that the film’s politics were not anecdotal or exceptional, but a microcosmic commentary on the managerial failings of the planned economy. Rendering the output-plan politically bankrupt and dramaturgically redundant, *Premiia* instead confronts the informal tolerance inherent to the exercise of power within this system, as personified by the managerial ensemble of its extraordinary Partkom meeting.

As Golovskoi acknowledges, the Party Secretary’s shift from unassertive arbitration to politically decisive leadership is the key factor to afford *Premiia* sufficient ideological legitimation to be politically acceptable.⁴⁸⁰ After 1972, Lenfil’s productions merely diagnosed these conditions without committing to the critical resolution that Gel’man insisted upon. In reality, such a response to whistle-blowing was as rare as corruption was inevitable, in what William Clark describes as ‘a heavily administered economy marked by a sizeable monetary overhang and severe chronic scarcity’.⁴⁸¹ Clark’s research into corruption among late-Soviet elites draws on the work of Nicholas Lampert on whistle-blowing to describe the forbidding societal conditions that made *Premiia* so unusual. Where earlier titles acknowledged how widespread mismanagement and obfuscation around plan-fulfilment had become, this film was the first to admit the conclusions of Clark and Lampert to the effect that breaching the Soviet legal code was a condition of survival for organizations and ambitious individuals in industry. As these researchers and Kelley argue, informally observed ground-rules of toleration towards illegality performed essential ‘system-maintenance’ functions for the Soviet regime, maintaining operability for its otherwise intolerably inflexible bureaucracy.⁴⁸²

According to Clark and Lampert, approximately one in five recorded complaints from late-Soviet citizens about enterprise-activities concerned the padding of plan-fulfilment reports, while ‘an equal number alleged improprieties in the calculation or distribution of wages and bonuses’.⁴⁸³ However, drawing on *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* and the Soviet legal journal *Sotsialisticheskaia zakonnost’*, Clark argues that very few officials ever received meaningful punishment for falsifications or employing procurement-agents like Kovalenko in *Nochnaia smena*.⁴⁸⁴ In Clark’s estimation, the combined total of recorded convictions involving these practices amounted to 36 between 1965 and 1990, or only four percent of all verdicts passed under the broad rubric of economic crimes recorded in this period.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, an annual snapshot of these convictions from 1971, when *Nochnaia smena* was released, reveals that 87.7% of Soviet officials convicted of planning falsifications did not lose their jobs, never mind face custodial sentences.⁴⁸⁶ For a judiciary that handed down death-sentences for economic theft and embezzlement, and regularly made harsh examples of officials deemed to have acted in too flagrant contravention of the informal ground-rules, these figures reflect the widespread extent of official tolerance towards planning and procurement infringements. Earlier Lenfil’ m industrial dramas protest these injustices, but only the unlikely working-class hero Potapov seeks and achieves redress. At the same time, the Party Secretary’s decisive resolution of conflict in *Premiia* perpetuated the doctrinal vision of late-Soviet managerialism from those earlier industrial dramas. The suspension or resolution of their plan-fulfilment narratives hinge on political interventions that are hugely revealing of the Party-state nomenklatura’s aspiration: to encode its justifications of power to a white-collar audience that it knows to be as implicated in the ‘functioning dysfunctionality’ of developed socialism as any of the protagonists discussed above.

‘Cadres Decide Everything’: CPSU Supervision in Action

Zdes' nash dom is the only Lenfil'm industrial drama to accord a city-level CPSU organization the political authority that it actually possessed in the late-Soviet system of dual subordination, depicting the kind of external intervention that would befall Lenfil'm during its 1978 production-crisis. This intervention, the only effort at a resolution to the metallurgical plant's faltering operations in *Zdes' nash dom*, was integral to the doctrinal agenda that underpinned Dvoretiskii's commission. However, revealingly, both his play and Sokolov's film stop short of explicitly naming the Leningrad CPSU organizations as the authority that supervises this *zavod*, although it is known to be located there. This reluctance was understandable, given the political pressure on Lenfil'm to produce programmatic works focused on 'new social elements' like Cheshkov, rather than propagate representations of CPSU-cadres work specific to Romanov-era Leningrad. Nonetheless, the Gorkom investigation contrasts the dynamism and political potency of Party officials to the infantilism and incompetence of the plant's executive.

Once the Gorkom investigation into Cheshkov and the jeopardized output-plan has commenced (following a plant Partkom meeting that is not shown), Kriukov and Turochkin (Leonid Nevedomskii), his younger deputy and Gorkom advisor [*instruktor*], appear for the first time in a meeting with Pluzhin (Vsevolod Sanaev), the plant director. Significantly, the previous sequence set in this office shows Pluzhin and Riabinin receiving the plant's 'commercial director', a man dressed in a Western suit who they call 'businessman' [*kommersant*] and whose comportment suggests that he is the most powerful procurement-agent [*tolkach*] depicted in the film.⁴⁸⁷ When this man announces that he has brought gifts from a trade-exhibition in Paris, along with journals, he presents them with toy cars. The two managers proceed to play with these gleefully while the other man describes his experiences abroad. Such childishness permeates the film's managerial

interactions. When Poluetkov repeats his refrain of 'buttons, buttons' [*knopochki*] in bewilderment and wonder at the plant's technological advances, he earns a reproach from Pluzhin that he is no more than a big kid. Gorkom officials express no such levity towards the under-fire directorship. However, as with the unseen Partkom meeting, the film leaves no doubt that the crucial political manoeuvring behind the appointment of Riabinin and the implicit punishment of Pluzhin is occurring off-screen.

Towards the end of the film, this suggestion is confirmed indirectly. Pluzhin walks across an outdoor carpark, when Turochkin passes and greets him. From the building in the background, and from the parkland visible behind Turochkin in the next shot, it is clear that this encounter takes place outside the Smol'nyi Institute, the seat of CPSU Obkom administration in Leningrad. When Pluzhin curtly asks Turochkin to whom belongs the idea of proposing Riabinin as Party Secretary, Turochkin diplomatically deflects the question and asks the director his opinion of this move. A sombre-looking Pluzhin expresses opposition and does not answer Turochkin's question of why, instead climbing into a waiting car. The insinuation is clear, yet too politically sensitive to articulate explicitly. Pluzhin has learned of impending moves against him during a meeting at the Obkom, the site of real political power in Leningrad, that may only be glimpsed fleetingly from its carpark. The film's power-play has shifted decisively with the intervention of Turochkin and Kriukov.

In *Zdes' nash dom*, the Gorkom investigation addresses not the intractable problems of plan-fulfilment, but rather, the failure of the plant's directorship and Partkom to adhere to the ground-rules for dealing with managerial conflicts that break out as a result of Cheshkov's rationalizing agenda, on which neither Kriukov nor Turochkin expresses a political view. Their manoeuvre to have Riabinin appointed Party Secretary is an intervention that viewers are expected to

understand as a direct manifestation of the Brezhnevite '*doverie k kadram*' [trust in cadres] principle.⁴⁸⁸ Kriukov and Turochkin are both originally engineers who now have careers in the Party apparatus, reflecting Hough's contemporaneous observation that, in this period, city and regional Party officials were no longer a 'fairly uniform' group of professional apparatchiki, but formed instead an aggregation of highly specialized and 'orderly' career-paths within sectoral nomenklatura hierarchies.⁴⁸⁹ Amid the dominant focus in Western Sovietology on mapping high-political patronage networks, the meritocratic impulse that *Zdes' nash dom* attempts to accentuate remains an underappreciated aspect of how regional CPSU organizations in the USSR organized their outward-facing supervisory work. As John Willerton asserts, 'heightened sensitivity to meritocratic factors' meant that elite policy-making cadres 'were not only more stable and diverse, they [also] contained a more qualified set of officials'.⁴⁹⁰

In this light, Kriukov, Turochkin and Riabinin represent a political foil to the economic risk that the 'knowledgeable engineer' Cheshkov poses to the plant's directorship. Its complacency and myopic fixation on plan-fulfilment defines the film's economic diagnosis, yet curiously, the Gorkom representatives make no mention of this predicament during their enquiries at the plant. Here, the political drama overrides the irremediable economic crisis as a redirection of narrative: the ground-rules for the resolution of the former conflict can be applied to the fictional scenario, whereas credible answers to the latter condition remain beyond reach in all Lenfil'm industrial dramas. Riabinin responds to Kriukov's strategic persuasion with an example of the economic mismanagement that is causing him to consider leaving the plant. Industrial rolling of sheet-metal was jeopardised by worn-out cutting machinery, but in spite of Riabinin's instruction to halt production for a week,

the director had already promised the sheets to the Glavk chief, the Glavk chief to the minister, and the minister to Gosplan, so the director told me that it's all politics. The sheets came out with massive excess metal envelopes, we then stripped them down almost manually and they ended up costing us three times as much to produce. That's the price of such a politics. And if I remember Lenin correctly, 'politics is a concentrated expression of economics'.

This anecdote supports Hosking's argument that the central planning system was perpetuated in the 1970s for political rather than economic reasons.⁴⁹¹ Following this speech and a pronounced cut-away to Kriukov when Riabinin mentions Lenin, the Gorkom secretary dismisses the director's practices as not politics, but lowbrow manoeuvring [*politikanstvo*]. The counter-manoeuve that follows is an attempt to correct the director's executive overextension, and not a response to the production of inferior quality material with impossible lead-times. This denouement leaves no doubt as to the political significance of Riabinin's prospective appointment. As Hough observes, support from above for a primary Party Secretary in a dispute with a superior industrial administrator was far from inevitable.⁴⁹² Kriukov's backing is thus explicitly reinforced by his assessment that the plant's Partkom 'is big – it operates on the level of a [whole] Raikom', effectively inviting Riabinin to assume a serious political post while assuring him – rather ominously – that the role will bring about changes to his unreserved temperament: 'we'll take care of that, too'.

A quiet example of this conversion is embodied by Turochkin, who we have earlier learned worked on a placement at the plant without the director recalling his presence. Diplomatically, he shares the perspectives of Riabinin and Cheshkov on the failing enterprise, as where he and

Riabinin share a knowing look of exasperation after a senior foundry worker comes to complain about Cheshkov's methods. After his introduction to the directorship, Turochkin is distanced from Kriukov's behind-the-scenes manoeuvring: Hough confirms that *instruktory* were supposed to have 'quite intimate contact' with those engaged in production and to spend time assisting lower CPSU representatives.⁴⁹³ However, as indicated by the cagey carpark encounter with Pluzhin, Turochkin's primary purpose is the surveillance that will assure the appointment of Riabinin as the Gorkom's preferred candidate. Hough concludes that this reflects the political process more accurately than the formal remit of *instruktory*: 'in reality, their main function [...] is to assist the [superior] secretary'.⁴⁹⁴ In *Zdes' nash dom*, the Gorkom intervention conspires to redirect the executive culture of the plant via the post of Party Secretary, the figurehead for CPSU members *within* the enterprise.

Like Cheshkov, Riabinin is a prototype framed in suspension: he assumes his role as the film ends and articulates only introductory remarks of conciliation. Clearly, the complexities of this Party Secretary's task made its depiction as problematic here as in subsequent industrial dramas. The Party Secretary in *Starye steny* consults Anna only once, in the penultimate sequence, about resignations provoked by Viktor. *Den' priema* dispenses with all mention of CPSU organizations – primary or otherwise – preferring instead to depict executive administration exclusively on the 'state' line of dual-subordination. In their wake, *Premiia* renewed the political urgency that remains suspended in *Zdes' nash dom*. Gel'man's first attempts to work themes of mismanagement, illegal procurement and class conflicts into *Nochnaia smena* faltered largely because that film lacked the justifying impetus, evident in features produced after the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress, for proposing political solutions to new economic challenges in the NTR era.

For all the enthusiasm expressed towards Gel'man's dramaturgy by key figures like Gukasian and Rakhmanov in the Lenfil'm First TO, other early assessments of *Premiia* voiced caution about the screenplay's almost exclusive focus on the outcome of a construction-site Partkom. One reviewer of the literary screenplay wrote of its 'hypertrophied social [vision] and the entire suppression of its human side'.⁴⁹⁵ This verdict perceives greater social antagonism in the film's conflict than could be accommodated in a moral reading of Potapov as a whistle-blowing misfit, rather than the vanguard of a thoroughly disgruntled working class. Alternatively, the *redaktor* Aleksandr Bessmertnyi expressed to Gel'man the view of the First TO *Khudsovet* that the second draft of the screenplay should see the Potapov-prototype decide to refuse the brigade's bonuses *during the course* of the Partkom, as if swayed by its investigative probity.⁴⁹⁶ Instead, *Premiia* accords the brigade this prerogative from the outset, opening a politically risky window on the Partkom, which all earlier industrial dramas had refrained from showing in action. *Premiia* reinforces Hough's view of the Partkom as a late-Soviet plant's 'real board of directors'.⁴⁹⁷ Gel'man's dramaturgy thus resolves its fantastical political narrative by replicating Potapov's transgressive appearance before the Partkom as its own transgression into the dynamic of the meeting. This sense of intrusive estrangement culminates in the last of the film's repeated circular pans of the office-room, where the camera fixes the gaze of each Partkom member in turn, after the absent Potapov's proposal has been carried.

The crucial political shift in *Premiia* is the firm stand taken by the Party Secretary, Solomakhin (Oleg Iankovskii), against the director, Batartsev (Vladimir Samoilev), once it emerges that the latter has deliberately misled his colleagues about the capacity of the construction-enterprise to fulfil its original output-plan. Solomakhin upholds Potapov's complaint and insists upon the vote to decide Batartsev's fate, even once the remaining Partkom members believe the workers' resistance to have been broken, when several brigadiers accept their bonuses. However,

Solomakhin's move is also pre-empted by a series of internal conflicts that he oversees during the meeting, when rank-and-file figures break ranks from their superiors. The financial officer goes against her line-manager, the domineering chief planner, by clandestinely assisting Potapov's brigade to compile its study with the provision of crucial data. The tired and withdrawn chief traffic-controller first speaks, late in the film, to denounce the incompetence of his sponsor and 'friend' Batartsev, after it emerges that the controller's son is among the brigadiers refusing his bonus. Even the harassed section-supervisor [*prorab*] responsible for distributing bonuses erupts in a fit of impotent rage at the hard-line brigade-leader who calls for the workers to be punished. Before Solomakhin decisively intervenes, these ruptures turn the Partkom from a kangaroo-court against Potapov into a chaotic forum for unexpectedly frank score-settling. However improbable in reality, Solomakhin's Partkom resolution succinctly reveals the actual separation of powers between late-Soviet Party Secretaries and enterprise-directors. This division hinges on the Partkom's formal supervisory rights [*pravo kontroliia*] over the executive operations [*rukovodstvo*] of administrative managers.

Although doubtlessly idealized in his exercise of political judgment, Solomakhin's enforcement of Potapov's proposal reflects the genuine authority of a Party Secretary as the head of the enterprise's rank-and-file CPSU members. Potapov reinforces this projection of Party supervision [*kontrol'*] early in *Premiia*, when he informs an indignant foreman that the CPSU statute allows him, as a member, to address his concerns to any level of Party authority, 'right up to the CC'. This assertion loops back at a decisive moment during the Partkom, when Solomakhin – the disembodied voice of authority during a circular pan of the office – reads a CC-issued statement from that day's edition of *Pravda* on the use of *sotssorevnovanie* to combat backwardness in industry. When this reading concludes with a quotation from Lenin on the importance of frank self-criticism to Soviet progress, Solomakhin's rhetoric enacts official discourse: he expresses that

which 'the Party CC calls upon us' to implement. This incitement frames the imminent vote on Potapov's proposal as a matter of principle and political consciousness, rather than an appeal to formal legal statutes governing economic malpractice that had no bearing on actual conditions or conventions. *Premiia*, like all Lenfil'm industrial dramas before it, acknowledges endemic contraventions to be systemically unavoidable.

While insisting that top-down *edinonachalie* hierarchies be respected, the Brezhnev-era CPSU apparatus tacitly acknowledged how illegality worked flexibility into an otherwise rigid system. *Premiia* disrupts this contradiction by posing a question formulated by Hough: with the Party apparatus's duty to supervise and control, what was the extent of formal authority granted it to force industrial administrators to accept its will?⁴⁹⁸ *Premiia* avoids fully answering this question by having Batartsev cast the deciding vote in favour of his own dismissal. Political persuasion, professional guilt and the weight of evidence accumulated against him make this dramatic moment of self-sacrifice cohere, however improbably, as a voluntary *mea culpa*. This decision neutralizes the overt conflict between *edinonachalie* and Party-member participation that defines the tension of the drama because, as Hough confirms, the fundamental distinction between Party *kontrol'* and administrative *rukovodstvo* is the absence in the former, and presence in the latter, of formal obligating authority.⁴⁹⁹

For Partkom *kontrol'* to trump Batartsev without compromising its obligatory support for the principles of *edinonachalie*, two operations are required. Firstly, the plan-fulfilment *shturm* is relegated to the filmic past and discredited retrospectively through evidential reports, rather than depicting the brigade's refusal to work in filmic time. Secondly, the directorship's obligation to maintain labour-discipline slips to such an extent as to prompt Potapov's intervention and require the corrective leadership of Solomakhin to uphold the principles of economic rationalism. In

reality, as Hough concludes, dual subordination and the nomenklatura's patron-client dynamics severely limited the ability of 'primary' CPSU organizations to influence industrial administrators from within enterprises.⁵⁰⁰ *Premiia* fantastically resolves its political standoff without implicating its participants in the supplicant/superior institutional relationships that *Zdes' nash dom* and *Den' priema* depict, but cannot reconcile to the informal managerial ground-rules that they encode. What persists instead is the precarious relationship of a 'conscientious' individual, seeking or delivering arbitration in a late-Soviet enterprise, to those branches of the Party-state apparatus that enforce the 'rules of the game'. In this light, CPSU rhetoric of economic progress was predicated exclusively on its preservation of political power.

Conclusion

In Lenfil'm industrial dramas, cineastes trod an uneasy path between representing institutional integrity amid economic mismanagement, and signposting material recompense for managers amid the chronic disincentives (for workers) of the planned economy. The 'little deal' being sold to the expanding Soviet white-collar classes appears, in these films, as a welfare package determined by effective political negotiation, and not a reward for demonstrable economic performance. Cheshkov insists upon a three-bedroom apartment and a job for his wife as part of his contract; Ivanov secures housing for his apprehensive middle-aged employees by playing the patronage of his Glavk chief to the advantage of his own enterprise's construction-projects; and Anna Smirnova, a 'company town' *direktor*, oversees the construction of a state-of-the-art sports stadium and an 'experimental' high-rise housing estate 'with the personal approval of the minister'. Away from the shop-floor, these captains of industry project a political competence that contrasts starkly with the economic predicaments of the enterprises they lead.

As the decade advanced and the tropes established in these films were reiterated in derivative workplace conflicts – as in the obvious towering of *Premiia* over Gel'man's script for *Obratnaia sviaz' / Feedback*, dir. by Viktor Tregubovich (1977) – informal channels of political power became less significant to narratives that had overwhelmingly ceased to pitch any vision of material prosperity. Beyond Semerchuk's reading of industrial dramas as documents of *cultural* stagnation, this development also reflects a yawning credibility gap as the USSR began to experience noticeable *economic* stagnation across key industrial sectors.⁵⁰¹ Far from realizing the programmatic doctrinal ambitions invested in industrial dramas in the early 1970s, *Premiia* was a politically controversial redirection of this repertory policy and a hard-fought release for Lenfil'm.⁵⁰² The containment of its diegetic action to the Partkom, insulated from the diktats of higher CPSU offices, was profoundly ironic. Not only did regional Obkomy allegedly attempt to prohibit its exhibition, but its release also coincided with a highly critical *Postanovlenie* on Lenfil'm that was issued by the Leningrad Obkom. In November 1975, less than three months after the premiere of *Premiia*, Lenfil'm experienced the most severe criticism of its management thus far in the TO-era. Thereafter, its closely scrutinized repertory policies and internal discourses of innovation turned away from industrial dramas and towards more varied and politically riskier strategies for artistic renewal. The next chapter traces the development of CPSU ideological campaigns that affected Lenfil'm in the 1970s, leading into its production crisis of 1978, which ended Blinov's directorship and threw the studio's plan-fulfilment obligations into unprecedented turmoil.

Chapter Five

Policing by Policy: Party *Postanovleniia* and Lenfil'm Production in the 1970s

This chapter examines Lenfil'm production through the prism of key CPSU *Postanovleniia* issued between 1972 and 1978, a period that concluded with a severe production crisis and the professional re-emergence of Kira Muratova at the Lenfil'm First TO. When Muratova commenced pre-production in 1977, six years had passed since the 'shelving' of *Dolgie provody*, her second feature. Both events were determined by a landmark 1972 CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema, which precipitated an industry-wide administrative purge and an ideological clampdown on repertory innovation. Although this chapter primarily contextualizes 1970s Lenfil'm in Leningrad's politics, it is supplemented by an understanding of CC *Postanovleniia* as texts that shaped the political relationship between film-studios and the Party-state apparatus in that decade.

CC *Postanovleniia*

CC *Postanovleniia* were the most authoritative expressions of CPSU doctrine that circulated in the late-Soviet period. Increasingly, these documents took the form of communiqués, published as leader-articles in *Pravda* or *Kommunist*. Largely dispensing with the point-by-point resolutions that concluded such decrees at lower levels, and integrating its demands into the body of a prepared statement, the CC stood rhetorically above the Party-state apparatus as a policy-formulating organ. It pronounced a master discourse of ideological authority for subordinate branches to enforce. CC *Postanovleniia* could have as broad or narrow a frame of reference as their political expediencies required. They variously read as abstract ideological commentaries on the work of entire Soviet sectors, issued directives for specific organizations, or combined both registers during larger political campaigns. *Postanovleniia* disseminated ideological messages to Soviet

citizens and deployed 'Party-language' in coded statements to the apparatus. A published history of the post-war Leningrad CPSU organization identifies over 30 'big' CC *Postanovleniia* on ideological questions between the Twenty-fourth Congress (1971) and Twenty-fifth Congress (1976).⁵⁰³ This substantial number confirms the centrality of these decrees to the operations of CPSU leadership under Brezhnev, whose authority as General Secretary was definitively consolidated by the Twenty-fourth Congress through the strategic turnover of high-level officials.⁵⁰⁴

The public-facing rubrics of Brezhnev-era Congresses were ceremonial in relation to the nomenklatura and macro-strategic in relation to its work. Focused policy initiatives were drafted and issued as *Postanovleniia* in the periods *between* CC inter-congress plenums, which the charter of the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress required to be held at least once every six months.⁵⁰⁵ After the first post-Congress plenum, a new cycle of policy-directives began, superseding the ubiquitous panegyrics and projections of a Congress-year with demands addressed directly to specific sectors or organizations. These conventions, coupled with Brezhnev's consolidation of power, made 1972 a significant juncture for the assertion of a conservative cultural agenda that had intensified during the previous Congress-cycle. Two major CC *Postanovleniia* from 1972 encapsulated this political campaign: 'On Literary-artistic Criticism' (January) and 'On Measures for the Future Development of Soviet Cinema' (August). While the former was very much an 'abstract commentary', the latter was a critical assault on filmmakers, Goskino management, and the SK, with far-reaching implications for cinema-production and its supervision by CPSU bureaus of all levels.

'On Literary-artistic Criticism' shrilly attacked the cultural press for 'articles, reports and reviews of a superficial nature, distinguished by a low philosophical and aesthetical level, [that]

demonstrate an inability to relate artistic phenomena to real life'.⁵⁰⁶ This wording unambiguously resonated with Stalin-era Party decrees: its very title evoked a CC Orghiuro *Postanovlenie* of 26 November 1940, 'On Literary Criticism'. Its targets – 'conciliatory attitudes towards ideological and artistic defectiveness [*brak*], subjectivism, chummy [*priatel'skie*] and factional leanings' – met with demands to 'expose the reactionary essence of bourgeois "mass culture"' on a retrograde lexical journey to the worst denunciations of the post-war anti-cosmopolitan campaigns.⁵⁰⁷ However, unlike those initiatives, this menacing pronouncement was addressed to the leaderships of all artistic unions, press-outlets, broadcasters and relevant ministries. The absence of concrete titles or institutions from its text was an all-encompassing warning of renewed conservatism in CC policy-formulation.

Fomin's research into the drafting of the August 1972 CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema reveals how this hardening ideological line originated in 1966. That August, a jointly drafted SK and Goskino project for wholesale industrial reorganization was submitted to the CC Culture Department for review.⁵⁰⁸ However, this department was drafting its own reforms. Around April 1968, the third draft of the CC project included, in its resolutions, the reestablishment of the Stalin-era Ministry of Cinema, which the CC Culture Department was to populate with its own 'ideologically trained cadres'.⁵⁰⁹ This 'cleanout' would tighten central CPSU control over thematic planning at studios, in response to perceived ideological mismanagement by Goskino. The same draft indicates that the Mosfil'm directorship and TO-structures were to be re-evaluated.⁵¹⁰ As already noted, plans to award Lenfil'm the Order of Lenin for the studio's fiftieth anniversary were torpedoed by the CC, allegedly at the insistence of Mikhail Suslov, the Politburo's chief ideologue.⁵¹¹

Baskakov, who was removed from Goskino in 1972, has insisted that Suslov personally delayed the publication of the *Postanovlenie* on cinema for two years, in order to prevent named titles or

filmmakers from being aggressively denounced in the final text, thus avoiding ‘undesirable associations’ with the worst excesses of the late-Stalin era.⁵¹² Ironically, Suslov had been a rhetorical architect of the late-1940s anti-cosmopolitan campaigns. Baskakov suggests that Suslov tempered the highly critical CC Culture Department overview to allay fears about the undesirable political attention that a ‘loud’ ideological campaign might entail. Instead, sectoral reform was deferred indefinitely, the reestablishment of the Ministry of Cinema was abandoned, and the transfer of officials from the CC was to be conducted ‘in the course of normal business’ [*vrabochem poriadke*].⁵¹³ Ultimately, the August 1972 *Postanovlenie* combined the nonspecific ideological menace of the January 1972 *Postanovlenie* with a less confrontational reworking of the all-out assault on Goskino management from earlier drafts. Subsequently, the appointment of Filipp Ermash from the CC Culture Department as the new Goskino chairman, the replacement of its deputies, and the dismissal of executives at all the major studios confirmed the colossal shift that this text – published on the front page of *Pravda* – announced.⁵¹⁴

The published *Postanovlenie* elided specific titles and thus obfuscated an accumulation of ‘shelved’ films, marginalized filmmakers, and demoted officials. *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn’* figured prominently in drafts from August 1967 and February 1968: it allegedly exemplified a trend towards ‘weak-willed, broken protagonists, excluded from active social spheres, and immersed in a narrow world of individualist emotional turmoil’.⁵¹⁵ By contrast, the concrete targets of the 1972 *Postanovlenie* remained hidden behind nonspecific criticism and ideological abstractions. A former Goskino manager, speaking anonymously to Fomin, explained how Ermash instrumentalized *Dolgie provody* to accelerate the approval of the *Postanovlenie* by sending copies of the film to CC officials for private viewings. According to this official, *Dolgie provody* – approved by Goskino in July 1971 and screened at an all-union festival – was summarily denied release on the orders of the Ukrainian Republic’s CC following complaints from the CPSU CC, leaving a

terminally vulnerable Goskino management to follow suit.⁵¹⁶ Muratova was disqualified as a filmmaker and *Dolgie provody* remained 'shelved' until an SK Conflict Commission released it in 1987. Despite support from Sergei Gerasimov and an attempted rehabilitation at Odessa Studio in 1975, Muratova's career would not fully resume until her unexpected move to Lenfil'm in 1977.⁵¹⁷

On 5 October 1972, SK chairman Lev Kulidzhanov addressed a closed session of the Union board on the challenges it faced, following the August CC *Postanovlenie*. *Dolgie provody* was the only artistically significant film among a handful of titles that Kulidzhanov mentioned in an admission of inattentiveness at the SK towards films that merited serious criticism. This presentation makes Kulidzhanov the only figure of central authority to name *Dolgie provody* explicitly in 1972, using strikingly similar language to the draft *Postanovlenie* from 1967-68. Having received 'undue praise' from the Moscow SK section, in *Dolgie provody*, 'the on-screen action develops as if within a fossilized social sphere, and the one-sided depiction of life leads to a direct retreat from the principles of socialist realism'.⁵¹⁸ The constative dimensions of Kulidzhanov's presentation are accessible only as a performative ingratiating with the rhetoric of both 1972 *Postanovleniia*.⁵¹⁹

Outgoing Goskino management was criticized for 'weak embodiment of state management and failure to guarantee purposeful repertory policies'; this extended into a predictable *mea culpa* for SK complicity in poor thematic planning and screenplay-development.⁵²⁰ However, when these obligations ceded ground to an assessment of conditions for film-production, Kulidzhanov was unusually frank. His most consequential remarks addressed chronic managerial shortcomings:

Working practices demonstrate that the current organizational system of film-production has in many ways become antiquated, outlived its usefulness, and does not correspond to contemporary levels of socialist

economic management. We feel this every day at the film-studios, in the absence of people's stake in the quality of their work and in the acute scarcity, in production, of qualified mid-tier cadres, as a result of their enormously high turnover [...] Yes, it has become difficult to make films – at the studios, everyone to whom our art is dear admits it.⁵²¹

This acknowledgement of a dysfunctional relationship between filmmakers and the mid-tier [*srednee zveno*] of studio-management reflected a condition of which the CC *Postanovlenie* was symptomatic, but which it did not address. Kulidzhanov's compliance with veiled CC criticism eventually identified production-management as the biggest problem facing Soviet cinema, with Lenfil'm singled out for lowering previously high standards of output.⁵²² Subsequently, mid-tier mismanagement became the political pretext for the Leningrad Party to issue *Postanovleniia* on Lenfil'm in 1975 and 1978. Although formally addressing production-management, these interventions overwhelmingly concerned the ideological compliance of Lenfil'm output with the demands of a powerful and deeply conservative regional CPSU committee.

Leningrad, Lenfil'm, and Regional Politics

Grigorii Romanov's regional authority was an economic development agency, a political broker, and an initiator of local policy innovations.⁵²³ According to Blair Ruble, it managerially implemented directives from above and used its grasp of sectoral realities on the ground to 'produce small-scale creative responses that may grow to reshape both local practice and central policy'.⁵²⁴ Ruble's appreciation of regional policy innovation cycles in the late-Soviet period proceeds from an acknowledgment of greater political power and 'unusually long-standing cadre

stability' in Leningrad, compared to other Soviet regions containing major cities.⁵²⁵ Leningrad's CPSU organization sought 'to maximize its operational space vis-à-vis the political centre': beginning in 1975, it initiated institutional reconfigurations within the USSR Academy of Sciences that led to all its operations in the Leningrad region coming under the direction of a locally based division.⁵²⁶ As Ruble observes, this not only boosted Leningrad's standing as a centre for research, but moreover strengthened Romanov's practical authority over these branches of a centrally administered system.⁵²⁷ This imperative – to attain maximum scope for political manoeuvre over local sectoral divisions – was an essential aspect of 1970s Leningrad politics, with significant implications for Lenfil'm and Goskino.

Much operational direction from the CC and responsive machination from late-Soviet regions was enacted through what Ruble calls the 'internal and frequently concealed political and bureaucratic expediencies' of CPSU power-brokering.⁵²⁸ However, in 1974-1975, two of the thirty-plus 'ideological' CC *Postanovleniia* published in this Congress-cycle were overtly addressed from the centre to the periphery of Soviet governance as severely coded reprimands about the limits of regional political manoeuvre. In both instances, the criticism was sufficiently general as to ensure that these texts became rhetorical blueprints for ideological *Postanovleniia* at all subordinate levels of CPSU authority. The second of these – 'On the State of Criticism and Self-criticism in the Tambov Regional Party Organization' (February 1975) – commands attention as a significant ideological pronouncement with bearing on the political life and filmic output of Lenfil'm.

The Tambov *Postanovlenie* typifies the distance, in 1970s CC rhetoric, between the text's constative meanings, its linguistic performance of abstract ideological principles, and its concrete political functions. On the surface, the CC criticized the region's industrial-scale agricultural development as 'significantly behind' the projections of the (expiring) ninth five-year plan,

charging officials with mismanagement, indiscipline, theft of state property and high turnover of cadres.⁵²⁹ It issued accusations of complacency and perfunctory reporting: 'Bottom-up criticism is poor', and therefore, the 'tried-and-tested Party method of criticism and self-criticism' must 'decisively oppose the efforts of certain leaders to cover up, citing objective reasons, the non-fulfilment of planning objectives and their own failure to deliver organizational and educational functions'.⁵³⁰ The CC demanded 'punishment going as far as the removal of those workers who react incorrectly to criticism, who interpret fair remarks addressed to them as undermining their authority, who put personal amour-propre before societal interests'.⁵³¹ Supported by Lenin's incitement to frank and comradely appraisal, the 'socialist initiative' of CPSU cadres was to mobilize against 'stagnation and inertia', without 'ever allowing criticism to be supplanted by demagoguery or mud-slinging'.⁵³² No concrete officials, institutions or enterprises were named. The overt address to the Tambov CPSU leadership dispensed with all mention of industrial planning, after the second paragraph had ascribed blame for failings.

Dmitrii Sel'tser argues that the official pretext – negligence in agriculture – concealed the real political motivations for a sustained attack on the Tambov Obkom. Serious discord had developed between the CC and the Obkom First Secretary, Vasilii Chernyi, a highly decorated leader, who was finally removed in 1978 and immediately retired from politics.⁵³³ As in 1972, this directive was, for Sel'tser, 'the harbinger of cadre-changes' wrought by CC intervention.⁵³⁴ The political implications for other centres of Soviet regional power were immediate. In March 1975, a Leningrad Obkom plenum assessed the Tambov *Postanovlenie* as a significant ideological rationale. A review of this plenum's work frames its discussion around 'the absence of principled Party assessments of a whole host of literary and artistic works' as a shortcoming in the political education of Leningrad's artistic intelligentsia.⁵³⁵ Revealingly, this passage is directly preceded by a description of the regional party's supervisory enforcement of the 1972 CC *Postanovleniia*.

‘Active measures’ remained in force for future consolidation of recent Lenfil’ m ‘successes’ in producing well-regarded films on contemporary themes.⁵³⁶

The political implications for regional campaigns in the Tambov *Postanovlenie* were unmistakably apparent to experienced Lenfil’ m Party members. At a Lenfil’ m Party meeting on 12 March 1975, veteran *Direktor kartiny* Nikolai Neelov – then working on Panfilov’s hugely controversial *Proshu slova* – responded to a presentation by the Petrogradskii Raikom First Secretary with an endorsement of press-coverage of the Tambov *Postanovlenie*, insisting that the failure of another regional authority to react to ‘healthy self-criticism’ was ‘an example for us all to heed’.⁵³⁷ The Partkom duly heard a keynote presentation on 31 March, entitled: ‘Criticism and Self-criticism as a Means to Raise the Level of Organizational and Ideological-educational Work’.⁵³⁸

The Leningrad Obkom *Postanovlenie* on Lenfil’ m (November 1975) was likely in development at this point: the above sources link its as-yet-inexplicit political motivations to the ideological signals of the Tambov *Postanovlenie* and the ‘continuous’ operational effect of the 1972 *Postanovleniia*. Beyond the coded specificities of intra-Party address, the regime’s primary aim was to compel regional CPSU authorities to enforce ideological directives from the centre while adapting the ‘socialist initiative’ licensed by this rhetoric to local priorities. The Leningrad CPSU thus tightened control over the cultural sector as a central focus for its response. Its stated policy towards Lenfil’ m – to build upon recent contemporary-focused achievements – was determined by the studio’s newfound reputation for quality industrial dramas. In particular, *Premiia* actualizes the Tambov *Postanovlenie* so strikingly as to make this film the key artistic representation of CPSU rhetoric from this period.

Premiia transposes the Tambov *Postanovlenie* to the construction site and righteously exposes its criticisms. Executive director Batartsev incarnates the management accused of obscuring plan non-fulfilment behind excuses about unfavourable conditions, while he and his allies on the Partkom refuse to accept the justified criticism from Potapov and dissenting CPSU-members for how the enterprise has been run. The conduct of the Partkom and the voicing of authoritative discourse by Party Secretary Solomakhin succinctly expresses the abstract and instructional aspects of 1970s CC *Postanovleniia* as a category of ideological message. Here, the *Postanovlenie*-as-communicé consists of non-specific criticism of subordinate branches of the Party-state apparatus – ironically – for permitting performative rhetoric to predominate over ‘criticism and self-criticism’. The consistent enactment of this practice by the regime reflected the crisis of authoritative ideological discourse that concerns Aleksei Yurchak’s anthropological examination of late-Soviet culture.⁵³⁹ However, these 1970s texts also asserted their function as tools for back-channel political manoeuvring that was screened by their stated address. With its own elision of higher CPSU structures, and the alleged attempts of several Obkomy to forbid its exhibition, *Premiia* is an apt example.⁵⁴⁰ The previous chapter has argued that these informal bans may have been motivated by fears that industrial workers in the regions might emulate Potapov.⁵⁴¹ This chapter contends that the release of *Premiia* was facilitated politically by the Tambov *Postanovlenie*. Thereafter, regional CPSU organizations were expected to enforce the centre’s ideological directives by performing the self-criticism that *Premiia* advocated.

Regional-level CPSU authority over Lenfil’*m* was part of a more complex institutional network than the kind of progressively consolidated control to which the Romanov-era Obkom aspired for its flagship sectors of heavy industry, military technology, and scientific research. Romanov represented a link in the vertical hierarchy of power between the CC and a regional CPSU bureau, whose meetings could sit in direct contact with Lenfil’*m* management and senior

cineastes. In Ermash, Romanov faced a Ministerial-level state functionary whose high-level political career had also been forged in the CC apparatus, under the auspices of the powerful Sverdlovsk CC patronage network.⁵⁴² These overlapping powerbases and their informal channels of influence must be considered when assessing local CPSU screening at 1970s Lenfil'm.

Blinov's appointment, Romanov's programme, and the August 1972 CC *Postanovlenie* all determined the studio's repertory focus on industrial dramas. However, Lenfil'm was also bound to broader currents in Soviet feature-filmmaking after its retreat from auteurist commissioning. Arguably the most unusual release was *Siniaia ptitsa/Blue Bird*, dir. by George Cukor (1976), a rare Soviet-American co-production (based on the play by Maurice Maeterlinck), born of détente and the prevailing 'peaceful coexistence' policies. This musical fairy-tale was shot at Lenfil'm and featured major Hollywood stars like Elizabeth Taylor, Jane Fonda, and Ava Gardner. However, studio-level management of *Siniaia ptitsa* aroused resentment among cineastes and prompted anxious scrutiny at the Partkom.⁵⁴³ Domestically, for the first time since the late-Stalin era, Lenfil'm emulated major Mosfil'm productions. A four-part military-historical saga on the siege of Leningrad, *Blokada/The Siege*, dir. by Mikhail Ershov (1973-1978) was Lenfil'm's answer to Iurii Ozerov's five-part *Osvobozhdenie/Liberation* (1968-1972). Similarly, the two-part *Zvezda plenitel'nogo schast'ia/The Captivating Star of Happiness*, dir. by Vladimir Motyl' (1975) depicted the uprising and Siberian exile of the Decembrists in a period-drama that resonated with the style of Sergei Bondarchuk's epic, four-part adaptation of *Voina i mir/War and Peace* (1965-1967). These productions all fitted the regime's aspirations for Soviet studios to produce 'marquee' historical and socialist-realist productions, as demanded by the August 1972 *Postanovlenie*.⁵⁴⁴ Although nowhere near as expensive as their Mosfil'm precedents, they represented a heavy budgetary burden for Lenfil'm and impacted adversely on its planning capacities.⁵⁴⁵

1975: Warning Signs

In this regard, 1975 was especially congested. Rokhlin, a Lenfil'm editorial board-member and former editor-in-chief of the defunct Third TO, warned the Partkom in June that the studio's current production-load far exceeded its reserves of qualified managers. Any unforeseen difficulties risked overwhelming the capacity of TOs to correct problems arising from the release of 'unready' screenplays into production, which potentially jeopardized the studio's swollen plan-fulfilment obligations.⁵⁴⁶ The studio-executive was also concerned that the wave of strong screenplays on contemporary and industrial themes had subsided since *Premiia*. Lev Varustin, the new Lenfil'm editor-in-chief, told a September Partkom that the studio must develop screenplays on 'burning contemporary problems'.⁵⁴⁷ Longstanding Party Secretary, Ida Rumiantseva, asked if Lenfil'm planned to resume the 'social' screenplay-commissioning [*sotsial'nyi zakaz*] that had permitted Dvoretiskii to write *Zdes' nash dom* after his residency at the Izhorskii factory.⁵⁴⁸ In 1975, a retreat into familiar strategies appears to have come from external political pressure. Concluding, Blinov complained that 'we sometimes forget about the big issues: communist integrity, criticism and Party positions, which *Premiia* speaks of'.⁵⁴⁹ Here, the clear association of *Premiia* (the only film Blinov named) with the criteria of the Tambov *Postanovlenie* was confirmation of tightening supervision, as Blinov revealed: 'On 22 October, we report to the CPSU Obkom on the studio's work on contemporary themes [...] Our [highest] achievements must become the norm in our work. We must draw serious conclusions about our shortcomings. This is one of our biggest tasks'.⁵⁵⁰

In response to Blinov's presentation, the Leningrad Obkom Bureau issued a *Postanovlenie* on 18 November 1975: 'On the Progress of Lenfil'm Studio's Fulfilment of the CC *Postanovlenie* "On Measures for the Future Development of Soviet Cinema" through Development of Contemporary

Themes'. Despite praising three films – *Premiia*, *Starye steny*, and *Zdes' nash dom* – the Obkom concluded that Lenfil'm had failed to fulfil the 1972 CC *Postanovlenie*, producing works that dealt superficially with Party-led societal development.⁵⁵¹ It continued:

In recent years, studio-work has been characterised by insufficiently deep artistic analysis of socio-political problems and a low level of ideological philosophy. In certain cinematic works, ill-defined expression is given to Party-purposefulness, class-based approaches to thematic elucidation, and the civic stances of authors towards characters that are devoid of social interests and firm moral foundations.⁵⁵²

As in the CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema, no films were specifically highlighted for criticism. Instead, vague but damning rhetoric replicates the language of the CC *Postanovlenie* in its introductory statement, before dispensing with all mention of that directive and of contemporary-themed studio-output. The rest of the statement criticizes studio-management and the Partkom over failures in production-management and political education. Structurally and critically resonant with the most recent CC ideological *Postanovleniia*, this intervention represented the first attempt at a cadre-cleanout of Lenfil'm. After Golovan' stepped down as editor-in-chief in 1974, Blinov's position was under close scrutiny due to his support for Asanova, German, and Mikaelian. Party Secretary Ida Rumiantseva was removed in January 1977, after the Obkom Culture Department produced its follow-up report on the studio's fulfilment of this 1975 *Postanovlenie*.⁵⁵³

Studio-directorship stood accused of weak thematic development, irresponsible allocation of filmmakers, and unsatisfactory management of *Khudsoveti*.⁵⁵⁴ The 1975 *Postanovlenie* included a word-for-word (but unacknowledged) replication of 'On Literary-artistic Criticism', attacking

'[professional] assessments of artistic works [that] frequently display subjectivism, compliment-making, chummy and factional leanings, a conciliatory attitude towards ideological and artistic defectiveness'.⁵⁵⁵ This hollow citation confirms the transparent purpose of the 1975 *Postanovlenie* as a political reprimand. The Lenfil'm Partkom was blamed for inadequately enforcing its *kontrol'* prerogatives over the directorship, exerting poor influence over the formation of the *templan*, and failing to raise the educational level and professional responsibility of the studio's communists.⁵⁵⁶ The Obkom insisted that, 'in [Lenfil'm's] Party organization, there is no smooth-running, thought-through system of ideological-educational work with creative cadres, as demanded by the CPSU CC *Postanovlenie* 'On the Selection and Education of Ideological Cadres in the Party Organization of Belorussia' (October 1974).⁵⁵⁷ Alongside the Tambov *Postanovlenie*, this directive is acknowledged in Leningrad CPSU literature as a key rationale for reinforcing conservative ideological positions.⁵⁵⁸

The watchword of the Belorussia *Postanovlenie* was not 'criticism', but 'attention': it demanded greater attentiveness from Belorussian CPSU organizations to the selection and deployment of managerial cadres for the conduct of ideological campaigns. Unlike the compact Tambov *Postanovlenie*, this far-ranging text instrumentalized ideological abstractions and vague references to international geopolitics to produce local changes to intra-Party management.⁵⁵⁹ Its implications for Lenfil'm were apparent from a passage that advocated greater Partkom intervention in the professional education of working collectives; another key section instructed the Belorussian Party to fast-track the promotion of its most capable Propaganda and Agitation Department cadres (in CPSU departmentalism, the arts and culture came under this rubric at the lowest, Raikom-level only).⁵⁶⁰

A key resolution in the 1975 Obkom *Postanovlenie* instructed the Petrogradskii Raikom to adopt the Belorussia *Postanovlenie* as guidance for ‘providing essential support to the directorship and Partkom of Lenfil’ m Studio in the elimination of shortcomings and the constant refinement of work with artistic cadres’.⁵⁶¹ In 1978, this license became operative when the Raikom intervened at Lenfil’ m during a plan-fulfilment crisis. In 1975, the Obkom *Postanovlenie* reflected its bureau’s responsibility for issuing directives of ideological, rather than strictly operative, significance. In asserting its supervisory political authority over Lenfil’ m, the Leningrad CPSU cited CC *Postanovleniia* to legitimize directives of its own issuing.

The Obkom’s intervention was facilitated by the post-1972 CC strategy to police the cultural sector without ‘loud’ ideological campaigns, relying on subordinate offices to interpret ideological directives like the Tambov and Belorussia *Postanovleniia* as license to assert local policy-initiatives. It also reflected the high-political power of Leningrad’s Obkom as a sectoral supervisor determined to concentrate as much authority over state-institutional administration as the central CPSU could countenance. Romanov and Ermash were both present alongside relevant officials from the Culture Departments of the Obkom, Gorkom and Raikom on 18 November 1975, when the *Postanovlenie* was issued to Blinov.⁵⁶² The presence of a ministerial-level state official (and ex-CC apparatchik) on a regional CPSU presidium, which issued its *Postanovlenie* independently of his authority and without any contribution from his office or reference to it in the resolutions, indicates the Leningrad Obkom’s real power to convoke Goskino leadership to hear the exercise of its local political imperatives.

Party-Supervision and Goskino Screenings

When Ermash addressed an all-studio Party meeting on 29 October 1975, he forcefully criticized filmmakers supported by Blinov and towards whom the Goskino chairman was known to be hostile. From German's rushes on *Dvadtsat' dnei bez voiny*, it was 'abundantly clear' to Ermash that 'this film is headed for failure', while Asanova, although a 'competent artist, [...] needed to be kept in line, to ensure that she did what was required'.⁵⁶³ Ermash considered these predicaments indicative of the 'unheard-of freedom' with which late-Soviet cineastes operated, compared to international norms.⁵⁶⁴ Even this brazen suggestion could not detract from the political counterbalance that was the primary message in Ermash's address. Goskino acknowledged the significance of Lenfil'm industrial dramas; Ermash 'would even say that, in our country, no other studio has developed the contemporary problematic over the last three years so actively, so determinedly, as you'. However, 'in the Party, there is also a different law: not to slacken, but recognize that which must be worked on today and tomorrow'.⁵⁶⁵ No elaboration followed. Instead, a chasm opened between Ermash's accurate assertion – that Lenfil'm had led Soviet cinema's response to the 1972 *Postanovleniia* – and the forthcoming verdict of the Leningrad Obkom, which maintained the contrary. Possibly, this was an act of political cunning, devised to position Goskino on the side of Lenfil'm. The readiness of studio-professionals to criticize Goskino at mid-1970s Partkom meetings suggests an understanding that the Leningrad Party set the political tone for Ermash to heed.

Valerii Golovskoi and Vitalii Aksenov, appointed Lenfil'm studio-director in 1982, support this suggestion anecdotally. Aksenov maintains that Romanov engineered his candidacy, categorically insisting that the Obkom's opinion was decisive on ideological matters and claiming that Ermash was again convened to its Smol'nyi offices after Aksenov's appointment.⁵⁶⁶ Golovskoi is more

critical, lamenting ‘entirely reactionary’ attitudes toward Lenfil’ m at Gorkom and Obkom-levels.⁵⁶⁷ Where ex-Goskino chairman, Armen Medvedev, suggests that Goskino looked to the Leningrad Party for ideological guidance in the 1970s,⁵⁶⁸ Golovskoi goes further:

[...] Without the Obkom’s blessing, Goskino simply refused to begin the process of accepting [submitted] films. Even Goskino and CC Culture Department apparatchiki were repeatedly horrified by the ultra-dogmatic demands from this guardian of ‘revolutionary traditions’, but alas, no-one had the courage to go against the will of a Politburo member.⁵⁶⁹

Archival sources substantiate these assertions. An internal memo dated 16 January 1978, sent to Romanov by Gorkom Culture Department Secretary T.I. Zhdanova, outlined all stages of Leningrad Party supervision of Lenfil’ m. During production, the Gorkom supervised ideological-screening processes: literary and directorial screenplays approved by Lenfil’ m were reviewed by its Culture Department. Both assessments could involve meetings with screenwriters and filmmakers, who Zhdanova would supervise personally from the directorial-screenplay stage. Gorkom Culture Department *instruktory* attended all subsequent screenings of rushes and the studio-level *Khudsovet*, where completed films were approved for submission to Goskino. A final screening was then arranged at Smol’nyi for an audience usually consisting of: the Gorkom First Secretary; Zhdanova; her deputies and *instruktory*; and officials from relevant Gorkom departments such as industry or agriculture, depending on the film’s theme.⁵⁷⁰ Thereafter, the Leningrad Party not only screened Lenfil’ m productions before release, but also exercised expressly editorial functions over them:

An exchange of opinions on the viewed film is conducted the day after the screening at the Gorkom Secretary's office [Zhdanova]. The head of the Culture Department then compiles a memorandum, which logs the most important comments of an ideological-artistic nature, corrections to individual lines and dialogue, and where essential, concrete proposals for future work on the film.⁵⁷¹

The Gorkom thus usurped Goskino authority by conducting comparably motivated interventions before Goskino had even viewed completed films. Within three days of the Smol'nyi screening, the Gorkom convoked the studio-director, editor-in-chief, and Party Secretary for a detailed review: the venue for the meeting depended on the severity of its criticism.⁵⁷² Conclusively, these procedures formally subjected Lenfil'm output to a double censorial filter, in which the Leningrad Party held political primacy over Goskino:

As a rule, it is not recommended that the studio show a film to Goskino USSR without first correcting the comments indicated by the CPSU Gorkom. This is permitted only in the event that its comments on the film are insignificant. Where these comments are significant, the same cohort of CPSU Gorkom officials views the film again, after their correction.⁵⁷³

Here, the Gorkom exceeds all centrally determined sanction by intervening editorially in the final stages of film-production. Only after this point would Obkom officials become involved 'in the normal course of business'. Golovskoi claims that Romanov insisted on viewing all Lenfil'm submissions;⁵⁷⁴ however, it is more likely that only the most ideologically problematic or socially

resonant films would be presented to this senior politician, whose chroniclers do not mention any interest in cinema.⁵⁷⁵ The memo concludes with proposals to add two Petrogradskii Raikom secretaries to the cohort for the Smol'nyi screenings and to assign a further cinema-focused official to the staff of the Gorkom Culture Department.⁵⁷⁶ V.I. Potemkin, the lone *instruktor* then overseeing Lenfil'm, also supervised: the Writers' Union; Leningrad's literary journals; the Institute of Russian Literature; all theatres; Leningrad's film, theatre and music school; all other Leningrad film-studios; film-distribution; the SK; film-exhibition management; and the Film-Engineer's Institute.⁵⁷⁷ To contemplate a similar degree of supervision for these institutions is not only to appreciate the scale, pressure and necessary cultural level of this official's work, but also to acknowledge how the Romanov-era administration concentrated its grip on Leningrad's cultural sector in the hands of as few 'ideological workers' as possible.

The Lenfil'm Partkom had its own *kontrol'* functions to demonstrate, and the prospect of disciplinary intervention by its hard-line regional CPSU superiors created anxieties, for the studio-directorship, about the true extent of Goskino's power to act as a political counterbalance. Ermash's convocations to Leningrad in late-1975 unleashed grievances over the perceived USSR-level marginalization of Lenfil'm: this long-familiar 'provinciality complex' only intensified over the following three years. At the October 1975 meeting, Blinov thanked Ermash for committing funds for essential repairs, but – to applause – remarked caustically: 'it would be helpful if [Goskino] management, deputies and assistants [...] came more frequently to the studio and helped get to grips with several pressing problems, rather than converse only in the language of letters and orders'.⁵⁷⁸

At the final Partkom of 1975 (without Goskino participation), *Direktor kartiny* Neelov asked how Lenfil'm could strategically protect its politically exposed filmmakers, when they were not

automatically invited to Goskino screenings of Lenfil'm productions.⁵⁷⁹ Rumiantseva argued that less heavy criticism would ensue from the Obkom if the Partkom better fulfilled its own resolutions, including a hopelessly forlorn demand for involvement in Goskino's allocation of pay-categories to Lenfil'm releases.⁵⁸⁰ Rumiantseva concluded that these negotiations had been scuppered through outright disregard from Moscow: 'for one-and-a-half years, we were unable to drag Ermash and Pavlenok out of the woodwork. We need to do that or resolve this question ourselves'.⁵⁸¹ Worsening lines of communication between studio-management and Goskino evidently exacerbated the budgetary and planning crisis that subsequently engulfed Lenfil'm. At an all-studio Party meeting on 31 January 1978, Igor' Karakoz, the First TO Chief Production Manager, attacked Goskino management for 'extremely irresponsible conduct' around funding-allocation and screenplay-approval: 'We need to have a serious talk with Goskino [...] The studio is under the cosh and this has created extremely difficult conditions. [...] This is one of the problems, in our country, that must be resolved'.⁵⁸² The gathering production-crisis precipitated the decade's final and furthest-reaching CPSU intervention at Lenfil'm, when the Petrogradskii Raikom issued a *Postanovlenie* on alleged managerial failures.

1978: The Anatomy of a Crisis

Although this crisis was triggered politically, its immediate consequences were desperate budgetary shortfalls for Lenfil'm. By 31 January, the First TO's 1978 output-plan was seriously threatened, jeopardizing overall Lenfil'm output-plans, which were already straining. Oleg Sharkov, recently appointed Party Secretary, told this meeting 'not to expect an easy ride' in 1978 because of two under-fire productions, which would ultimately be 'shelved': *Vtoraia popytka Viktora Krekhina* / *Viktor Krekhin's Second Shot*, dir. by Igor' Sheshukov (Second TO, 1977; released

1987) and *Oshibki iunosti / Mistakes of Youth*, dir. by Boris Frumin (First TO, 1978; released 1989).⁵⁸³

Vtoraia popytka exemplified the Obkom's power to prevent the release of films approved by Goskino. On 16 January 1978, an 'explanatory memo' from Gorkom Culture Department Chief, E.A. Shevelev, to Obkom Secretary, Boris Andreev, outlined its submission. After a Gorkom screening on 5 August 1977 – attended by Shevelev and *instruktor* Iu.A. Krasnov while 'Gorkom Secretary Comrade T.I. Zhdanova was on holiday' – the film was returned to Lenfil'm for corrections, which were communicated to Varustin and Sheshukov.⁵⁸⁴ The memo cites 'an agreement with studio-management that after [any subsequent] corrections, the film would then be submitted for official approval by Goskino': in Zhdanova's absence, these Gorkom officials had authorised Lenfil'm to submit to Goskino.⁵⁸⁵ On 30 September 1977, Pavlenok approved *Vtoraia popytka* for release with a Category Two rating.⁵⁸⁶ Shevelev's memo was a *mea culpa* to the Obkom Culture Department, which had since viewed the film and deemed it unacceptable for release. The internal investigation that followed this error motivated Zhdanova's aforementioned memo to Romanov, outlining Gorkom screening-procedures, on the same date. Despite Goskino approval and its 'completed' status in the 1977 output-plan, *Vtoraia popytka* was 'shelved' without the recovery of Goskino's bank-credit to Lenfil'm for the production's budget.⁵⁸⁷

Oshibki provoked the same outcome, although it was Goskino – asserting authority after the lapse of *Vtoraia popytka* – that halted its post-production on 25 April 1978, having rejected three final-cut submissions by Lenfil'm.⁵⁸⁸ On 15 February, Goskino GSRK editor-in-chief, Dal' Orlov, had attempted to close the production, but Lenfil'm acquired an extension on the condition that the First TO CPSU-bureau take charge of its completion.⁵⁸⁹ On 13 March, Pavlenok sanctioned this step but demanded that Blinov decisively eliminate artistic noncompliance at Lenfil'm.

Specifically, this concerned digressions from approved directorial screenplays during shoots, which was the accusation levelled at Frumin by the Partkom and First TO.⁵⁹⁰ When Goskino finally closed *Oshibki*, Lenfil'm lost 400,000 roubles in credit and all hope of fulfilling its 1978 output-plan, as Blinov informed a Party meeting on 28 June.⁵⁹¹ The full extent of this nadir was only becoming apparent. On 30 August, newly appointed Head of Production and acting-Director, Nikolai Eliseev, confirmed that, among Soviet studios, only Lenfil'm and Kirgizfil'm would fail to fulfil their centrally approved plans.⁵⁹² This genuine humiliation intensified mounting anxiety at the prospect of an ever-deepening collapse. Although *Oshibki* was the biggest loss, other titles had contributed to a financial squeeze that made recovery from its 'shelving' practically impossible.

That year, the Partkom heard that *Iaroslavna, koroleva Frantsii / Iaroslavna, Queen of France*, dir. by Igor' Maslennikov (1978) – an already-expensive historical drama set in medieval Rus' – had missed every production-deadline and incurred astronomical costs to ensure completion.⁵⁹³ Subsequently, it was confirmed that the film's third-quarter submission came 79 days behind schedule and 250,000 roubles over-budget, i.e. more than half the cost of another feature.⁵⁹⁴ This crippled any scope for financial manoeuvre by the First TO. *Oshibki* and *Iaroslavna* meant that the TO failed to fulfil its production-plans for four quarters in a row between the summers of 1977 and 1978.⁵⁹⁵ Additionally, as Karakoz correctly anticipated in January, Goskino's rejection of the directorial screenplay for *Golos / The Voice* in March meant that a further projected film would not now be submitted in the final quarter of 1978.⁵⁹⁶ The next chapter examines the eventual production of *Golos* as an expression of the studio's recovery from crisis. This chapter recognizes its initial rejection as the earliest signal for the First TO to shuffle its production-reserves for the attempted fulfilment of the 1978 Lenfil'm output-plan.

Like the fictional enterprises discussed in the previous chapter, Lenfil'm needed to readjust targets and release-dates to fulfil output-plans. Practically, downwards revision was possible in all measurable areas except that of its promised output-by-unit, i.e. sixteen feature-films (not including the TVO). However, Goskino's dismissal of Blinov in August was an inevitable consequence of the spiral that had begun with *Vtoraia popytka*, been exacerbated by the fiasco of *Oshibki*, and ended with his admission in June that the approved production-plan could not be fulfilled. Consequently, four titles from the 1979 *templan* were released into production in August 1978.⁵⁹⁷ The subsequent *shturm* proved successful. All four films were submitted to Goskino before January 1979, when the new studio-director, Vitalii Provotorov, proudly declared the 1978 plan fulfilled, with seventeen features in place of the planned sixteen, seventeen TV-films in place of the planned fifteen, and thirty-four dubbed titles in place of the planned thirty.⁵⁹⁸

These figures, backed up by mandatorily impressive percentage-breakdowns of productivity, belie the mechanisms of crisis-resolution.⁵⁹⁹ The *shturm* was financed, in August, by a Goskino loan of 1.1 million roubles, which assured these hastily approved productions while offsetting the studio's half-year shortfall of 500,000 roubles.⁶⁰⁰ Eliseev estimated that, in turn, Lenfil'm would save 300,000 roubles by releasing titles from the 1979 plan in 1978.⁶⁰¹ Goskino's advance amounted to a lump-sum dotation with the same bank-credit principles as its standard film-financing model: this loan was the only constructive option available under the existing system. In this light, the surplus seventeenth feature seems like a herculean feat of penitence, especially since the embattled First TO produced three of the four early releases. The Second TO was in the unfamiliar position of receiving the directorship's praise for its performance in 1977-1978, with only one rejected screenplay requiring, and finding, replacement.⁶⁰²

The First TO released three new titles into production because Muratova's *Poznavaia belyi svet / Getting to Know the Big, Wide World* (1978; released 1980) began shooting in late-April and immediately caused alarm at all levels of screening.⁶⁰³ No other motive explains the production of a surplus title, beyond the fear that, like *Dolgie provody*, *Poznavaia* would be 'shelved'. Before a replacement was scheduled, it became the only Lenfil'm title from 1978 to be subjected to a Partkom investigation during its shoot. Goskino's eventual approval of *Poznavaia* for release on 22 December 1978 was a relief not anticipated by Lenfil'm management between June and the film's completion in late-November. In the intervening period, *Poznavaia* was the primary focus of a Partkom mobilized to tighten supervision of Lenfil'm output by a Petrogradskii Raikom *Postanovlenie* of June 2 1978, the political contexts of which are inseparable from the 'shelved' films and CPSU *Postanovleniia* discussed above.

The Raikom *Postanovlenie*

Although issued at the height of the crisis, the Raikom *Postanovlenie* resulted from an Obkom investigation initiated in January 1978. A wordy title – 'On the Work of Lenfil'm Studio's Partkom and Management on the Selection [*podbor*], Deployment [*rasstanovka*] and Education [*vospitanie*] of Managerial and Creative Cadres in the Light of the Resolutions of the Twenty-fifth CPSU Congress' – covered a range of motivations for its appearance in June.⁶⁰⁴ On 1 May 1978, an internal Obkom memo from Culture Department Chief, Galina Pakhomova, to Secretary Andreev, outlined the protocols. Pakhomova confirmed that the Raikom had been instructed to review Lenfil'm during the first half of 1978. This investigation would 'assist' the Partkom to ideologically shape studio-output and maximize *kontrol'* over studio-management.⁶⁰⁵ Other details suggest that this intervention primarily concerned ideologically unacceptable films. Pakhomova referenced the 1975 Obkom *Postanovlenie* as the key source: CPSU *kontrol'* over Lenfil'm output

was now measured according to this directive, which saw the role and accountability of the Gorkom raised at all stages of screening.⁶⁰⁶ However, the date and title of the document to which Pakhomova's memo responds is significant. A 16 January 1978 Obkom report on *Vtoraia popytka* provides the title for Pakhomova's update on the Raikom investigation, linking it to Zhdanova's memo on screening procedures and Shevelev's explanatory note on *Vtoraia popytka*, both issued on 16 January.⁶⁰⁷ The controversy around this production seems to have made a comprehensive CPSU investigation into Lenfil'm essential for the Obkom. The production-crisis appears simply to have hastened this Raikom *Postanovlenie*, rather than load its political criticism with any unanticipated force.

Ideologically, its title echoed the aforementioned Belorussia *Postanovlenie*. Raikom Propaganda and Agitation *instruktory* – of all CPSU representatives, the figures whose work involved the closest routine contact with Lenfil'm – would conduct a thoroughgoing investigation into the studio's managerial structures. The *Postanovlenie* was issued at a closed session of the Raikom bureau, following a presentation by Sharkov.⁶⁰⁸ Where its contents were summarised and discussed at Lenfil'm Party meetings and in Partkom *Postanovleniia*, no mention was made of the Twenty-fifth CPSU Congress resolutions to which its title refers, suggesting that this suffix – like the 1975 Obkom reference to the 1972 CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema – simply added a veneer of authority to the intervention.

A seasoned CPSU functionary, Blinov recognized on 28 June that the Raikom *Postanovlenie*, although nominally focused on cadres, was motivated by ideological failings. He concluded: 'The Raikom bureau made it unambiguously clear that making good and even average films [...] is normal service for us [...], but making bad films, ideologically and artistically defective [*brak*] films is forbidden. [...] *Oshibki*, *Vtoraia popytka* and other films named by the Raikom bureau are

the very *brak* that we must admit to'.⁶⁰⁹ Blinov sought to demonstrate the commitment of Lenfil'm management to the politically responsible direction of as-yet unresolved production controversies. However, this backfired spectacularly amid a final episode of executive misjudgement. On 17 July 1978, Blinov reported to Obkom Secretary Andreev on a proposed Anglo-Soviet co-production, *Karnaval/Carnival*, which the central Sovinfil'm agency had transferred to Lenfil'm from Mosfil'm in January. The subsequent collapse of this co-production, amid professional acrimony and political suspicion, evidently necessitated Blinov's report to the Obkom, three days after returning from negotiations in London.⁶¹⁰

A Gorkom memo to Romanov on 14 August accused Blinov of political naïveté over preliminary terms agreed with De Grunwald, the British production company, 'guaranteeing' prime shooting locations in Leningrad. Previews of locations and screenplay-contents were 'prematurely' released by Lenfil'm to TASS news agency and the newspaper *Leningradskaia Pravda* on 16 June.⁶¹¹ The Gorkom deemed this an extremely serious infringement and issued Blinov and Varustin with the severest Party-punishment, beyond exclusion: *strogii vygovor s zaneseniem v uchetnuiu kartochku* [severe reprimand logged on the personnel-card].⁶¹² It added: 'The Gorkom Bureau remarked that Comrade Blinov merits dismissal, but, considering that Goskino USSR has freed him from his obligations as studio-director over failures of economic management, has limited itself to a Party reprimand'.⁶¹³

On 14 June, when the Lenfil'm delegation landed in London, the Partkom heard Gukasian present on the First TO's 'unsatisfactory' management of *Oshibki*. There, Raikom Propaganda and Agitation *instruktor* Aleksandr Golutva – the future Lenfil'm studio-director during perestroika – issued Gukasian (editor-in-chief) with a *strogii vygovor* [severe reprimand], while Kheifits (*Khudruk*) and Karakoz (chief production-manager) each received a *vygovor* [reprimand].⁶¹⁴ Juggling crises,

Blinov's position became untenable. Concerns were mounting over Muratova's shoot, and Blinov was absent from these investigations into *Oshibki*. Blinov's prioritization of the collapsing co-production meant that his July justifications to the Gorkom were of no avail. The all-studio Party meeting on 28 June was Blinov's last stand. Returning from his ill-timed foreign trip, his admissions of ideological *brak* and the collapse of the 1978 production-plan made his dismissal inevitable.

This 28 June meeting also provides the fullest available insight into the scope of the Raikom *Postanovlenie*. As well as Sharkov (presumably drawing significantly on his 2 June presentation to the Raikom Bureau) and Blinov, it heard a detailed address from Raikom Secretary, Valentina Serova. The Raikom judged that serious managerial shortcomings at Lenfil'm had allowed ideologically unacceptable films to be produced in the period since the 1975 Obkom *Postanovlenie*.⁶¹⁵ Consequently, it argued that inadequate Partkom *kontrol'* had permitted arbitrary abuses of executive power to proliferate at Lenfil'm, where nepotism, poor labour-discipline and high staff-turnover were observed.⁶¹⁶ Furthermore, the Raikom demanded that 'criticism and self-criticism' be mobilized at Lenfil'm to interrogate the causes of the production-crisis.⁶¹⁷ A direct line runs from Kulidzhanov's 1972 SK presentation to this criticism: not until this Raikom *Postanovlenie* had an external investigation explicitly linked deteriorating conditions at an RSFSR studio to its managerial structures. In this regard, Sharkov and Serova's reports went far beyond the fallout from *Oshibki* and *Vtoraia popytka*. More substantially, they diagnosed a stark disconnect between artistic workers, executive managers and mid-tier administrators. In perestroika, when Frumin returned from the USA to re-edit *Oshibki*, Lenfil'm cineastes would discover that the film's working-positive celluloid had been destroyed, but that Tamara Denisova (film-editor on *Oshibki*) had clandestinely retained its negative.⁶¹⁸

Lenfil'm was palpably smarting from such criticism. This was apparent from Sharkov's lengthy praise for its performance during 1977 and in the firm objections of the meeting's chairman, the *redaktor* Aleksandr Zhuravin, to the suggestion that Lenfil'm had produced overwhelmingly poor films between 1975 and 1978.⁶¹⁹ Accordingly, the Partkom concluded with a less damning observation: 'A range of films released in 1975-1978 have poor content; substantial ideological shortcomings are present in certain films'.⁶²⁰ This investigation, Serova insisted, had been a professionally and emotionally trying experience for the district's CPSU apparatus. Its 'pride' in Lenfil'm as a 'symbol' of Leningrad led her to ask that the findings be understood not as part of a political campaign, but the beginning of a long-term undertaking to raise managerial accountability.⁶²¹ However, this plea represented a political calculation of the same calibre as Blinov demonstrated in his acknowledgement of the causal link between cadres-management and ideologically unacceptable films, an admission that Serova endorsed.⁶²² She reiterated that ideological vigilance was the duty of all communists but demanded that those subjected to Party disciplinary measures now set the tone after their egregious mistakes.⁶²³ Punishment for 'respected colleagues' in the First TO did not, Serova argued, prevent them from remaining among the USSR's leading artistic professionals. However, *edinonachalie* and collective responsibility required that 'each manager must be held accountable for the concrete task given'.⁶²⁴

Serova summarized her findings bluntly: 'The first thing remarked upon at the Raikom bureau was that, at the studio, there is an absence – a word we use rarely at the bureau – of any system in work with cadres. There is an unforgivably quick-fix, stop-start approach to this question'.⁶²⁵ Rhetorically, the distance between this frank position and the ultra-coded Belorussia *Postanovlenie* reflected the authority of the CPSU office enunciating criticism more than a qualitatively different set of motivations. Serova's Raikom diplomacy was more practical than performative, and the

absence of any recent CC ideological *Postanovlenie* to reference meant that criticism could be unrestrainedly direct, especially in the context of an extraordinary Party meeting. Sharkov's task was to convey the detailed findings of the Raikom investigation in more conciliatory terms.

The Partkom's *kontrol'* prerogatives rendered the political and operational dimensions of this response inseparable. The Raikom had found Partkom authority diminished by informal administrative practices and an alarmingly high turnover of mid-tier managers. Lenfil'm was deemed extremely concerning because of its failure to develop an adequate internal recruitment-pool [*rezerva*] for managerial posts.⁶²⁶ Sharkov reported the Raikom's findings in figures that suggest a stagnating enterprise: in 1977, 16.4% of the overall studio-workforce had been hired, yet 17.2% of staff were dismissed in the same period.⁶²⁷ That year, seven unit-managers were replaced, demonstrating to Sharkov poor judgement and selection-criteria. The Actors' Department, for example, had four temporary directors in 1976-1977 alone.⁶²⁸

Staff-retention was clearly an endemic problem. For labourers, cinema-production was a demanding environment. The Secretary of the Lighting-Technician's CPSU Bureau confirmed that 36 workers – more than a third of staff – had been dismissed between June 1977 and June 1978, adding ruefully that young men arriving from military service 'could not get what they needed' from 100 roubles monthly salary, irregular hours, and poor conditions on location.⁶²⁹ Technical-department heads and production-managers bore the heavy brunt of economic and judicial responsibility in an environment where pilfering and corner-cutting were rife. Many simply left cinema-production, exercising the easy labour-withdrawal to which Hosking refers, or sought promotion to purely administrative positions.⁶³⁰ Serova complained of mismanagement and 'unforgivable wastefulness' among production-managers, revealing that one in five Lenfil'm productions from 1976-1978 had necessitated criminal proceedings.⁶³¹ Under these

circumstances, it proved challenging to recruit and retain suitably qualified professionals. In August 1978, the Chief Controller at Lenfil'm asked caustically: 'who works as a production-manager here? Anyone you like'.⁶³² In June, Serova agreed, citing a Lenfil'm Komsomol activist who complained that 'we pick our cadres off the streets by whistling at them'.⁶³³

These crudely expressed frustrations were reflected in the Raikom investigation. Sharkov revealed that 38% of senior management (nineteen people) had no higher education, a figure reaching 46% among production-managers and their assistants, upon which Serova remarked that no other enterprise in the district had such poor standards.⁶³⁴ Moreover, 19% of senior management (ten workers) were of pensionable age.⁶³⁵ Without a suitable *rezerva*, Lenfil'm resembled an enterprise requiring the 'fast-tracking' advocated in the Belorussia *Postanovlenie*, whereby promising ideological cadres could be parachuted from the CPSU apparatus into positions of administrative authority. Both Sharkov and Serova referenced complaints from employees about the Lenfil'm Personnel Department [*Otdel kadrov*]. This office had replaced seven workers in the previous three years – its permanent staff was four people – while its head, Lavrentii Sokolovskii, was one of several senior managers that fell into both of the above categories.⁶³⁶ In Serova's unsparing judgement, the directorship and Partkom's failure to intervene in the 'poor, criminally negligent work' of this department demonstrated 'a classic example of how *not* to solve problems'.⁶³⁷ This department appears to have prompted the Raikom to make 'cadres-deployment' the official pretext for its *Postanovlenie*.

The charge-sheet was serious. The *Otdel kadrov* stood accused of falsifying documents, while Sharkov articulated a case against Sokolovskii that indicated the real power held by the latter at Lenfil'm. Sokolovskii was responsible for the compilation of all personal files and references (provided to the CPSU, security services and judiciary) for studio-employees. However, Sharkov

noted ‘multiple infringements in the formatting of personal files’, many of which, he alleged, had not been updated in ten or more years.⁶³⁸ Instead, an informal executive regime produced *seemingly* up-to-date versions of these documents for distribution to external authorities. Sharkov cited several instances where court-references, signed by Blinov and Sokolovskii, did not correspond to the copies held on the respective employees.⁶³⁹ Furthermore, Sharkov reported that hiring, dismissals, and transfers of personnel were conducted not via requisite official directives [*Prikazy*], but through ‘instructions’ [*razporiazheniia*] recorded in a handwritten logbook and bearing the signatures of Blinov and Sokolovskii alone.⁶⁴⁰ We cannot know if the Partkom’s accusations of document-falsification related only to this practice. From Sharkov’s commentary, it appears that the flagrant circumvention of the Partkom and senior administration was predicated on secrecy:

Instructions are unordered, without consistent registration, formatting or criteria. No-one from the administration knows how many instructions are issued at the studio. [...] There are instances where directives are issued without dates or numbers, which allows future changes and additions to be made to their contents.⁶⁴¹

These manipulations were allegedly intrinsic to Sokolovskii’s conduct, which Serova acknowledged as having prompted regular complaints from Lenfil’*m* employees to the Partkom and Raikom over at least ten years.⁶⁴² Serova concluded that weakened Partkom *kontrol’* over the *Otdel kadrov* had facilitated these abuses.⁶⁴³ The real dynamic of the working relationship between Blinov and Sokolovskii remains obscure. However, considered alongside Sharkov’s report, accounts of Sokolovskii’s background and conduct suggest that these irregularities masked political motivations. The surveillance-led allocation of staff was the primary internal function of

late-Soviet personnel departments. Their rumoured external connections fostered the understanding – supported by Gukasian – that, like all state enterprises, Lenfil'm had covert operatives from the security services working among its departments.⁶⁴⁴

Sokolovskii appears to have been the most senior of these operatives at Lenfil'm. In 2006, Frumin recalled how Sokolovskii attempted to prevent his allocation to Lenfil'm in the early 1970s.

Despite Kozintsev's recommendation and Kiselev's approval, Frumin needed to enlist the support of Gerasimov and Anatolii Golovnia, his VGIK tutors, to counteract Sokolovskii's 'singlehanded' rejection of his candidature (Frumin was eventually hired as an assistant-director).⁶⁴⁵ Ol'ga

Shervud, a former Lenfil'm *redaktor*, has supported the view that personal and Leningrad CPSU-endorsed anti-Semitism motivated this and many other such arbitrary rejections at Romanov-era

Lenfil'm.⁶⁴⁶ Shervud and Frumin also discussed the 'common knowledge' that Sokolovskii had previously worked for the KGB in Leningrad.⁶⁴⁷ Indeed, Sokolovskii's record as an intelligence-

agent contains a 1939 decoration of Junior Lieutenant in the Fourth Department of the NKVD, effectively confirming active service during the years of Stalin's Terror.⁶⁴⁸ Such a background

explains the fear that Sokolovskii inspired. Shervud remarked how colleagues guarded against miscalling Sokolovskii not Lavrentii Vasil'evich, but Lavrentii Pavlovich, the patronymic of the

notorious NKVD chief, Beria.⁶⁴⁹ Frumin remembered Sokolovskii 'sitting alongside [Blinov] at all

Khudsovery, looking with hatred at the screen and attendees'.⁶⁵⁰ Since the CPSU CC and the KGB

represented distinct hierarchies of late-Soviet power whose local political interests did not always

align, it is possible that this investigation became a flashpoint of contestation over internal

methods.

Given his alleged animosity towards Frumin, it is ironic that Sokolovskii was ousted following an investigation motivated, in part, by the 'shelving' of *Oshibki*. By the Partkom's one-year review of

the Raikom *Postanovlenie* in 1979, Sokolovskii – who faced his own personal-file panel at the Partkom in August 1978 – had been removed along with several other senior administrators.⁶⁵¹ Larger socio-political trends also surfaced here. Sofia El'kind was the longstanding Production-Department head identified in Sharkov's report as another pensionable-aged manager with no higher education.⁶⁵² Enduring criticism for mismanagement, El'kind resigned in August 1978 to take up a lesser position at the Lenfil'm technical filial at Sosnovaia Poliana, before requesting exclusion from the CPSU in May 1979, in order to emigrate to Israel.⁶⁵³ A subsequent Partkom inquiry typified shrill official denunciations of rapidly growing Jewish flight from Leningrad in the late-1970s.⁶⁵⁴

Although glossed over rhetorically in *Postanovleniia*, waning Party influence over the cultural sector was a serious concern for subordinate CPSU branches. Sharkov summarized weak Party-membership figures: twenty-six Lenfil'm film-directors (67%) were non-Party, while among Category One and Two film-directors, only six of twenty-seven were members.⁶⁵⁵ 'Many leading filmmakers', remarked Sharkov, 'S.G. Mikaelian, V.I. Tregubovich, among others, are non-Party and do not plan to join the CPSU ranks'.⁶⁵⁶ Even in the ideologically pivotal role of *redaktor*, Sharkov saw 'unjustifiably few communists' numbering twenty of a total thirty-seven.⁶⁵⁷ These poor figures were less alarming than the direction of travel. Candidate-members among artistic workers, complained Sharkov, did not become full members frequently enough; only one of thirteen creatives hired in 1977 was a Party-member; and most tellingly, overall membership among artistic workers stood at just 19%, down 3.6% in the previous three years.⁶⁵⁸ This slide was likely motivated by deteriorating political conditions at Lenfil'm since the 1975 Obkom *Postanovlenie*. Although Party-membership remained a marker of career-ambition for some cineastes, Lenfil'm had struggled to promote its benefits in a city renowned as the USSR's 'capital of cultural conservatism'.⁶⁵⁹

This was also a demographic crisis. Sharkov observed that one-third of all film-directors were of pensionable age, while seven of twelve higher category filmmakers – including Party-members Ivanov and Kheifits – were over sixty-five.⁶⁶⁰ ‘Our respected old-timers’, Serova insisted, ‘are our pride and joy, but we need to prepare the changing of the guard’.⁶⁶¹ How this would transpire was unclear: the ever-resourceful Kheifits had proposed permanent artistic workshops for prospective and debuting filmmakers, a proposal which Serova was ready to back, but which did not materialize until well into perestroika.⁶⁶²

‘Youth’ remained a subject of rhetorical grandstanding at odds with ageing artistic cohorts. The Raikom’s final review of Lenfil’m on 23 December 1978 produced a report in response to Obkom and CC *Postanovleniia* from late-1976: ‘On Work with Artistic Youth’. It assessed the studio’s engagement with district Komsomol branches and observed that ‘the work of debuting filmmakers is subject to particular *kontrol’*’.⁶⁶³ However, these assertions confounded reality. Among the films reviewed closely by the Partkom in the preceding two-year period were works by ‘young directors’ like Asanova (thirty-six), German (forty), and Muratova (forty-four).⁶⁶⁴ Highly suspect official criteria for defining ‘youth’ had always been incredulously received by senior Lenfil’m cineastes during the TO-era.⁶⁶⁵ In contrast to Serova’s Party-meeting contribution, this Raikom report speaks only in performative address to higher CPSU offices. The formal requirements laid before the Raikom, when responding to higher *Postanovleniia* as a subordinate body, engendered such perfunctory rhetoric. Meanwhile, the production-crisis at Lenfil’m had only just been overcome with the confirmed fulfilment of the 1978 plan: Goskino approved *Poznavaiia* for release one day before this report appeared.

Kira Muratova at Lenfil'm: Talent and Tribulation

For Lenfil'm and the First TO, the consequences of the Raikom *Postanovlenie* and the production of *Poznavaia* are inextricably linked. From August, Golutva directed Raikom supervision of the studio's turn-around. Further irony surrounds disciplinary measures issued to Gukasian, Kheifits, and Karakoz, in June 1978, by this staunch future guardian of *avtorskoe kino* as the main Lenfil'm repertory policy. At this precarious juncture, Golutva ensured that First-TO production could stabilize without further dismissals or shutdowns. Having replaced El'kind as production-chief, a pressurized Eliseev faced Golutva's questioning at the 30 August Partkom. When asked what inadequacies he saw in his own recent work and that of the directorship, Eliseev responded that he was working flat-out and that Lenfil'm had suffered failures with *Oshibki*, *Karnaval* and *Poznavaia*.⁶⁶⁶ This last inclusion is alarming: while the other productions were irretrievably closed before late-August, Muratova continued to shoot amid heightened tensions. While Lenfil'm executives feared another disastrous 'shelving', the First TO was politically and artistically motivated to save *Poznavaia*. As well as serving penitence for *Oshibki*, its leaders were managing a significant auteur, whose professional fate depended upon their success. Following the Raikom *Postanovlenie*, *Poznavaia* became the Partkom's first opportunity to tighten *kontrol'*. Its report on *Poznavaia* (13 September) emanated from the views presented to Golutva (30 August) and a Goskino GSRK review (24 August), which forecast 'serious work to improve the conceptual focus and stylistic calibration of the film'.⁶⁶⁷ Nine years before his appointment as studio-director, Golutva's earliest promotion of Lenfil'm auteurism came about indirectly, through a Partkom investigation that, although conservatively disposed, may ultimately have saved *Poznavaia* from closure.

Poznavaia is a bold aesthetic experiment that marked a turning-point in Muratova's filmography. Her attempts to resume filmmaking after *Dolgie provody* faltered in 1975, when the pre-production of *Kniazhna Meri/Princess Mary* – adapting a novella from Mikhail Lermontov's *Geroi nashego vremeni/A Hero of Our Time* – was closed by Odessa Studio after screen-tests.⁶⁶⁸ This decision had important ramifications for the directorial treatment that Muratova exercised on *Shelestiat na vetru berezy/Birches Swaying in the Breeze*, the incongruously titled screenplay by Grigorii Baklanov for the industrial drama-cum-love story that became *Poznavaia*.⁶⁶⁹ However, in 1977, Muratova's post-Odessa destination was uncertain. This was an artistic coup for Lenfil'm and a risky political move, given the Odessa shutdown and the extreme disfavour with which Goskino regarded Muratova. Gukasian, who 'held Muratova in great esteem', managed the commission.⁶⁷⁰ In unfavourable local political conditions, the First TO was regenerating artistically. 'The only people who wanted to help [Muratova]', observed Nataliia Riazantseva, 'worked at Lenfil'm: Frizh'a Gukasian, Iosif Kheifits [...] In Moscow at Gor'kii Studio, no Gerasimov could help her now. Everyone was against it'.⁶⁷¹ Muratova was expected to progress gradually through screenplay-development at Lenfil'm. In November 1977, a directorial screenplay was approved by Goskino and brought forward into the 1978 production-plan, replacing *Letniaia poezdka k moriu/A Summer Seaside Trip*, dir. by Semen Aranovich (1978), which itself would be retrieved from the 1979 plan to help resolve the crisis in August 1978.⁶⁷²

High-level flux at Goskino exacerbated worries at Lenfil'm about the approval of *Poznavaia*. On 31 May 1978, the GSRK editor-in-chief, Dal' Orlov, was removed after a period of exceptionally difficult relations with Lenfil'm. Fomin describes Orlov's departure as 'the dearest, most desired and deeply hard-fought gift to our filmmakers' from the Brezhnev-era authorities.⁶⁷³ It took until 29 June for Orlov's replacement, Anatolii Bogomolov, to be appointed, creating an administrative vacuum just as Lenfil'm management was imploding.⁶⁷⁴ *Poznavaia* began shooting in

late-April, and although Gukasian was the film's *redaktor*, her authority as First TO editor-in-chief was significantly damaged by the 'shelving' of *Oshibki* and CPSU reprimands. Furthermore, Muratova was filming almost entirely on location: 92% of scheduled shooting was to be conducted away from Lenfil'm.⁶⁷⁵ This made the First TO screening of rushes (8 June) and subsequent studio-level assessment (13 June – one day before Blinov's London trip and the Partkom on *Oshibki*) highly pressurized moments. An alarmed official letter to Muratova from Blinov, Varustin and Gukasian followed these unsuccessful screenings, beginning fraught executive interventions into a film that, for Eugénie Zvonkine, 'poses the question of unsettling the perceptual habits of Soviet viewers'.⁶⁷⁶

***Poznavaia*: Love under Construction**

This chapter is interested in the industrial drama as a touchstone for Muratova's new aesthetical direction, and consequently, in the repertory status of *Poznavaia* at Lenfil'm. From the earliest assessments of Baklanov's screenplay, its dramatization of rivalrous love and coming-to-social-consciousness against the backdrop of a construction site not only seemed to lack action, as Zvonkine discovers from its Goskino assessments, but moreover, hinged on genre-clichés that predominated over narrative-conflict and character-development.⁶⁷⁷ Reviewing as a First TO literary consultant, the ethnographer Rudol'f Its struggled to fully understand the screenplay's concept, finding that its 'industrial entourage is derivative in nature'.⁶⁷⁸ To Kheifits, the protagonists seemed 'static' and 'not new': Baklanov's many dramaturgical clichés in 'lively and bright' genre-scenes masked an inharmonious aggregate of plotlines, which required a filmmaker's intervention to give it shape.⁶⁷⁹ Kheifits confidently endorsed the First TO's auteurist investment: 'If Kira Muratova takes this on, everything will come together'.⁶⁸⁰

What Its and Kheifits could not anticipate was the appeal, to Muratova, of disharmony and derivativeness in the screenplay. Muratova has spoken of her attraction to the construction site as a zone of chaos in which ‘aesthetics is yet to be formed’.⁶⁸¹ This vision imposed a radically deformed framework on the 1970s industrial drama. *Poznavaia* disharmonizes processes of transformation – material, romantic, of human self-identity – and estranges their cultural referents, presenting the challenge of what Zvonkine calls ‘disorders that pulverize the coherence of the filmic material’.⁶⁸² The formal pleasure that Muratova takes in the aestheticization of chaos is a provocative removal of the industrial drama’s social signifiers and a rejection of conventional narrative. Here, Zvonkine sees the subversion of a ‘traditional prudery in Soviet cinema’, whereby, through a detour in the resolution of the main protagonist’s coming-to-social-consciousness, he proves his transformation to his beloved.⁶⁸³ In *Poznavaia*, romantic interest between Mikhail (Sergei Popov) and Liuba (Nina Ruslanova) is established in the opening sequence and never disrupted by conflict or tension between them. The barrier to their union is Liuba’s partner, Nikolai (Aleksei Zharkov), whose coarseness and possessive demeanour makes him the antagonist, but whose rivalry with Mikhail is denied eruption into violence. As Zvonkine observes, Muratova retains the departure and arrival points of the plot-cliché but removes all obstacles from the route between them.⁶⁸⁴ The apparent transformation occurs in Liuba, who comes to consciousness of the love that she had previously only observed and commented in her duties as a speech-reader at a mass Komsomol wedding.

The eccentricity and decorative excess in this wedding-sequence is without equivalent in contemporary Soviet cinema. The following year, Vera Chytilová – another aesthetic innovator interested in repositioning gender archetypes – directed *Panelstory/Prefab Story* (1979), which satirically explores a colourful cross-section of Czech society on a mud-bound satellite-estate near Prague. There, inhabited buildings remain under construction and infrastructure is constantly

failing. The Komsomol wedding in *Poznavaia* converses with this film aesthetically and in its privileging of female agency in the face of collective rituals and male disregard. However, somewhat unusually given its formal experimentations, the frank sexual politics and radical social critique in *Panelstory* (both forbidden to Soviet cineastes) form a discursive protest much closer to the Cinema of Moral Concern, and hence to *Premiia*, than the poetic and contingent diegesis of *Poznavaia*. Zvonkine observes Muratova using the industrial site as ‘a genuine backdrop’ for sophisticated compositions, and we may add that this setting is as remarkable for abandoned genre-referents as it is compelling for physical disorder and intricate *mise-en-scène*.⁶⁸⁵ Muratova quickly clashed with a First-TO leadership under immediate pressure to produce a film that meaningfully resembled its earlier industrial dramas.

Poznavaia retains only the loosest thematic parameters. The site is purposely denied geographical or sectoral specificity; from two lines of dialogue, we learn only that a new town will be built with a tractor factory. Protagonists drive trucks, forge metal, and lay bricks, but make no reference to the status of their labour. Only Mikhail and Timofeich, a minor character, verbally affirm their roles as drivers. No managers are ever identified; only at a ceremony marking the completion of the site’s work do we see officials who could be from the Party or enterprise-directorship. This scene, which was heavily modified by studio-screening, disorientates in placement, tone, and rhetoric. It follows a lyrical sequence in which Mikhail and Liuba visit an unspoiled village as their intimacy deepens. That sequence is preceded by a scene in a building under construction, where there is no indication of completion nearing. Moreover, the ceremony appears in the middle of *Poznavaia* and is followed by sequences where protagonists still live on-site. A swift rightwards pan over a distant industrial plant is accompanied by the familiar fanfare [*tush*] for Soviet award-giving ceremonies. However, rather than the customary trumpets, this melody is performed by what sounds like a small guitar-band, lending the tune a humorously

diminished feel. From the ensuing fragments of this ceremony, it remains unclear what has been constructed, and to what end. *Poznavaia* is an ‘industrial drama’ without production-plans, professional conflicts, CPSU-direction, or drama. Instead, ubiquitous markers of late-Soviet industrial culture are subjected to knowingly clichéd or disconcerting performances devoid of narrative significance.

The polarized reception of *Poznavaia* at Lenfil’ m reflected a split between those who interpreted the film as an auteur’s dazzling poeticization of contemporary realia, and those whose comprehension was hindered by the eccentric and socially unanchored protagonists. Zvonkine confirms that Igor’ Sadchikov, the editor-in-chief of the Goskino thematic group supervising *Poznavaia*, still maintained, twenty years later, that the unconventional appearance and exaggerated behaviour of Mikhail and Liuba were the biggest barriers to understanding the film.⁶⁸⁶ For Sadchikov, ‘the labour sequences were involuntarily parodic’.⁶⁸⁷ In contrast, Andrei Plakhov describes *Poznavaia* as the first example of Soviet postmodernist cinema, citing the influence of Sots Art, which emerged in the 1970s as a subversive appropriation of ‘classical’ socialist realism by underground artists.⁶⁸⁸ Thus framed, the ceremony represents the occasion’s ideological clichés as kitsch, which is bolstered by the coherence of conventional visual codes but complicated by the delivery of speeches that are interrupted by camera cuts, an audience-member, and – in the disconcerting contribution of Timofeich – the speech-giver himself.

Comparisons of *Poznavaia* with the strategies of Sots Art require scrutiny. Zvonkine refers Plakhov’s assertion to the originators of this style, Vitalii Komar and Aleksandr Melamid, as artists interested in a late-Soviet deformation of Pop Art, whereby reproductions of Party sloganeering and orthodox imagery were ironically mocked.⁶⁸⁹ However, in several sequences, compositions and colour palettes testify to Muratova’s own engagement with contemporary

socialist-realist painting. Sequences in which female protagonists are bricklaying and the film's final sequence provide two striking examples. The labouring sequences privilege frontal perspectives and are characterized by colours and materials that Zvonkine identifies as the dominant motifs in *Poznavaiia*: red (headscarves, hats, drapes), orange (drapes, raw brick, mixing bowls), grey (cement, metal) and geometric window-frames.⁶⁹⁰ Combined, this composition reproduces elements from one panel of a triptych by Valerii and Nina Rodionov, *Tekstil'nyi gorod / A Textile Town* (1974), which depicts four women (the number of the brigade we see in *Poznavaiia*) in headscarves, sitting and standing among billowing orange and red drapes, with an open window revealing factory-stacks in the background. The final sequence by the new apartment blocks, where Liuba and Mikhail inexplicitly agree to marry, draws on *Svad'ba na zavtrashnei ulitse / Wedding on Tomorrow's Street* (1962) by Iurii Pimenov. This painting depicts a newlywed couple walking across boards that bridge the raw earth of a construction site; its background shows the same completed and unfinished buildings, attendant onlookers, baby-prams, and industrial detritus that crowd these frames in *Poznavaiia*.⁶⁹¹ Rather than the overwhelmingly ironic ambitions of Sots Art, these examples are suggestive of Muratova's nuanced relationship to late-Soviet kitsch. Its permeation of the diegesis is an aestheticizing strategy that imbues everyday scenes with unexpected counterpoints of colour and materiality. As such, kitsch exists here as a visual pleasure on a par with the cinematic compositions forged from industrial activity.

Site and Sound: Cinema-History in *Poznavaia*

Muratova's inscription of *cinema* as a visual pleasure is an underexamined aspect of *Poznavaia*. Galia's (Natal'ia Leble) theatrical performance on the construction site is a monologue from *Kniazhna Meri*, in which the eponymous heroine bids farewell to Lermontov's doomed anti-hero, Pechorin. This ornately costumed rehearsal is Muratova's defiant and forlorn reconstruction of the destroyed screen-tests for her unapproved production. Its abrupt occurrence and absence of development reflect the project's abandonment, as does Mary's scorned, heartbroken speech. Galia's relationship also pairs enigmatically with this subtext. After a fleeting glimpse of Galia singing at a workers' club alongside her pianist-boyfriend, they are shown together during two brief encounters, which the camera observes from afar, and where their implied arguments are inaudible under the noise of machinery and traffic. This 'silencing' denies access to the intimate life of Galia and of her longhaired, bearded boyfriend, who dejectedly disappears from the film after their second argument. This character is played by Viktor Aristov, who would become an influential Lenfil'm cineaste during perestroika. However, in 1978, Aristov's directorial debut *Svoiaki/In-Laws* (released 1987) was the only short in a portmanteau film adapting tales by Vasilii Shukshin, produced by the Second TO, to be 'shelved'.⁶⁹² This silencing and marginalization of Aristov is both replicated and overcome by his casting and by the link, through his failed relationship with Galia, to Muratova's abandoned project.

Poznavaia also draws on the repertory history of Lenfil'm. The ceremony-sequence is followed by a festive-looking scene, set somewhere between the 'completed' site and the inhabited world. From a background poster, we see that *Starye steny* will be shown. This ideologically irreproachable and genuinely popular Lenfil'm industrial drama is a safe gesture towards the genre-context against which *Poznavaia* stands out so boldly. However, more interesting is

Muratova's deployment of Liudmila Gurchenko, the superlatively prolific star of *Starye steny*. Gurchenko's image appears on posters announcing an 'Evening in conversation' and showing the actor at different stages of her career. Strikingly, Muratova selects publicity stills from obscure or very recent films that both estrange Gurchenko's stardom and inscribe this screening-within-the-film in a 'hidden' history of Lenfil'm, one to which *Poznavaia* itself soon belonged. A counterpoint between masquerade and social reality is manifested, in these selections, as an echo of this theme in *Poznavaia*. A young Gurchenko appears in eighteenth century costume from a largely forgotten TV-film, *Poimannyi Monakh / The Captured Monk*, dir. by Grigorii Nikulin (1960), an adaptation of Henry Fielding; two posters from the early-to-mid-1970s show her in contemporary dress; and a still from German's recently released but severely under-distributed *Dvadsat' dnei bez voiny* shows Gurchenko as Nina Nikolaevna, a wartime divorcee evacuated to Tashkent. Muratova seems interested in Gurchenko's versatility as an expression of interchangeable performative identities. It is no coincidence that the twins Vera and Zoia are prominent in this sequence, playfully confusing Mikhail as to who is who.

This unanswered question is redirected to Gurchenko. Four sequences later, Mikhail and Liuba take a night-ride in his truck, when a woman's voice interrupts their conversation to request help with her car's engine. It is Gurchenko – credited only as 'stranger' [*neznamka*] – who, as one *Khudsovet* attendee insisted, is evidently playing herself, returning from the screening.⁶⁹³ As Mikhail repairs the car, Liuba sees the departing Gurchenko discard an 'unneeded' letter, which then permits Liuba to read about a love that is 'disproportionate to the object that arouses it', in an impassioned summation of the film's romantic message. Gurchenko is parachuted into *Poznavaia* as an instantly recognizable star, whose diegetic identity is entirely screened by her accumulation of roles and guises. With the poster-stills and this cameo, Muratova makes cinema-production the only industry to which the world of *Poznavaia* may be unambiguously anchored.

Revealingly, Gurchenko's letter provoked one of the most contested moments at a TO-level assessment on 28 November 1978. Baklanov found it 'intolerably pretentious' and demanded the removal of his name from the credits if it remained.⁶⁹⁴ Gukasian called it a tautology that detracted from the previous scene, where Mikhail and Liuba warmly reprise Liuba's speech from the Komsomol wedding.⁶⁹⁵ Nevertheless, both the letter and Baklanov's credit survived. The real battle for *Poznavaia* had already been fought on less rarefied ground.

Excessively Complex or a Necessary Experiment?

Between June and December 1978, Muratova's rushes were deemed 'highly professional', and, even at the 'crisis' September Partkom, Kheifits could not conceal his excitement at the 'first-class' camerawork, concluding: 'I believe in this movie'.⁶⁹⁶ However, the unconventional protagonists caused deep alarm for Lenfil'm management. This soon congealed into an anxious fixation that cannot have been assuaged by recollecting the ferocity with which *Dolgie provody* had been 'shelved' for alleged nonconformism. Muratova later complained that the 'lectures' at Lenfil'm were 'the same as everywhere else', and decided against remaining there.⁶⁹⁷ The calibre of criticism levelled at *Poznavaia* confirms the helpless predicament of Gukasian and Lenfil'm, as it became clear that *Poznavaia* operated on another conceptual level entirely from the 'faithful picture of contemporary working people' demanded by their first formal warning to Muratova.⁶⁹⁸

'The grubbiness of relationships and forced nervousity, bordering on hysteria', it read, 'is excessive'.⁶⁹⁹ Originally, Muratova had envisaged even more exaggerated behaviour than made it into *Poznavaia*.⁷⁰⁰ However, the bewildered objections of Lenfil'm and Goskino to the appearance of Mikhail and Liuba betray terror at the prospect of allowing any suggestion of oddness or social marginality to enter the industrial drama. Mikhail's clothing was deemed strange, and his haircut

unkempt: this major bone of contention is best explained by Sadchikov's subsequent reflection that Mikhail 'looked more like a hippy than a truck-driver'.⁷⁰¹ Liuba was repeatedly described as 'vulgar' and 'harried': her 'almost grotesque makeup' was a more recurrent concern than the observation – advanced by Zvonkine – that this variation on the 'coming-to-consciousness' model was subverted by an actual *absence* of character-development.⁷⁰² In an awkwardly formulated letter, Blinov, Varustin, and Gukasian 'categorically propose[d] that [Muratova] change the outward appearance of [Mikhail]: give him another haircut, rid him of unkemptness. A change of outfit and haircut could 'work wonders' for a clearer exposition of Mikhail's burgeoning feelings for Liuba'.⁷⁰³

Perhaps under pressure from studio-management, Muratova wrote to Ermash in late-July 1978. This highly unusual explanatory letter, addressed by a prominent victim of the 1972 *Postanovlenie* to its chief instigator, is remarkable in its tone. Muratova defended her 'film about love – tender, selfless, and – most importantly - harmonious', and indignation is felt in her justifications.⁷⁰⁴ 'Does it not seem to you', asked Muratova, '[...] that *Carmen* [Bizet's opera] is just grubby and vulgar? Strong, heightened feelings, or even a dream of them, must stand with feet on the ground, so as not to remain (in art) an empty chimera, removed from reality'.⁷⁰⁵ Muratova signalled ironic defiance of Ermash through avowals of compliance: 'In the shooting to come, I will take into account your recommendations and those of the studio, and will try to mark ALL ACCENTS CORRECTLY and CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE FILM'.⁷⁰⁶ This capitalized mimicry of a Goskino communiqué anticipates the rhetorical subversions of the ceremony sequence, which first appears in draft-form, entitled 'additional scene', at this point in the production's screenplay file.⁷⁰⁷

Muratova, therefore, was compelled to draft new scenes well before the Partkom investigation. This intervention amounted to a reactive demonstration of *kontrol'* at Lenfil'm: practically, *Poznavaia* continued to be managed at TO-level. The September Partkom listed changes already effected, and the ceremony-sequence figures among 'new' draft-texts that conformed to the studio's expectations. An official's speech congratulates the gathering on delivering the site's first (unspecified) industrial unit, ahead of schedule and under pressure, before applause interrupts. The speech resumes at the point where this sequence actually begins in *Poznavaia*, which discards these congratulations but retains the interruptions that determine the off-kilter mood of the scene.⁷⁰⁸ In Vera's speech, the humorous corrections and prompts whispered by her twin, Zoia, remain, but the heckling from the floor that breaks their officious tone, and cuts the sequence short in *Poznavaia*, is absent.⁷⁰⁹ As is Timofeich, who, in the film, moves erratically and interrupts applause to unexpectedly resume his disconcerting speech, by turns exalted, congratulatory and confrontational.

Timofeich represents Muratova's literal subversion of her promise to Ermash. As Zvonkine observes, Timofeich accentuates stress on incorrect vowels and contradicts the atmosphere of the sequence several times in one intervention.⁷¹⁰ This character, who most fully anticipates the extreme oddities in Muratova's later work, is again deployed defiantly when he gives Mikhail a haircut, fulfilling the insistent demand from Lenfil'm by shearing clumps haphazardly. It is tempting to read this outcome as Muratova purposely spoiling the desired conformity. Moreover, by the final draft of *this* 'additional scene' – approved by Gukasian one week after the Partkom – Timofeich's dialogue had been stripped of normalizing references to his wartime-service and an unspecified 'chairmanship'.⁷¹¹ Regardless of nominally tightened supervision, Muratova continued to assert artistic autonomy and provocatively estrange *Poznavaia*.

The September Partkom exerted only perfunctory pressure on Muratova. Its real purpose was to hold a castigated First TO to account, amid fears of a further Goskino shutdown. However, unlike the social dissipation in *Oshibki*, *Poznavaia* faced criticism for its ‘deliberately perplexing style, [...] excessive metaphoricality of film-language, [and] absorption in formal exercises’.⁷¹² Aesthetical innovation itself was on trial. Gukasian defended *Poznavaia* as ‘prose-poetry’, stressing that new scenes, which deepened the protagonists’ *fabula*-lines, would assuage remaining worries, which had ‘become significantly fewer’ since the earliest screenings.⁷¹³ Kheifits and Baklanov advocated giving Muratova time and supporting her indisputable talent.⁷¹⁴ However, these views did not convince studio-management. Provotorov warned of the deepening crisis Lenfil’ m would face if *Poznavaia* was ‘shelved’, insisting: ‘What is this film about?’ is an economic question’.⁷¹⁵ The Partkom’s resolutions delegated general instructions to the TO for simplifying *Poznavaia*.⁷¹⁶ Cineastes and *redaktery* knew that Muratova’s film could only be cut with painstaking compromises to meet these reductive demands. In *Poznavaia*, the abruptness with which many sequences end is testament to this fraught process. As Muratova confirmed, and as the final screening-report from November 1978 demonstrates, many scenes – including the ‘additional’ ceremony – were originally double their eventual length.⁷¹⁷

Much spatio-temporal disorientation and ‘complicated’ editing in *Poznavaia* therefore results from cuts demanded by Lenfil’ m. This final screening-report evokes the 1975 *Postanovlenie* and the 1978 memos on CPSU supervision of studio-output. Following the decisive Gorkom screening, ‘serious corrections and clarifications’ were enforced, having assessed earlier TO, studio and Goskino reviews.⁷¹⁸ *Poznavaia* appears to have survived this political gauntlet only by virtue of its industrial genre-framework. At submission, the Lenfil’ m *Khudsovet* conclusion stressed – wholly against the filmic evidence – that the construction site was not simply a representational backdrop with real social significance, but moreover, an integral engine for its protagonists’ journeys from

chaos to harmony.⁷¹⁹ However, this formal approval concluded with familiar complaints about ‘repetitions, slowed rhythm in certain places, [...] overcomplicated editing-movements, [...] and excessive nervousity in character-behaviour, which hinders understanding of the film and ultimately lowers viewer-interest in it’.⁷²⁰ These remarks acknowledge how the aesthetics and atmosphere of *Poznavaia* had barely altered, despite official affirmations to the contrary. Instead, ‘challenging’ scenes were unceremoniously shortened, removing tranches of problematic dialogue and leaving an uncommonly short, 2134 metres-long film in place of the approved 2700.⁷²¹

Poznavaia – approved as a Category Two release on 22 December 1978 – did not premiere until 31 March 1980, receiving extremely limited distribution thereafter.⁷²² For all the anxious interventions, *Poznavaia* was not ‘shelved’: where Lenfil’*m* sensed a political risk exacerbated by the weight of the 1972 *Postanovlenie*, Goskino saw only a peripheral burden. Presenting the corrected final cut to an unnamed Goskino deputy editor-in-chief, having endured protracted tensions with Muratova over the enforced changes, Gukasian has criticized the institutional inertia of this ‘horrific time’ in Soviet cinema-production, when Lenfil’*m* languished in its lowest political standing of the post-Stalin era:

He asked me: ‘Frizheta Gurgev’na, which part [of the film] have you made corrections to?’ I said: ‘well, all of them, the lot, we did them.’ Then he said: ‘all the same, which part should I watch?’ I asked him: ‘Aren’t you going to watch the whole film?’ He watched one part and they gave us the form [*akt*], nobody cared one bit about the film anymore, [...] everything was falling apart! If we had understood that, we wouldn’t have made the corrections because they were very hard to

effect, we didn't want to. It was torturous and painful, we argued, but such was the situation.⁷²³

Conclusion: Auteurism Revived

Poznavaia immediately became the most divisive Lenfil'm title of the 1970s. In January 1979, Varustin observed: 'to this day, arguments have not quietened. Its supporters insist upon the innovative nature of this work, [...] but its serious errors are just as apparent [...] even the film's admirers cannot hide: it will not have broad audience-appeal'.⁷²⁴ Provotorov was genuinely bemused by its 'density of complex metaphors' and dismayed by a film with 'plenty of excellently shot frames', but whose 'comprehension of human nature' eschewed 'understandable and expressive' means.⁷²⁵ Provotorov sympathized with the First TO's leadership, whose practical recommendations he felt had gone largely unheeded, 'to the detriment of the film'.⁷²⁶ Muratova already seemed beyond consideration as a Lenfil'm filmmaker. However, at the annual LOSK conference on Lenfil'm in April 1979, Izol'da Sepman acknowledged its divisiveness but praised *Poznavaia* for 'mobilizing all the forces of cinematographic imagery', concluding that 'in art, experimentation in the field of [film-] language is a necessary business. Muratova's film would have been interesting even if it had been limited to aesthetical innovation'.⁷²⁷ Responding, Aleksei German hoped – against probability – that Muratova could be retained:

After a long wait, we have a director with first-class artistic and human values [...] the existence of such a talented, experimentally inclined personality – even if there's much I disagree with in this film – [...] gives our studio such a boost in quality. If Kira Muratova leaves Lenfil'm, the studio takes a step backwards.⁷²⁸

That outcome had already been decided by Muratova's frustration with studio-level screening. Nonetheless, *Poznavaiia* astounded many Lenfil'm cineastes, who responded with professional – and emotional – excitement. At a First TO *Khudsovet* screening in November 1978, the mood was exalted and exhausted, amid widespread relief that *Poznavaiia* no longer looked vulnerable to 'shelving'. Filmmakers lined up to praise its innovations and support diversity at Lenfil'm.⁷²⁹ Others suggested that its unconventional structures and cutting resulted, in part, from the obvious effects of screening-interventions.⁷³⁰ Overwhelmingly, this *Khudsovet* demonstrated that *Poznavaiia* was keenly analysed by those invested in repertory innovation at Lenfil'm. Iurii Klepikov and Irina Golovan' – immediately following their first viewing – anticipated sophisticated insights in Muratova scholarship from Zvonkine and Nancy Condee.⁷³¹

Reactions among *redaktory* were evocative of auteurist reconsolidation in the First TO, where Muratova would not work again, but where German, Aristov, Averbakh, and Aleksandr Sokurov began the 1980s in development for films that would make Lenfil'm the most artistically experimental Soviet studio. Gukasian agreed with Leonid Rakhmanov that *Poznavaiia* 'hypnotized', but perhaps understandably professed to have lost her emotional feel for the film.⁷³² Those removed from the stresses of supervision expressed bolder views than ever seemed permissible in the heat of that summer's crisis. 'It is easier than anything to embrace cliché [...] To simplify a film, for any old viewer!', exclaimed Marina Zhezhelenko, 'but maybe we ought not to? Yes, it's difficult [material], but [...] this is a very interesting film'.⁷³³ Rokhlin went further still:

For all that I deeply respect my position as a *redaktor*, and *redaktory* in general, I have a feeling that it is not my business to make suggestions

here, [...] but this should not be corrected, it is too much of an auteurist creation.⁷³⁴

With this assertion, and given Rokhlin's redactional hinterland, we may acknowledge connections between the production-histories of Muratova and Shpalikov at Lenfil'm. Both were recruited by Lenfil'm TOs well-disposed to aesthetical innovation in unfavourable political conditions. However, after each producing one film that met with admiration, incomprehension and unusually emotional responses from seasoned studio-professionals, both ceased working there as a consequence of protracted screening-processes, poor relationships with studio-management, and outright hostility at Goskino. Beyond Fomin's discovery that both filmmakers' works were implicated in the drafting and eventual form of the 1972 *Postanovlenie*, Dmitrii Bykov reads *Dolgaia schastlivaia zhizn'* and Muratova's debut, *Korotkie vstrechi*, as deeply complementary markers of epochal change in late-Soviet society. For Bykov, these parallel films expressed the cultural crisis of *shestidesiatnichestvo* in its end-phase. Both delivered uncomfortable messages to the intelligentsia and confounded their supervisors with starkly gendered alienation and provocatively open-ended dramatic structures.⁷³⁵

Shpalikov and Muratova ultimately represented missed repertory opportunities at transitional moments in the artistic evolution of late-Soviet Lenfil'm: these films also shared limited domestic distribution and longstanding critical neglect. In this regard, Rokhlin's response to *Poznavaia* is both typical of institutional continuity and an indication of the political distance travelled. Both productions were sanctioned for a 'peripheral' Lenfil'm by Goskino at junctures when these filmmaking careers truly hung in the balance. However, by 1978, Muratova's auteurist aesthetics could be vocally defended in a manner unthinkable for the 1966 assessments of Shpalikov's debut. The studio's senior *redaktory* and *Khudruki* were sufficiently attentive to these limited

opportunities to use the prerogatives of TO-led commissioning with undimmed ambition, despite inauspicious local political conditions.

Leningrad was the USSR's 'capital of cultural conservatism' when Lenfil'm was the only Soviet studio where *Poznavaia* could be produced. Golutva's enforcement of the 1978 Raikom *Postanovlenie* encapsulates this paradox. While supervising the politically expedient replacement of studio-management, this future studio-director ensured that the First TO retained operational agency with its artistic leadership unviolated. This tacit alliance, formed between Lenfil'm cineastes and their Raikom *instruktor*, persisted until Golutva's arrival as editor-in-chief in 1985. However, studio-production continued to face reactionary opposition from the Leningrad CPSU, against the backdrop of poor relations with Goskino that were deeply damaged by the humiliation of 1978. If that year marked a political nadir for Lenfil'm, it also contained the seeds of an artistic recovery that was gradual, contested, and largely dependent for success on those who had negotiated this crisis with their professional standing intact.

Chapter Six

Comrade Blue-Eyes: Sound, Genre, and Gender in *Golos*

Management told me: ‘make it so they are shooting *Anna Karenina*, and everything will fall into place’. Initially, I wanted absolutely for the director to be fat, rotten and shooting an entirely rubbish film. I settled on the halfway option: let them make a film that’s run-of-the-mill, passable, forgettable.⁷³⁶

Il’ia Averbakh

The 1978 crisis had lasting political consequences at Lenfil’ m. That December, the Partkom re-established a united CPSU organization for artistic workers, reversing a 1977 reform that created a Partbiuro within each – temporarily renamed – PTO [*proizvodstvennoe-tvorscheskoe ob’edinenie*], now with its own political-reporting structures.⁷³⁷ This reversal sought better-coordinated activism among CPSU-members. However, it represented a hasty attempt to conceal the dire state of ‘Party work’ at Lenfil’ m, which remained under close scrutiny from Leningrad’s CPSU organizations. PTO Partbiuro had enforced ideological compliance reluctantly: their infrequent meetings were woefully attended.⁷³⁸ In 1979, calls arose for PTOs to be restored as TOs. From the enviable position of *Khudruk* in the booming TVO, Vitalii Mel’nikov demanded: ‘it’s time to return to TOs their original function as organizers and catalysts of the artistic process, and leave the organization of production on a studio-scale to those who receive wages for this’.⁷³⁹

No studio-specific initiatives could conceal widespread disillusionment among Lenfil’ m cineastes between 1978 and 1982. Partkom contributions also increasingly referred to social strains unconnected to film-production: these years are widely considered to be the most repressive and

impoverished of Romanov's Obkom tenure.⁷⁴⁰ At the 1982 LOSK conference, Kheifits lamented fatigue, resignation and mediocrity at Lenfil'm: never in the TO-era had this unfalteringly constructive *Khudruk* expressed such despondency:

At Lenfil'm, we're not lying awake at night enough. The release of a film was always a cultural event, of social value, was always greeted either triumphantly or bitterly, but with active bitterness. Pessimism and narrow-mindedness have gotten the better of us. In many ways the release of a film has become a prosaic fact that is summed up in the following sentence: 'never mind, they'll take it, maybe they'll even give it a Category Two and the efforts of the artistic collective will be repaid.'⁷⁴¹

Frustrations around complacency and overdependence on the authorities' artistic criteria [*prokhdimost'*] were not new. Despite Kheifits' conciliatory efforts in 1978, Party reprimands had been a profound ignominy for this Hero of Socialist Labour (1975) and Lenfil'm filmmaker since the 1920s. Eighteen months after its initial rejection, with a new Lenfil'm studio-director and Goskino GSRK editor-in-chief in place, Lenfil'm resubmitted the screenplay of *Golos* to Goskino in September 1980.⁷⁴² *Golos*, dir. by Il'ia Averbakh (1982), encapsulates the troubled artistic soul-searching at Lenfil'm during this bleak period, and would be Averbakh's last narrative feature-film. His death from cancer at fifty-one in January 1986, and that of Dinara Asanova from heart-failure at forty-two in April 1985, coincided with perestroika. Both premature deaths symbolically ended a period in the studio's artistic culture and charged the theme of bereavement in *Golos* with tragic resonance.

Production and Plot

Golos has much in common with *Nachalo*, but exceeds its critical-reflexive representation of late-Soviet filmmaking. Lead actor Iuliia Martynova (Nataliia Saiko) is recording her voice on the post-synchronized soundtrack of a feature-film in post-production. Unbeknownst to Iuliia, she is terminally ill and soon absconds from hospital to work at the film-studio. Alongside Iuliia's rehospitization and determination to finish the job, it emerges that the film-director, Sergei Anatol'evich (Leonid Filatov), has deviated substantially from the approved screenplay, and is relying on the screenwriter, Aleksandr Il'ich (Georgii Kalatozishvili), to confect a new ending from material that has already been shot. As the squabbling filmmaker and author struggle to complete the film, the overworked assistant-director, Anna Viktorovna ('Aniuta', Elizaveta Nikishchikhina), must find a replacement for Iuliia's voice. On discovering this plan, Iuliia avoids the editing-suite and is swept up in the bustling studio, until Sergei Anatol'evich spots her and persuades her to work. Iuliia frenetically overdubs dialogue during one final shift, after which only a few lines remain. However, she proves too unwell to return from hospital. Following Iuliia's death, the earlier replacement candidate, Masha Akhtyrskaiia (Tat'iana Lavrova), completes the part. *Golos* ends with the recording of the film's music: the eccentric composer, Romashkin (Sergei Bekhterev), who has hidden from all crew-members except Iuliia during production, reveals an emotionally stirring score, conducting an orchestra in front of a screen-projection of Iuliia's performance.

Nataliia Riazantseva later remarked that she 'preferred the film to [her] harassed screenplay-drafts, made grey by enforced corrections', but that the turbulent six-year journey from genesis to completion had damaged the 'lyricism' of *Golos*.⁷⁴³ Lenfil'm went through three studio-directors during that period, and *Golos* had three candidate-directors from the First TO.⁷⁴⁴ In July

1977 (Riazantseva's literary screenplay) and March 1978 (Solomon Shuster's directorial screenplay), Goskino rejected *Golos* in curtly dismissive communiqués. In 1977, Dal' Orlov concluded that *Golos* 'does not interest the thematic needs of [Soviet] cinema', before criticizing 'the ill-defined nature [*priblizitel'nost'*] of its protagonists, ideas and conflict'.⁷⁴⁵ The 1978 rejection found that additional redrafting had made no improvements.⁷⁴⁶ These positions struck seasoned observers as exceptionally harsh. A collective letter from influential screenwriters to Ermash insisted on the screenplay's impeccable literary merits and potential; Fomin has called this an extremely rare attempt at professional leverage from the SK in these challenging years.⁷⁴⁷

Sergei Solov'ev has described Riazantseva's best work – among which *Golos* certainly figures – as the most literarily complete Russian screenwriting of her generation.⁷⁴⁸ Dmitrii Bykov argues that Riazantseva's dramaturgy is concerned not with *fabula*, but fundamental conflicts: its 'clash between *a priori*, unreasoning righteousness and reflection' manifests itself as 'the opposition of a principled, consistent, and therefore forever-losing character, to the immoral, ever fickle, and therefore all-conquering force of circumstances'.⁷⁴⁹ Elaborating, Bykov proposes an existential selfhood for Riazantseva's characters as individuals in crisis, who both resist and engage with a fickle and ambivalent world, where 'all firm structures are corroding or collapsing'.⁷⁵⁰ In *Golos* as in *Kryl'ia*, *Dolgie provody* and *Chuzhie pis'ma/Other People's Letters*, dir. by Il'ia Averbakh (1975) Riazantseva's screenwriting isolates women in conflict with late-Soviet institutions that bind them to their lifework but stifle their sense of self.

Theory and The Cinematic Voice

Golos shares its historical moment with important shifts in the theorization of sound in cinema. Although discourses emerging in semiotics-focused American film-studies and French criticism shaped by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory concerned the cultural, economic and industrial formations of Hollywood and European cinema, their preoccupations resonate with the reflexivity of *Golos*. Rick Altman confronts the ‘primacy of visuality’, in close analysis of cinema, as an ideologically motivated effacement of sound-recording and sound-reproduction technologies in the service of classical narrative conventions.⁷⁵¹ Sound-editing conventions obscure the voice’s origins as a technological construct, which ‘complements and reinforces the better-known masking of image-production’.⁷⁵²

To illuminate Altman’s summation – ‘I speak, therefore I am seen’ – we can refer with him to shot/reverse-shot technique as cinema’s ‘most blatant’ application of this principle. The image’s constructedness is accentuated if the camera remains fixed on the interlocutor being ‘spoken to’, instead of returning to the ‘speaker’, as happens unexpectedly in the theatre-bar-sequence in *Dolgaia schastlivaia zhizn’*.⁷⁵³ For Altman, the dialogic currency of the on-screen, ‘narrative’ voice originates in the language of the screenwriter: its attribution to a presence in the frame is a kind of aesthetical ventriloquism, whereby the work of recorded sound is attributed to the image as an ideological front.⁷⁵⁴ Thus, the ‘rerouting of sound from apparatus to diegesis is part of a fundamental progression in cinema whereby the *discours* connecting producers and consumers is masked by the *histoire* of the diegesis’.⁷⁵⁵ The recorded voice is *made* to speak reproduced language to anchor narrative meaning to a system of visual cues.

The centrality of voice-recording to film-production is doubly significant to *Golos*, from Riazantseva's self-ethnographizing, 'humanizing look at [late-Soviet filmmaking's] 'everyday hustle and bustle' to the more distanced critical perspective of Averbakh's film.⁷⁵⁶ In his final communiqué before *Golos* was released into production, Anatolii Bogomolov, the new Goskino GSRK editor-in-chief, insisted that it respect the studio-collective's labour and avoid *legkovesnost* ' [frothiness'].⁷⁵⁷ Although this prudish tone was unsurprising, compliance was already dubiously factored into Riazantseva's *zaiavka*. She wrote cautiously yet playfully that 'neither irony, nor satire, nor any criticism towards our cine-life is being proposed, not because such a view of cinema is uncharacteristic of the author, but because the given plot requires romantically elevated moods'.⁷⁵⁸

Iuliia's plight occupies the narrative foreground: she perspires at the microphone, using the rushes to guide her post-synchronized recording. The obscure resolution of the *fictional* film hinges on a more complex relationship between plotting and on-screen voices. Sitting before a moviola, Aleksandr Il'ich must devise new dialogue for an alternative ending from the existing footage. He achieves this by taking advantage of a large moving banner, which momentarily obscures the body of Sofia Nikolaevna (Iuliia's character) to the camera, to compose lines for her that fit these visual constraints. This salvage-job resonates with Altman's argument. It is not only the language, but the very *voice* of the screenwriter – improvising new dialogue in the editing-suite – that gives narrative plausibility to the image, which here deploys an actual screen to mask the origin of the language attributed to the momentarily concealed actor. Moreover, this manipulation – hiding a voice behind a visual object – is overtly ideological: the banner carried through the office of the official Soviet newspaper where Sofia works reads 'our best material'. This composition obscures the on-screen voice, which generates meaning, behind a literally 'ideological front' of visual primacy. The work of sound-technology is revealed in the diegesis but remains masked in the

fictional film. This voice is a *spatialized* construct, determined by the possibility of its attribution to a character that we have already glimpsed, and that the banner screens.

Questions of screen-space and spectatorial identification preoccupy Michel Chion's *The Voice in Cinema*, from the same year as *Golos*. Sharing Altman's perspective on 'ventriloquism' and the ideological functions of sound-technology in cinema, Chion is nonetheless more aesthetically interested in the voice as an *object*. The theorization of 'voice-objects', Chion argues, originated with Jacques Lacan's categorization of the voice in his 'A' level of 'partial objects', which are 'susceptible to being fetishized and harnessed to 'turn difference into the state of a thing' [*chosifier la différence*]'.⁷⁵⁹ Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts were still energizing much of the West's most sophisticated film criticism at the time of Chion's earliest contributions to scholarship. As Dominic Lennard has recently reasserted, this appeal stemmed overwhelmingly from the extension to cinematic spectatorship of the 'gaze' and 'looking' hypotheses in Lacan's discussions of the 'mirror-stage' of human development.⁷⁶⁰ Therein, the infant – able to recognize and derive pleasure from its own reflection – experiences the vision of a distinct and autonomous self as 'a kind of "screened" image', an '*illusion* of wholeness and autonomy' at odds with its actual developmental level.⁷⁶¹ Drawing on related but less intensively mined areas of Lacanian object-relations, Chion asks what we, as *audio-viewers*, perceive when the cinematic voice becomes an object identifiable with human difference, whose illusory wholeness is complicated by deployment in, around and beyond the spatially fixed cinema-screen. The original concept to emerge from this exploration is *la voix d'acousmètre*, defined by Chion as 'the voice that we do not see, or can barely glimpse'.⁷⁶²

This concept – a neologism combining *acousmatique* and *être* – rests upon Chion's insistence that sound cinema is 'vococentric'. By acousmatic sound, Chion understands 'a sound that is heard

without its cause or source being seen', while the suffixed verb *être* denotes the *being* whose voice, with all its differentiations of identity, is correspondingly 'acousmatized' in relation to the film-image.⁷⁶³ Vococentrism is the hypothesis that Chion invokes to posit *acousmètre* as crucial to an understanding of how voice-objects function as determinants of diegetic space. In this argument, the human voice is not one sound among others. Rather, 'in any jumble of sounds, the presence of a human voice gives a hierarchy to the perception around it'.⁷⁶⁴ Thus, for sounds not jumbled, but purposely mixed and edited, 'the presence of a voice structures the sound-space [*l'espace sonore*] that contains it'.⁷⁶⁵ As such, Altman and Chion concur that the voice is the primary constitutive element of sound cinema. However, Altman is most interested in revealing the hidden work of production that constructs the voice, while Chion is preoccupied by the results of that production: an auditory-spectatorial perception of the voice that is subject to complication, depending on the relationship between the voice and the visual field.

Golos plays extensively with well-established cinematic scenarios for revealing and withholding the sources of sounds. Technologies work subversively to expose fault-lines in relationships where communication has already broken down. For example, early in *Golos*, a meticulous tracking-shot ends with Iuliia occupying a roadside telephone-box on a deserted bridge over a busy urban carriageway at nightfall. She calls her husband after her flustered departure from the studio, having struggled to voice-record her lines, when something – worries about illness, frustration with her husband, a need to escape this desolate locale – motivates Iuliia to lie that a queue has formed for the booth, before she hangs up. Later, Iuliia demonstrates vocal dexterity: desperate to know if she has been replaced, she calls Aniuta from an internal telephone and skilfully impersonates Akhtyrskaiia, the likely candidate. When Aniuta confirms this, Iuliia indignantly reveals her identity and hangs up. In turn, Aniuta fails to recognize the voice of Arkadii, Iuliia's husband, when he calls from the same internal telephone to ask about his wife's whereabouts

(Iuliia has absconded from hospital to work at the studio). Arkadii is too distressed or awkward to introduce himself, bumbling instead that he and Aniuta ‘do not know each other by sight [...] we have, as you’d say, a telephone acquaintance’. Only after Aniuta complains and aggressively hangs up does Arkadii call again and reveal his identity.

In these examples, we are complicit with the on-screen voice, which has knowing agency in these asymmetrical, hostile exchanges. *Golos* rarely structures a scene around a *complete acousmètre* – the voice of the as-yet-unseen body, which is liable to enter the visual field at any time. When this happens, agency belongs exclusively to men engaged in loaded bouts of verbal masculinity. In the opening moments of *Golos*, a male voice (Sergei Anatol’evich) is heard against a black frame, murmuring to another audible male presence (an actor) about delivering his lines in a baritone voice. When the next shot reveals Iuliia’s sweaty face at the microphone, it holds at length, then pans momentarily as the two men in the dark background banter and chuckle, until Iuliia interrupts: ‘are we recording or not?’. In the hospital, sound-levels are spatially manipulated to amplify the bellowing of a middle-aged man on the telephone, in a space adjacent to the room where Iuliia hovers uneasily beside women reading health tips aloud from a magazine. Our one-way insight into this call comes exclusively from his monotonous platitudes: ‘it’s not a bad crowd gathered here... we’re keeping our spirits high, as they say’. Subsequently, Iuliia’s conversation with the studio-hairdresser Anton is interrupted by an off-screen male voice reminiscing about Iuliia’s arrival at the studio as a girl. Iuliia smiles and confidently challenges the assertions of this voice, which turns out to belong to Iurii, the cameraman on the film in post-production. With his professional duties fulfilled and a trip abroad looming, Iurii refuses to allow Iuliia her haircut and leads her away by the arm in what seems like an attempt at casual seduction, although it remains unclear if these professional collaborators have previously shared an intimate relationship. *Golos* checks Iurii’s advances through Iuliia’s sardonic resistance and his eventual emasculation by a

formidable retired set-designer, whose apartment Iurii occasionally rents when the elderly woman is absent, and where he takes Iuliia. Another acousmatic ‘reveal’ has undermined this insistent but ineffectual romancing. A rightwards pan over an empty city road is accompanied by an effusive French love song, which seems like extra-diegetic music, until the shot settles over the windscreen of a car, where Iurii and Iuliia sit motionless until she requests that he switch the music off on the stereo. These examples all frame a male *complete acousmètre* as the expression of unveiled authority, entitlement or even harassment. To discover its identity is also to be confronted with its requirement to ‘enter the visual field at any point’, to direct and dominate on-screen space.

By contrast, the *incomplete acousmètre* (the ‘already visualized’ body, temporarily absent from the visual field, and thus ‘more familiar and reassuring’) is overwhelmingly afforded to women in *Golos*. As already noted, this is the means by which Iuliia’s voice is subjected to an acousmatic manipulation that changes the meaning of a pivotal sequence in the fictional film. The gendered nature of this vocal transference is not inconsequential to the hierarchies of studio-labour that separate men and women. A fascinating counterpoint to Aleksandr Il’ich’s improvisations at the moviola comes in the penultimate sequence. After Iuliia’s death, Akhtyrskaiia and Aniuta sit on a bench outside the sound-editing suite. Aniuta produces a handwritten farewell note from Iuliia; we see the whole sheet of paper, but Aniuta reads aloud only its most moving, final line. Welling up, Akhtyrskaiia begins to cry, before the shot cuts to a low-angled view of the projection-screen in the sound-editing suite. Remarkably, Akhtyrskaiia’s sobbing carries over as a sound-bridge into this new shot, where we see Sofia (Iuliia) on-screen. She cries as she gathers up papers at a desk, and when the shot cuts to show Akhtyrskaiia working at the microphone where Iuliia has earlier stood, there is a discernible shift in the rhythm of Akhtyrskaiia’s sobs as her gaze attentively scans the screen, looking for visual cues from Iuliia’s performance.

Akhtyrskaiia's voice imitating Iuliia's actorly mimicry of emotional distress is doubly ironic, since we have already witnessed Iuliia impersonating Akhtyrskaiia's nonchalant voice, over the telephone, from a place of genuine emotional distress. Initially, from professional solidarity, Akhtyrskaiia refuses Aniuta's request to overdub Iuliia when the latter is still alive; Akhtyrskaiia is visibly upset by this predicament. Having accepted Aniuta's unappealing proposal after Iuliia's death, Akhtyrskaiia's genuine sobs uninterruptedly merge, through the sound-bridge, with her recording: diegetically, she is subjected to a similar vocal appropriation as Iuliia in the office-sequence. As actors, these women are dexterous vocal performers, but in the professional hierarchies of film-production, their voices are manipulated – consentingly or otherwise – to serve synchronicity and a male-conceived ordering of space.

It would be excessive to describe *Golos* as an explicitly feminist film. Nonetheless, Riazantseva's draft-screenplays reveal deeper reflections and longer detours into the various forms of suppressed production that culminate in the *re-veiling* of Iuliia's 'already visualized' identity through the manipulation of her voice. Chion stresses the role of feminist criticism in the voice becoming an object of study.⁷⁶⁶ In 1982, this concerned feminist discourse that 'opposes the voice as fluid and continuous expression to the rigidity and discontinuity of writing; or even to 'speech' with its limited, circumspect and instructive character'.⁷⁶⁷ Each of these resistant oppositions surfaces in the muted feminism of *Golos*. If, as Chion suggests, 'the voice could be a space of liberty for women to reconquer', then Iuliia's deadening habitation of the late-Soviet film studio suggests that, along with any notion of liberty, the space for women's voices to be heard in late-Soviet cinema-production had barely been glimpsed. However, Riazantseva's discontinuous and officially screened writing could not be stripped of the ambivalence that this milieu inspired in the creators of *Golos*, as close analysis demonstrates.

Lenfil'm on Film

Although never named, the studio in *Golos* is shot entirely in and around Lenfil'm, on Leningrad's 'Petrograd side', despite Averbakh's pre-production insistence on a 'composite studio' (plans to shoot sequences at Mosfil'm were quickly dropped).⁷⁶⁸ It is unimportant to the plot that this studio be identifiable with Lenfil'm, yet its physical specificity confronts informed audiences with the film's self-ethnographizing impulse. Iuliia's story is a topographical back-and-forth between the studio and a hospital on the periphery of Leningrad, with only one sequence (Iurii and Iuliia's visit to the retired set-designer) located elsewhere. Aesthetically, starkly contrasting *mise-en-scène* and shooting conditions hold these institutions in tension as diegetic poles. The narrative shifts between them, as the chaotic, anomalous and thematically 'new' setting of the studio is contrasted to the orderly, universal and cinematically well-worn hospital. However, this dichotomy is less oppositional than its aesthetical contrast suggests. Rather, *Golos* is pervasively concerned with failing health, communication-breakdowns, and the institutional conditions linking these two themes in late-Soviet society.

The sterile hospital stands in the middle of nowhere and is brightly lit, while the bustling studio is opaque with cigarette-smoke and built around interiors in which shadow predominates. The two buildings are nonetheless linked by similar shot-framing. These distinguish a 'known' interior, which reflects the logic of the institution, from desolate perimeter grounds and urban deserts beyond its windows. By day, Iuliia and Arkadii squabble about her anxious wait for a call from the studio while she sits on a window ledge overlooking a forlorn driveway, slowly squeezing juice from a pomegranate into a glass, in an ominous visual metaphor for her ebbing life. By night, Iuliia sits on the same ledge listening to classical music on the radio. When a nurse enters to put

her to bed, the space beyond the window-frame is a pitch-black void, and after Iuliia has absconded in the daytime for her last recording session, her final return in the dead of night sees her disappear into this void at ground level, as she moves away from the fence where Arkadii is waving goodbye.

Faint lights dim progressively in this night-time sequence, which begins with a strikingly composed exterior shot. Block Ten of the Lenfil'm complex – authentically home to sound-stages and editing-suites – displays a few windows illuminated by differently coloured lights, estranging the building into an impression of an abstract composition.⁷⁶⁹ Sequences inside the studio reveal film-production technologies in operation, while simultaneously estranging our perception of this work aesthetically. Dolinin has referred to Averbakh's wish to shoot the film-editing suite like the interior of a submarine: the first sequence there begins with a leftwards pan across the moviola and editing-table, creating a narrow-angled and claustrophobic visual field, accompanied by the deep roar of machinery.⁷⁷⁰ The sound-editing suite recreates the configurations of post-synchronized recording between the projection of footage, the 'rough' tape-recording from the shoot, the microphone stands and the mixing booth, but enhances the dramatic effect of the scene with red up-lighting, which shines brightly on Iuliia's face as she struggles with her recording, estranging her heavily shadowed reflection from her body and all objects except the microphone before her.

At different moments, Averbakh and Riazantseva both insisted that the narrative and thematic resonance of *Golos* concerns the 'uniqueness [*nepovtorimost'*] of each person's voice', as Iuliia battles to be heard before her death.⁷⁷¹ However, as Oksana Bulgakova recognizes, the production shown in *Golos* demonstrates the contrary. Iuliia's voice is partially replaced in the film-within-a-film, while her body is repeatedly subjected to visual doubling.⁷⁷² Bulgakova describes the

‘clamouring and interrupting’ voices of the filmmakers and senior crew as those of ‘the late-1970s Soviet intelligentsia, with their chattering melody [and] muffled intonation [that] runs through the long-shots as noise. But it is precisely in [these voices] that the historicity of the moment and its loose-ends of mood are captured. This way of speaking disappeared, along with the departed bodies’.⁷⁷³ This assessment must be understood not only in terms of Bulgakova’s innate cultural recognition of this milieu, but also in acknowledgment of an Averbakhian leitmotif, and hence, an important repertory coordinate at Lenfil’ m. Averbakh’s films reflect critically on the entropy of Russian-intelligentsia values, expressed – often agonizingly – through the fading voices of surviving bearers of its language. Complimenting Riazantseva’s explorations of emotional and artistic conflict in the cultural vacuum of the studio, Averbakh’s anguished artistic worldview is constrained in a late-Soviet institutional bind of commitment to ‘unique voices’ amid contemporary cultural degradation, but also of preoccupation with actual social conditions that contradict the earnestness of intelligentsia ethics.

As in *Nachalo, Golos* self-ethnographizes through casting that commemorates ‘below-the-line’ Lenfil’ m professionals. The fierce retired set-designer, Pavla Fedorovna (Tat’iana Pankova) embodies Averbakh’s cultural affinity with the ‘departed bodies’ of an old intelligentsia: she is typical of elderly characters in his films that belong to earlier cultural formations, checking the actions of wayward younger protagonists.⁷⁷⁴ For the role of film-editor, Averbakh cast Tamara Rodionova, an elderly Lenfil’ m filmmaker with a handful of releases to her name, but who worked exclusively on restorations and dubbing during the TO-era. Rodionova’s professional experience allowed her to intuitively incarnate a dependable technician, expertly operating the editing table while diffusing tension between Sergei Anatol’evich and Aleksandr Il’ich. As they review the rushes, Rodionova volunteers no opinion beyond ‘I like it’. This expression recurs as an indication of mediocrity in the artistic criteria of crewmembers. Natasha, the indiscreet

assistant-director, ‘likes’ the working title adopted during post-production, and Sergei Anatol’evich defensively insists that ‘*everyone* likes’ the material when Aleksandr Il’ich expresses disdain in the projection-suite, replying that ‘everyone always likes second-rate stuff’. However, as Oleg Kovalov argues, the fragments shown struggle to attain even that level.⁷⁷⁵ The collective’s abiding complacency and fatigue throw Iuliia’s tragedy into especially stark relief as she battles to fulfil her own, individual artistic commitment.

Romashkin, the elusive composer, is unmistakably inspired by Oleg Karavaichuk, an exceptionally gifted musical innovator and confounding eccentric in the midst of Lenfil’ m. Muratova’s composer on *Kороткие встречи*, and a frequent collaborator with Averbakh and Mel’nikov, Karavaichuk was the object of repeated scandals with the authorities, stretching back to his precocious debut at twenty-four in 1952. Several cineastes remarked on this obvious resemblance at the studio *Khudsovet*, but Averbakh unconvincingly insisted that Karavaichuk had merely been a loose model for Romashkin during screenplay-development alone.⁷⁷⁶ This qualification, and the ‘toning down’ of Romashkin in *Golos*, are doubtlessly motivated by political caution. Karavaichuk was officially banned from performing publicly at that time and remained hugely controversial in Leningrad and beyond.⁷⁷⁷ However, he also composed deeply expressive scores for all of Averbakh’s 1970s films. The filmmaker thus sought to protect his near-constant collaborator during studio-screening.

After their paths cross in a corridor, Romashkin takes Iuliia to a rehearsal suite and plays piano-variations of the score that he is withholding, to Iuliia’s evident appreciation of his craft (the final sequence reveals this piece to be a dramatic, ominous work). The contrast between Romashkin’s assured composition and the hasty improvisations of the film’s new plot is central to Averbakh’s critique: this talented artist must shelter from the deadlock and incompetence holding sway in the

production. From what we glimpse, Romashkin's score fits uneasily with the mood of the fictional film. Like Karavaichuk's own arrestingly complex work for films of diverse artistic registers, it reflects the warped distribution of artistic capacity, in late-Soviet cinema, between individual innovations and the systemic pressures that yearly generated a mass of rushed and professionally substandard films. Romashkin's hide-and-seek avoidance of Aniuta is motivated as much by his aversion to the chaos and aggression of this faltering post-production as by his artistic sensibility.

Genre, Cliché and Cinema-History

The opening of *Golos* hints at underlying conflicts in the embedded film that are never resolved. As in *Nachalo*, *curiosité* cedes to film-production specificity: from subsequent rushes and fragments of dialogue, we must glean the kind of 'contemporary' late-Soviet feature that *Golos* frames through its post-production editing. The viewer is presented with a similar technological challenge: how to take dialogue that is estranged from its primary source and overcome this dislocation to form an impression of coherence based on audio-visual fragments from this avowedly troubled production.

Iuliia's character, Sofia, is a newspaper journalist writing a personality-feature (*ocherk*) on Pavel Platonovich (Mikhail Gluzskii), an elderly man living in the south of Russia. From the rushes, it is unclear how Pavel's story relates to Sofia's other journalistic engagement: the voice-recording session in the opening sequence shows her poolside with a children's swimming-coach. Sofia wishes to photograph the children, who we later learn are in social care, but warns the coach that '[she] will probably be forced out of the newspaper and that radio will not likely take [her] on'. We remain unaware of the specific risks inherent to Sofia's work, but one possible answer may

concern Pavel. While tape-recording his reminiscences about a feat of wartime resistance, Sofia uncovers another story – inaccessible to us – that ignites her investigative drive, creates conflict with Pavel’s middle-aged daughter, and compels Iuliia to fight for this new angle with her employers. Speaking into a payphone, Sofia insists that, rather than the commissioned *ocherk*, ‘what’s needed here is a topical satire [*fel’eton*]’ on the uncovered affair. Despite apparent urgency and Sofia’s fondness for the ‘unique and remarkable’ Pavel, *Golos* denies any resolution of the fictional film’s rewritten plot, which remains even more obscure in Riazantseva’s screenplays. After Aleksandr Il’ich improvizes new dialogue for the newsroom-sequence, we see Sofia tearfully clearing out a desk, while Akhtyrskaiia overdubs sobbing noises. *Golos* ends as Sofia – played after Iuliia’s death by a hastily recruited and glaring body-double, wearing a cap and hiding her face behind a camera – photographs children at the swimming pool from the opening sequence (there is no sense of this sequence’s position in the embedded film). The final shots of *Golos* appropriate this photographic perspective, mimicking Sofia’s shots through stop-frame images of the children at play.

Sofia’s feature-turned-investigation story grounds this film in the Soviet journalistic tradition of *publitsistika*, a form of ‘accessible’ current-affairs coverage presented as opinion-editorial essays on social issues.⁷⁷⁸ Brezhnev-era *publitsistika* feature-films reflected changing social conditions from the late-1960s onwards: tightened screening of the arts, foreign-policy retrenchments, the intelligentsia’s shifting generational relationship to the war and its attitudes towards the collapse of Khrushchev-era cultural politics foremost among them. Three films directed by Sergei Gerasimov between 1967 and 1972 (revealingly, after a five-year artistic hiatus) are particularly indicative of the tropes that embedded this trend in a new political climate. Investigative journalism, international relations, ecological advocacy and architectural policies all served as issue-driven thematic backdrops for narratives built around the personal dramas of impressive

‘Soviet contemporaries’ at the forefront of their fields. Gerasimov’s cinema-*publitsistika* plucked these vanguard specialists from the realm of press-profiles and subjected their emotions, professional ambitions and moral duties to assured statements of official ideological orthodoxy. As Petr Bagrov has argued, Gerasimov’s *publitsistika* did not express the existential alarm of an authentically issue-driven cinema [*problemnoe kino*], but rather projected phony answers to superficially framed social questions, ‘[giving] an impression of well-heeled comfort and smugness’.⁷⁷⁹

While 1970s industrial dramas embodied ‘Soviet contemporaneity’ in managerial strategists and committed workers, *publitsistika* protagonists represented an amalgam of cultural codes. All glimpses of Sofia in *Golos* clearly suggest that, beyond the shambolic film-production, this artificial prototype is the main target of Averbakh’s cultural critique. He was not a CPSU member, and no recorded expression of sympathy with communist ideals exists in his writings or contributions to studio-life, although his chairmanship of the film-director’s division [*biuro rezhisserskoi sekti*] at Lenfil’m occasionally involved delivering Partkom presentations.⁷⁸⁰ In 1979, Averbakh’s contribution to a debate on thematic planning reflects his critical attitude towards the kind of production that *Golos* depicts:

Do you know what’s missing in this plan? We need to think more about viewers. Firstly, I don’t agree that we should never spend our time focusing on moral and ethical themes. People have been focusing on these themes for centuries. Beyond these themes, art does not exist. Industrial themes are closer to *publitsistika* as a genre.⁷⁸¹

Arkus and Bykov insist that, in Averbakh's 'minimalist' cinema, 'there are no higher truths than one's own code of honour' and that *Golos* represents 'the redemption of a professional honour-code'.⁷⁸² This register is implicit to Sofia's story, but remains subtextual in fragmented rushes that privilege Iuliia's performative consistency over Sofia's motivations. Kovalov focuses on Sofia's clothing – inappropriately loud for a journalist – as a marker of tackiness and infantilization: her squint baseball cap, oversized sportswear and love-heart neck-chain form an adolescent-looking stylistic mishmash, reinforced by parallels with Natasha, the gormless director's assistant.⁷⁸³ Each of Sergei Anatol'evich's departures from the script (as flagged by Aleksandr Il'ich) involve Sofia engaging in spectacular actions that, although suggestive of dynamism, appear as bafflingly contrived vignettes. Sofia crash-lands a glider on a hillside when attempting to visit Pavel, rushes him towards a gala ship-launch where a brass-band play Soviet marches, and sings him a song while playing guitar. These digressive embellishments encapsulate the muddle of the fictional production. *Golos* presents it as a film about an opinion-editorial journalist without any accessible opinions, made by speculative filmmakers without any coherent style or intellectual position. Sofia's unconvincing body-double is the final confirmation of rushed, second-rate Soviet production-values. Like *Chelovek-amfibiia*, this film attempts to use 'action' and music to mask its structural fragility.

During her visit, Sofia argues with Pavel's daughter, who seems critical of Sofia's take on Pavel's story. Both women's dialogue is derivative: the daughter indignantly tells Sofia to 'go back to where [she] came from – we're the ones living here!'. Sofia, in turn, accuses the daughter of profiting from her 'heroic' father's name, adding: 'I won't write about your mud-slinging, your constant letters to the editors', before asserting entitlement to write about the 'extraordinary' Pavel. This sets the tone for Sofia telephoning the newsroom: in one scene, she blankly repeats a Soviet formula about her *ocherk* commission to find a 'simple, everyday hero'; in another, she

threatens to complain ‘to the top’ of an unspecified organization. The most mysterious – and glaringly clichéd – lines in these calls concern Sofia’s discoveries: ‘of course, they would just have retired and accused [him] of slander [...] it would have been easiest of all for him just to keep quiet and accept his bonus-payment, and even his due. But he couldn’t keep quiet’. Two assertions become possible from these lines. This film is not only mired in second-rate dramaturgy, but also combines a *publitsistika* ‘thriller’ with a whistle-blower narrative like *Premiia*. The spectre of late-Soviet institutional obfuscation haunts these fragments: Sofia’s threatened job and the suspiciousness of Pavel’s daughter allude elliptically to endemic denunciation and hierarchical intimidation, which must be taken as a given for the newspaper and whichever organization Pavel has been associated with.

Awareness of this unnameable societal condition makes Aleksandr Il’ich’s reworking of the newspaper-office sequence an especially pitiable example of artistic hackwork. As *Golos* progresses, he gradually becomes derisive, having initially appeared phlegmatic when his restrained manner contrasted with the nervousity of the crew. This is an achievement of casting: Georgii Kalatozishvili (son of the preeminent veteran filmmaker, Mikhail Kalatozov) was not a professional actor, but a cameraman and director, who had written scripts for four of his own features and never before appeared on-screen. The lack of refinement in Kalatozishvili’s delivery and gestures fosters a disconcerting lethargy in scenes where he occupies the frame, until a role-reversal sees him attempt to rouse Sergei Anatol’evich from despondency about their film. The distance between his earlier complaints and this new mood soon diminish Aleksandr Il’ich’s professional stature. Although attached to classical narrative principles (‘for the sake of [Iuliia’s] beautiful eyes, you’ve lost the *siuzhet* [...] the screenplay had some kind of intricately woven disruption, there was something in there’), he is unfazed by the requirement to hastily mask the film’s incoherence. When Sergei Anatol’evich demands a new ending from Aleksandr Il’ich, the

critique of endemic late-Soviet mediocrity in *Golos* reaches its peak. After viewing rushes, Aleksandr Il'ich persists with questions about episodes discarded from his screenplay:

- Tell me, where's the scene with the scandal at the newsroom?
- It didn't work... it's in the bin.
- Of course...
- What's this 'of course', I couldn't make it work, ok? *Me*. I chiselled away at it.
- But you liked it before...
- What does it matter if I 'liked' it? There's no ending! Understand? We need an ending: a totally neat, long shot. That's it. One frame! And while we're at it: simplified, without dragging it out. For example: she returned there... Or: she didn't return, but...
- Tell me, then, did she return or didn't she?
- It doesn't matter! We need an ending! A precise, clear ending. That's it. Use your brains.

This astonishing exchange confirms that any sufficiently clear and compliant ending will do, regardless of fidelity to the approved screenplay.⁷⁸⁴ Aleksandr Il'ich and the film-editor then review the newsroom-sequence on the moviola. Assisting with the improvisation, the editor repeats lines that Aleksandr Il'ich is considering for replacement, comically accentuating their clichés with her exaggerated deliberation: 'what is it, are you in love with him, then? You're behaving like a total show-off [*vedesh' sebia kak poslednyi pizhon*]'. In place of this, Aleksandr Il'ich proposes, 'he won't take it? Then don't beat your head against a brick wall!' [*tak, ne lez' na rozhon!*]', suggesting a realignment with the plotline of Sofia's professional conflict. The editor

likes this assonant substitution. Next, as well as existing dialogue, the editor plugs gaps where new words – to be ‘spoken’ by Sofia as the banner passes – might be inserted: ‘his back to camera, whatever here, instead of this: any text, someone promised tea. What would you like, coffee or tea? [*kofo ili chiau?*]’. This ‘filler’ dialogue reinforces a visual estrangement during repeated rewinds and slowed playbacks of the grainy moviola footage. Sofia sits behind a desk in the background: the chance to feed her more new lines comes when the man with his back to the camera advances towards her. Aleksandr Il’ich improvises a magnanimous resolution to Sofia’s dispute through further assonance: ‘Valentin Zakharych, I forgive you everything [*ia Vam vse proshaiu*]’. His final version adds the pathos of Sofia’s dismissal (or resignation?), making for a neater finality as he exclaims, ‘Valentin Zakharych, I bid you farewell, and I forgive you everything! [*ia s Vami proshchaius’ i ia Vam vse proshaiu!*]’. The scene appears to have been saved: carried away, Aleksandr Il’ich shouts ‘genius!’ and the editor excitedly murmurs the same. Veronika, the assistant-editor, enters alongside Sergei Anatol’evich, who calls the changes ‘nimble’ [*lovko*], before the beaming editor cringeworthy offers him tea. He moves to the window, from where he unexpectedly glimpses the elusive Iuliia.

The old lines, new dialogue and behaviour in this sequence seem hackneyed and crass. The first lines change from trashy to trite, while the second lines condemn Aleksandr Il’ich’s ‘triumph’ with their shift from unimaginative banality to mawkish sentimentality. In this light, the sign that reads ‘our best material’ is biting irony. At her final voice-recording, Iuliia falls into a fit of laughter as she prepares to deliver these lines. Any release of professional frustration she might feel towards her second-rate role is overwhelmed by an endearingly human moment, when contagious laughter spreads among the assembled crew-members. Bulgakova is justified in seeing this scene release the ‘hysterical’ tension of the loud and fractious post-production.⁷⁸⁵ However, these lines also foreshadow Iuliia’s imminent death. The spontaneous laughter momentarily

suspends the session, but Iuliia is never shown delivering her lines: the scene cuts from a sound-technician pleading for calm to the painterly shot of Lenfil'm's Block Ten. Aleksandr Il'ich has been silently relegated and is scolded for rustling his screenplay during the recording. As Iuliia returns to hospital in a taxi with Arkadii, she wearily lambasts the 'horrifying' Sergei Anatol'evich for his coercive tyranny and indifference to her wellbeing.

Sergei Anatol'evich is loaded with film-historical irony. He devises two name-changes (the film's original title is never revealed): *Ee golubye glaza* ('Her Blue Eyes') and *Pravila igry* ('The Rules of the Game'). These changes are soon ridiculed. *Ee golubye glaza* is obviously inappropriate for a *problemnyi fil'm*, as demonstrated by the exchange between Aleksandr Il'ich and Natasha, and the confusing rushes. Likewise, Sergei Anatol'evich coins *Pravila igry* spontaneously during a recording session. When he wonders if this might already have been a film-title, the elderly actor playing Pavel replies haughtily that 'new things are always long-forgotten old ones'. When the film-director's doubts persist, Veronika smilingly answers that she thinks it had.

Sergei Anatol'evich has misappropriated *La Règle du jeu/The Rules of the Game*, dir. by Jean Renoir (1939). The joke belongs to Averbakh: this scene is absent from Riazantseva's screenplays, where references to canonical European cinema express the tastes of protagonists.⁷⁸⁶ *La Règle du jeu* is Renoir's most aesthetically complex 1930s film, with an extremely sophisticated regime of diegetic sound.⁷⁸⁷ Acousmatic unveilings abound in its repeated use of recording and broadcast technologies, which complicate the viewer's initial perception of the origins of sound. Music is frequently revealed to emanate from objects and diegetic spaces positioned beyond the parameters established by camerawork and editing, while the layering of competing voices creates a radically complex relationship between dialogue and ambient noise for this period. The acoustic virtuosity of sound-editing that Bulgakova praises in *Golos* consciously emulates the pioneering

experimentations of Renoir's film.⁷⁸⁸ Averbakh's joke laments the isolation and impoverishment of late-Soviet filmmakers in relation to world cinema, as much as any philistinism. The francocentrism of Averbakh's cinephilia is an oft-remembered trait, appearing here as an objection to enforced cultural ignorance and a marker of his own formation from the VKSR onwards.⁷⁸⁹

The historical significance of *Ee golubye glaza* almost surfaces when Sergei Anatol'evich and Aleksandr Il'ich are viewing rushes. When Sofia sings to Pavel, the lines heard during the playback are 'Do you remember, comrade/How we battled together/How the storm embraced us?/When both of us saw/Through the smoke, smiling/...' These lines are from 'Kakhovka', a civil-war ballad written by Mikhail Svetlov and scored by Isaak Dunaevskii. It remains unacknowledged in *Golos* that 'Kakhovka' is lifted from the original score of *Tri tovarishcha/Three Comrades*, dir. by Semen Timoshenko (1935), a celebrated 1930s Lenfil'm title. 'Kakhovka' is the source for *Ee golubye glaza*: 'her blue eyes' is the line that ought to complete the verse that Sofia is singing, but this remains inaudible. This scene is perhaps the crassest moment that we see from the fictional film: Pavel appears uncomfortable and his expression throughout Sofia's jaunty serenade – across a generational divide untouched by wartime combat – is studiously sombre. Although Kovalov acknowledges this discomfort and names the song, he does not address its film-historical origins.⁷⁹⁰

This distant inter-filmic quotation – uncommon in Averbakh's literocentric referential framework – serves several purposes. The eponymous heroes of this playful comedy are three former civil-war brothers-in-arms, reunited by a construction project that links their positions of high responsibility in a region underexploited by industrial forestry. The plotline that tracks their disintegrating friendship is a schematic Stalin-era conspiracy and sabotage. A construction-chief

attempts to expand the operations of a paper-factory, but blunderingly enlists petty criminals to accelerate this, creating conflict between his old friends, the chief of log-transportation and the factory-director. In an intersecting comedic plotline, the construction-chief woos the chief of log-transportation's wife into an affair, while the factory-director suspects his wife of an affair with the latter, when she is actually working nights at the factory's telephone-exchange to increase its productivity and to punish her husband for the incessant work-related, night-time calls that have been disturbing them at home.

As in *Golos*, telephones in *Tri tovarishcha* are instruments of manipulation and misrecognition that establish complicity with the viewer. In *Golos*, the sombre telephone calls that concern Iuliia's fate play on cinematic clichés, filling gaps between the incomprehensible fictional rushes and exposing the professional isolation of the women who are presented as the manipulating or misrecognizing agents of the call. By contrast, *Tri tovarishcha* is an innovation of early-Soviet sound-cinema, deploying identical telephonic motifs alongside letter-reading subversions and acousmatic technological unveilings to give a comedic backbone to this troublingly humorous snapshot of Stalinist dogma on the eve of the purges. In *Golos*, 'Kakhovka' jars because of the crass serenade, but also because it seems incongruous to the fictional film. By contrast, the world of *Golos* remains bound to an accumulation of mythologies surrounding the Soviet 1930s, both at Lenfil'm and in societal taboos still publicly unaddressed in 1982. In the opening sequence, Iuliia's voice-recording collapses during strained attempts to deliver the line 'on the off-chance' [*na vsiakii sluchai*]. This phrase is a rejoinder to the same line in *Tri tovarishcha*, jokingly repeated by male protagonists during a tense Partkom disciplinary hearing. Iuliia's exhausted attempts to murmur what was a cry of mockery towards officialdom in the earlier film point to the crumbling façade of compliant optimism at 1980s Lenfil'm.

Historically, the jaunty ‘Kakhovka’ of *Tri tovarishcha* is particularly distasteful. It conditions our discovery of the Stalinist ‘sabotage’ plotline by establishing nostalgic masculine affinity between the civil-war veterans, whose military pasts are never again mentioned. The biggest farce in *Tri tovarishcha* is not the three-way marital comedy of errors, but the chaotic and corrupt plan-fulfilment practices of Soviet forestry. Even denuded of the saboteurs and opportunistic criminals that litter its background, it relies heavily for humour on the exposure of its protagonists as easily overwhelmed by bureaucratic intransigence. Stalinist industrialization rhetoric is ideologically responsible for these managerial constructs, but not for the pleasure that *Tri tovarishcha* takes in ridiculing their hapless attempts to fulfil demanding plans by making ill-fated shortcuts. An abiding irony of *Golos* is that the film takes extreme care to avoid ascribing managerial blame for any aspect of the post-production. The minimal critical attention that *Golos* has received beyond its immediate professional cohort is a lasting consequence of the production-model that it set out to critique.

The Muted Feminism of Nataliia Riazantseva

Frequently, *Golos* tones down challenging reflexive episodes from Riazantseva’s literary screenplay and restrains her nuanced protagonists by withholding dialogue that could motivate their interpersonal dynamics. After a *Khudsovet* screening, Kheifits criticized its indulgence in cliché and ‘stock-phrases’ [*pobochnye frazy*].⁷⁹¹ This strategy holds just as true for the diegetic studio as it does for the fictional film. Subsequent to its 1978 rejection, Riazantseva’s literary screenplay remained politically problematic when the project was revived.⁷⁹² Primarily, this concerned a more pointed critique of film-production than *Golos* allows itself.

In Riazantseva's literary screenplays, many more women participate actively in production. These characters form a network of collaborative professional relationships: these screenplays are also much more invested in male-female relationships that become complicated because of gender imbalances in studio-work. Marital conflict between Iuliia and Arkadii over her absconding from hospital is complemented by a scene in which Sergei Anatol'evich, debating with Aleksandr Il'ich about whether 'neurotics' or 'supermen' are currently in fashion for male protagonists, reveals that he has moved out of his home because '[his] wife doesn't like neurotics either'.⁷⁹³ Preserved in the film is a scene where Aniuta juggles a telephone call to her dozy teenage son as the *Direktor kartiny* grumbles alongside her, but without any visual elaboration of the dialogue's suggestion that the two have a history. He remarks that Aniuta 'had already found one 'genius' [before working with Sergei Anatol'evich] ... and now you're here, burning yourself out in production-management', a clear insinuation that Aniuta has been demoted as the consequence of some scandal involving a profligate director.

In the film, male dominance and opportunism are prerogatives of filmmaking. Aleksandr Il'ich has 'nothing against' Iuliia as an actor, but she 'organically cannot be a victor, she's always the victim'. As Akhtyrskaiia (called Zoia in the screenplay) prepares to record the overdubs that Iuliia could not complete before dying, it is a downcast Aniuta who hands Akhtyrskaiia the note that Iuliia has written from hospital, 'thanking fate and Sergei Anatol'evich for our movie: his, but also a little bit, mine'. In both the film and the screenplay, this note is the prompt for genuine tears that will facilitate the recording. However, in the screenplay, the note is addressed not to Aniuta, but directly to Sergei Anatol'evich ('Serezha'), and is much more intimate. Crucially, in the screenplay, it is Sergei Anatol'evich who premeditatedly approaches Akhtyrskaiia with the note as she is about to perform, taking it back once he has given the command to record.⁷⁹⁴ This emotional manipulation is a double exploitation of his female colleagues by showing Iuliia's

personal note to Akhtyrskaiia with the aim of making her cry. In transposing this role to Aniuta, the film neutralizes the explicitly gendered aspects of the scene.

By contrast, Riazantseva privileges the depiction of women working and reflecting on their professions. Female sound-engineers, extras and janitors populate a lively background: Iuliia has a longer and further-reaching conversation with Sveta, her body-double, than in the corresponding scene in the film; even the imprudent Natasha manages to get airside to meet Aleksandr Il'ich after his flight because 'we've filmed here and I know a lot of the girls'.⁷⁹⁵ Riazantseva's screenplay confronts imbalances in the representation of women as producers of cinema, representing the milieu in greater correspondence with reality. In May 1987, a Partkom presentation confirmed that 1260 of Lenfil'm's 2530 employees were women.⁷⁹⁶ In Riazantseva's own reflections on late-Soviet Lenfil'm, and in production-histories from this period that have surfaced in Russian coverage, the studio's most dexterous *redaktery* were frequently women with longstanding political experience and proven artistic credentials. Riazantseva has been particularly clear in acknowledging how, within the TO-system, Ianina Markulian, Frizheta Gukasian, Larissa Ivanova and Svetlana Ponomarenko assisted filmmakers' negotiations with studio-management and Goskino.⁷⁹⁷

In *Golos*, the most substantial loss from the literary screenplay is the greatly diminished role of Veronika, the young assistant-editor. Here, Veronika is almost wordless, following instructions in the editing-suite, while revealing through body-language and glances that she is perturbed by the production's artistic conflict. Riazantseva's 'original' Veronika is a highly skilled professional with an evident feel for aesthetics.⁷⁹⁸ When the post-synchronization process is affected by technological problems, a crew-member tells Iuliia to 'pray for Veronika. She's an ace, they draft her in for all borderline cases'.⁷⁹⁹ Veronika had ambitions to progress professionally, but is

discouraged by her experiences. Riazantseva writes this revelation into an episode where Sergei Anatol'evich congratulates Veronika on an excellent sequence of cutting that she has devised for the film's ending:

- [...] So artful! I forgot we had even shot that [...] Beautiful! But it's not from our cinema. That'll stand you in good stead when you're making your own films. We need something simpler, simpler...
- I probably won't. [...] I'm leaving. To join my husband.
- Absolutely right! – said Serezha approvingly, thinking about his own business. – So, when you're making your own films...
- I've handed my notice in. It's not meant to be. And it's not a woman's work, so they say.⁸⁰⁰

Veronika is abandoning a studio in which most conversations between professionals concern production-crises and poor conditions. Riazantseva's screenplay is bleak and unflinching about late-Soviet filmmaking: her dialogue reveals chronic problems affecting the industry that proved too uncomfortable for inclusion in *Golos*. Natasha lets slip to Aleksandr Il'ich that 'the studio cannot fulfil its quarterly plan because of us', clearly echoing the 1978 First TO crisis.⁸⁰¹ Subsequently, the *Direktor kartiny* interrupts a conversation between Aniuta and Sergei Anatol'evich to demand a completion-plan, warning that 'we cannot deprive the studio of its *premi* [bonuses]', a long-familiar threat to Lenfil'm cineastes.⁸⁰² Moreover, an elderly janitor complains that she has been sitting amid decaying props for as long as she can remember; the

cameraman reminisces about a retired makeup-artist, who gave Iuliia her first ever haircut at the studio, who had ‘hands shaking from old-age and drunkenness’; and the corridor conversation between Iuliia and Sveta concerns not only their own recent illnesses, but also a colleague’s horrendous accident on location: she ‘crashed a glider and is into her second month in a coma’.⁸⁰³ These typify chronic complaints at early-1980s Lenfil’ m, reflecting its reputation among staff as a crumbling and unsafe workplace, where absenteeism, alcoholism, and corner-cutting were rife.⁸⁰⁴ *Golos* retreats from these uncomfortable truths and elides them into safer characterization: the janitor becomes petty, the deceased hairdresser vaguely tyrannical, and Sveta so closely resembles Iuliia that their ‘doubling’ – a seeming premonition of death – overwhelms their brief, friendly chat. Averbakh could not take *Golos* into such risky territory, which, in Riazantseva’s screenplay, is a frank effort to address the human symptoms of late-Soviet cinema’s ‘illnesses’.

For all Averbakh’s reductions of Riazantseva’s women, theirs remained a fruitful working partnership, in which directorial primacy was ultimately a professional given. Characterization developed through negotiated co-authorship: Riazantseva’s pre-1978 drafts cast the fictional protagonist played by Iuliia as a turn-of-the-century stage-actor, whose husband is a People’s Will [Narodnaia Volia] activist.⁸⁰⁵ This thematically secure, ‘historical-revolutionary’ embedded narrative was anathema to Averbakh’s cultural politics and remained undeveloped in Riazantseva’s screenwriting. Instead, Averbakh exposes Sofia Nikolaevna as a phony ‘contemporary’ construct. Alongside its elision of Veronika, *Golos* thus reverses the capacity of Riazantseva’s women – cineastes and investigative journalists alike – to mitigate conflict and succeed on their own terms.

Averbakh’s preoccupation with second-rate cinema and the driven, uncommunicative men who make it concerns the frequent debacles of late-Soviet Lenfil’ m more intrinsically than the ‘icily alienated’ and ‘external’ perspective on filmmaking that Kovalov observes in *Golos*.⁸⁰⁶ In the

2000s, Averbakh's closest collaborators have spoken of the crippling self-doubt and depression that afflicted this outwardly urbane and self-assured filmmaker. Dolinin recalls Averbakh's frequent on-set asides – 'what kind of rubbish are we shooting?' – and Riazantseva has disclosed a harsh self-assessment of his lifework from an anguished, early-1980s diary-entry.⁸⁰⁷ It appears that Averbakh did not simply channel post-crisis despondency at Lenfil'm, but moreover extended his own hyper-critical, internalized inadequacies to this beleaguered milieu out of professional affinity and concealed self-loathing. At the Lenfil'm *Khudsovet*, studio-executives and First-TO cineastes praised the film's faithful depiction of late-Soviet production, but collectively took issue with Dmitrii Moldavskii's fear that 'terrifying words' – 'all is vanity' [*sueta suet; vanitas vanitatum*] – might lie behind this critique as the principal artistic message of *Golos*.⁸⁰⁸ That opinion, then rejected, merits renewed consideration as a valid reading of this film, whose complex intersections of cinematic invention, gendered power-imbalances and authorial despondency are purposely masked behind a screen of commonplace late-Soviet mediocrity.

Chapter Seven

Models and Manoeuvres: Lenfil'm Exceptionalism through Perestroika and Collapse

Like the studio it plays in *Golos*, early-1980s Lenfil'm was a tense workplace. Averbakh, who would not direct another feature, complained in March 1984 that, 'with every passing year, filmmaking is becoming unbearable'.⁸⁰⁹ Goskino appeared reluctant to invest in essential renovations or technological renewal: its newly appointed GSRK editor-in-chief, Armen Medvedev, later asserted that Soviet cinema finally ceased to generate profits in 1984, thereafter becoming dependent on governmental subsidies for survival.⁸¹⁰ Industrywide production-reform seemed an unrealistic prospect.

Lenfil'm management changed unprecedentedly between 1982 and the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as CPSU General Secretary in 1985. Lenfil'm entered perestroika self-identifying as the artistic vanguard of Soviet feature-filmmaking: the brief yet significant period preceding it must be contextualized to understand the grounds for this claim. This conclusory chapter historicizes underexamined continuities between the 1960s and the production-reforms pursued at Soviet studios after 1986. As such, it considers how this cineaste-led agenda drew upon the original imperatives of the TO-model to propose a new architecture for politically autonomous, market-orientated and profit-generating enterprises, and discusses the reasons for its failure. Rather than proposing production-histories as ciphers for this most politically volatile period, this chapter bookends the introduction's analysis of the politics that drove industrial reform and justified a studio-specific reorganization of Lenfil'm on the basis of its artistic culture and repertory potential.

1982-1985: Repertory Shifts, Reformist Rumbings

In January 1982, Vitalii Aksenov became the third Lenfil'm studio-director in four years, leaving the equivalent post at Lennauchfil'm to replace Provotorov, another city-level CPSU bureaucrat, whose transitional directorship was entirely shaped by the 1978 crisis.⁸¹¹ It resulted in two highly critical 'follow-up' Raikom *Postanovleniia* in February and June 1981, when Lenfil'm management was accused of inadequately fulfilling demands to promote ideologically assertive CPSU-members into managerial roles.⁸¹² Grigorii Romanov accused Lenfil'm of dropping working-class and Leningrad-focused films from its repertoire.⁸¹³ Romanov's ultra-reactionary charges reflected a genuine reticence among Lenfil'm cineastes. Vitalii Mel'nikov complained that petty meddling from low-ranking CPSU officials had almost eradicated 'Leningrad material' at Lenfil'm, further lamenting that 'we have no repertory policy'.⁸¹⁴

Aksenov's appointment was unprecedented: this was a filmmaker with feature-film, televisual and documentary experience as recent as 1978, including three musically themed films made in the Lenfil'm First TO between 1964 and 1972.⁸¹⁵ Senior cineastes thus expected Aksenov's knowledge of production to improve relations between artistic workers and the studio's much-criticized technical departments.⁸¹⁶ As Lennauchfil'm director, Aksenov claims to have built a strongly networked overview of managerial cadres at Leningrad's studios and a reputation for discipline and efficiency.⁸¹⁷ This likely motivated Romanov's appointment of Aksenov at Lenfil'm to consolidate the managerial clear-out initiated in 1978.⁸¹⁸ However, ensuing reshuffles eventually facilitated the opposite outcome, as political power changed hands at studio, Leningrad and USSR-level between 1982 and 1986.

According to Aksenov, Romanov advocated gradually moving his most-trusted managers from Lennauchfil'm; in return, the Obkom appointed Nikolai Eliseev – head of production at Lenfil'm and acting director in mid-1978 – to the Lennauchfil'm directorship.⁸¹⁹ This provided Eliseev with a formal promotion while simultaneously removing the most powerful representative of the previous executive from Aksenov's path. Nonetheless, Goskino thwarted efforts to renew artistic leadership from within the maligned studio. Aksenov claims that Boris Pavlenok categorically rejected Frizheta Gukasian, his preferred candidate for Lenfil'm editor-in-chief, on the grounds that she was 'ideological enemy number one' at Goskino.⁸²⁰ Aksenov settled instead on Nelli Mashendzhinova, a recently arrived Second TO *redaktor* with chief-editorial experience in Leningrad radio and a reputation for artistic astuteness. To promote Mashendzhinova over senior staff was a powerful statement of reorientation towards new repertory policies, filmmakers, and aesthetic criteria. Aksenov's appointment of Igor' Maslennikov as Party Secretary had even further-reaching implications for the studio's artistic culture. This active filmmaker was then three films into an exceptionally popular series of Sherlock Holmes televisual features. Maslennikov had also been a Leningrad television editor-in-chief, leaving in the mid-1960s to join the Lenfil'm First TO, where Aksenov then worked. Although this executive-filmmaker tandem was unprecedented, its administrative power was not exercised locally without some ongoing dependence upon senior managers whose conservatism was reinforced by the chastening 1978 crisis. Iurii Khokhlov, who Maslennikov succeeded as Party Secretary, was a longstanding *Direktor kartiny* and the studio's economic-planning chief before becoming Party Secretary under Provotorov. When Aksenov resigned in 1985, Khokhlov – then assistant director of production – effectively assumed the directorship by default. This was the last predictable step in Lenfil'm's game of nomenclatural musical chairs before the momentous upheavals of perestroika.

Regional-level political shifts with far-reaching implications for Lenfil'm had also occurred during Aksenov's directorship. In June 1983, Romanov left Leningrad for Moscow to become the CC Secretary responsible for the USSR's military-industrial complex. His Obkom successor, Lev Zaikov, followed the same trajectory in July 1985, when Romanov, a serious conservative candidate for the Soviet leadership, was ousted from the Politburo (and politics entirely) when Gorbachev assumed power.⁸²¹ Little has been written about Zaikov's disposition towards Lenfil'm. Aksenov resigned citing the indifference and constant suspicion of the new Obkom regime towards him, claiming that 62 CPSU investigations into Lenfil'm management were conducted during his three-year directorship.⁸²² Nonetheless, the renewal of Obkom cadres impacted Lenfil'm significantly. As Viktor Tregubovich reflected synecdochally during perestroika, 'Romanov's people' [*Romanovskie liudi*] had so dominated Leningrad's administration that the arch-conservative's departure inevitably loosened the Party's iron grip on its cultural sector, amid the hidden political manoeuvring and overt patron-client promotions that accompanied Zaikov's installation at Smol'nyi.⁸²³

This process saw Aleksandr Golutva promoted from *instruktor* at the Petrogradskii Raikom Propaganda and Agitation Department to lead the Cinema Section at the Obkom Culture Department in 1983. The 1978 crisis had been a crucial testing-ground for this hands-on role. Golutva's prestigious post-Soviet career trajectory (Goskino Deputy and then Chairman in the 1990s; Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation in the 2000s) testifies to the investment of Leningrad CPSU bureaucrats in this promising young official. However, Golutva's eventual transfer to Lenfil'm departed significantly from late-Soviet nomenclatural conventions. Aksenov resigned fifteen days after Zaikov's departure for Moscow in July 1985, following Gorbachev's landmark visit to Leningrad in mid-May.⁸²⁴ Here, Gorbachev very publicly affirmed the newly adopted CPSU policy of economic 'acceleration' [*uskorenie*], asserting his authority in

Romanov's former powerbase.⁸²⁵ Aksenov and Maslennikov attended this speech at Smol'nyi; two weeks later, Maslennikov informed the Lenfil'm Partkom of the deep impression it had made upon him.⁸²⁶ Capitalizing on Aksenov's departure, the transition of authority in Leningrad and the professional esteem he enjoyed within the Obkom apparatus, Maslennikov invited Golutva to become Lenfil'm editor-in-chief in July 1985, a post formally confirmed in October.⁸²⁷

This move appears to have been motivated by reformist efforts to bypass the supervision of the Obkom and Goskino. Despite Maslennikov's claims that he 'carefully persuaded' Golutva to move, it remains unclear to what extent Golutva's chief-editorship was planned from the outset as a route to the studio-directorship.⁸²⁸ Regardless, Golutva became the 'de facto' leader of Lenfil'm shortly after his arrival.⁸²⁹ Tregubovich confirmed in October 1989 how he had 'watched Golutva preparing himself for [the directorship] for over two years', perpetuating the retrospectively propagated myth that Golutva was formally elected.⁸³⁰ In fact, Khokhlov – the embodiment of pre-perestroika frustrations – was deposed by a filmmaker-led rebellion at a Partkom on 22 July 1987, accused of failing to command sufficient authority to conduct negotiations with Goskino in a swiftly changing institutional landscape.⁸³¹ Golutva's subsequent appointment was an uncontested formality: Goskino simply confirmed that which the Partkom and Lenfil'm *Khudsovet* had already agreed, in Gukasian's words, as 'our unanimous viewpoint'.⁸³² Under Golutva, artistic gains from the studio's early-1980s production-profile were consolidated into a brand-identity for perestroika-era Lenfil'm as an experimental production base and a repertory bastion of *avtorskoe kino*.

Crucial to this process was the professional rehabilitation of Aleksei German following the production of *Moi drug Ivan Lapshin / My Friend Ivan Lapshin* (1982; released 1984). Although *Lapshin* was released into production under Provotorov, this watershed moment for Lenfil'm

auteurism played out as a well-documented political drama between the film's completion and perestroika. Initially 'shelved' at a loss of 634,000 roubles, *Lapshin* was quietly released after an opaque wrangle between Goskino, Lenfil'm and German himself.⁸³³ The critical acclaim that met *Lapshin* and the 'unshelving' of *Proverka na dorogakh* by Goskino in 1985, well before the following year's cataclysms, greatly enhanced German's cultural standing.⁸³⁴ Only the belated emergence of Aleksandr Sokurov had comparably far-reaching implications for the artistic direction of perestroika-era Lenfil'm. Since arriving in 1980, when Andrei Tarkovskii allegedly intervened to secure a place at Lenfil'm for the young filmmaker, Sokurov had occupied a marginal position at the studio.⁸³⁵ *Odinokii golos cheloveka/The Lonely Voice of Man* (1978; released 1987), Sokurov's diploma-film, was the object of such virulent rejection at VGIK as to deny him graduation.⁸³⁶ Despite the notorious status of this film and the narrowly averted destruction of its negative, Sokurov was able to screen the material at Lenfil'm; it was on this basis that Gukasian reported to an October 1980 Party meeting that Sokurov was an exceptional talent who had made 'a controversial film that [many] attack and even reject outright'.⁸³⁷

Attempts to secure a production for Sokurov failed until Aksenov approved his candidature for *Skorbnoe bezchuvstvie/Mournful Unconcern* (1983; released 1987) despite hostility from Goskino and Pavlenok in particular, of which Sokurov and Aksenov have both written.⁸³⁸ However, their fraught professional relationship collapsed when Aksenov abruptly closed the production, having screened footage that he met with incomprehension. This incurred losses of 270,000 roubles for Lenfil'm and provoked serious conflict between Aksenov and the Partkom, which had ordered that Sokurov be allowed to complete the film (allegedly, only 100 metres remained to be shot).⁸³⁹ The ensuing fallout meant that Sokurov would not direct another feature until 1988, working instead on documentary filmmaking away from Lenfil'm. Remarkably, these setbacks did not preclude active participation in the studio's CPSU organization. In 1982, Sokurov led a Partkom

commission that planned to organize further professional training for Lenfil'm technical staff and connect this with existing Goskino courses. This provides the earliest indication of the pedagogical impulse that resulted in Sokurov's short-lived 'film school' [*kinoshkola*] for experimental filmmakers in 1988.⁸⁴⁰

Sokurov's complicated pre-perestroika career reflected the internal transitions already underway at Lenfil'm. On the one hand, Sokurov was effectively excluded from production; on the other, CPSU-membership enabled his assumption of responsibilities that allowed his professional influence to rise, especially among younger filmmakers. As the ideological authority of the CPSU and Goskino collapsed after 1986, an emboldened SK provided central political support for increasingly fragmented studio-level structures. Sokurov became a key figure in this new configuration: the new SK leadership was decisive in securing the re-release of his earliest features.⁸⁴¹ A Lenfil'm committee chaired by Golutva in December 1987 was unsure of the studio's entitlement to submit *Odinokii golos* to the Baku State Festival, given the joint prominence of the SK, VGIK and Lenfil'm in the film's newly applied opening credits.⁸⁴² Sokurov became a highly visible presence in the cultural landscape of perestroika. As with German, his public appeal was driven as much – if not more – by the humane cultural politics expressed in his media engagements, than by appreciation of his films. The combined political and artistic capital of these public personae made German and Sokurov into powerful mentors and – eventually – executive producers for young filmmakers, as the studio's production structures began to reorganize.

Frustrations over the lack of room for artistic experimentation surfaced early in Aksenov's directorship. In March 1982, Mel'nikov told a Party meeting that Lenfil'm required an annual fund of 200,000-300,000 roubles to develop a 'creative laboratory' that would not burden the studio's output-plans with the pressure of producing fully fledged, feature-length releases.⁸⁴³

Filmmakers like Sokurov and Sergei Ovcharov, who were ‘difficult to put on the studio conveyor-belt’, could thus mount more ambitious artistic projects than their earlier diploma-films and shorts, without increasing the political exposure that already threatened their careers, or causing Lenfil’ m the budgetary risk of commissioning features that could be closed or ‘shelved’. The ensuing debate, although premature, marked the earliest practical proposals for an adaptation of the TO-system to the studio’s need for artistic renewal.

In these years, the emergence of promising and genuinely young filmmakers (as opposed to the ‘young’ 40-somethings of the 1978 Raikom report) had been fraught with political risk. A new filmmaker’s prospects of securing a feature had never been weaker in the TO-era. Lenfil’ m mostly commissioned shorts from young cineastes in the studio’s secondary directorial cohort or recruited from the shallow pool of VKSR graduates. This led to criticism by Goskino and the Obkom over inattentiveness to VGIK graduates, who were nonetheless deemed of a lower standard than a generation before.⁸⁴⁴ A handful of controversially regarded young directors transitioned into feature-filmmaking just as perestroika was dawning: Ovcharov, Viktor Aristov, and Konstantin Lopushanskii.⁸⁴⁵ Each was an artistically ambitious figure in a period lamented by authoritative insiders like Medvedev as one of aesthetical and conceptual impoverishment, especially for debuts.⁸⁴⁶ Aksenov’s flagship ‘entertainment film’ [*zrelishchnyi fil’ m*] repertory agenda may not have engendered box-office success from the culturally polarized vantage points of perestroika, but it did offer promising young filmmakers the opportunity to progress – albeit sporadically – within the TO-system.⁸⁴⁷

Perestroika: A *Political Project*

The seismic socio-political shifts that occurred in the USSR between 1986 and 1991 produced an explosion of civic initiatives, public debates, and bitter power-struggles, which cultural producers pursued with determination, volatility, and rancour. Gorbachev's CPSU-led reforms, which ultimately resulted in total systemic collapse, have unsurprisingly occupied the foreground in much scholarly discussion of perestroika-politics. Giving the period its most historically persistent title in Russian cultural discourse, this chapter examines the reorganizations of cinema-production that materialized during perestroika, and the projected reforms that did not. It cautions against the temptation to treat historical analysis of perestroika as a binary choice between the teleological perspective – that, by the mid-1980s, systemic collapse was inevitable, and thus that reforms only hastened this 'predetermined' outcome – and historical counterfactuals that imagine alternative developments, under which the USSR may have been able to survive.

Dmitrii Bykov argues that 'the main mistake of perestroika-era [cultural producers] was the determination to read collapse as progress'.⁸⁴⁸ The assessment must be qualified by the acknowledgment that, amid such misrecognition, significant institutional reform *did* occur throughout Soviet cultural production, but that neither economic nor judicial reforms could keep pace with bottom-up political change. Industry leaders like Medvedev and many cinema-historians alike have recently supported the view that the impetus behind Gorbachevian perestroika as a whole, and the reform of Soviet cinema in particular, was fundamentally a political programme, and *not* economically motivated.⁸⁴⁹ However, this had already become evident to leading reformers like Golutva *at the time*. Their challenge was to formulate viable models of studio-governance and funding that could respond immediately to demands for political change and begin operating while existing structures were in flux, and further, to anticipate an unknowable

economic landscape. Retrospectively, the outcome is summarized by an oft-repeated assertion: reformist Soviet cineastes knew exactly *how not* to do it, but as for *how to* do it, nobody had any idea.⁸⁵⁰

We must cut through the disavowal of competence in this facile admission of failure and examine the institutional architecture and terms of engagement that late-Soviet cineastes devised for reforms. Their implementation began well before their overdue legislative enshrinement in a *Postanovlenie* from the USSR's Sovet ministrov [Council of Ministers, CM], but also before hyperinflation, racketeering and national/inter-ethnic conflicts accelerated the collapse of the USSR in 1989-1991. Historically, perestroika's economic reforms appear uncomprehensive, poorly formulated and widely sabotaged. Central planning was curtailed and laws on entrepreneurial activity were passed, but prices remained fixed by central government, and property-rights – material, intellectual and land-based – were left unresolved, exacerbating increasingly brazen corruption and criminality.

Sergei Vasil'ev, a leading Soviet economic-policy advisor during perestroika, has recently argued that the liberalization of prices would have improved conditions for commercial activity, allowing new entrepreneurial structures to emerge and perhaps avoiding the terminal hyperinflation that paralysed the USSR after 1989.⁸⁵¹ While in-depth examination of the Gorbachev regime's experimental macroeconomics is beyond the scope of this chapter, it acknowledges the persistence of positions like Vasil'ev's. Enduring change in Soviet society could have been achieved through governmental prioritization of economic reforms, before further political liberalization. However, in reality, political imperatives drove perestroika. Soviet cultural producers both fuelled and responded to the ensuing groundswell of societal grievance with all-consuming intensity. This was a moment of unanticipated euphoria and angry vengeance for many

Soviet filmmakers. The Party-state apparatus had been denuded of its ideological authority and monopoly on power: both were dismantled from within. Iurii Arabov, a longstanding screenwriter for Sokurov, recently described perestroika as ‘an infernal coda’ to the Soviet experience: the ‘return of the psychologically repressed trauma’ proved more powerful than all attempts to repair its infrastructural breakdown.⁸⁵²

The Fifth SK Congress

Historical judgments on perestroika in Soviet cinema have been contested ever since the Fifth SK Congress in May 1986. This Kremlin-set gathering has taken on the pathos of a revolutionary insurrection, which became one of the earliest emblematic expressions of *glasnost* ‘[openness], given its unprecedentedly forceful criticism of Goskino management.⁸⁵³ This Congress propelled the SK headlong into what Igor’ Kokarev describes as the ‘breakneck politicization’ of Soviet society.⁸⁵⁴ Indeed, its new leadership swiftly established a civic platform with political and lobbying agendas well beyond the governance of cinema. Thus, Valerii Fomin describes the SK as not just a signatory to the foundation of Memorial, the civil rights society, but the driving force behind its creation.⁸⁵⁵ The real impact of the SK’s manoeuvres is not easily gauged, either against such superlative claims, or amid the societal polarization that mobilized many new and reorganized civic bodies towards a vitriolic battle for influence over the direction of reforms. Under scrutiny, the Fifth SK Congress advanced a thoroughly Soviet project, however iconoclastically disposed its resolutions were towards Goskino management and the ‘film-generals’ [*kinogeneraly*] of its own privileged elite. For Lenfil’ m, the fallout from this confrontation was of far greater significance than its actual participation in the machinations of the Congress, which radically altered the relationship between the SK, Goskino and senior CPSU leadership in Moscow.

For Kokarev, the Congress mandated the dismantling of command-based administration in Soviet cinema. This would renew the 1966 SK proposal to separate studio-level management of artistic units and industrial departments, and then liquidate the central apparatus of ‘censorship’.⁸⁵⁶ For Liubov’ Arkus and Dmitrii Savel’ev, however, it did *not* propose this dismantling or adopt constructive resolutions, but simply represented a collective protest against the status quo, which perpetuated the production of so-called ‘grey films’ [*seroe kino*] to fulfil Goskino’s arbitrary output-plans.⁸⁵⁷ Thusly framed, its only concrete achievement was to replace the ‘establishment’ SK secretariat with an entirely new leadership, led by Elem Klimov – then an authoritative Mosfil’ m cineaste – and overwhelmingly composed of secretaries whose presence would have been previously unimaginable.⁸⁵⁸ The Congress’s spontaneous, ‘collective’ revolt might be more usefully considered an aggregate of carefully prepared, individual rhetorical performances, which contributed to the SK’s transformation into Soviet cinema’s dominant political force. Kheifits’ son, Dmitrii Svetozarov, has suggested that his father was chosen to deliver the opening address because he was one of the few elder statesmen in Soviet cinema *not* expected to be targeted by rebellious delegates over close association with the prevailing regime.⁸⁵⁹ The Congress’s *Postanovleniia* were unsurprisingly devoid of *programmatic* detail, given its formal purposes and the tenor of debate.⁸⁶⁰ To this extent, Arkus and Savel’ev seem excessively harsh in their judgment that constructive resolutions did not emerge from it.

Its celebrated firebrands – Rolan Bykov, Andrei Plakhov, Valentin Tolstykh, Vladimir Men’shov and Sergei Solov’ev – exposed shortcomings of Goskino and the SK in relation to their own professional practices. This meant that Moscow-centric voices predominated on USSR-level questions and issues concerning production at the major RSFSR-based studios.⁸⁶¹ Only Tolstykh explored the ultimately decisive combination of *khozraschet* economics at studios and a redefinition

of Goskino's 'societal function', arguing that the central apparatus 'essentially duplicates the work of film-studios' and that 'this type of economy has reached the end of the road'.⁸⁶² However, no historical attention has been paid to Vitalii Mel'nikov's earlier contribution – after Kheifits', the only podium speech from a senior Lenfil'm cineaste – which advocated the same reconfiguration on the basis of the initiatives discussed at Lenfil'm in 1982.

Citing the existing SK charter, Mel'nikov reiterated his proposal for 'experimental artistic workshops' at studios.⁸⁶³ This resonated with widespread criticism of the Mosfil'm-based Debiut [Debut] unit; as Maslennikov later insisted, Mel'nikov 'recognised substantially watered-down and even outdated Lenfil'm proposals from four years ago' in the recent, joint SK-Goskino proposals for the promotion of debuting filmmakers and greater devolution of related commissioning powers.⁸⁶⁴ Mel'nikov also insisted upon 'the evident need for a new *khozraschet* structure, a fundamentally different *bazovaia model'* [reference model], as car-manufacturers would say'.⁸⁶⁵ This was the only Congress speech to specifically mention a *bazovaia model'*, which became the title of the SK-backed *khozraschet* programme, following the Bolshevo *delovye igry* [business simulation] of December 1986.

Contextualizing *Khozraschet* and the ETK

The term *khozraschet* requires unpacking. In 1922, this key macroeconomic principle of the New Economic Policy represented Lenin's attempt to raise productivity, eliminate loss-making and generate profits for state enterprises.⁸⁶⁶ In the Stalin period, centralized plan-fulfilment economics were absolute and enterprise profits were 'confiscated' into the state's budgetary reserves. However, *khozraschet* theory re-emerged in research-circles under Khrushchev, informing selective decentralizations in enterprise-management, of which cinema's TO-system was a

partially fulfilled example.⁸⁶⁷ In 1965, the so-called Kosygin economic reforms introduced limited profit-redistribution back into the account-books of state enterprises, encouraging partial relaxation of plan-fulfilment criteria, strategic reinvestment according to local priorities, and greater 'material interest' for workers.⁸⁶⁸ *Khozraschet* became the byword for this bold yet ultimately frustrated experiment in economic devolution, which was effectively over by the Twenty-fourth CPSU Congress in 1971, when a politically conservative Politburo restored centralizing imperatives across the economy along neo-Stalinist lines.

When Gorbachevian economic 'acceleration' became political perestroika, *khozraschet* was officially reconfigured to combine state-supervised marketplaces, devised to limit the plan-formulation prerogatives of ministries and central agencies while reforming investment and remuneration laws for enterprises. Given the Gorbachev administration's speculative (and internally contested) legislative programme, its refusal to liberalize price-controls and the gargantuan budgetary burden in sectors like defence and healthcare, this macroeconomic *volte-face* proved unsustainable. It floundered amid hyperinflation, chronic commodity deficits and societal panic, as the collapsing economy gave way to racketeering and asset-stripping, often by those in the crumbling Party-state apparatus best positioned to exploit the absence of coherent regulations or judicial authority governing commercial activity. Nonetheless, *khozraschet* brought concrete results in the filmic output of reorganized major studios, despite the many structurally unresolvable crises in the Soviet film industry *beyond* production. In reality, late-1980s *khozraschet* was an aggregate of interrelated principles for enterprise-management rather than a totalizing macroeconomic model. Aspects of *khozraschet* developed at Lenfil'm, while other elements encountered incompatibility and conflicts of interest both within and beyond the studio.

Depending on context, *khozraschet* could stand in for any of its constituent elements as an economic practice or signify the concept that united these elements into a doctrine. As a mechanism for introducing financial stimuli at Soviet enterprises, the principles that defined *khozraschet* were financial viability [*rentabel'nost'*], i.e. the ability to generate a profit-surplus; autonomous recouping of invested credit [*samookupaemost'*]; financial reinvestment from the enterprise [*samofinansirovanie*] and independent business decision-making [*samoupravlaemost'*], which implied the 'democratization' of enterprise-management through elections for managers and new governance structures.⁸⁶⁹ Incentivization hinged on potential material rewards, where enterprises budgeted for efficiency and prioritized their balance-sheets when forecasting results. *Khozraschet* implied the responsibility of enterprises for results on the basis of profit-and-loss accounting. Such a shift towards market principles would require enterprises to re-educate Soviet workforces to become stakeholder-producers, whose livelihoods would – for the first time – be genuinely at risk in the event of lossmaking.

In cinema, *khozraschet* materialized with the *Ekspperimental'naia Tvorcheskaia Kinostudiia* [ETK], a production-structure operational between 1965 and 1976 and independently managed by Grigorii Chukhrai and Vladimir Pozner. Chukhrai's self-avowed motivation was to bind the artistic and financial investments of studios and filmmakers to the success of their films with audiences.⁸⁷⁰ Over nine years, the ETK produced some of the period's most popular hits. One of the biggest, *Beloe solntse pustyni/ White Sun of the Desert*, dir. by Vladimir Motyl' (1969), was produced entirely at Lenfil'm on a contractual basis. Generally, ETK films were held to cost more than other Soviet features, but drew larger average audiences per budget-rouble, making their recoup-rate (*samookupaemost'*) much lower.⁸⁷¹ Overwhelmingly, these were films aimed at mass-audiences: by focusing on 'quality' genre-cinema, which was largely absent from existing repertoires, the ETK broke with the weighting of thematic planning that defined other studios' obligations.

ETK *khozraschet* hinged on cost-efficiency – negotiating mutually advantageous production-contracts with ‘established’ studios – and material incentives for filmmakers. Free to offer substantially higher remuneration to film-directors and screenwriters than other studios, the ETK only paid these contractually agreed fees in full if 17 million tickets were sold during a film’s first run. At the initiative of the USSR Ministry of Finance, this amount could be doubled, by way of a bonus, if the box-office exceeded 30 million tickets.⁸⁷² These staggeringly advantageous conditions made exceptionally wealthy men, by Soviet standards, of filmmakers like Leonid Gaidai and Georgii Daneliia. However, Chukhrai was known to be deeply concerned by this external initiative and petitioned successfully for its cancellation.⁸⁷³

The influence of the ETK on the *bazovaia model’* has been widely acknowledged, but opinions diverge as to the principal reasons why ETK *khozraschet* failed. In 1968, at Goskino’s insistence, the ETK – until then officially named ETO [*Ekspperimental’noe tvorcheskoe ob’edinenie*] – became a fixed substructure of Mosfil’ m. Fomin contends that it aroused hostility at Goskino from the very beginning by threatening to expose the economic inefficiency and artistic counterintuition of the entire administrative system.⁸⁷⁴ Congested shooting-schedules disincentivized collaboration with the ETK for studios perpetually anxious about meeting their plan-fulfilment criteria. Vladimir Mikhailov sees this as its ultimate undoing, post-1968: Mosfil’ m had to cover ETK losses in the event of complications or poor box-office returns, but did not benefit financially from a share of its takings destined for reinvestment.⁸⁷⁵ Even under these conditions, according to Mikhailov, ‘full *samookupaemost’*’ was not achieved until 1971.⁸⁷⁶ Like many cineastes, former ETK *direktor*, Leonid Gurevich, identifies the scandalized ‘shelving’ of two films from *Nachalo nevedomogo veka / The Beginning of an Unknown Age* (1967), a portmanteau commission to commemorate the Civil War,

as its point of no return.⁸⁷⁷ Continued autonomous management was deemed impossible, given the ideological clampdown then underway.

Kristen Roth-Ey asserts that the ETK ‘inspired jealousy and had few defenders’. In a studio-system built upon permanent staff-rosters and predictable output-quotas, few beyond the most lauded filmmakers were prepared to risk job-security for uncertain, performance-related returns. The ETK therefore struggled to attract ‘below-the-line’ artistic workers, amid terse contractual negotiations with ‘established’ studios for production-facilities.⁸⁷⁸ Mikhailov confirms that the ETK could not retain experienced *direktora kartiny* either: their bonus-pay was insignificant compared with that of cineastes and involved far greater professional risk than standard studio-production.⁸⁷⁹ Amid resentment at Mosfil’ m, dwindling high-political support, and recruitment complications, the ETK was closed by Goskino in 1976. Despite formal endorsements and a new commission, nominally established to consider USSR-level ‘intra-studio’ *khozaschet*, Goskino quietly discarded Chukhrai’s tabled proposals.⁸⁸⁰ The earliest indication of impending perestroika in cinema came on 14 February 1986, when an ‘interview’/monologue from Chukhrai in *Pravda* concluded with a remarkably open attack on Ermash, quoting the Goskino chairman directly over the ETK’s closure and alleging false assurances about the introduction of its most successful elements into Soviet production.⁸⁸¹

In the best and most recent analysis, Irina Tcherneva concludes that the ETK created unreconcilable conflicts in Goskino’s system for rating and rewarding ‘successful’ releases.⁸⁸² Chukhrai conceived the ‘experiment’ as the first stage of industrywide expansion of *khozaschet*. However, after amalgamation into Mosfil’ m, *rentabel’nost’* became a murky equation for ETK releases. Furthermore, the ascendancy of ‘entertainment’ films in Mosfil’ m repertory policies led many excluded cineastes to challenge *rentabel’nost’* and box-office performance as criteria for

legitimizing reforms, when the diverse artistic identities of late-Soviet cinema required support from studio-executives to survive. For Tcherneva, ‘cinema-professionals implicated in a possible expansion of the experiment considered it a potential destabilization of their working conditions – technologically, materially (remuneration), and organizationally (professional autonomy)’.⁸⁸³

Early in perestroika, Soviet cineastes scrutinized other *khozraschet* models, such as Polish cinema’s recent separation of all feature-film studios from the industry’s production-facilities.⁸⁸⁴ At Lenfil’m, this approach combined with the evolving principles of the SK’s *bazovaia model’* to propose ‘internal’ [*vnutrennyi*] *khozraschet*. This would create a transitional micro-market *within* a reorganized studio, funded by film-sales to state-distribution and the hire/sale of industrial services, until governmental sanction for industrywide reform materialized. However, cineastes’ demands for organizational change fast outstripped official preparedness for corresponding draft-legislation. This meant that the future economic landscape brainstormed in initiatives like the *Bolshevo delovye igry* continued to be shaped in the idealized self-image of a cinema unburdened by censorship or bureaucratic interference, but which nonetheless retained governmental funding, while assuming devolved control over its reinvestment. When the landmark ‘Law of the USSR on the State Enterprise (Association)’ (LSE) came into force on 1 January 1988, the actual economic situation had altered so profoundly that any introduction of *khozraschet* required significant legislative reformulation.

The provisions of the LSE were published in June-July 1987, when the SK’s reformist agenda was faltering amid complex negotiations with Goskino and central government over the drafting of new legislation on cinema.⁸⁸⁵ In the analysis of Richard Ericson, the LSE envisaged radical economic restructuring that recognized the ‘enterprise’ [*predpriiatie*] as the ‘basic unit of the economic system’, providing for greater autonomy and democratization of management through

an overhaul of the conditions governing ‘planning, financing, investment, supply, sales and trade, labour and wages, accountability and control, and the creation and elimination of enterprises’.⁸⁸⁶ The LSE proclaimed a universal decree of *khozraschet* as the official programme for economic reform under perestroika. In eliding CPSU organizations *within* enterprises from their decision-making organs, it also enshrined the reallocation of local political power. Performance-driven criteria for management and self-management was to replace the performative rhetoric of criticism and self-criticism.

Ericson reviews the complex mechanisms by which reforms would be guided, from the redefinition of the Soviet state from a monopolistic client into a ‘priority purchaser’, to the official coefficients that would regulate taxes, social services, industrial equipment and allocations of income.⁸⁸⁷ These areas all featured prominently in debates at Lenfil’ m, as reformers sought to adapt *khozraschet* principles to its projected output and investment needs. The LSE confirmed that which had become clear in Soviet policy-making circles by mid-1987 but was still unapparent to reformist cineastes. The economic downturn in the USSR was such that state funding for cinema would continue to decline steeply: alternative sources of funding were urgently required.

‘Full *khozraschet*’, as Ericson identifies in the LSE, implied that complete self-sufficiency (i.e. the eventual removal of all central funding) had become the officially stated aim for enterprises like feature-film studios.⁸⁸⁸ However, this ambition was somewhat contradicted by the central ministries’ continued regulation of prices, coefficient-formulation criteria and policy-implementation responsibilities. Thus, ministries were dissuaded from interference in entrepreneurial decision-making, but continued to be held responsible for sectoral performance. Enterprises were to be bound by ‘full financial accountability’ without inheriting price-setting prerogatives or access to statistical data that could establish the real value of any money earned.⁸⁸⁹

Ultimately, the LSE posed more questions than answers for USSR-wide implementation of *khozraschet*. As Ericson argues, the law's insufficient provisions for truly autonomous and decentralized economic activity were hindered by the absence of capital markets, the distortion of projected costs, the unclear status of money as 'a true medium of exchange and store of value', and an according disincentive for enterprises to strive for profit, or for banks to 'become commercial partners, not merely auditors'.⁸⁹⁰ Time and again following the effectuation of the LSE, Lenfil'm reformers led by Golutva reasserted that the impetus behind *khozraschet* had been political, and not based on informed economic forecasts.⁸⁹¹ Ericson's bleak assessments of unlikely success eventually rang true in the realization, among cineastes, that governmental promotion of autonomy was not underpinned by the establishment of functioning marketplaces based on investment, sales, or the acquisition of goods and services for money. 'Rather', as Ericson concludes, 'this [was] an attempt to loosen central control over the flow of economic activity without abandoning the objectives of that control. The central authorities, in principle, will no longer attempt to manipulate the details of enterprise economic activity'.⁸⁹² This assertion encapsulates the fundamental contradiction of perestroika-era *khozraschet*. While enterprises assumed ever-greater control over production-management, the state – although suffering terminal decline – remained the only source of capital investment and the only ever-present purchaser in this short-lived experiment.

Bolshevo

The Bolshevo *delovye igry* of 2-6 December 1986 were commissioned by the new SK leadership to brainstorm a *khozaschet* model. As with the Fifth Congress, many participants later reflected on the revolutionary euphoria of their momentary empowerment while acknowledging the political and professional naïveté of their proposals.⁸⁹³ Nonetheless, Bolshevo was a landmark of professional democracy. Coordinated by progressive sociologists and economists from Saratov University, the *delovye igry* gathered a select cross-section of SK members – cineastes, *direktora kartiny*, studio-level and Goskino administrators, critics and historians – for scenario-based exercises. This cohort divided into mixed groups that were each allocated a branch of the industry to analyse and reimagine structurally.⁸⁹⁴ The result was the ‘Bolshevo Manifesto: Strategies, Tactics and Mechanisms of Perestroika in Soviet Filmmaking’. This 84-page document provided the basis for the *bazovaia model’* that the SK subsequently advanced through fraught and protracted negotiations with Goskino, the CC and the CM.⁸⁹⁵ Although elements of *khozaschet* commenced at studios in 1988, official legislation on cinema was not formally enshrined until November 1989 with CM *Postanovlenie* 1003, almost three years after Bolshevo.

Like Pyr’ev before them, the post-1986 SK leadership made the structural reorganization of studios the object of a political struggle with the central administrative apparatus. Between Bolshevo and CM *Postanovlenie* 1003, the SK’s thorny proposal of an *obshchestvennyi-gosudarstvennyi kinematograf* [community-state cinema] – essentially state-funded but without ideological or repertory oversight from Goskino – was the single biggest roadblock to progress in negotiations.⁸⁹⁶ Goskino’s new leadership accused the SK of a muddled and utopian power-grab, while the SK increasingly complained that reform was being thwarted by a Goskino administration that opposed further liberalization and knew itself to be living on borrowed time,

since the new initiatives were supported by Gorbachev and Aleksandr Iakovlev, an influential CC Secretary in the Politburo.⁸⁹⁷ Klimov's plan to dismantle central Goskino was only restrained by the absence of any alternative administrative cohort, leading to what Medvedev described as an uneasy 'non-aggression pact' when addressing the Lenfil'm *Khudsovet* in 1988.⁸⁹⁸ Participating tangentially in this conflict through the SK secretariat, Soviet studios began to implement limited changes to their own production-models. Although industrywide administrative reorganization stalled in 1986-1988, Bolshevo was as much a catalyst for independent action at Lenfil'm as a blueprint, given the studio's newfound artistic confidence and recent reformist aspirations. In Kokarev's overview, the SK's *bazovaia model'* advanced the following objectives:

- the creation of independently resourced, 'so-called creative film-units' [*tak nazyvaemykh tvorcheskikh kinoob"edinenii*] within the old film-studios and the separation of these [units] from the studios' industrial departments, which in turn convert into 'state *khozraschet* enterprises [*predpriatiia*];
- the transfer of leading artistic professions (i.e. film-directors, camera-operators, set-designers and composers) from studio-payrolls to contractual relationships with freely variable remuneration;
- the enforcement of authorial rights throughout the film-production process;
- the establishment of liberalized film-sale markets [*svobodnye kinorynki*], where the independent TOs – 'the owners of the movies they produce' – present titles to 'distribution agencies [*prokatnye*

- kontory*] that, in their own commercial interest, purchase films that they believe have box-office potential’;
- the transfer of cinema-theatre management to working collectives on the basis of rental from the state and of *khozraschet*, i.e. market activity ‘with the aim of maximising profit-generation’.⁸⁹⁹

It quickly became clear that these last two aspirations – linking production with distribution and liberalizing exhibition-management – were the most difficult industrial configurations for studio-based professionals to conceptualize. Commercial access to demonopolized *prokat* was considered crucial to the viability of any prospective *khozraschet* system. However, Inna Vasil’eva has observed that *prokat* occupied only three pages in the ‘Bolshevo Manifesto’, while Kokarev confirms that no *prokat* officials participated in the *delovye igry*.⁹⁰⁰ Instead, the *bazovaia model’* vaguely insisted that ‘*khozraschet* relationships, both within the *prokat* system and in [its] relationship with studios, must become the economic mechanism that guarantees self-sufficiency and further development in filmmaking’.⁹⁰¹ In reality, the authors had no detailed vision for how this mechanism would function. SK leaders enthusiastically advocated reinvesting profits from exhibition into production, but did not, as Kokarev concludes, proceed beyond the very Soviet idea of an instrumental ‘mechanism’ – to be regulated by studios and the state – for distributing this wealth.⁹⁰² Eventually, the SK would participate in the allocation of distribution-categories and print-runs for all releases, prerogatives that remained formally with Goskino throughout perestroika. Beyond this limited achievement, all other initiatives for sales and distribution reform emerged at studios on an ad hoc basis, as local responses to the *bazovaia model’* began to emerge.

For Lenfil’m, Golutva’s repertory promotion of *avtorskoe kino* was the decisive factor in shaping the studio’s approach to imagined domestic markets and real international ones, when its

reorganization of production accelerated with his formal assumption of the studio-directorship. In 1986, Golutva (then editor-in-chief) still advocated the ‘unified, Soviet’ studio as the ideal model for the new era of devolved production-management.⁹⁰³ This Lenfil’ m was artistically confident and partly protected from the bitter power-struggle then underway in Moscow. However, the benefits of relative autonomy amid this marginality were weighed against frustrations about internal administrative paralysis and ineffectual representation at the political centre under Khokhlov’s directorship. When Golutva finally took over, the political lessons from this interlude informed his emergent doctrines of ‘internal *khozraschet*’ and ‘reform through practice’, which sought to adapt Bolshevo into a ‘Leningrad model’. Both Golutva and Maslennikov considered the *bazovaia model*’ utopian and excessively idealistic.⁹⁰⁴

In April 1986, a crucial Lenfil’ m Party meeting saw reformers seize the initiative locally, before the Fifth Congress or any anticipated central sanction. Maslennikov, calling perestroika a ‘revolution [*krutoi perelom*] in the life of the country’, explained that Lenfil’ m could become the ‘experimental base of Soviet cinema’ under the auspices of Leningrad-wide economic reforms that had been unveiled following Gorbachev’s visit in May 1985.⁹⁰⁵ At this meeting, Golutva – now firmly in the political ascendancy – announced that *zaiavki* and screenplays would no longer require approval from the studio’s editorial board for release into production. Furthermore, TO-level ‘ideological *kuratory*’ (i.e. *redactory* below the editor-in-chief and the two most senior deputies) would be transferred to minor, supervised roles on the studio’s editorial board.⁹⁰⁶ This meeting’s resolutions confirmed that the Partkom would supervise an experimental regrading of income-band categories [*pereattestatsiia*] for the leading artistic professions along locally determined contractual lines, which would encourage greater studio-level autonomy in commissioning and development.⁹⁰⁷ Its final resolution called on ‘[studio]-directorship and social organizations [i.e. SK members] to develop proposals to be addressed to Goskino USSR for the

broadening of independence in the activities of the film-studio, the introduction of a *khozraschet* system, and contract-based, team-pooled remuneration [*brigadnyi podriad*].⁹⁰⁸ This was a resoundingly clear statement of intent. As Golutva insisted in November 1986, wholesale reorganization of filmmaking was occurring in the USSR ‘from the bottom up’ for the first time.⁹⁰⁹ In these resolutions, Lenfil’*m* was the first Soviet studio to adopt concrete reformist measures and demand greater administrative autonomy from Goskino.

Leading Lenfil’*m* reformers considered their programme to be the most conceptually sound *khozraschet* proposal of perestroika, a view reinforced by Golutva’s swift contention for appointment to senior administrative posts at Leningrad and USSR-level.⁹¹⁰ In December 1986, Golutva described the ‘Bolshevo Manifesto’ – ‘Klimov’s document’ – as a satisfying blueprint, but called on Lenfil’*m* cineastes to shift their working practices now, rather than indulge in further theorization.⁹¹¹ Golutva’s first studio-specific move was to implement *pereattestatsiia* for artistic workers. Initially, the SK advocated the transfer of all employees at Soviet studios from their permanent staff-payrolls [*shtat*] to contractual categories specific to their professions. Post-Bolshevo, the compromise – made with studio-managers’ input – was for TOs to elect a small core of artistic leaders to manage productions and operate a *Khudsovet*. This body would then be free to make contracts with ‘invited’ filmmakers, camera-operators and set-designers, while ‘secondary’ professions like assistant-directors could be hired into a production’s film-crew from a pool of studio-affiliated workers [*tvorcheskii rezerv*], for whose labour-welfare the ‘umbrella’ studio-structure would still bear responsibility.⁹¹² This was the *khozraschet* model eventually established at Mosfil’*m*, where the prospect of mass redundancies as a consequence of an unrestrained ‘hire-and-fire’ marketplace proved intolerable to that studio’s new leadership from 1988 onwards.⁹¹³ Such concerns were no less acute at Lenfil’*m*, but its smaller industrial scale and greater cohesion (artistic and cultural) meant that elections at TO and studio-level could initiate

the ‘democratization of management’ before the implementation of *khozraschet* created a precarious or unpredictably mobile *tvorcheskii rezerv*.⁹¹⁴

For Golutva and senior filmmakers like Tregubovich, the aim was not to prematurely release the mass of secondary professionals whose livelihoods were at greatest threat, but rather to return to TOs their ‘original’ functions as ‘like-minded cohorts’ [*gruppy edinomyshlennikov*] empowered to shape their own artistic identities through commissioning.⁹¹⁵ The creation of a new Lenfil’ m TO was deemed crucial to this plan for studio-output to expand and for repertory auteurism to reconsolidate. To prepare the ground, Golutva argued for the separation of ‘democratized’ management of the artistic process and the ‘supervised’ transition of the studio’s industrial facilities [*tekhnicheskaiia baza*] to market principles within two-to-three years.⁹¹⁶ This ‘internal *khozraschet*’ was proposed as local-scale training for a future in which the commercial sale of production-services and hiring of technology would be required to fund the studio’s repertory programme.

Upon formally assuming the directorship in September 1987, Golutva outlined what he estimated to be the necessary conditions for both internal *khozraschet* and industrywide perestroika to succeed. His audience of Lenfil’ m cineastes also included Goskino editor-in-chief Medvedev and newly appointed Goskino Chairman Aleksandr Kamshalov, who, like Ermash, assumed this post having most recently led the CC Culture Department’s Cinema Division. Previously, Golutva and Maslennikov had both described how internal *khozraschet* would involve the formation of new ‘studios’ from the existing TOs, with an as-yet underdetermined degree of administrative autonomy from Lenfil’ m. These would begin to manage their own budgets and repertory profiles in preparation for ‘full’ *khozraschet* and eventual independence from the industrial base of the old studio.⁹¹⁷ The Lenfil’ m directorship would have an important steering role in this transition,

acting as a broker between the three envisaged contractual agents in a film's production: the lead-crew [*postanovochnaia grupp*a], the TO-studio [*kinostudiia*] and Lenfil'm's industrial facilities and departments [*kinokombinat*]. First, the *postanovochnaia grupp*a would sign a contract with the *kinostudiia* for all stages of development. Next, the *kinostudiia* would project a package for the production, including its budgets and schedules, and commit this to a second contract with the *postanovochnaia grupp*a, delegating all production-related questions to the filmmaker, while establishing mutual guarantees between the two parties around the assessment of working material and the scope for extensions or reshooting. Finally, having received budgetary approval and the sanction of the TO/*kinostudiia* for release into production, the *postanovochnaia grupp*a would take its package to the *kinokombinat* and sign a contract for the material production of the film.⁹¹⁸ Consequently, the Lenfil'm directorship would manage this double contractual bind by allocating funds to the *kinostudiia*, selling the services of the *kinokombinat* to the *postanovochnaia grupp*a, and reinvesting anticipated profits from the sale of those services and a share of the film's box-office takings (dependent upon *prokat* reforms) back into the technological modernization of the *kinokombinat*. Although slightly modified by fast-moving political change, this was the 'Leningrad model' that permitted filmmaker-led 'studios' to emerge at Lenfil'm in 1988. The LSE protected this tentative local initiative well before the practical establishment of *khozraschet* relations between the 'old' established studios and Goskino, or the long-awaited legislative enshrinement of cinema-reforms.

For these subdivisions to work, the Lenfil'm directorship would manage the *kinokombinat* – at least initially – as a wholly state-funded enterprise, given the studio's chronic technological disrepair and urgent need for large-scale facilities investment [*kapital'noe stroitel'stvo*].⁹¹⁹ On 14 September 1987, Golutva wrote to Kamshalov with a list of requirements to make the transition to *khozraschet* possible. These ranged from general demands for Lenfil'm facilities to be brought

up to contemporary standards to requests for funding of specific constructions and state-of-the-art production-equipment.⁹²⁰ On 25 September, Golutva measured these needs against potential income from film-sales, projected on the basis of the studio's production-records and domestic box-office figures – recently acquired from the *prokat* division of Goskino – covering the performance of Lenfil'm releases from the previous five years. In these estimations, profit-making looked a distinct – if theoretical – possibility for a new agglomeration of *khozraschet* studios at Lenfil'm.

Taking 1986 as an example, annual production costs represented 27.4% of the box-office gross [*valovyi sbor*] from Lenfil'm titles. Golutva considered the maintenance of these levels essential to Lenfil'm's establishment of the reinvestment reserves [*fondy*] so crucial to the viability of *khozraschet* enterprises, which required the capacity to absorb losses.⁹²¹ Improvements on this level of box-office performance would theoretically allow for progressively less reliance on central-state funding for infrastructure and new technologies, which Lenfil'm would purchase according to its needs and on the basis of the wealth in its *fondy*. The required growth seemed achievable: Golutva put the average annual *valovyi sbor* from 1981-1986 at 37,400,000 roubles, while the projected income 'necessary for the creation of a *fond* upon which we will [be able to] develop' was 39,595,000 roubles.⁹²² According to Golutva, just over 50% of the latter figure would constitute a production-development *fond*. Remuneration would require around 39% and just over 10% would cover planned commitments to social welfare and cooperative housing.⁹²³ However, amid deepening economic uncertainty and widespread scepticism over Goskino's preparedness to reform, the genuine worth of these projections remained unclear, a point not discounted by Golutva.⁹²⁴ Conditions for growth in Leningrad still appeared relatively advantageous, when compared to rapidly fragmenting Moscow studios rife with political

infighting and increasingly sucked into the legislative standoff between Goskino and the SK leadership.⁹²⁵

Having earlier approved *pereattestatsiia* and *khozraschet* ambitions, the Lenfil'm Partkom retreated from supervising their implementation and focused instead on advocating fuller democratization of management. This was its last meaningful contribution to studio-governance before its effective dissolution with the creation of the new *khozraschet* 'studios'. Nina Morozova, Maslennikov's replacement as Party Secretary, expressed support for greater devolution in November 1987, as momentum gathered behind the creation of a new Third TO:

Khozraschet taps into the objective logic of production [...] Finally, the directorship can be occupied with 'big' politics, [our] relationship with the ministry, attentiveness to currency receipts and the easing of technological issues, most of which happens – as you know – on a scale beyond the studio and even Leningrad.⁹²⁶

The Lenfil'm Partkom now reported on the fulfilment of its *Postanovleniia* to the LOSK in the first instance, superseding weakened perestroika-era Gorkom and Obkom Culture Departments.⁹²⁷ Its rhetoric was more virulently opposed than ever to Goskino obstructionism, and now confronted orthodox CPSU history from the preceding era. Ahead of the extraordinary 19th All-union Party Conference in late-June 1988, Morozova historically critiqued Stalin's personality cult and warned of the threat posed to perestroika by rallying conservative forces.⁹²⁸ Although formal legislation on the dissolution and attendant outlawing of CPSU organizations within state enterprises in the RSFSR would not materialize until July 1991, the ideological authority of the Lenfil'm Partkom collapsed in 1988.⁹²⁹ None of the new 'studios' formed at Lenfil'm would

adopt any CPSU representation. With their emergence, a delegitimized Partkom ceased to participate in the studio's executive management.⁹³⁰

Future control over domestic film-distribution policy was the biggest object of political contention in this radically redefined relationship between Lenfil'm and the Party-state. Reformers advocated profit-redistribution away from central budgets and back into restructured studio-level *fondy*: a consensus prevailed that *khozraschet* could only succeed if Soviet *prokat* was subjected to as thorough an overhaul as proposed for production. Their debates on how to reform this most opaque sector suggest how *khozraschet* might theoretically have succeeded at USSR-level. At the same time, their frequently ingenious proposals struggled to penetrate the long-entrenched mechanisms by which their output was delivered to Soviet audiences.

Prokat Reform, Political Intransigence

SK reformers viewed Goskino's *prokat* divisions as a barrier to change and potentially an existential threat to cinema's perestroika. However, dissenting voices were even emerging from inside those secretive agencies. In November 1986, the head economist of *prokat* and *kinofikatsiia* at Goskino RSFSR, A. Skakov, wrote a scathing article on the sector in *Sovetskaia kul'tura*. Despite steep falls in overall viewer-figures and average annual attendances per citizen [*poseshchaemost'*] between 1970 and 1985, the *valovyi sbor* from cinema in the RSFSR had swollen by 53 million roubles in the same period. Skakov attributed this to 'cunning business with foreign imports' and a culture of deceit, visible in recent Goskino *Postanovleniia*, that prioritised 'takings at all cost' through ticket-price increases.⁹³¹ Moreover, Soviet cinema-theatres were unable to locally adapt their repertory acquisitions to meet audience-demands, caught as they were in the bureaucratic bind of the central administration's overloaded plan-fulfilment priorities. As Inna Vasil'evna

acknowledges, no other country in the world printed as many film-copies as the USSR, and as Skakov complained, no other country ran 7-8 showings a day per cinema-screen.⁹³² Despite such abundant service-provision on paper, in reality, both viewer-figures and box-office takings were falling since 1985, when, according to Skakov, 120,385 'screen-days' were lost in the RSFSR due to a lack of projectionists, with many cities still awaiting their first run of 'significant' 1980s titles.⁹³³ Reformist cineastes anticipated that *prokat* would be the hardest and most important sector to reorganize, given the opacity of its operations, its lucrative monopoly, and the apparent cynicism of its current profiteering. The SK's struggle to conceptualize *prokat* reform handed studios the opportunity to propose alternative 'mechanisms' and markets for film-sales, once *khozraschet* production had been established nationwide.

At Lenfil'm, *prokat* reform had two purposes: to right the wrongs of 'shelving' and inappropriate distribution for studio-titles (whether ideologically or bureaucratically motivated) and, long-term, to earn enough from box-office takings to fund *avtorskoe kino* as a repertory priority. On 22 July 1987, at the decisive Partkom for Golutva's appointment, Viacheslav Sorokin posed a rhetorical question that summed up the positions of many: 'what does perestroika mean for our studio? The return of [Aleksii] German's films to viewers, and those of other directors denied access to the screen for many years'.⁹³⁴ The legacy of *prokat* manipulation as a 'soft' form of ideological control was a bitterly resented aspect of Goskino's widely discredited mechanism for regulating the link between production and distribution through the 'categorization' of releases. This chart determined remuneration for filmmakers and established corresponding but obscure criteria for the print-runs of each new release. The day after Skakov's article, Golutva described 'incorrectly allocated print-runs' as the source of all errors in official assessments of box-office performance, which was distorted by hugely varying exposure for different releases.⁹³⁵ Nonetheless, he recognized that meaningful reform would require much more invasive surgery on

the bloated body of Soviet *prokat* than simply correcting the quantity and domestic distribution of prints to reflect perceived demand.

In 1986-1987, Lenfil'm conducted information-gathering on the potential *rentabel'nost'* and *samookupaemost'* of studio-output in order to link box-office performance and studio-income indexically in any future model. Igor' Karakoz – having left the First TO to manage the Lenfil'm Press-Office [Informbiuro] and serve under Maslennikov as assistant chairman of the studio's Perestroika Committee – wrote two significant letters in summer 1987. One went to Nikolai Sizov (Goskino First Deputy Chairman and former Mosfil'm studio-director), and requested domestic distribution figures for all Lenfil'm releases since 1981, including initial and subsequent print-run quantities and overall box-office performance 'for the entire period of release', presented annually and at USSR-level.⁹³⁶ The other letter demanded information from Soveksportfil'm on all Lenfil'm titles sold abroad in the same period, again including the quantity of prints sold and 'the sums of currency earned [*summy valiutnykh vyplat*] on each film, both from individual sales and for the entire period of a film's release abroad'.⁹³⁷ Lenfil'm was demanding a previously unthinkable entitlement: to know exactly how much money the Soviet state was making from its output. Using this data, it proceeded to calculate the potential viability of *khozraschet*, as Golutva outlined above. Part of this undertaking was to develop a system of print-run coefficients designed to reflect the SK's new ten-level criteria for rating films artistically.⁹³⁸ Thus, less lucrative *avtorskoe kino* might be made commercially sustainable on the back of heightened interest in German and Sokurov, or from upsurges in demand for prints, as occurred with Lopushanskii's *Pis'ma mertvogo cheloveka/Letters of a Dead Man* (1986).

This approach generated fierce debate. Maslennikov insisted that without the reorganization of *prokat* into regional agencies with decentralized film-purchasing rights, USSR-wide perestroika in

cinema could not succeed. If decentralization succeeded and state-funding remained around the levels forecast in 1987, then Maslennikov estimated that *poseshchaemost'* of 15,000 viewers-per-copy would be sufficient to fund the reinvestment and remuneration packages that Golutva outlined for the visiting Goskino leaders.⁹³⁹ However, the assessment of box-office performance on a per-copy basis was highly controversial from the standpoint of central authorities conscious of dwindling audiences and budgetary reserves. The most radical voices at Lenfil'm proposed that the studio enter any future deregulated *prokat* market as its own distribution-agent.⁹⁴⁰ Under the existing system, only the crudest overcompensation of disproportionately large print-runs could expose marginalized *avtorskoe kino* to wider audiences.

Clearly, this was the case with *Pokaianie/Repentance*, dir. by Tengiz Abuladze (1984), whose fate in distribution was compared to that of *Lapshin* at an April 1988 debate between Lenfil'm cineastes and Lev Furikov, Goskino's chief box-office analyst and a senior link between central *prokat* and production administrations. Generously funded and effectively produced in secret in Georgia, this allegory on Stalinism became a cultural landmark, just as *Lapshin* had evoked the mid-1930s with unprecedented nuance. Despite serious resistance from the CC and KGB, Aleksandr Iakovlev's support eventually assured a large-scale release that reflected the political significance of *Pokaianie*.⁹⁴¹ However, Furikov complained that the new Goskino management's sanction for 450 copies of *Pokaianie* was 'a mystery', given its unimpressive first-run performance and limited box-office potential.⁹⁴² Likewise, reported Furikov, Goskino had suggested 450 copies for *Lapshin*. Ultimately, 138 were printed and ticket-sales 'were still only 1.3 million'.⁹⁴³ From this debate and in subsequent assessments of his work, Furikov's professional priority was the exploitation of top-grossing Soviet films.⁹⁴⁴ He delivered statistical analysis of falling figures for releases attracting between 20 and 30 million domestic viewers (from 11.6% in 1984 to just 3% in 1986), and confirmed that only 20 releases had surpassed 50 million viewers since 1972,

the last coming in 1982.⁹⁴⁵ These were the bluntest cautions yet made against reformers' optimism that *khozraschet* could become viable at Lenfil'm within five years. To their projections of viewers-per-copy income on the basis of *valovyi sbor* performance comparable with 1981-1986, Furikov countered steeply declining *poseshchaemost'* and the sobering judgement that more than half of all Soviet features never exceeded five million ticket-sales.⁹⁴⁶

Golutva's own reality-check concerned two 'battles' to keep artistically significant cinema viable in the USSR. 'Masterpieces and audiences' were both 'essential', but as yet prematurely linked to *khozraschet*, amid such institutional precarity.⁹⁴⁷ These reflections anticipated those cineastes who subsequently admitted to believing that economic freedom would soon lead to the increased production of masterpieces, betraying the cultural resilience of the assumptions and aspirations that Maria Belodubrovskaya analyses for the 1930s.⁹⁴⁸ Golutva insisted that the survival of Soviet cinema could only be assured through *prokat* reform, devolved cinema-theatre ownership, and anti-piracy regulation of the emerging home-videotape market. Until then, 'battling for viewers under our conditions is like spitting in the wind'.⁹⁴⁹ To Furikov, Golutva responded bluntly. Had *Proverka na dorogakh* been released when it was made, and had German received comparable media coverage to the attention that followed the release and televisual screenings of *Lapshin*, then the cultural standing of Lenfil'm *avtorskoe kino* would have been much higher. Consequently, box-office performance since 1972 could have reflected more favourably on Lenfil'm repertory policies in the intervening period.⁹⁵⁰

Anger at historic Goskino neglect remained palpable, especially among Lenfil'm camera-operators, who felt the sharp-end of its woeful technological deficits most acutely. Valerii Fedosov insisted in September 1987 that Lenfil'm had 'received practically nothing from Goskino USSR in the last nine years'. This traced grievances back to the 1978 crisis to support the growing

reformist consensus that *khozaschet* could only be established alongside an initial period of continued state-funding, while *prokat* reformed. Fedosov was unequivocal: faced with ever-deeper budgetary squeezing, it was now apparent to him that ‘Goskino has no money [...] money comes from *prokat*’.⁹⁵¹

Lenfil’ m’s limited supply of state-of-the-art, industry-standard 35mm Arriflex cameras encapsulated the studio’s sense of neglect. In 1981, Eduard Rozovskii first observed that, according to Goskino data, Lenfil’ m possessed only three of sixty foreign-purchased Arriflexes in the USSR (Mosfil’ m then had nineteen).⁹⁵² This imbalance became a leitmotif for the studio’s camera-operators: according to Fedosov, Goskino data from 1986-87 showed that Lenfil’ m produced thirty-two of the USSR’s features while in possession of three Arriflexes (Mosfil’ m – fifty-three features, twelve Arriflexes; Gor’kii Studio – twenty-three features, four Arriflexes; Sverdlovsk – thirteen features, four Arriflexes).⁹⁵³ Furthermore, Fedosov assured Kamshalov that ‘they will always convince you that Moscow needs [the investment] more’.⁹⁵⁴ Kamshalov responded that the Moscow studios’ power-dynamics – ‘every man for himself’ [*svoia rubashka blizhe k telu*] – were indeed easier for Goskino to negotiate.⁹⁵⁵ However, the ‘catastrophic state’ of Soviet filmmaking could no longer be resolved by central subsidies: republic-level Goskino committees were now purchasing technology like Arriflexes from their republican administrations’ newly devolved budgetary allocations.⁹⁵⁶ Accordingly, Kamshalov promised Lenfil’ m three more Arriflexes (costing \$120,000 each) over the current five-year plan, and then, ‘from 1989, according to the beautiful programme devised by the Lenfil’ m Perestroika Committee, you’ll be earning currency yourselves and purchasing your own’.⁹⁵⁷ Such sarcastic recrimination was increasingly common in high-level negotiations between Goskino and filmmakers. Fedosov subsequently told the Partkom that it was time for Lenfil’ m to free itself from the obligation to fulfil Goskino *Postanovleniia*, unless bureaucratic obstructions to legislation

on *khozraschet* in cinema were removed. Politically, Lenfil'm had 'struggled to get those three Arriflexes and lost a lot of blood, there'.⁹⁵⁸

For Kamshalov, the financial burdens inherited along with Goskino's monopolies were daunting. His perspective on *prokat* reform began not with cineastes' speculative decentralization proposals, but with the urgent macroeconomics of sectoral taxation and price-setting. The prospects appeared deeply unfavourable. Amid falling box-office revenues, cinema-theatres' takings remained subject to the highest industrial tax-bracket (55% in cities, 10% in rural areas). Nationwide, the average cheapest ticket-price of 27.4 kopecks was also becoming swiftly unsustainable as the USSR entered the vestibule of hyperinflation.⁹⁵⁹ Without relieving this tax-burden and obtaining the price-setting entitlements that Goskino was actively seeking from central government and Gosplan, Kamshalov concluded that *prokat* reforms could not be initiated. Therefore, *khozraschet* could not yet be fully established at studios, which already faced the 'social problem' of redundancies among unneeded staff, as Kamshalov saw illustrated at Mosfil'm.⁹⁶⁰

A comparably stark social problem was developing at the other end of the industry. As political momentum grew behind the creation of regional distribution agencies, the bureaucratic hierarchies of regional-level CPSU organizations began to dissolve. In 1987, no-one at Lenfil'm or Goskino anticipated the discovery made by Tregubovich in 1989, having travelled widely to promote domestic sales for Ladoga (one of the new, semi-autonomous 'studios' operating under internal *khozraschet* at Lenfil'm) to recently empowered regional purchasers. In Tregubovich's assessment, regional *prokat* divisions had consolidated into Cinema and Video Units [*kinovideoob"edineniia*] with the goal of re-monopolizing lucrative control over cinema-theatre repertoires and official copy-making rights for videotape at regional level.⁹⁶¹ With central *prokat* hamstrung by fixed prices and ownership wrangles, *kinovideoob"edineniia* expanded their

operations on the basis of local political influence. Unsurprisingly, the chief exploiters of this reversal were those former apparatchiki best positioned to marshal regional structures. As Tregubovich observed:

I came up against situations in which the chairman [*predsedatel'* *kinoupravleniia*] is, as a rule, an ex-Party manager. It turns out that *prokat* is one line of work that they've started dispatching them to. He sits very steadfastly on that ship, travels to market, and purchases according to his tastes.⁹⁶²

The absence of central *prokat* reforms meant that wildly variable local practices dominated domestic film-distribution in the short but decisive period between the LSE (January 1988) and CM *Postanovlenie* 1003 (November 1989), which coincided with the effective collapse of the central *prokat* network.⁹⁶³ As Lenfil'm attempted to implement internal *khozraschet*, the chaotic political carve-up underway in the new 'marketplaces' of Soviet cinema did much to accelerate the final fragmentation of studios and the SK itself. Simultaneously, the purposeful stripping of executive powers from central USSR structures implicated RSFSR-based enterprises in the Russian Republic's exceptionally volatile 'sovereignty-grab', creating irreparable institutional fissures at all levels of production and throughout the economy.

Brave New World: *Khozraschet* and New ‘Studios’

In 1987, the studio-approved proposal for a new, commercially-orientated Third TO was an intuitive and ‘safe’ response from Lenfil’m to the vaguely sketched *bazovaia model’*. However, this plan collapsed in 1988: filmmakers’ forceful claims for political autonomy and artistic self-determination reflected the deepening revolutionary mood of perestroika. The Third-TO initiative had first emerged in a letter to the Lenfil’m Perestroika Committee from young First-TO cineastes, calling for a unit dedicated to debutants and early-career filmmakers. This proposed Aleksei German as *Khudruk*.⁹⁶⁴ In keeping with German’s characteristic equivocation over the many leadership roles proposed to him during perestroika, the *Lapshin* director declined.⁹⁶⁵ The nomination was then transferred to Maslennikov, who acknowledged his artistic unsuitability to the experimental brief, and proposed a repertory reorientation of any Third TO along ‘audience-focused’ lines.⁹⁶⁶

For Maslennikov, this TO would make room for new filmmakers with popular appeal and develop a commercial foil for the uncompromising aesthetic auteurism of Sokurov and Lopushanskii.⁹⁶⁷ Practical details on this platform were few, but its scope for removing the burden of a ‘standing-start’ *khozraschet* implementation from the First and Second TOs was real.

Maslennikov and Golutva offered cineastes and Goskino alike the example of Ernest Iasan (Second TO), whose 1986 box-office smash *Prosti/Forgive Me* achieved 31,143,900 ticket-sales during its domestic first-run alone.⁹⁶⁸ According to Savel’ev, this reorganization suited senior cineastes and *redaktory* in the existing TOs much better than the proposal that young filmmakers depart en masse to a Lenfil’m ‘Debut’ TO, which could threaten their immediate privileges and long-term viability in a fast-changing landscape.⁹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the first new Lenfil’m ‘studio’ to appear was the First-Film Workshop [*Masterskaia pervogo fil’ma*] in October 1988, led by German and

Iurii Pavlov (editor-in-chief), one of the studio's earliest Aksenov-era advocates of an experimentally-focused 'Youth TO'.⁹⁷⁰

The Workshop subsequently became PiEF [*kinostudiia pervogo i eksperimental'nogo fil'ma*], one of the ten semi-autonomous Lenfil'm studios to release films from 1989 onwards, once internal *khozraschet* took effect. Thereafter, Lenfil'm-wide repertory policies can be spoken of only inasmuch as its established filmmaking cohorts remained largely unchanged. Meanwhile, Golutva was growing in stature as one of the Soviet cultural sector's most highly regarded administrators. PiEF – uniquely state-funded, administratively apart, and outward-looking – represented an exception. For the first time since Kozintsev's one-off 'courses' at Lenfil'm in the late-1960s, a professional route into Soviet filmmaking bypassed VGIK, the VKSR, and Moscow's sphere of influence. At first, PiEF was to operate under the joint supervision of existing Lenfil'm TOs and the Mosfil'm Debut TO, which since 1979 had held the exclusive right to distribute commissions for shorts to Soviet studios on behalf of Goskino (Lenfil'm received two such 'units' each year). At Lenfil'm, Debut was long deemed ineffective and a barrier to the genuine aesthetic experimentation anticipated from German's leadership and the involvement of Sokurov. The latter's short-lived *kinoshkola* had been approved in May 1988, when the formation of PiEF remained undecided.⁹⁷¹

The sense of impending fragmentation hanging over existing production-structures made dependence upon their protocols unappealing to German and Pavlov. Their written representations to Debut on full autonomy went unopposed, subsumed as it was in the vitriolic power-struggles at Mosfil'm, where *khozraschet* eventually took a unitary, almost inverse shape to Golutva's horizontal devolution.⁹⁷² Decisively, PiEF declared its own *Khudsovet* a self-sufficient, 'final authority' [*posledniaia instantsiia*] for all stages of production, including the selection of

prospective filmmakers.⁹⁷³ This unprecedented assertion of independence was a hyper-enhanced reimagining of the 1960s TO as the engine of repertory innovation. Its *Khudsovet* was still modelled on an executive *sostav avtorov*, led by a senior *Khudruk*, whose real influence was – unlike at Mosfil'm – always more locally concentrated than centrally significant at Goskino. Benefitting from a peripheral status and central funding, Soviet-era PiEF became the most prolific of the new Lenfil'm studios, with nine releases in 1991 alone.⁹⁷⁴

Among the other *khozraschet* units, Troitskii most [Trinity Bridge], under Maslennikov's artistic direction, became the most commercially successful studio. Its shift away from the envisaged Third TO's domestic programme and towards the international film-festival market was unanticipated: Troitskii most would be a flagship for Lenfil'm *avtorskoe kino*. The political acumen of its impressive redactorial cohort – drawn by this repertory agenda and including former editor-in-chief Mashendzhinova – was an important factor in persuading Sokurov to produce his films there, immediately making Troitskii most attractive to filmmakers with festival-focused aspirations.⁹⁷⁵ In this regard, 'big' Lenfil'm remained a more fluid zone of professional exchange in 1989-1991 than is apparent from the rhetoric of artistic demarcation in press-features and studio-literature from these years.⁹⁷⁶

Taksi-bliuz / Taxi Blues, dir. by Pavel Lungin (1990) demonstrates how a high-profile, cineaste-brokered and internationally co-produced version of *avtorskoe kino* as 'arthouse cinema' replaced the prioritization of domestic audience-appeal at perestroika-era Lenfil'm. *Taksi-bliuz* stakes a reasonable claim to be one of the most successful Lenfil'm titles of the late-Soviet period, not only for earning Lungin a Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1990, but also for an international sales and distribution performance that dwarfed any Soviet title from the period of

this study.⁹⁷⁷ However, its production bore all the scars of the ‘big’ studio’s multiple reorientations towards *khozraschet*, international markets and director-led executive production.

Lungin, a Moscow-based screenwriter, was new to Lenfil’*m*. He had never directed a film and was working alongside Mikhail Ordovskii, formerly of the Second TO, in pre-production and screen-testing. When a dispute erupted over Lungin’s wish to rewrite the approved screenplay and direct *Taksi-bliuz* himself, fragmenting Lenfil’*m* executive structures proved unwilling to conciliate. The balance of political power had shifted definitively towards its outward-looking cineaste-producers. Ordovskii complained that uncertainty caused by Lungin’s move had meant the loss, to the project, of all crew-members that had worked on pre-production or were preparing for the shoot. The transition to *khozraschet* left these workers unable to surrender potential income from other commencing projects while waiting for the approval of a precarious-seeming foreign co-production.⁹⁷⁸ Conversely, *khozraschet* was also cited by several senior cineastes as the reason why Lenfil’*m* could not afford to deny Lungin artistic ownership of *Taksi-bliuz*, which had already received significant financing and was considered a crucial, early marker of viability for international operations. Troitskii most could not ‘afford to lose this unit’, and endorsed the express resolution of MK2, the French co-producers, to work with Lungin.⁹⁷⁹ Having received tacit backing from the influential German, and following careful negotiations involving Maslennikov to secure the coproduction, Lungin embarked on *Taksi-bliuz* as a self-avowed *avtorskii fil’*m**, according to the key LOSK debate on this dispute.⁹⁸⁰ Other veterans like Aranovich were affronted and incredulous, arguing against the ‘betrayal’ of a longstanding Lenfil’*m* cineaste in favour of a ‘carpetbagger from Moscow’, and observing that such ‘pure’ auteurist productions were ‘almost non-existent’ in late-Soviet cinema.⁹⁸¹

However, this had now irrevocably changed. *Taksi-bliuz* and *Zamri, umri, voskresni! / Freeze, Die, Resurrect Yourself!*, dir. by Vitalii Kanevskii (1990) – the other Lenfil'm title prized at Cannes – were solely written and directed by debuting filmmakers at Troitskii most with political support from German, who sat on the Cannes Jury in 1990 and fought for what Aleksei Gusev describes as Soviet cinema's fullest international festival triumph since the 1960s.⁹⁸² The financially unthreatened *sostav avtorov* within the 'big' studio had been supplanted by package-driven alliances between influential senior cineastes, domestic executive producers, foreign investors, and highly mobile filmmakers. Lungin and Kanevskii's films also seemed consciously to appeal to the new interest of Western viewers in Soviet life at this moment, while potentially alienating Soviet audiences held to be less interested in grim Stalin-era tragedies (*Zamri*) or arthouse parables (*Taksi-bliuz*) than in more 'relatable' contemporary expressions of genre. However, such directions were more proper to emergent trends at Mosfil'm and Gor'kii Studio.⁹⁸³ Lenfil'm projected a self-image of *avtorskoe kino* shaped by dominant studio personalities like German and informed by the growing exposure of Soviet filmmakers to a panoply of Western art cinema.

Domestically, the offshoots of the Lenfil'm Second TO contributed to an upsurge in *publitsistika* filmmaking that reflected the growth of investigative and political journalism during perestroika. These films addressed officially repressed taboos with unprecedented directness, irony and scorn. Their diagnoses of Soviet societal ills evoked specific historical cases and imagined scenarios that warned of widespread lawlessness and a collapsing social fabric. Lenfil'm studios produced some of the period's most controversially received critiques of the decaying power-apparatus. Aleksandr Rogozhkin and Sergei Snezhkin – both directors whose routes into feature-filmmaking were preceded by work as assistant-directors on seminal pre-perestroika Lenfil'm releases – were at the forefront of this confrontational turn.⁹⁸⁴

Snezhkin's *ChP raionnogo masshtaba / A District-scale Emergency* (1988) was among the last films made at the Second TO. It ridiculed the moral hypocrisy and political corruption of the Romanov-era Leningrad CPSU with an attack on its Komsomol, which had become a commercial operation in perestroika and would culminate in the asset-stripping of its 'property' by unscrupulous leaders as the USSR collapsed.⁹⁸⁵ Rogozhkin's *Karaul / The Guard* (1989) – made at Ladoga studio under Tregubovich's domestically focused artistic direction – proved a hugely controversial exposé of *dedovshchina*, the system of informal bonded subservience and slavery for Soviet army conscripts. Its story of a Private, who murders the abusive senior conscripts on his prisoner convoy-train, resonated strongly with the so-called 'Sakalauskas case' of 1987, when a strikingly similar revenge-killing occurred on a prisoner convoy between Pskov and Leningrad.⁹⁸⁶ However, Rogozhkin insisted that the incident from which *Karaul* took inspiration occurred in 1972/1973, and spoke at length on the covert efforts of senior army officials to prevent the film's release.⁹⁸⁷ Indeed, *Karaul* represented one of the last (and unsuccessful) attempts by conservative forces to censor Lenfil'm output, at a moment when ideological constraints were disappearing from Soviet feature-filmmaking. Nonetheless, Tregubovich's observations about the trickle of ex-CPSU management into regional *prokat* had specifically concerned his difficulties selling *Karaul*.⁹⁸⁸ Although it went on to win the Alfred Bauer prize at the 1990 Berlin Film Festival, it struggled to reach domestic audiences beyond Leningrad and Moscow.⁹⁸⁹ By the end of that year, both Rogozhkin and Snezhkin were professionally unaffiliated to the first-wave Lenfil'm *khozraschet* studios, hovering instead between their own fledgling cooperatives and those units, which struggled for survival as domestic film-distribution fragmented irretrievably.⁹⁹⁰

Towards Collapse: The Politics of Chaos

These *publitsistika* protests also reflected the aggressive intrusion of ‘big’ politics at Lenfil’ m. Its cineastes – mostly through LOSK channels – were increasingly subjected to civic lobbying by groups readying themselves for the end of state-socialist dominance. Alarming forecasts of unrest and actual events aligned uncannily, as fear of an imminent hard-line revanche against perestroika grew. Dmitrii Bykov recently reflected on the political stasis of 1990-1991, asserting that anticipation of a putsch was ‘hanging in the air’ for many Soviet citizens observing the fragmentation of the body politic and official media.⁹⁹¹ In November 1990, this observation was put to an LOSK meeting by representatives of the newly formed Free Democratic Party of Russia [*Svobodnaia demokraticheskaia partiia Rossii*, SDPR], which sought financial backing and public endorsements from cineastes as a party of entrepreneurship and social pluralism. There, a SDPR spokesperson outlined the scenario of a possible *coup d’état*, and advocated civil disobedience towards it, which corresponded extremely closely to the events of late-August 1991.⁹⁹² In the intervening months, at Troitskii most, Snezhkin made *Nevozvrashchenets / The Defector* (1991), a screen-adaptation of Aleksandr Kabakov’s story about an investigative television-reporter’s attempts to expose a military and KGB-backed plot against the reformist government. Remarkably, Leningrad television broadcast *Nevozvrashchenets* on 20 August 1991, the eve of the ill-fated GKChP [*Gosudarstvennyi komitet po chrezvychainomu polozeniiu*] putsch against Gorbachev’s leadership.⁹⁹³ Even as the SDPR warning was issued, the chaotic politics of conspiracy and intrigue had overwhelmed any functioning political guidance for production-management at Lenfil’ m. With investment-shortfalls biting hard, Golutva’s directorship was forced into one final defensive manoeuvre to keep the production-base intact.

The 'full' *khozraschet* adopted on 1 July 1989 had committed the new, semi-autonomous studios to a profit-sharing and reinvestment programme that was designed to promote market opportunities for filmmakers, while guaranteeing Lenfil'm the income required to renovate facilities, modernize technology, and assure the welfare of staff. From April 1990, studios producing all films released into production after July 1989 were entitled to 15.5% of the net profit from film-sales and box-office shares, which the Lenfil'm executive negotiated and administered on their behalf. This relatively modest arrangement excluded dwindling Goskino commissions or films completed without having secured a *prokat* distribution contract. It also required that the producing-studio shoulder the risk of declining – in advance – access to the fixed-income pay-fund that Golutva created to manage future productions released under the 'Lenfil'm' brand.⁹⁹⁴ In October 1989, midway through the first such production-cycle, Golutva contrasted the future opportunities of this model – 'progressive' and 'more economically precise than at other studios' – to some pressing challenges.⁹⁹⁵ The first *khozraschet* quarter had earned 450,000 roubles for the studio's pay-fund: less than quarter of projected requirements. These rates suggested that it would take four-to-five years to make *samofinansirovanie* viable.⁹⁹⁶ For even that to happen, argued Golutva, Lenfil'm would have to dramatically increase its earnings from the provision of facilities and services to other studios: the 11% of studio workload this represented was insufficient for the *kinokombinat* to survive. Moreover, the complete absence of ready money for *kapital'noe stroitel'stvo* meant that Lenfil'm 'will have to live in debt for a long time' to achieve any improvement to facilities.⁹⁹⁷

The steepness of decline in central funding was truly alarming. In late-1989, Boris Tsvetovatyi resigned from the newly created role of Lenfil'm deputy director for *kapital'noe stroitel'stvo* to assume management of the LOSK Kinofond, having agreed with Golutva that the deputyship was unnecessary, and confirming their 'worst fears' from negotiations with Goskino. When

Tsvetovatyi arrived at Lenfil'm in 1983, annual central funding for infrastructure provided 2.5 million roubles, rising to 4 million early in perestroika, then falling to 1.9 million in 1989. For 1990, Tsvetovatyi informed a distraught audience of cineastes that, having budgeted for 1.8 million, Lenfil'm would receive a meagre 310,000 roubles.⁹⁹⁸ Lenfil'm could no longer guarantee its new studios any stable reinvestment mechanism akin to 'full' *khozraschet*. Thus, Golutva was forced to propose a new administrative model that could realistically hope to save the *kinokombinat*, while allowing its producing-studios to trade independently.

The proposal that Lenfil'm become the keystone of a Leningrad Film Association [*kinoassotsiatsiia*] has been described by historians as the logical conclusion to the studio's perestroika, and by a former Lenfil'm executive deputy as a desperate attempt to keep the studio 'formally' intact.⁹⁹⁹ Both perspectives are valid yet incomplete readings of a volatile situation, in which feature-film production in Leningrad had become materially challenging, while also, paradoxically, experiencing a local boom. As hyperinflation and economic collapse accelerated, the improbable-seeming upsurge in productivity at Lenfil'm was a direct consequence of the creation of a *kinoassotsiatsiia*. As proposed in October 1989 and established in October 1990, this move transferred the now autonomous studios to a long-term contractual relationship with a Lenfil'm *kinokombinat*. Lenfil'm would not administratively supervise production, but instead provide industrial facilities and services, while reserving the right to produce films under its own name.¹⁰⁰⁰ In practice, this meant complete financial and legal independence for the new studios, and a semblance of professional continuity for the cohort that had made Lenfil'm widely regarded as the USSR's leading studio in the 1980s.¹⁰⁰¹ As Golutva asserted, Lenfil'm was the same people as before, only without any shared administrative and redactorial apparatus.¹⁰⁰² Konstantin Palechek, then commercial director of Petropol' studio (formerly the Lenfil'm TVO), retrospectively framed this as a compromise born – yet again – of political intent over economic projection:

Amid everything, it was absolutely clear to everyone that we remained 'big' Lenfil'm [...] Nobody wanted to part with that name, but everybody wanted freedom... Golutva advocated that the *kombinat* kept the property. And we got the body of work [*tvorchestvo*]. [...] When we make our film, we'll take all the profit, we thought then. True, we had not thought about whether there would actually be any profit...¹⁰⁰³

This final reorganization hinged not upon the likelihood of profit-making, but rather upon the appetite of both parties for engaging in new forms of trade that could keep feature-filmmaking viable in Leningrad. 'Full' *khozraschet* had appeared like a disproportionate risk for insufficient returns amid such economic uncertainty to the inheritors of Lenfil'm TOs.¹⁰⁰⁴ It also failed to clearly determine who would assume legal ownership of the rights to those TOs' titles. This unresolved question created conflict between several new studios and Golutva's Lenfil'm.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, Lenfil'm's relatively successful foray into international co-production, and its distance from the central power-struggle in Moscow, meant it avoided the biggest scandal at Cannes in 1990, when executives from Mosfil'm and Sovesportfil'm arrived separately at the trade-market, both claiming to own the rights to perestroika-era Mosfil'm titles.¹⁰⁰⁶ To avoid internal antagonism, Golutva became an executive producer at Lenfil'm while serving as a kind of power-brokering, brand-ambassador-cum-chairman for the *kinoassotsiatsiia* studios, interesting himself in quality and profit for the former, and the 'moral aspect' of 'brand prestige' for the latter.¹⁰⁰⁷ In 1990-1991, this straddling was made possible by the extreme fragmentation of financing and commissioning in the USSR, as Golutva then explained:

Our studios have very advantageous conditions. Firstly, they have highly subsidized financial conditions: credit for film-production over three years at six percent. Secondly, there is a colossal amount of fast money circulating in the country, and very many people are still putting money into cinema without even considering whether or not they will recoup. So-called sponsors. Thirdly, our studios are contractually secured to production-bases, an advantage that no money can measure.¹⁰⁰⁸

The astounding frankness of this pitch reflects the resourcefulness with which Golutva had adapted to the murky emerging markets that were funding cinema production. Amid what Gukasian called ‘the total deficit of everything we are living in’, Lenfil’ m and the *kinoassotsiatsiia* had attempted to mitigate the failure of ‘full’ *khozraschet* by dissolving that ambitious architecture and focusing collective efforts on the survival of those studios that had emerged from the ‘old’ TOs.¹⁰⁰⁹ In 1989, production remained in line with pre-perestroika levels at thirty-one films (including television commissions). Five of these came from the still-active First TO and the remainder were new-studio releases. In 1990, as *khozraschet* faltered, only twenty films were made, but Golos – the studio emerging from the First TO – again produced five titles, while benefitting from closer support by the Lenfil’ m directorship than other studios. After that low watermark of late-Soviet output, a remarkable forty-two films were made in 1991, nine of which had Lenfil’ m as the sole producer or domestic lead in an international co-production. This testifies to a significant upsurge in productivity under the *kinoassotsiatsiia*, despite the economic crisis.¹⁰¹⁰ The final disintegration of the Leningrad *kinoassotsiatsiia* was preceded by its release of seventy-eight films in 1992 alone.¹⁰¹¹ Thereafter, all residue from Soviet perestroika was wiped away by the market economy, in which the only latent worth of these studios was the names of

the filmmakers who had led them through this turbulent period. It would take until 1996 for Golutva to leave Lenfil'm and accept Medvedev's invitation to become Goskino Deputy Chairman. Golutva had first rebuffed this approach in 1989, when the doomed reformist project that would nonetheless make his managerial reputation became, against all odds, a short-lived reality of Lenfil'm production.¹⁰¹²

Conclusion: TOs as the Limit of the Possible?

Even as state-administration of Soviet cinema collapsed, Lenfil'm cineastes continued to conceptualize the shrinking space for reform around those small production units – former TOs – that now called themselves 'studios', but were so in name only. It is striking to observe how, in this period, the organizational principles of the TO held such persistent, irreducible primacy for late-Soviet cineastes. This was especially true at Lenfil'm, where the artistic identities of these units had sustained a marginalized studio through the 1960s and 1970s, and allowed it to respond to perestroika with a coherent repertory programme for *avtorskoe kino*. Lenfil'm filmmakers were among the most celebrated Soviet 'discoveries' in the West, as the interest of festivals, distributors and broadcasters in Soviet culture momentarily peaked between 1986 and 1991.¹⁰¹³ Domestically, however, the removal of total dependency on the state provoked deep professional perplexity, with ramifications for film-financing, welfare, and fundamental psychological recalibration.

In November 1989, the long-awaited and extremely convoluted CM *Postanovlenie* 1003 on cinema reform sanctioned – at least theoretically – the coexistence of state-administered studios and production-cooperatives with sweepingly deregulated entrepreneurial prerogatives.¹⁰¹⁴ However, as Kokarev observes, the industry's reformist elite did not embrace this legislation as a license to

establish structures like independent production companies, which could have operated and traded separately from the monolithic studios' industrial facilities.¹⁰¹⁵ Instead, fearing the detrimental impact of market-forces on artistic quality, but recognizing the need to introduce economic stimuli into a decaying infrastructure, reformers simply attempted to improve the structures inherited from those monolithic studios, in the hope of retaining political leverage *vis-à-vis* the state and guaranteeing social-welfare provision for their cohorts.

At the outset of perestroika, Gukasian and Tregubovich saw *khozraschet* more as a reform necessary to improve the artistic quality of Soviet cinema, than as an indicator of profit-potential or better reinvestment. Its priority would be to finish with 'grey films', which they both held responsible for sustaining Goskino politically, draining the meagre resources of studios, and lowering the interest of domestic audiences in Soviet cinema.¹⁰¹⁶ Unsustainably cheap ticket-prices, growing videotape-piracy and the milking of cheap foreign imports further damaged the prospects of *khozraschet* studios, which were revising their business-models mere months after their establishment, in the face of continuous economic destabilization.

In practice, TO-focused *khozraschet* was a model under which Lenfil'm cineastes grouped together, as *gruppy edinomyshlennikov*, to make the films they themselves wanted to see, both as producers and culturally privileged viewers. A *Khudsovet* with 'final authority' over all aspects of production was not just an executive-auteurist cartel; it was also the most responsive audience a film produced in this period and cultural context could realistically aspire to. As Lenfil'm moved towards the *kinoassotsiatsiia* in 1990, Gukasian feared a collapse of artistic standards if commissioning criteria were detached from studio-supervision, and lobbied Golutva to retain 'a managerial body for the repertory process, if the studio is to exist in art'.¹⁰¹⁷ For Tregubovich, however, Lenfil'm *avtorskoe kino* no longer required studio-level repertory direction, not least

because these films were too numerically insignificant to be made responsible for driving change in the industry. Auteurism that was ‘art, and not empty pretentiousness, [was] an essential and extremely fruitful development in our cinema [...] Experimental, *avtorskie* films don’t generate income, but they don’t create the deficit either!’, he concluded.¹⁰¹⁸

In 1991, with the disintegration of the Party-state apparatus at all levels, a bitter irony became apparent. Beleaguered Lenfil’*m* professionals were then actively engaging in more recognizably socialist initiatives – forming new professional unions, devising welfare-programmes on the basis of wealth-distribution, bargaining collectively for access to public funds – than at any previous time. Nonetheless, the inability of the SK to secure *prokat* reform had almost inevitably condemned the political initiative of the Fifth Congress to failure, before *khozraschet* even came into effect. When Soviet cinema collapsed, what remained at Lenfil’*m* was the sense of an uncorrupted artistic identity. Throughout the late-Soviet period, Lenfil’*m* had used its marginalization from the central power-structures to forge a commitment to institutional auteurism as a form of aesthetical resistance, despite determined opposition from one of the USSR’s most reactionary regional CPSU organizations. The editor’s introduction to a November 1991 discussion between cineastes evokes this well:

Without awaiting the Fifth SK Congress, Lenfil’*m* prided itself on patronage of uncommercial cinema (then, this was called *avtorskoe*, which here implied not so much the absence of commerce as the absence of ideological bias). Even though the economic environment has changed the name, lexicon and style of clothing, its essence has not changed. Insofar as it can, Lenfil’*m* upholds its brand, but now even

less depends on the studio than before, when an all-powerful Goskino towered above it.¹⁰¹⁹

This absolute dependency on the state – for funding, distribution, political currency, *and* an oppositional force to organize against and resist psychologically – was a condition of the studio's 'self-ethnographizing' culture and its institutional practices. In 1991, German ruefully remarked that he 'finds it funny when we are praised at festivals for [making] uncommercial cinema. That's like praising an impotent man for his celibacy'.¹⁰²⁰ Later in the 1990s, he would observe that the 'enciphered world' [*zashifrovannyi mir*] of Soviet life had been replaced, 'upon coming out from behind the looking-glass', by 'a dull room'.¹⁰²¹ Between these barbed comments, there is a pertinent metaphor for the entire TO-system, with its paradoxically disposed *Khudsovety* and its powerful, precarious *redaktory*. When it existed, its chronic political disenfranchisements and ideologically coded performances of professional compliance were the source of constant grievances about the studio's apparent cultural degradation, material impoverishment, and attendant provinciality complex. Once it had passed into historical obsolescence, following a succession of improbably negotiated compromises with the unyielding behemoth of the late-Soviet state, it became apparent that 'impotence' and 'agency' were not mutually exclusive conditions of artistic and civic life under this system. Rather, the late-Soviet studio had been both a repressive institution and a cherished home, offering Lenfil'm cineastes extremely limited scope for political freedom, but more ample room in which to nonetheless manoeuvre towards it artistically.

Conclusion

Although mandated by the Party-state apparatus, late-Soviet cinema-reforms were complex negotiations of institutional power. Soviet film-studios were politically typical yet structurally unique, ideologically uniform(ed) yet culturally diverse organizations. They were perpetually mitigating technological backwardness, industrial inertia and bureaucratic inflexibility to produce a synthetic artform that reflected and sublimated the performative paradoxes of late-Soviet life more extensively than any other branch of state-controlled cultural production. Moreover, their enterprise was entirely delimited by the plan-fulfilment economy and officially dictated thematic categorizations. Until perestroika, this imposed a public veneer of stability on output, masking declining audiences, mounting professional discontent and the irrepressible artistic impulse to interrogate social relations, which the Party-state sought to direct and contain.

The Party-state proved unable to direct or contain the artistic development of Soviet cinema, once studio-level commissioning was devolved to cineastes with broader repertory horizons than their supervisors. Detached from domestic audiences, isolated internationally and beholden to the authorities for every release, innovative filmmakers pursued what limited scope for self-expression this system reluctantly offered. Their studios awaited the authorities' unpredictable and inconsistent intervention with a repertoire of political strategies that diminished in currency, the more insistent official calls for punitive exposure became.

The artistic culture of late-Soviet Lenfil'm has consistently been defined against the grain of this political reality. An ethical commitment to truth-telling is ascribed to discreetly nonconformist aesthetics, whereby existential malaise was the principal subtext of its chief 'realisms': poetic, social(ist) and 'domestic' [*kamernyi; bytovoï; komnatnyi*].¹⁰²² The studio's professional discourses

have been less extensively scrutinized: archival sources document its production-histories from *within*. This thesis finds ‘Lenfil’ m specificity’ to have been a more ambivalent self-ethnographizing identification than can be accommodated in retrospective critical commendations for intellectual resistance to late-Soviet cultural orthodoxies. Its *avtorskoe kino* developed in ceaseless tension with the thematic categorizations of a system that was extremely reluctant to acknowledge its repertory emergence in the 1960s, having inadvertently facilitated this through studio-reorganization.

Frequently, a ‘provinciality complex’ among Lenfil’ m cineastes expressed their relative material impoverishment and stark political disadvantage, confronted by dual subordination to a distant Goskino bureaucracy and a reactionary Leningrad CPSU organization. For Iosif Kheifits, cinema – at once art and industry – was only viable in the USSR because its collaborative professional milieu and synthetic nature allowed isolated artistic workers to identify with the culture of a studio-collective, something which could never apply to the increasingly fractious political habitat of Soviet literature, for example.¹⁰²³ Nonetheless, Kheifits often wryly repeated a line from Kozintsev: “The thing I fear more than anything’, he said, ‘is that a comrade from the planning department will stand up at my funeral and say, ‘Kozintsev is dead. He was a good worker [*proizvodstvennik!*!’”¹⁰²⁴

Kheifits’s biography (born 1905, died 1995) recounts one version of the entire chronology of Soviet cinema-history: each decade brought titles that encapsulated new repertory directions for Lenfil’ m. *Dama s sobachkoi* was the earliest reconciliation of the studio’s celebrated legacy of director-focused commissioning – a cornerstone of its artistic leadership of Soviet cinema in the 1930s – to a new era, in which an expansion of film-production would be assured by collegiate studio-level commissioning. At Lenfil’ m, *Dama* was an artistic criterion that bridged the

beginning and the culmination of the studio's reorganization into TOs. Its familiar classicism and pre-revolutionary credentials were emblematic of an artistically ambitious cinema that challenged the fixities of thematic planning *aesthetically*, even within its binding categorizations.

Concurrently, 1958-1961 saw unprecedented legitimization of interest in foreign cinemas. Here, *Chelovek-amfibiia* appeared at the intersection of several untravelled roads in late-Soviet moviemaking. Aesthetically credible genre-cinema, aspiring to Western standards and backed for international export by central authorities, failed to develop a repertory foothold because it was born into a transitional executive-production vacuum, grappled with inorganic artistic traditions, and upheld unwieldy thematic expectations. Ironically, the astounding box-office success of *Chelovek-amfibiia* was less beneficial to Lenfil'm than simply submitting this film on time, which rescued the studio's plan-fulfilment obligations but frightened it away from similarly ambitious productions. Incoming Lenfil'm TOs were disincentivized to adapt genre-cinema experimentations into their thematic planning. This only deepened their detachment from the huge potential audiences such films could attract. Subsequently, only one Lenfil'm release reached the top three in annual domestic box-office charts between 1963 and perestroika.¹⁰²⁵

In the mid-1960s, Lenfil'm attracted talent from new sources. Under *Khudruk* Vladimir Vengerov, the Lenfil'm Third TO encouraged aesthetical experimentation and *avtorskoe kino* to occupy the repertory foreground of a drive to maximize audience-appeal. However, it repeatedly drew the ire of the authorities, studio-management and 'establishment' critics. In this context, Gennadii Shpalikov epitomized the decade's irreconcilable collision between filmmaker-led and official repertory expectations. Screenwriter of *Zastava Il'icha* and *Ia shagaiu po Moskve* – two epoch-defining films of contrasting intonation about youthful ardour and generational change –

Shpalikov was commissioned to make his directorial debut at Lenfil'm before the controversial fates of these titles had been politically resolved.

This was also the moment of European auteurism's greatest influence over Soviet filmmaking. Shpalikov's recondite cinephile identifications illustrated a concern with gender politics and social marginality in *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'*. Its unsettled filmic world and open-ended aesthetic met with incomprehension and hostility during a panicked Lenfil'm submission, which coincided exactly with the activation of the Brezhnev regime's conservative programme. Shpalikov never directed another film: his professional marginalization deepened steeply thereafter. Throughout its short existence, the Lenfil'm Third TO's regular contravention of official orthodoxies sealed its eventual liquidation. It was replaced by a TV unit with lucrative conditions and relative operational autonomy. In this climate, narrower thematic categories predominated, albeit with patchy official enforcement and informal political manoeuvring determining the scope for commissioning innovations.

After a widely lauded debut on the Civil War – commissioned to meet the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution – Gleb Panfilov sought to use this esteem to realize his ultimate ambition, the life-story of Jeanne d'Arc. However, this project was modified amid discontent at Goskino and the Leningrad Party over the standard of output from young Lenfil'm cineastes. The film-within-the-film of *Nachalo* preserved the contours of the controversial *Jeanne d'Arc* project and worked a subtly polemical commentary on the politics of Soviet filmmaking into its story of a working-class woman plucked from obscurity to play Jeanne.

Incredibly, Panfilov would continue to manoeuvre (unsuccessfully) for *Jeanne d'Arc* to be produced, eventually relinquishing this plan to make *Proshu slova*, a film which aroused such

hostility from Leningrad's CPSU leadership that further work at Lenfil'm became politically impossible. In response to a landmark 1972 CC *Postanovlenie* on cinema, Lenfil'm momentarily discarded its privileging of working-class archetypes to focus instead on managers as the vanguard of developed-socialist ideology, as aesthetic auteurism went into strategic retreat. The studio pragmatically negotiated this conservative turn by prioritizing the production of industrial dramas within newly restrictive repertory parameters.

In the 1970s, the formal presentation of CPSU policies engendered a major repertory shift in Soviet cinema. This decade saw official encouragement of contemporary themes directed towards the production of 'instructive anthropologies' for the managerial classes. The ubiquitous artistic expression of this ideological realignment – the industrial drama – simultaneously justified the centralized plan-fulfilment economy and exposed its counterintuitive conventions and vulnerability to corruption. Narrativizing the performative rhetoric of developed socialism was a psychologically complex balancing-act. Lenfil'm industrial dramas consistently belied their prescriptive aims: plan-fulfilment economics were invariably framed as burdensome, managerially bungled and inaccurate criteria for measuring productivity. Unable to compel auteurs to make industrial dramas, Lenfil'm commissioned its strongest representatives of mass-cinema to develop this repertory direction, frequently responding to, or in tandem with, innovative theatrical productions. In encoding the problematics of developed-socialist management for the screen, Lenfil'm also displaced commentary on practices endemic in the centralized planning-system onto sectors whose industrial significance assured the thematic appeal of these films to expectant CPSU supervisors.

In this period, the CC *Postanovlenie* increasingly became the most authoritative expression of official discourse for lower echelons of the apparatus to enforce and replicate in their own

rhetoric-driven disciplining of organizations like film-studios. After 1972, when two such *Postanovleniia* (on cinema; on literary criticism) were issued, the Leningrad CPSU organizations under Grigorii Romanov hardened an ultra-conservative line that advanced this Politburo Candidate-Member's high-political ambitions and reflected the region's status as an industrial leader. Under Romanov, the Leningrad Obkom's brokerage of local policy-initiatives and its pre-emptive screening of Lenfil'm output were common assertions of an informal political pre-eminence. Goskino could not, in practice, proceed without first heeding and adapting to the Obkom's decision to allow or deny a Lenfil'm production onward submission for release.

In 1975, the Obkom issued a highly critical *Postanovlenie* on mismanagement at Lenfil'm. Thereafter, studio-executives and *redaktery* were caught between local CPSU organizations licensed to intervene at the faintest hint of ideological deviation, and Goskino administrators whose criteria for rejecting screenplays often seemed arbitrary, punitive and vague. Detailed scrutiny of the 1978 Lenfil'm plan-fulfilment crisis reveals a multi-level political campaign to purge studio-management and remorselessly marginalize artistic innovation. This crisis led to serious Party reprimands for the leadership of the First TO and the removal of most senior studio-management, precipitating a salvage-job to meet all plan-fulfilment requirements. It also exposed obvious hostility and suspicion in the studio's relationship with Goskino, when older representatives of senior-management were found to be increasingly at odds with influential cineastes and leading TO-level *redaktery*.

This was a collective nadir that became an unlikely turning-point. The managerial clear-out had claimed the studio's most senior Jewish administrator and another figure likely to have been the leading KGB operative at Lenfil'm. However, amid such a turbulent purge, the seeds of the studio's reformist future were planted. As the CPSU Raikom official leading the district-level

Party investigation, Aleksandr Golutva – a future Goskino chairman and Russian Federation Deputy Minister of Culture – diplomatically mitigated punishments for First TO cineastes, enhancing his political standing among filmmakers and progressive administrators.

The First TO's remarkable commissioning of Kira Muratova was at the centre of this investigation. Muratova, one of late-Soviet cinema's most persecuted and officially reviled auteurs, represented a political risk and an unlikely foil to mounting ideological criticism of Lenfil'm. In her hands, the industrial drama was conceptually hollowed into a superlative auteurist experiment with only passing – and parodic – gratification of orthodox tropes. No other late-Soviet Lenfil'm title so divided studio-professionals over its aesthetical value. Parallels between the aborted Lenfil'm careers of Muratova and Shpalikov speak of an enduring split between artistic experimentation and political panic that would remain unreconciled until Golutva's arrival as editor-in-chief in 1985. After a fraught production that coincided exactly with the Party intervention and a correspondingly damning Raikom *Postanovlenie* (enforced by Golutva), incoming studio-executives seemed convinced that Muratova's experimental film would be disastrously 'shelved'. When this did not transpire, relief was tempered by the need to rebuild executive credibility from scratch. The departures of Panfilov and Muratova were rumoured to be the beginning of a larger impending exodus – ultimately avoided – over the following years, which are long-considered the most repressive of Romanov's tenure in Leningrad.

Golos, rescued from thematic rejection under a new studio-directorship, is the film that best expresses the studio's professional despondency and need for renewal after an extremely torrid period. This critical self-ethnography depicts the production of a hack late-Soviet feature-film, (cautiously) exposing the mediocrity of the so-called 'grey' cinema that guaranteed fulfilment of

yearly studio production-plans. Like *Nachalo*, *Golos* elides all risky mention of official screening-practices, but goes further to explicitly implicate the filmmaking milieu in its unfavourable predicament. Here, typical late-Soviet post-production contingencies are charged with ideological significance. Observing technological modifications to the film-within-the-film, we access a critique of derivative source-material, professional cynicism and political precarity holding sway in the production-contexts of Lenfil'm itself, the setting for *Golos*. Il'ia Averbakh staked the determination of a terminally ill actor to complete her role's voice-recording against a milieu that is unconcerned by her health or professional dignity in its search for an ending to this second-rate film. Soon, the early deaths of Averbakh and Dinara Asanova lent *Golos* a tragically prophetic dimension. An era in the culture of Lenfil'm auteurism ended symbolically with their passing, before the tumult of perestroika, but after the internal regrouping that facilitated its overhauls.

A persistent notion – that concerted reformist initiatives began with perestroika – is challenged by evidence of studio-specific responses to stagnating repertory development at Lenfil'm in the early 1980s. The reformist agendas of this period shared the practical investments of 1960s reorganizations in devolved commissioning rights and greater autonomy for studio TOs. Following the 'revolutionary' Fifth SK Congress, the impetus behind reform was overwhelmingly political, and not economic. Conceptually, however, *khozraschet* economics seemed the most viable means by which leading reformers imagined overturning Goskino's monopoly on film-funding, repertory administration and film-distribution. This success of this programme was widely held to depend upon reform of the entire network of film-printing, distribution and exhibition-practices.

Leading Lenfil'm reformers understood the political motivations for this central agenda early in perestroika. They embraced its greater artistic freedoms while critiquing its utopian aspirations

and entrenchment in Moscow's turbulent powerplays. Ultimately, Lenfil'm reformers recognized the *prokat* system as self-serving, inefficient and widely failing, but were unable to propose a sustainable alternative to this monopoly amid such fast-moving political change. Against the backdrop of overt acrimony and behind-the-scenes subversion between the SK and Goskino leaderships in 1987-1989, Lenfil'm established 'internal' *khozraschet* to train TOs in market-driven activity, while awaiting further system-wide liberalization of funding, reinvestment and profit-distribution. By devolving repertory management, hiring facilities and selling services to 'new' TO-studios on the premise that these units would become semi-autonomous under 'full' *khozraschet*, Golutva's Lenfil'm directorship sought to retain talented cineastes whose artistic interests had been marginalized or stifled under previous administrations.

Under Golutva, Lenfil'm auteurism was repackaged as the studio's brand. Impressive international festival performances and the short-lived prominence of Soviet cinema in global art-house markets made Lenfil'm, in the words of Marcel Martin, the only Soviet studio where auteurist filmmaking remained possible.¹⁰²⁶ Behind this categorical assertion lay the tricky equation of Golutva's gambit to hold the studio together and make its art-cinema economically viable. The transition from 'internal' to 'full' *khozraschet* at Lenfil'm suffered multiple setbacks due to dwindling central funding and inadequate profit-retention incentives for its new 'studios', as Soviet cinema's institutions fragmented irreparably. Emerging from Goskino oversight in 1990, and inherently wary of commercial forces, Lenfil'm auteurism collapsed domestically at the moment of its highest international renown. Perestroika afforded Lenfil'm auteurism new reach beyond a repertory system that ought to have precluded its existence, but it also exposed uninitiated filmmaker-producers to insurmountable financial challenges.

Many reformers were resourceful, imaginative and committed civic figureheads, who encouraged cinema – an artform, industry and professional milieu – to reflect and advance societal liberalization in the final years of the USSR. They could not, however, solve the existential quandaries of declining attendances, rampant videotape-piracy or rogue regional distribution, a new refuge for ex-CPSU officials determined to conserve their material advantages. Nor could they insulate principled reorganizations from the hyperinflation and political conflict that precipitated total systemic collapse. Considering an arch from the TO-system’s establishment to the point at which these units were the only functioning artistic structures that remained from studio-based production, further avenues for scholarship could productively adopt what may be called, in Russian, the *obratnaia tochka* [reverse angle] of this thesis. A study of repertory management at Goskino and an authoritative history of late-Soviet Mosfil’ m would greatly enhance our understanding of the institutional fault-lines that configured political power in the central administrative apparatus. Under auspicious archival conditions, research could also illuminate the hitherto underexamined influence of high-ranking CC CPSU officials upon Goskino practices, complementing this thesis’s interest in the Leningrad Party’s supervisory pre-eminence over 1970s Lenfil’ m.

Notes

Introduction

¹ Dudley Andrew, *the Major Film Theories: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 4.

² Dudley Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 115-16.

³ Thomas Elsaesser, 'A Retrospect: The Film Director as Auteur – Artist, Brand Name or Engineer?', 1995, pp. 2-3 and p. 7.

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⁴ Alexandre Astruc, 'Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde: La caméra stylo', *Écran français*, 144 (1948), p. 22, republished in *The New Wave*, ed. and trans by Peter Graham (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), pp. 17-23.

⁵ Graham (ed.), *The New Wave*, p. 22.

⁶ Antoine de Baecque, *Les Cahiers du cinéma. Histoire d'une revue : Tome 1: À l'assaut du cinéma: 1951-1959* (Paris: Éditions Cahiers du cinéma, 1991), p. 148.

⁷ Sergei Filippov, 'Zametki ob avtorakh i teorii: Vmesto poslesloviia k stat'e Astriuka', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 104/105 (2013), 130-42 (pp. 130-31).

⁸ Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 83.

⁹ David Bordwell, 'Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory' in *Post-theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, ed. by David Bordwell and Noel Carroll (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 3-34 (p. 19).

¹⁰ Thomas Elsaesser, *The New German Cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 46.

¹¹ de Baecque, *Les Cahiers du cinéma*, pp. 149 and 155.

¹² André Bazin, 'De la politique des auteurs', *Cahiers du cinéma*, 70 (1957), 2-11 (p. 6). For a considered discussion of Bazin's position on the *politique des auteurs* in this article and elsewhere, see de Baecque, *Les Cahiers du cinéma. Histoire d'une revue*, pp. 160-63.

¹³ Elsaesser, *The New German Cinema*, p. 43.

¹⁴ Andrew Sarris, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962', *Film Culture*, 27 (1962), 1-8, republished in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 515-18 (p. 516).

¹⁵ Filippov, 'Zametki ob avtorakh i teorii', p. 134.

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- ¹⁶ Elsaesser, 'A Retrospect: The Film Director', p. 6.
- ¹⁷ Filippov, 'Zametki ob avtorakh i teorii', p. 141.
- ¹⁸ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. by Charles Rougle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 6.
- ¹⁹ Vladimir Baskakov, 'Kino ottepeli bylo "diffuzionnym"', in *Kinematograf ottepeli: Kniga vtoraiia*, ed. by Vitalii Troianovskii (Moscow: Materik, 2002), 322-34 (p. 332).
- ²⁰ Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker, 'Introduction: The Socialist 1960s in Global Perspective', in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, ed. by Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1-21 (p. 2).
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- ²² Ten short articles by Soviet cineastes praising different works and aspects of contemporary neorealism, grouped under the title 'A Discussion of Italian Films', are textually woven around a longer, central survey by Grigorii Boiadzhiev, 'Liubit' cheloveka', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1957, 1, pp. 129-54.
- ²³ Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 35.
- ²⁴ See, for example, 'Rossellini razoblachaet' (unattributed article), *Iskusstvo kino*, 1960, 2, pp. 139-40.
- ²⁵ Neia Zorkaia, "'General Della Rovere": Zapiski c Venetsianskogo festivalia 1959 goda', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1960, 1, pp. 140-42, and Federico Fellini, Tulio Pinelli and Ennio Flaiano, "'Sladkaia zhizn'": Otryvki iz stsenarii', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1961, 7, pp. 135-46.
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- ²⁷ John MacKay, 'Montage under Suspicion: Bazin's Russo-Soviet Reception' in *Opening Bazin. Postwar Film Theory and its Afterlife*, ed. by Dudley Andrew and Hervé Joubert-Laurencin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 291–301.
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- ²⁹ Elsaesser, *The New German Cinema*, p. 40.
- ³⁰ Ibid, p. 47.
- ³¹ Ibid, p. 44.
- ³² Ibid, p. 47.
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- ³⁴ Elsaesser, *The New German Cinema*, p. 46.
- ³⁵ Ibid, p. 47.

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- ³⁶ Ibid, p. 51.
- ³⁷ Ibid, pp. 55 and 57.
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- ⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 11–12.
- ⁴¹ John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press), p. 201.
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- ⁴⁴ Lilya Kaganovsky, ‘Postmemory, Countermemory: Soviet Cinema of the 1960s’ in Gorsuch and Koenker (eds), *The Socialist Sixties*, 235-50 (pp. 238-39).
- ⁴⁵ Gorsuch and Koenker, ‘Introduction’, p. 8.
- ⁴⁶ Frizheta Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.
- ⁴⁷ Maria Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan: Filmmaking under Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), p. 213.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 50-51 and pp. 128-29.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 51.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, pp. 213-20.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 215-16.
- ⁵² Ibid, p. 97.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 58-59 and 62-63.
- ⁵⁵ For an extensive discussion of Stalin-era cinema-administration, see *Kremlevskii kinoteatr: 1928-1953: Dokumenty*, ed. by Kirill Anderson and others (Moscow: Rosspen, 2005).
- ⁵⁶ Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan*, pp. 52-89 (especially pp. 65-88).
- ⁵⁷ See Vladimir Baskakov, ‘“Serebrianyi vek” sovetskogo kino’ in *Kinematograf ottepli: Dokumenty i svidetel’sтва*, ed. by Valerii Fomin (Moscow: Materik, 1998), 178-97 (pp. 179-91).
- ⁵⁸ Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan*, p. 89.
- ⁵⁹ For example, in 1965, a Goskino circular issued all studios with instructions to pay particular thematic attention to Soviet revolutionary history and Vladimir Lenin, before immediately threatening that ‘failure to fulfil an approved plan for colour-film and new format [i.e.

widescreen] releases will be considered a failure to fulfil the overall [thematic] plan'. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1169, l. 54.

⁶⁰ Thematic-planning descriptions are referenced here from multiple archival volumes. See TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, dd. 24-272.

⁶¹ Grigorii Kozintsev (1962): 'What does 'demanding a film about Leningrad's working classes' mean? We don't have any such straightforward screenplays. We can't just call up a screenwriter and tell him to write a screenplay on a theme that we require'. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 44, l. 24.

⁶² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 36, l. 45; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 75, l. 89.

⁶³ Fomin has addressed the Brezhnev regime's attempts to remove Stalinist repression from the thematic landscape of cinema in the late-1960s, in "Nikakoi epokhi kul'ta lichnosti ne bylo..." ili Kak kino izbavialo ot kramol'noi temy', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1989, 1, pp. 96-109.

⁶⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, l. 10 ('Vvedenie')

⁶⁵ Iurii Golubenskii, *Lenfil'm* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1968), p. 71.

⁶⁶ Andrei Bakhilin, *Kinostudiia "Lenfil'm"* (Moscow: Soiuzinformkino, 1982), p. 1.

⁶⁷ See Valerii Fomin, *Polka: Dokumenty, svidetel'stva, kommentarii* (Moscow: Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut kinoiskusstva, 1992), pp. 123-27.

⁶⁸ See Valerii Fomin, *Kino i vlast': Sovetskoe kino 1965–1985 gody: Dokumenty, svidetel'stva, razmyshleniia* (Moscow: Materik, 1996).

⁶⁹ Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Caldwell, *Production Culture*, p. 5.

⁷¹ See Armen Medvedev, *Territoria kino* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001); and Boris Pavlenok, *Kino: Legendy i byl'* (Moscow: Galeriia, 2004).

⁷² Vitalii Aksenov, *Kak stat' direktorom Lenfil'ma* (St. Petersburg: Petropolis, 2015).

⁷³ James Steffen, *The Cinema of Sergei Parajanov* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), p. 9.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 10.

⁷⁵ Ibid, in reference to Valery Golovskoy and John Rimberg, *Behind the Soviet Screen: The Motion-picture Industry in the USSR, 1972-1982* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1986), pp. 23-25, and Boris Konoplev, *Osnovy fil'moproizvodstva* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1975), p. 90.

⁷⁶ Joshua First, *Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity During the Soviet Thaw* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

⁷⁷ Ibid, especially pp. 180-209.

⁷⁸ Ibid, especially pp. 13 and 17.

⁷⁹ See *Iz istorii Lenfil'ma*, 4 vols, ed. by Nina Gornitskaia (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1968-1975).

⁸⁰ Bernard Eisenschitz, 'Une autre histoire: Dialogue avec Naum Klejman 1' in Bernard Eisenschitz (ed.), *Lignes d'ombre: Une autre histoire du cinéma soviétique (1926-1968)* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2000), p. 24.

⁸¹ Aleksandr Pozdniakov, *List'ia akanta* (St. Petersburg: Kinostudiia "KinoMel'nitsa", 2014), p. 218.

⁸² *Ibid*, pp. 240-56. In her preface to the posthumous publication of Bratoliubov's study, Gornitskaia attested to the author's dependence on consultation of the journal *Kinonedelia* for his verification of sources. See Sergei Bratoliubov, *Na zare sovetskoi kinematografii: Iz istorii kinoorganizatsii Petrograda-Leningrada 1918-1925 godov* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1976), p. 5.

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⁸⁴ See Marcel Martin, *Le Cinéma soviétique de Khrouchtchev à Gorbatchev (1955–1992)*, (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1993), pp. 119-22 and pp. 157-60. See also Natacha Laurent, 'Le modèle soviétique des studios: L'exemple de Lenfilm', *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 46 (1995), pp. 107-16.

⁸⁵ Blair A. Ruble, *Leningrad: Shaping a Soviet City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 16.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 180; and Jerry Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 13-15.

⁸⁷ For an astute sociological discussion of the Leningrad Affair, see Boris Firsov, *Raznomyslie v SSSR, 1940-1960-e gg.: Istoriia, teoriia i praktika* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii dom, 2008), pp. 142-46.

⁸⁸ Jeremy Hicks, 'Lenfilm Lives On! The Charm and Curse of Continuity: Report on 'RealAvantGarde—With Lenfilm Through the Short Twentieth Century,' goEast (Wiesbaden, 18-24 April)', *KinoKultura*, 37 (2012).

<http://www.kinokultura.com/2012/37-hicks.shtml> [accessed 25 October 2015].

⁸⁹ *XXII s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda: Stenograficheskie otchet*, 3 vols (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1962), III, p. 276.

⁹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 65.

⁹¹ Woll, *Real Images*, p. 228.

⁹² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 68.

⁹³ First, an initial proposal [*zaiavka*] for a screenplay was submitted. Next, the approved screenwriter(s) produced a literary screenplay [*literaturnyi stsenarii*], multiple drafts of which required formal TO-level approval before work could commence on the filmmaker's directorial

screenplay [*rezhisserskii stsenarii*]. The final preparatory stage of pre-production required the filmmaker to produce a redrafted directorial screenplay, enhanced by detailed indications of camera-positioning and *mise-en-scène*, which was called a ‘directorial blueprint’ [*rezhisserskaia razrabotka*].

⁹⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, ll. 24-27.

⁹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, l. 27.

⁹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2, l. 5.

⁹⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2, ll. 6-7.

⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, l. 26.

⁹⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, l. 25.

¹⁰⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, l. 25.

¹⁰¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1, l. 25.

¹⁰² Golovskoy and Rimberg, *Behind the Soviet Screen*, pp. 23-25.

¹⁰³ Igor’ Maslennikov, *Beiker-strit na Petrogradskoi* (St. Petersburg: Seans/Amfora, 2007), pp. 65-67.

¹⁰⁴ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

¹⁰⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 68.

¹⁰⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 69.

¹⁰⁷ The roster of permanent TO-staff was given as follows:

Unit-Manager (*Direktor ob"edineniia*); Artistic Director (*Khudozhestvennyi rukovoditel'*); film-directors (*rezhissery-postanovshchiki*); Editor-in-chief/Deputy Chairman of the Artistic Council (*Glavnyi redaktor / Zamestitel' predsedatelia Khudozhestvennogo soveta*); senior editors and editors (*starshie redaktory i redaktory*); production-managers (*direktora kinokartin*); camera-operators (*operatory*); set-designers (*khudozhniki-postanovshchiki*); sound-operators (*zvukooperatory*); first and second assistant-directors (*rezhissery i assistenty rezhissera*). TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 70.

¹⁰⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 72. Goskino awarded all films approved for release a remuneration category that also determined its distribution status. Officially, this was based on aesthetical and political excellence, but designations depended, in practice, upon ideological compliance and formal orthodoxy. A ‘first category’ film would be a major promotional event with USSR-wide press and distribution-coverage; a ‘second category’ ensured the security of earnings for cast and crew, allowing the studio to recoup its state-bank [Gosbank] loan; while a ‘third category’ film would be allocated to disgrace the studio in question, imposing heavy financial penalties upon it and denying its creators their prearranged rates of remuneration. Such films were printed according to the minimal sanctioned quantity of copies and proved extremely

difficult to view in urban cinemas. ‘Fourth category’ releases, like the lowest formally available grades in Soviet and Russian educational examinations, were vanishingly rare: films deemed so inappropriate for release were sooner ‘shelved’.

¹⁰⁹ Mariia Kosinova, *Istoriia kinoproduserstva v Rossii* (Riazan’: Uzoroch’e, 2004), pp. 213-14.

¹¹⁰ Baskakov compared Pyr’ev’s knack for executive production to that of Louis B. Mayer, in terms of astute hiring-practices and guidance of on-going productions. Baskakov, ‘Kino ottepeli bylo “diffuzionnym”’, p. 322.

¹¹¹ RGALI f. 3058, op. 1, d. 415, ll. 39-60, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr’ev: Pravda tvorchestva: Posviashchaetsia 110-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia narodnogo artista SSSR, I.A. Pyr’eva*, ed. by Igor’ Korotkov, Elena Ogneva and Valerii Fomin (Barnaul: GMILKA, 2011), pp. 386-93. The archival documents in this publication are drawn from the Russian State Archive of Literature and the Arts [Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva, RGALI].

¹¹² Oleg Kovalov, ‘Istoriia zhurnala “Iskusstvo kino”’, in Liubov’ Arkus, ‘Zhivoi zhurnal’, *Seans* (13 August 2009), <<http://seance.ru/blog/zhivoy-zhurnal/>> [accessed 20 October 2015].

¹¹³ See Baskakov, ‘Kino ottepeli bylo “diffuzionnym”’, pp. 322-37; Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepeli*, pp. 178-87; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast’*, pp. 132-43.

¹¹⁴ A.O. Khanskii, ‘Materialy XIX s’ezda VKP(b)-KPSS’ – Resheniia s’ezda’ (19 February 2013), <<http://stalinism.ru/dokumentyi/materialy-xix-s-ezda-vkp-b-kpss.html>> [accessed 21 October 2015].

¹¹⁵ RGALI f. 2453, op. 1, d. 68, ll. 76-79, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr’ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, p. 381.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ RGALI f. 3058, op. 1, d. 415, ll. 28-30, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr’ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, p. 383.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 384.

¹¹⁹ See RGALI f. 3058, op. 1, d. 415, ll. 39-60, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr’ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, pp. 386-93.

¹²⁰ *Ivan Pyr’ev v zhizni i na ekrane: Stranitsy vospominanii*, ed. by Grigorii Mar’iamov (Moscow: Kinotsentr, 1994), p. 58. Romm credits a ‘cunning’ Pyr’ev with the initiative of persuading the CC Secretary Dmitrii Shepilov, with whom Pyr’ev had a close working relationship, to advance the cause of a filmmakers’ union in 1956, when Khrushchev was abroad. However, Shepilov’s political downfall in 1957 – famously ‘siding with’ [primknuvshii k] a defeated CC alliance of Viacheslav Molotov, Georgii Malenkov, and Lazar Kaganovich – left this proposal suspended in uncertainty but still alive. Leading Mosfil’ m cineastes continued to lobby for its establishment. See Mikhail Romm, *Kak v kino: Ustnye rasskazy* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Dekom, 2003), p. 171.

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- ¹²¹ RGALI f. 2936, op. 1, d. 41, ll. 92-105, reproduced in *Pravda tvorchestva*, p. 399.
- ¹²² Ibid, p. 402.
- ¹²³ Ibid, p. 401.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 392.
- ¹²⁵ For an assessment of Surin's contribution to the renewal of Mosfil'm, see Baskakov, 'Kino ottepli bylo "diffuzionnym"', p. 323.
- ¹²⁶ Nikolai Sumenov, *Kinostudiia "Mosfil'm"* (Moscow: Soiuzinformkino, 1982), pp. 61-62.
- ¹²⁷ Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan*, pp. 90-129; and Gukasian: 'What was the real difference [between the TO-system and the structures that preceded it]? The masters of cinema, to whom it did not have to be explained, you understand, how *Dama s sobachkoi* [*Lady with a Lapdog*, a short story by Anton Chekhov] differed from some feuilleton or other on a Soviet theme'. Interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.
- ¹²⁸ Baskakov, 'Kino ottepli bylo "diffuzionnym"', p. 328.
- ¹²⁹ RGALI f. 3058, op. 1, d. 214, ll. 1-21, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr'ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, pp. 411-19.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 412.
- ¹³¹ Romm and Chukhrai are credited with persuading Khrushchev to preserve the SRK at a gathering in the Kremlin on 7 March 1963. See Romm, *Kak v kino*, pp. 194-96.
- ¹³² Mar'iamov (ed.), *Ivan Pyr'ev v zhizni*, p. 62. For the USSR ministerial *Prikaz* that ordered the creation of the Mosfil'm directorial courses, see RGALI f. 2453, op. 1, d. 76, reproduced in *Ivan Pyr'ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, p. 385.
- ¹³³ Troianovskii (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, pp. 257-59.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 233. For Chukhrai's perspective on the ETK, see Chukhrai, *Moe kino*, pp. 165-87.
- ¹³⁵ *Ivan Pyr'ev: Pravda tvorchestva*, pp. 401-02.
- ¹³⁶ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.
- ¹³⁷ Dmitrii Ivaneev, 'Iz istorii "Lenfil'ma": (Pervoe desiatiletie "Lenfil'ma")', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 63 (2003), 75-95 (p. 75).
- ¹³⁸ This quotation is attributed to Sergei Gerasimov, the pre-war Lenfil'm filmmaker and late-Soviet powerbroker, in Nina Gornitskaia, 'Iz istorii "Lenfil'ma": Korotko o glavnom', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 63 (2003), 96-102 (p. 99). It also evokes the title of Fridrikh Ermler's final and remarkably unconventional – by the standards of this filmmaker and of late-Soviet cinema – film. *Pered sudom istorii / Facing the Judgment of History* (1965) stages an interview with Vasili Shul'gin, a leading figure in the White Movement against the establishment of Soviet

communism, in which the articulate and reflective Shul'gin is widely held to out-argue the clichéd orthodoxies of his interlocutor, an actor 'playing' a Soviet historian.

¹³⁹ Trauberg came under sustained and vicious attack from the highest levels of the apparatus from 1949 onwards. See 'Resoliutsiia sobraniia tvorcheskykh rabotnikov sovetskoi kinematografii po dokladu Ministra kinematografii SSSR tov. Bol'shakova I.G. "Sovetskoe kinoiskusstvo v 1948 godu i blizhaishie zadachi sovetskoi kinematografii" 1 marta 1949 goda' in Anderson (ed.), *Kremlevskii kinoteatr*, 815-23 (pp. 818-20).

¹⁴⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 4.

¹⁴¹ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

¹⁴² Kheifits' three post-Stalin 'breakthrough' films were *Bol'shaia sem'ia/One Big Family* (1954), whose portrait of a working-class Leningrad shipbuilding dynasty represented a similar early sign of burgeoning aesthetical and thematical sea-changes at Lenfil'm as would Chukhrai's *Sorok-pervyi/The Forty-First* (1956) at Mosfil'm; *Delo Rumiantseva/The Rumiantsev Case* (1955), a police-thriller about an unfairly framed young truck-driver; and *Dorogoi moi chelovek/My Dear Fellow* (1958), the story of the relationship between an honourable doctor and his close female acquaintance during the Second World War.

¹⁴³ Sergei Dobrotvorskii and Natal'ia Sirivlia, 'Mednyi vsadnik "Lenfil'ma"', *Iskusstvo kino*, 3 (1996), 96-102 (p. 99).

¹⁴⁴ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

¹⁴⁵ Leonid Trauberg, 'Dvadtsatye gody', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1968, 4, 18-21 (p. 18). Kirovskii prospekt – now returned to its pre-revolutionary name, Kamennooostrovskii prospekt – was the avenue in Leningrad where the Lenfil'm complex was, and still is, located.

¹⁴⁶ Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 137. Mikhail Suslov was a CC secretary from 1947, and a Politburo member between 1955 and his death in 1982. Under Brezhnev, Suslov was widely considered to be the chief conservative CPSU ideologue and reigning *éminence grise*, responsible for the tone of the period's official political discourse.

¹⁴⁷ Kovalov, 'Istoriia zhurnala "Iskusstvo kino"'.

¹⁴⁸ Sergei Iutkevich, 'Iz nenapisannykh memuarov', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1968, 4, 23-32 (pp. 25-26).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 29.

Chapter One

¹⁵¹ Pozdniakov, *List'ia akanta*, p. 278 and TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op.18, d. 3, l. 20.

¹⁵² TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 17.

¹⁵³ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 36.

¹⁵⁴ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 36.

¹⁵⁵ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 3, l. 37.

¹⁵⁶ Iosif Kheifits, *Poidem v kino! Zhizn': Trud: Opyt.* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 1996), p. 213.

John MacKay and Rita Safariants reproduce Kheifits' erroneous claim about 1959 in 'Chekhov on the Screen: *Lady with a Little Dog* (1960) and *Vanya on Forty-Second Street* (1994)', in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Anton Chekhov*, ed. by Michael Finke and Michael Holquist (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2016), 123-40 (p. 128). However, the truncated reproductions of Lenfil'm production-files in *Iskusstvo kino* from April 1968 demonstrate that the screenplay was formally assessed before 1959 began. See 'Iz stenogramm Khudozhestvennogo soveta studii: Obsuzhdenie rezhisserskogo stsenariia I. Kheifitsa "Dama s sobachkoi": 27 dekabria 1958 g.', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1968, 4, 40-44 (p. 40).

¹⁵⁷ 'Dama s sobachkoi', *Entsiklopediia otechestvennogo kino*,

<http://old.russiancinema.ru/template.php?dept_id=3&e_dept_id=2&e_movie_id=1514>
[accessed 15 December 2015]

¹⁵⁸ *Domashniaia sinemateka: Otechestvennoe kino, 1918-1996*, ed. by Sergei Zemlianukhin and Miroslava Segida (Moscow: Dubl'-D, 1996), p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Lidia Pogozheva, "Kinematograficheskii pisatel'", *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 28 January 1960, p. 4; and A. Vlasov and A. Mlodik, 'Otkryt' cheloveku – cheloveka', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1960, 1, 126-32 (pp. 131-32).

¹⁶⁰ '100 let co dnia rozhdeniia A.P. Chekhova', *Ogonek*, 1960, 4, 8-25 (p. 18).

¹⁶¹ Fridrikh Ermler, 'Posle plenuma: Razgovor s leningradskimi kinematografistami', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1960, 6, 14-19 (p. 16).

¹⁶² Gukasian has spoken about the 'spiteful satires' directed towards Kheifits in the conservative press (interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014), a reminiscence supported and developed by Dmitrii Svetozarov (Kheifits' son and himself a Lenfil'm cineaste) in a television programme from 2000: 'It was one of the few grievances that father held onto for his whole life, it burned inside him [...] he could not forgive that bureaucratic system for what it did to *Dama*, for how it rated *Dama s sobachkoi*'. See "U menia eshche est' adresa...": Iosif Kheifits: Postskriptum: Chast' 1', TRK Peterburg, 2000.

¹⁶³ 'Dnevnik iskusstvo: B Kanne, Minske i v budushchem...', *Ogonek*, 1960, 26, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*, ed. by Raphael Shargel (University Press of Mississippi: Jackson, 2007), p. 42; and Iakov Butovskii, *Andrei Moskvina, kinooperator* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2000), p. 267.

¹⁶⁵ 'Iz stenogramm Khudozhestvennogo soveta studii', p. 41.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Lidiia Pogozheva, "Kinematograficheski" pisatel', p. 4.

¹⁷² Kheifits, *Poidem v kino!*, pp. 215-21.

¹⁷³ Butovskii, *Andrei Moskvina*, p. 267.

¹⁷⁴ Frizheta Gukasian, *Kinooperator Andrei Moskvina: Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva: Vospominaniia tovarishchei* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1971), p. 110.

¹⁷⁵ Kheifits, *Poidem v kino!*, p. 231.

¹⁷⁶ Boris Egorov, Chief Research Consultant and Staff-member at the St. Petersburg Historical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was present as a postgraduate student at the crucial denunciatory meeting in April 1949, when such academic luminaries as Boris Eikhenbaum, Grigorii Gukovskii, Mark Azadovskii, and Viktor Zhirmunskii were expelled from their department. According to Egorov, Berdnikov – 'the faculty's Party boss, [...] who considered himself almost the faculty supremo [*vozhd'*]' – chaired the meeting that approved their expulsion in an especially hard-line manner. For his part, a humiliated Makogonenko allegedly diverted his own 'conformist' speech into a denunciation of eighteenth century French literary figures for their malign influence on Russian culture, 'forgetting entirely that he was required to denounce [contemporary] professors', for which he was soon officially castigated. See "Eto do sikh por bolit": Razgromu leningradskoi filologii 70 let: Vospominaniia o sobytiakh 1949 goda', Radio Svoboda, 5 April 2019.

¹⁷⁷ Rakhmanov was lead-screenwriter on Kheifits' biggest pre-war success, *Deputat Baltiki/The Baltic Deputy*, dir. by Iosif Kheifits and Aleksandr Zarkhi (1937). German, by the late-1950s a highly influential figure in Leningrad's cultural politics and father of the future Lenfil'm filmmaking icon Aleksei German, was screenwriter on Kheifits' *Delo Rumiantseva* and *Dorogoi moi chelovek*, with pre-war credits including *Semero smelykh/The Brave Seven*, dir. by Sergei Gerasimov (1936). Among Chirskov's Lenfil'm screenplays is *Stanitsa Dal'niaia/A Far-off Encampment*, dir. by Evgenii Cherviakov (1939).

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- ¹⁷⁸ Aleksandr Ignatenko and Vasilii Gusak, *K Voprosu ob Ikhtiandre* (St. Petersburg: Leningradskoe Izdatel'stvo, 2011), p. 62.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 12.
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid, p. 31.
- ¹⁸² Ibid, pp. 68 and 134.
- ¹⁸³ *K Voprosu ob Ikhtiandre*, pp. 7-8.
- ¹⁸⁴ Maïia Turovskaia, 'Prozaicheskoe i poeticheskoe kino segodnia', *Novyi mir*, 1962, 9, 239-41 (p. 239).
- ¹⁸⁵ Andrei Zorkii, 'Plach po Ikhtiadru', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 20 January 1962, p. 3.
- ¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁷ Stanislav Rassadin 'Krasota ili krasivost'?', *Sovetskii Ekran*, 1962, 5, p. 7. The term *shestidesiatniki* first appeared in Stanislav Rassadin, 'Shestidesiatniki: Knigi o molodom sovremennike', *Iunost'*, 1960, 12, 58-62.
- ¹⁸⁸ *K Voprosu ob Ikhtiandre*, pp. 7-8. The filmmaker Marlen Khutsiev's 1960s titles epitomize the 'Soviet new wave' aesthetic that Kaganovsky describes as emerging in response to European art cinema in the early-1960s ('Postmemory, Countermemory', pp. 238-39).
- ¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 58.
- ¹⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 58-59.
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 60.
- ¹⁹² Ibid, p. 61. Despite his retention on *Chelovek-amfibiia*, Rozovskii was nonetheless excluded from the Party following these disciplinary procedures.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 62.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 158.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 153.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 164-65.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 174.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 162.
- ¹⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 57 and 169. The productivity of late-Soviet film-shoots was measured and monitored by studios in terms of adherence to officially planned directives on the 'quantity of usable footage' [*poleznyĭ metrazh*] generated during each shooting-day. According to Oleg Nikolaev, a technical assistant on *Chelovek-amfibiia*, the impossibility of accurately predicting the technical outcome of the experimental underwater-shooting contributed significantly to the film-crew's earliest conflicts with studio-management (ibid, p. 150).

²⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 171-72.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 174.

²⁰² Ibid, p. 70.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 68; and *Domashniaia sinemateka*, p. 8.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 153. Between 1962 and his death in 1966, Chirskov sat on the *Khudsovet* of the Lenfil'm Second TO.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Chirskov does not specify whether the screening took place at the Moscow Dom kino or its Leningrad filial.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 154.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 161.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 158.

²¹⁰ Ibid, p. 160.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 154.

²¹² Ibid, p. 155.

²¹³ Ibid, p. 155-57.

²¹⁴ Ibid, p. 156.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 157.

²¹⁶ Exhibition programmes from 1903 demonstrate that chase-films were becoming a repertory staple of early cinema: the genre would become one of the pre-war era's most ubiquitous. By way of an example, Kozintsev may have been thinking of the period ushered in by a famous Keystone Film Company production, *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, dir. by Mack Sennett (1914), the first feature-length comedy of American cinema, starring Charlie Chaplin and featuring a zany police chase in its conclusion. See Noël Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, trans. by Bill Brewster (London: BFI, 1990), pp. 147-48 and Donald W. McCaffrey, 'The Evolution of the Chase in the Silent Screen Comedy', *The Journal of the Society of Cinematologists*, 4/5 (1964/1965), 1-8, pp. 1-2.

²¹⁷ Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, pp. 148-49.

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 148.

²¹⁹ *K Voprosu ob Ikhtiandre*, pp. 156 and 160.

²²⁰ Ibid, pp. 168-69.

²²¹ Ibid, pp. 142 and 164.

²²² Ibid, p. 165.

²²³ Ibid, p. 163. Allegedly, Nikolai Simonov, the pre-war Lenfil'm 'leading man' playing Dr. Salvator, worried aloud to a crew-member about not having realized that he was 'making a film

for children' until delivering his first takes of dialogue on *Chelovek-amfibiia*. Ibid, p. 137; and 'Istorii i legendy Lenfil'ma: Chelovek-amfibiia', 100 TV, 2008.

²²⁴ Dunia Smirnova, 'Ikhtiandr: Chelovek-amfibiia: 1961', *Seans*, 8 (1993), p. 25.

Chapter Two

²²⁵ Gennadii Shpalikov, *Ia zhil kak zhil* (Moscow: Podkova, 1998), p. 328.

²²⁶ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino, 1986-2000*, ed. by Liubov' Arkus, 7 vols (Saint Petersburg: Seans, 2001), IV, p. 336.

²²⁷ Bella Akhmadulina in Gennadii Shpalikov, *Proshchai, Sadovoe kol'tso* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2000), p. 6.

²²⁸ Bulat Okudzhava, *ibid*, p. 10.

²²⁹ Shpalikov, Gennadii, *Izbrannoe: Stsenarii: Stikhi i pesni: Razroznennye zametki* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979). For a discussion of Shpalikov in perestroika, see *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 336. For typical reformist late-1980s attitudes towards the Soviet 1960s generation, see *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 424; and Aleksandr Timofeevskii, 'Poslednie romantiki', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1989, 5, 59-66.

²³⁰ Shpalikov, *Proshchai, Sadovoe kol'tso*, p. 6.

²³¹ Shpalikov, *Ia zhil kak zhil*, p. 327.

²³² *Lenfil'm: Annotirovannyi katalog fil'mov: 1918-2003*, ed. by Dmitrii Ivanev and others (St. Petersburg: Anikushin, 2003), p. 88.

²³³ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 4.

²³⁴ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, ll. 34-35.

²³⁵ Mikhail Bleiman, 'Proshchet', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1968, 2, pp. 54-55.

²³⁶ Vera Kuznetsova, 'Protiv inertsi', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 63 (2003), 254-75 (pp. 264-65).

²³⁷ For a detailed account of Khrushchev's comportment at these meetings, see Romm, *Kak v kino*, pp. 179-214. The reworking of *Zastava* at Gor'kii Studio began in earnest after this thrashing: see *Letopis' rossiiskogo kino. 1946-1965*, ed. by Valerii Fomin and others (Moscow: Kanon, 2010), pp. 580-81.

²³⁸ Nataliia Riazantseva, interview with the author, Moscow, 10 September 2016.

²³⁹ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 8.

²⁴⁰ TsGALI-Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 14.

²⁴¹ 'Shpalikov: 'Liudei teriaut tol'ko raz...'', Telekanal Kul'tura, 29 November 2006.

²⁴² Valerii Fomin, 'Gennadii Shpalikov: Nesbyvsheesia', in *Posle ottepeli: Kinematograf 1970-kh*, ed. by Andrei Shemiakin (Moscow: NII kinoiskusstvo, 2009), pp. 436-76.

²⁴³ The most recently published of Shpalikov's late screenplays is *Spoi ty mne pro voinu/Sing to Me of War* (1974), a seemingly semi-autobiographical story of a mentally unwell young man's flight from Moscow to Kyiv, where he meets an ex-soldier uncle, euphemistically discusses Soviet military conflicts, and visits the site of the Babi Yar Nazi massacre. See Gennadii Shpalikov, 'Spoi ty mne pro voinu: Povest' dlia kino', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2017, 4.

<<https://old.kinoart.ru/archive/2017/04/spoj-ty-mne-pro-vojnu-povest-dlya-kino>> [accessed 5 May 2017].

²⁴⁴ 'Ia shagaiu po Moskve: Gennadii Shpalikov', Telekanal Rossiia, 2008.

²⁴⁵ Dmitrii Bykov, 'Gennadii Shpalikov: Nedolgaia schastlivaia zhizn'', *Priamaia rech'*, 26 March 2017.

<https://www.pryamaya.ru/bykov_shpalikov> [accessed 5 April 2017].

²⁴⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 142.

²⁴⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 214.

²⁴⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 159.

²⁴⁹ Nataliia [sic] Adamenko, 'Dmitrii Meskhiev i poeticheskii realizm fil'ma "Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn"', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 64 (2003), 83-96 (pp. 95-96).

²⁵⁰ Natal'ia Adamenko, 'Eta dolgaia zhizn'', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2009, 5, 72-84 (pp. 77-80). Shpalikov directly addresses Vigo in a dedication entitled 'O volshebnom' [On magic]: '[...] and I – in your memory – shot a crazily long ending to my first picture, - in your memory, Vigo, in your memory, Vigo, and once more in your memory [...]'. Shpalikov, *Ia zhil kak zhil*, p. 416.

²⁵¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 138.

²⁵² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1480, l. 87.

²⁵³ 'Prichal: Kinostsenarii', in Shpalikov, *Ia zhil kak zhil*, pp. 155-84.

²⁵⁴ *Prichal* is one of four unrealized 1960s screenplays (two of which are by Shpalikov) to be examined, with archival presentations, on the interactive website *Iz zhizni planet (From the Life of Planets)*, artistically directed by the musician, author, and cultural historian, Oleg Nesterov. <<http://www.planetslife.ru/>> [accessed 15 September 2016].

²⁵⁵ Nataliia Riazantseva, "Ne govori mame" i drugie rasskazy o romanakh, svoikh i chuzhikh, a takzhe vospominaniia, stat'i, interv'iu kinodramaturga Natalii Riazantsevoi (Moscow: Vremia, 2005), p. 32.

²⁵⁶ Michael Temple, *Jean Vigo* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 109 and 113.

²⁵⁷ Bernard Eisenschitz, 'L'Atalante, film russe?' in *L'Atalante, un film de Jean Vigo*, ed. by Nathalie Bourgeois, Bernard Benoliel and Stéfani Loppinot (Paris: Cinémathèque française/Pôle Méditerranéen d'Éducation cinématographique, 2000), 140-51 (p. 145).

²⁵⁸ Temple, *Jean Vigo*, pp. 102-05.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 106.

²⁶⁰ Sergei Iutkevich, 'Gorst zvezd Zhana Vigo', in *Zhan Vigo: Sbornik*, ed. by Aleksandr Braginskii (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979), p. 9.

²⁶¹ The most chronologically recent example published during the production of *Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn'* was Maiia Turovskaia, "Krasnaia pustynia (Italiia)", *Iskusstvo kino*, 1965, 4, pp. 85-90.

²⁶² For a summary of such criticism toward Khutsiev, see Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesiatniki i my: Kinematograf, stavshii i ne stavshii istoriei* (Moscow: Kinotsentr, 1991), pp. 142-52.

²⁶³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 138.

²⁶⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 163.

²⁶⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 147.

²⁶⁶ Woll, *Real Images*, pp. 209-11.

²⁶⁷ John Tulloch, *Chekhov: A Structuralist Study* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 185.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 186.

²⁶⁹ Anton Chekhov, *Plays*, trans. by Elisaveta Fen (London: Penguin, 1984), pp. 360-61.

²⁷⁰ Tulloch, *Chekhov*, p. 194.

²⁷¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1480, l. 93.

²⁷² For a discussion of Solenii as Lavrov's first incarnation of an overtly negative and grotesque character in theatre, see Natal'ia Starosel'skaia, *Kirill Lavrov* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2011), pp. 130-38.

²⁷³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 220.

²⁷⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1480, l. 85.

²⁷⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1480, l. 89.

²⁷⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 31.

²⁷⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 136.

²⁷⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 84, l. 11.

²⁷⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 157.

²⁸⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 130.

²⁸¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 148.

²⁸² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 141.

²⁸³ *XXIII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 29 marta-8 aprelia 1966 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols (Moscow: Politizdat, 1966), I, pp. 357-58.

²⁸⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, ll. 52-54.

²⁸⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 40.

²⁸⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 142.

²⁸⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 157.

²⁸⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 159.

²⁸⁹ See “Mne dvadtsat’ let”, *Iskusstvo kino*, 1965, 4, 27-44 (p. 27).

²⁹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 135.

²⁹¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 239.

²⁹² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 164.

²⁹³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1485, l. 58.

²⁹⁴ Liubov’ Arkus, ‘Lena: Dolgaia schastlivaia zhizn’’, *Seans*, 8 (1993), p. 56. Armen Medvedev gives a more literal account:

The auditorium voted with its feet against [*Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn’*]. . . An outstanding film completely passed over for attention and in no way rehabilitated: it seems it was released formally and the artistic community simply did not like it.

Medvedev, *Territorii kino*, pp. 104-05.

²⁹⁵ Fomin, ‘Gennadii Shpalikov: Nesbyvsheesia’, pp. 436-76.

²⁹⁶ Unpublished letter from Shpalikov to Irina Golovan’, 3 November 1970. This document, and permission for its reproduction, was provided by Petr Bagrov of Gosfil’mofond Rossii at the conference, ‘Period zastoia? Epokha Brezhneva 35 let spustia: Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia’, European University in St. Petersburg, 24 September 2016.

Chapter Three

²⁹⁷ Jean Anouilh, *L’Alouette*, ed. by Merlin Thomas and Simon Lee (London: Methuen, 1956), pp. 133 and 136.

²⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 605, op. 194, d. 1, ll. 2-3.

²⁹⁹ In February 1970, a Gosteleradio *Prikaz* set a goal for Lenfil’m to produce 50 TV films by 1975. With eight TV films in production at that point, Kiselev insisted that a higher relative cost compared to feature films would necessitate increased central-state funding and commissioning [*goszakaz*] to meet this demand. Both were in place by 1972. As of 1970, he complained, ‘we are creating this unit at our own risk and peril. Going forward, this will be intolerable’ (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 102, l. 234). Despite a marked upsurge in production after 1973, Lenfil’m still produced only 29 TV films in 1970-1975. See Ivaneev (ed.), *Lenfil’m: Annotirovannyi katalog*, pp. 99-111.

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- ³⁰⁰ Iakov Rokhlin, 'Vospominaniia o sebe', *Seans*, 6 (1992), p. 47.
- ³⁰¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 18, l. 141.
- ³⁰² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 18, ll. 155-57.
- ³⁰³ Evgenii Margolit, *Zhivye i mertvoe: Zametki k istorii sovetskogo kino 1920-1960-kh godov* (Seans: St. Petersburg, 2012), pp. 513-14.
- ³⁰⁴ See Petr Bagrov, '“Pervorossiiane”: Arkhiv', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 92/93 (2009), pp. 249-51; and Petr Bagrov, "“Pervorossiiska net – kommuna zreet”. Ob"edinennoe zasedanie Khudozhestvennogo sovet studii i Vtorogo tvorcheskogo ob"edineniia', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 92/93 (2009), pp. 290-318.
- ³⁰⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 17, l. 90.
- ³⁰⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2015, ll. 125-27.
- ³⁰⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, ll. 42-43.
- ³⁰⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, ll. 42 and 47.
- ³⁰⁹ Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, pp. 256-60.
- ³¹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 19, d. 467, l. 66.
- ³¹¹ Valerii Fomin, *Polka: Dokumenty, svidetel'stva, kommentarii* (Moscow: Materik, 2006), p. 105.
- ³¹² Ol'ga Kovalenko, 'Nevinnost' i vera kak rebiachestvo', *Seans*, 41/42 (2010), p. 186.
- ³¹³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, ll. 6-7.
- ³¹⁴ Soviet-Hungarian plans for a film about Máté Zalka eventually materialized with the Mosfil'm/Mafilm coproduction, *Pseudonim: Lukach/Code Name: Lukács*, dir. by Manosz Zahariasz and Sándor Köö (1976). Iulii Dunskaa and Valerii Frid were the Soviet screenwriters.
- ³¹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 7.
- ³¹⁶ Fomin, *Kinematograf ottepli*, p. 260.
- ³¹⁷ Klepikov's introduction to Panfilov by Trauberg, Panfilov's introduction to Gabrilovich by Klepikov, and the origins of co-authorship on *V ognе broda net* are discussed at length in 'Zvezdnye gody Lenfil'ma: Konets khrushchevskoi ottepli: Chast' II: Gleb Panfilov', Rossiia K, 30 April 2008.
- ³¹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 2.
- ³¹⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 4.
- ³²⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 3.
- ³²¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 12.
- ³²² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, ll. 14-16.
- ³²³ There is self-referential continuity in the choice of actor for this scene and role: in *V ognе broda net*, Evgenii Lebedev plays the White Army murderer of Churikova's character, Tania Tetkina.

³²⁴ Raymond Spottiswoode, *Film and its Techniques* (Berkeley: University of California, 1963), p. 199.

³²⁵ Klepikov's VKSR graduation script, *God spokoinogo solntsa / A Quiet Sun Year* (no connection to the film of the same name, dir. by Krzysztof Zanussi (1984), formed the basis for one of the earliest 'shelved' films of this period: *Istoriia Asi Kliachinoi, kotoraiia liubila, da ne vyshla zamuzh / The Story of Asia Kliachina, Who Loved but Did Not Marry*, dir. by Andrei Konchalovskii (1967; released 1987). See Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, pp. 268-69. Although Konchalovskii's treatment altered the screenplay significantly, Klepikov's association with *Asia* was soon compounded by two controversial Lenfil'm productions made from his screenplays, the harsh Civil War drama, *Sed'moi sputnik / The Seventh Satellite*, dir. by Grigorii Aronov and Aleksei German (1967), and the story of a working-class single mother's remarriage, *Mama vyshla zamuzh / Mum Got Married*, dir. by Vitalii Mel'nikov (1969). These ordeals left Klepikov under suspicion and without executive succour at Goskino. See Dmitrii Savel'ev, "Ia iz tseremonnykh chitatelei, da i zritelei tozhe...", *Seans*, 1 December 2008, <<http://seance.ru/blog/klepikov/>> [accessed 15 May 2017].

³²⁶ Klepikov's potential transition to film-direction remained under discussion at Lenfil'm, during the production of *Nachalo*, through the studio's attempts to obtain Goskino approval for *Ispytanie / The Ordeal*, which was officially written by his no-less hounded VKSR classmate, Fridrikh Gorenshtein. In May 1971, Gukasian – who led Lenfil'm in Moscow negotiations over this 'very interesting screenplay' – exasperatedly told a Partkom meeting that Goskino had been stalling on *Ispytanie* for two years. See TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 107, l. 137.

³²⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 329.

³²⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 332.

³²⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2345, l. 102.

³³⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2345, ll. 97 and 103.

³³¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2345, l. 70.

³³² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2345, l. 79.

³³³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 18.

³³⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 17, l. 218.

³³⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 17, l. 67.

³³⁶ Alla Gerber, *Inna Churikova: Sud'ba i tema*. (Moscow: AST, 2013), p. 221.

³³⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 20, d. 402, l. 4.

³³⁸ Gerber, *Inna Churikova*, p. 13.

³³⁹ 'Oni Bam znakomy', *Ogonek*, 1969, 1, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op.18, d. 2344, l. 328.

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- ³⁴¹ ‘Zvezdnye gody Lenfil’ma: Konets khrushchevskoi ottepeli’. Given that Bulgakova was Gabrilovich’s daughter-in-law, his opportune collaboration with Panfilov – away from Moscow – presented a chance for her casting, two years on from her powerful and controversial performance as the veteran air-force pilot, Nadezhda Petrukhina, in the lead role of *Kryl’ia/Wings*, dir. by Larisa Shepit’ko (1966).
- ³⁴² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, l. 130.
- ³⁴³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 69.
- ³⁴⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 74.
- ³⁴⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 18.
- ³⁴⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2345, l. 96.
- ³⁴⁷ The album of screen-test photographs confirms this for *Nachalo*: none of the film’s lead-actors were affiliated with the Lenfil’m Actor’s Studio. See TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 20, d. 402, ll. 2-12.
- ³⁴⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 20, d. 402, l. 15.
- ³⁴⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, ll. 120-29.
- ³⁵⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, ll. 124 and 138.
- ³⁵¹ Robert Belknap, *Plots* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 3-4.
- ³⁵² *Ibid*, p. 17.
- ³⁵³ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵⁴ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 19.
- ³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 17.
- ³⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 22.
- ³⁵⁸ A non-cineaste ‘guest’ at the Second TO *Khudsovet* screening, describing himself as an ‘average *intelligent*’ [cultured person], claimed to have thought this opening sequence to be a trailer for a forthcoming Lenfil’m production of *Jeanne d’Arc*. This perspective was surely encouraged by the unusual absence of any opening credits: the title *Nachalo* only appears at the end of the film. See TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, l. 131.
- ³⁵⁹ Boris Tomashevskii, *Teoriia literatury: Poetika* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1928), pp. 136-37, cited in Belknap, *Plots*, p. 32.
- ³⁶⁰ Belknap, *Plots*, p. 32.
- ³⁶¹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. by Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), p. 21, cited in Belknap, *Plots*, p. 33.

³⁶² The most sustained analysis of Baba-Iaga's many forms and functions appears in Vladimir Propp, *Sobranie trudov: Morfologiia volshebnoi skazki: Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* (Moscow: Labirint, 1998), pp. 146-202.

³⁶³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 320.

³⁶⁴ Henry W. Knepler, 'The Lark, Translation vs. Adaptation: A Case History', in *Critical Essays on Lillian Hellman*, ed. by Mark W. Estrin (Boston, Mass: G.K. Hall, 1989), 64-71 (p. 65).

³⁶⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 2344, l. 320.

³⁶⁶ See Tat'iana Bachel, 'Parizh plachet, Parizh smeetsia...', *Novyi mir*, 1961, 1, pp. 255-58. Georgii Boiadzhiev, author of the landmark 1957 article on Italian neorealism in *Iskusstvo kino*, also wrote *Teatral'nyi Parizh segodnia* [*Paris Theatre Today*] (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960). For a book review praising the Russian translation of *L'Alouette* (*Zhan Anui: Zhavoronok: P'esa: Perevod s frantsuzskogo K. Khenkina* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960), see I. Solov'eva, "'Prostaia p'esa' Zhana Anuiia", *Novyi mir*, 1961, 5, pp. 262-66. Solov'eva writes: 'Eto slozhnyi pisatel' i ochen' krupnyi. Ego nado znat', dlia etogo nado perevodit' i izdavat'. Poka ego perevodiat i izdaiut redko' ['This is a complex and very noteworthy writer. He ought to be known, and for that, he must be translated and published. As yet, he is but rarely translated and published']. Ibid, p. 266.

³⁶⁷ Iurii Iuzovskii, "'Staraia golubiatnia' v Moskve", *Teatr*, 1960, 9, 176-83 (p. 179).

³⁶⁸ Sergei Snezhkin makes this claim in 'Zvezdnye gody Lenfil'ma: Konets khrushchevskoi ottepelei'. According to Snezhkin, the first Soviet theatre to introduce *L'Alouette* into its repertory programme was Moscow's Leninskii-Komsomol [Lenkom] Theatre, where Churikova would be based after leaving Lenfil'm in 1976, and where Tarkovskii (1977) and Panfilov (1986) would each stage an adaptation of *Hamlet*. Tarkovskii cast Churikova as Ophelia, while in Panfilov's production, she played Gertrude.

³⁶⁹ Henry W. Knepler, 'The Lark', pp. 71-72.

³⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 65-66.

³⁷¹ Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Difficult Woman: The Challenging Life and Times of Lillian Hellman* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), p. 201.

³⁷² Il'ia Kukulin, 'Chto mozhno uvidet' v pozdnesovetskoi neofitsial'noi kul'ture s pomoshch'iu teorii sotsial'nykh setei?' (unpublished conference paper), at 'Period zastoia? Epokha Brezhneva 35 let spustia: Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia', European University in St. Petersburg, 23 September 2016.

³⁷³ Anouilh, *L'Alouette*, p. 43.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 50.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 101-02.

³⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 136.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 137.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Françoise Meltzer, *For Fear of the Fire: Joan of Arc and the Limits of Subjectivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 215.

³⁸⁰ Belknap, *Plots*, p. 17.

³⁸¹ Anouilh, *L'Alouette*, p. 55.

³⁸² In 1973, Churikova wrote a despairing letter to Ermash, pleading for him to reconsider the unfavourable official position towards *Zhizn' Zhanny*:

All these years, for the sake of Jeanne, I refused other offers of work in cinema [...] I refused work in theatre, refused the possibility of having children, faithfully believing that Jeanne was worth all the torments and privations, believing that my strengths and abilities are needed in our cinema. [...] I do not know how deeply you understand [Panfilov's] work. And his films. You most likely do not understand them, judging by your attitude towards his idea of making a film about Jeanne d'Arc (It is astonishing that you have not even taken the time to read the screenplay).

Reproduced in Petr Shepotinnik, 'Tema', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1991, 8, pp. 35-36.

³⁸³ See Fomin, *Polka* (2006), pp. 105-06 and Irina Shilova, 'Gleb Panfilov: 'Pravda – eto impul's, no eshche ne predmet iskusstva'', *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 11 (1991), pp. 118-19.

³⁸⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 69, l. 31.

³⁸⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 4.

³⁸⁶ Anouilh, *L'Alouette*, p. 11.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 25, d. 30, l. 35.

³⁸⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 39.

³⁹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 25, d. 30, l. 15.

³⁹¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 25, d. 30, l. 138.

³⁹² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 25, d. 30, ll. 144-47.

³⁹³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 37.

³⁹⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 7.

³⁹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 8.

³⁹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 17, l. 218.

³⁹⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 39.

³⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 39.

³⁹⁹ Panfilov agreed with Shilova's suggestion that controversy around *Rublev* impacted on the rejection of *Zhizn' Zhanny* ('Gleb Panfilov', pp. 118-19). To this we might add the suspicion that attendant international exposure for Panfilov – he and Churikova were prize-winners at the Venice Film Festival in 1971 with *Nachalo* – may have elevated the filmmaker to a comparable status as Tarkovskii, at home and abroad. Panfilov later reminisced that, 'had I made that picture, I would have become largely unmanageable for [Ermash]: I would have entered a different class, and then he would not have been able to talk to me as he did.' Fomin, *Polka* (2006), p. 105.

⁴⁰⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 29.

⁴⁰¹ For Kiselev's attempt to leverage support on the basis of Brezhnev's visit to France, see TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 28.

⁴⁰² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 33.

⁴⁰³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 33.

⁴⁰⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 35.

⁴⁰⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24-2, d. 1021, l. 41.

⁴⁰⁶ Fomin, *Polka* (2006), p. 106.

⁴⁰⁷ Golovskoy, *Behind the Soviet Screen*, p. 19. When Panfilov finally left Lenfil'm in December 1976, his resignation letter explained that Churikova had received a three-bedroom flat for their young family in Moscow, where she was to take up theatre-work at Lenkom. See TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 19, d. 467, l. 120.

⁴⁰⁸ Golovskoy, *Behind the Soviet Screen*, p. 19.

⁴⁰⁹ Nataliia Riazantseva, 'No kto my i otkuda: Pis'ma Il'e Averbakhu', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2003, 7, 124-33 (p. 132).

⁴¹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 393, l. 48. This conference speech is, chronologically, the final of several suggestions, voiced at late-1970s TO and Partkom meetings, that news of Panfilov's actual resignation in 1976 had been hidden from all at Lenfil'm, barring those administratively implicated in his departure.

Chapter Four

⁴¹¹ Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 13.

⁴¹² Kiselev's dismissal was finally announced – as a 'reappointment' to manage the Pushkin Dramatic Theatre (today's Aleksandrinskii) – at a Lenfil'm Partkom on 2 October 1972 by Iurii Sergeevich Afanas'ev, then head of the Obkom Culture Department, who became deputy head of the CC Culture Department in 1974, and later served as a high-ranking administrator at the central Soviet Council of Ministers [Sovet ministrov, CM]. No prior communication of this decision had been made to the studio collective: a question from the floor at the end of this meeting demanded to know if rumours circulating to this effect were true. When Afanas'ev admitted that no replacement had yet been found for Lenfil'm, an outraged cry came from the audience: '*A nam kogo? [...] nado bylo dumat' ran'she!*' ['Who do we get, then? [...] You should have thought about that before now!']. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 118, ll. 203-04.

⁴¹³ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

⁴¹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 106.

⁴¹⁵ Cited in Valerii Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu: Kinematograf 70-kh* (Moscow: Materik, 2004), p. 131.

⁴¹⁶ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 503.

⁴¹⁷ On Blinov's support for Asanova, see TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 158, ll. 57-58. On Blinov's role in facilitating the collaboration between German and Simonov, see Anton Dolin, *German: Interv'iu: Esse: Stsenarii* (Moscow: NLO, 2011), p. 172.

⁴¹⁸ *XXIV s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz, 30 marta-9 apreliia 1971 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), I, pp. 63 and 82.

⁴¹⁹ Donald Kelley, *The Politics of Developed Socialism: The Soviet Union as a Post-industrial State* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 109.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid, p. 114.

⁴²² Vladimir Semerchuk, "'Smena vekh' na iskhode ottepei'", in Troianovskii (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepei: Kniga vtoraiia*, 120-59 (p. 125).

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Iampol'skii, 'Kino bez kino', p. 89.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, p. 91.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, p. 92.

⁴²⁷ Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann, 'Gorbachev and the "Circular Flow of Power"' in

Elites and Political Power in the USSR, ed. by David Lane (Cambridge: Edward Elgar, 1988), 21-48 (p. 42).

⁴²⁸ Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 376-77.

⁴²⁹ *Deiatel'nost' leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii po sovershenstvovaniuu gosudarstvennogo apparata*, ed. by A.N. Arzamastsev and others (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1976), p. 239.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 174-75.

⁴³¹ Jerry Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 81.

⁴³² *XXIV s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz*, I, pp. 166-67.

⁴³³ Denis Khriukin, "Proizvodstvennyi fil'm" kak zhanrovyy fenomen otechestvennogo kino 1970-kh godov: Kinematograficheskaya spetsifika i formal'nye osobennosti', *Istoricheskaya i sotsial'no-obrazovatel'naya mysl'*, 8:2 (2016), 112-20 (p. 117).

⁴³⁴ *Deiatel'nost' leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii*, p. 264.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid*.

⁴³⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 2.

⁴³⁷ Izol'da Sepman, 'Grani sovremennogo kharaktera' in *Leningradskii ekran: Stat'i, tvorcheskie portrety, interv'iu*, ed. by Izol'da Sepman and Nina Gornitskaia (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1978), 38-53 (p. 42).

⁴³⁸ In May 1970, Kiselev informed the studio *Khudsovet* of severe criticism aimed at Lenfil'm during a recent Obkom bureau-meeting over the studio's appointments of 'inexperienced' cineastes to direct feature-films. The bureau demanded urgent action to decide the professional fates of at least 47 'questionably qualified' filmmakers. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, l. 155.

⁴³⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 34.

⁴⁴⁰ Khriukin, "Proizvodstvennaya drama", p. 113.

⁴⁴¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 16. The studio's initial artistic disorientation around new industrial dramas is revealed by an astoundingly long list of potential titles, still being considered for this film, late in post-production. From the initial working titles of *Inzhener*, *Chelovek so storony* and *Cheshkov*, the TO settled for a prolonged period on *Sovremennaya Khronika* [*Contemporary History*] before deciding, shortly before submission, on *Zdes' nash dom*. Alternative titles considered up until the last moment included some extremely awkward suggestions, such as *Utro dolgogo dnia* / *A Long Day's Morning*; *Chto sluchilos' sred' belogo dnia* / *What Happened in Broad Daylight*; *To, o chem ne govorili* / *The Thing They Could Not Talk About*; *Budushchee rozhdaetsia v tsekh* / *The Future Depends on the Foundry*; and *Dolgoe, zharkoe leto* / *A Long, Hot Summer*.

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- TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 121.
- ⁴⁴² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, ll. 33-33a.
- ⁴⁴³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 41.
- ⁴⁴⁴ Efros's production of *Chelovek so storony* premiered in Moscow on 27 September 1971. The televisual adaptation of this play was first broadcast in 1973. See *Anatolii Efros: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo: Annotirovani bibliograficheskii ukazatel'*, ed. by Iuliia Raznotovskaia and others (St. Petersburg: Baltiiskie sezony, 2010), pp. 457 and 467. On the acclaim with which this production was met, see B. Evseev, 'Inzhener Cheshkov vedet boi', *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 13 October 1971, p. 4.
- ⁴⁴⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 38.
- ⁴⁴⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 41.
- ⁴⁴⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 41.
- ⁴⁴⁸ Khriukin, 'Proizvodstvennaia drama', pp. 114-15.
- ⁴⁴⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 41.
- ⁴⁵⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, ll. 48-53.
- ⁴⁵¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 71.
- ⁴⁵² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 6.
- ⁴⁵³ James R. Millar, 'The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to Acquisitive Socialism', *Slavic Review*, 44 (1985), 694-706 (p. 697).
- ⁴⁵⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 345, l. 27.
- ⁴⁵⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 104.
- ⁴⁵⁶ Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu*, p. 138.
- ⁴⁵⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 49, l. 1.
- ⁴⁵⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 49, l. 24.
- ⁴⁵⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 51, l. 29.
- ⁴⁶⁰ Grebnev's play *Iz zhizni delovoi zhenshchiny/From the Life of a Businesswoman* (1973) adapted *Starye steny* for the stage in the same year as the film's release. See Anatolii Grebnev, *Dnevnik poslednego stsenarista: 1945-2002* (Moscow: Russkii impul's, 2006), p. 106.
- ⁴⁶¹ Sepman, 'Grani', p. 44.
- ⁴⁶² Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 387.
- ⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, pp. 385-86.
- ⁴⁶⁴ 'Istorii i legendy Lenfil'ma: Starye steny', 100 TV, 2009.
- ⁴⁶⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 336, l. 2.
- ⁴⁶⁶ *Den' priema* used ensemble casting of highly regarded screen and stage actors to maximize the dramatic impact of its *kamernost'*, which privileged theatre-like, one-interior sequences driven by

dialogue and ‘close-quarters’ expressivity. This film merits appreciation as arguably the strongest ensemble cast of any industrial drama. Anatolii Papanov, Oleg Basilashvili and Zinaida Sharko appeared in their first industrial dramas, with repeat-casting for Oleg Zhakov, Vladimir Emel’ianov, Zamanskii, and Solov’ev in roles that reinforced their recognizability from earlier Lenfil’ m industrial dramas.

⁴⁶⁷ David A. Dyker, ‘The Power of the Industrial Ministries’ in Lane (ed.), *Elites and Political Power*, 188-204 (p. 188).

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 190.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 194.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, p. 193.

⁴⁷² We may acknowledge with Khriukin (“Proizvodstvennaia drama”, p. 116) the associative significance of Iurii Tolubeev in the role of Ponomarev. Describing Ponomarev – a representative of the past – as the only non-artificial character in the film, Khriukin locates the genesis of this archetype in Tolubeev’s iconic performance as the heroic director of an evacuated Leningrad aviation factory in *Prostye liudi/Simple Folk*, dir. by Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg (1945), the most prominent Lenfil’ m title to be officially criticized and ‘shelved’ in the wake of the notorious late-Stalin era Party Orgbiuro *Postanovlenie* of 4 September 1946, ‘On the film “Bol’shaia zhizn”’. For a discussion of the high-level political censorship of *Prostye liudi*, see Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan*, pp. 125-28.

⁴⁷³ Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel’iu i glasnost’iu*, p. 139.

⁴⁷⁴ Linking ‘work’ as a privileged theme in the Cinema of Moral Concern to socialist realism, Ewa Mazierska describes core tenets that correspond closely to *Premiia*: the aspiration to ‘social’ truth-telling by a morally motivated protagonist; the frequent focus of narrative on an isolated incident or working day; the stylistic preference for office-based settings and spaces of ‘immaterial production’; and the predominance of character-development over action, with ‘much information [...] conveyed through dialogue’.

Ewa Mazierska, *Poland Daily: Economy, Work, Consumption and Social Class in Polish Cinema* (Berghahn: Oxford, 2017), pp. 186 and 194-96.

⁴⁷⁵ During a Partkom presentation in January 1975, Blinov stated: ‘Among films on contemporary themes, the greatest feeling of satisfaction is aroused by *Premiia* [...]. We feel that this film has been the most noteworthy phenomenon in the biography of the studio in the last few years, from many perspectives’. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 158, l. 50.

⁴⁷⁶ Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 386.

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- ⁴⁷⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 109.
- ⁴⁷⁸ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 151.
- ⁴⁷⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 174, l. 85.
- ⁴⁸⁰ Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu*, p. 140.
- ⁴⁸¹ William A. Clark, *Crime and Punishment in Soviet Officialdom: Combatting Corruption in the Political Elite, 1965-1990* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 74.
- ⁴⁸² *Ibid*, p. 91.
- ⁴⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 120.
- ⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.
- ⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 81.
- ⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 95.
- ⁴⁸⁷ Clark describes the *tolkach* as an 'aggressive, inventive and often free-lance procurement agent', the utilization of which became 'a Soviet growth industry virtually winked at by enforcement agencies'. *Ibid*, p. 76.
- ⁴⁸⁸ 'Brezhnev's watchword was 'trust in cadres', and he put it into practice by making as few changes as possible at the highest levels of party and state. [...] The result of Brezhnev's policy was to give new stability and confidence to the men at the centre of the nomenklatura network'. Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 377.
- ⁴⁸⁹ Hough, *The Soviet Prefects*, p. 275.
- ⁴⁹⁰ John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 45.
- ⁴⁹¹ Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 381.
- ⁴⁹² Hough, *The Soviet Prefects*, p. 31.
- ⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 23.
- ⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 345, l. 23.
- ⁴⁹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 24, d. 345, ll. 20-21.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Hough, *The Soviet Prefects*, p. 89.
- ⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 80.
- ⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 102-03.
- ⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 106.
- ⁵⁰¹ Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 382.

⁵⁰² During the Lenfil'm production crisis in June 1978, Igor' Maslennikov referred to 'the amount of deep unrest for the studio' caused by unspecified political backlash over the release of *Premiia*, adding nonetheless that 'there can be no success without risk'.

TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 68.

Chapter Five

⁵⁰³ *Ocherki istorii leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS v trekh tomakh*, ed. by Vasilii Zakharov, 3 vols (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1985), III, p. 436.

⁵⁰⁴ 'By the time of the Twenty-fourth Party Congress in 1971, when the Brezhnev regime's comprehensive domestic and foreign policy thrust was comprehensively presented, well over half the leading officials in all top organizations had been replaced.'

Willerton, *Patronage and Politics*, p. 43.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ustav Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuz: Uverzhden XXII s"ezd, chastichnye izmeneniia vneseny XXIII i XXIV s"ezdami KPSS* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976), p. 32.

⁵⁰⁶ 'O literaturno-khudozhestvennoi kritike', *Kommunist*, 1972, 2, 14-16 (p. 14).

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 14.

⁵⁰⁸ Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli: Dokumenty*, pp. 59-60.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 104-05.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 106.

⁵¹¹ See n. 146; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 137.

⁵¹² Troianovskii (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli: Kniga vtoraia*, p. 327.

⁵¹³ Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli: Dokumenty*, p. 60.

⁵¹⁴ By becoming the Goskino chairman with enhanced managerial prerogatives following the August 1972 *Postanovlenie*, Ermash assumed a ministerial position in all but name. For example, Sergei Solov'ev referred to Ermash as 'the minister' when recalling a meeting between them in the 1970s. See 'Istoriia kinonachal'nikov, ili Stroiteli i perestroishchiki. 80-e: Gibel' imperii Filippa Ermasha', Telekanal Kul'tura, 2011.

⁵¹⁵ *Kinematograf ottepli: Dokumenty*, pp. 91 and 96.

⁵¹⁶ Fomin, *Polka* (1992), pp. 108-09.

⁵¹⁷ Eugénie Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova: Un cinéma de la dissonance* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2012), p. 80.

⁵¹⁸ Lev Kulidzhanov, 'Zadachi Soiuz kinematografistov SSSR v svete Postanovleniia TsK KPSS 'O merakh po dal'neishemu razvitiu Sovetskoi kinematografii' (doklad L.A. Kulidzhanova na

Plenum Pravitel'ia SK SSSR, 5 oktiabria 1972 g.)' (unpublished paper for personnel: Soiuz kinematografistov, 1972), p. 22.

⁵¹⁹ Kulidzhanov's criticism of *Dolgie provody* may be compared to this passage from the August 1972 CC *Postanovlenie*:

'Instead of the truthful depiction of life from positions of Leninist Party principles, in such works there is a superficial, one-sided, sometimes even a false interpretation of events and facts. There have been incidences of attempted uncritical borrowing of techniques from foreign cinema that are alien to the art of socialist realism'.

'Postanovlenie Tsk KPSS 'O merakh po dal'neishemu razvitiuu Sovetskoi kinematografii', in *Sovetskoe kino, 1917-1978: Resheniia Partii i pravitel'stva o kino: Sbornik dokumentov*, 3 vols (Moscow: NIIK, 1979), III, 102-08 (pp. 103-04).

⁵²⁰ Kulidzhanov, 'Zadachi Soiuzna kinematografistov', pp. 21 and 24.

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 26.

⁵²² Ibid, p. 32.

⁵²³ Romanov was a 'full' Politburo member from 5 March 1976 until 1 July 1985, when the ascension of Mikhail Gorbachev to the position of CPSU General Secretary effectively ended Romanov's high-level political career. At one time, Romanov was considered a potential successor to Brezhnev: in 2008, Romanov himself insisted that Brezhnev personally supported his prospective candidature. Oleg Kashin, 'Khoziain Leningrada: U Grigoriia Romanova v Romanovom pereulke' in *Russkaia zhizn'*, 12 October 2007.

<<http://rulife.ru/mode/article/323>> [accessed 3 October 2018]. For an outline of Romanov's political career, see *Tsentrāl'nyi Komitet KPSS, VKP(b), RKP(b), RSDRP(b): 1917-1991: Istoriko-biograficheskii spravochnik*, ed. by Iurii Goriachev (Moscow: Parad, 2005), p. 351.

⁵²⁴ Ruble, *Leningrad*, p. 183.

⁵²⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

⁵²⁶ Ibid, pp. 181-82.

⁵²⁷ Ibid, p. 181.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ 'V Tsentrāl'nom Komitete KPSS: Tsentrāl'nyi Komitet KPSS rassmotrel vopros 'O sostoianii kritiki i samokritiki v Tambovskoi oblastnoi partiinnoi organizatsii'', *Kommunist*, 1975, 4, 3-6 (p. 3).

⁵³⁰ Ibid, pp. 4 and 5.

⁵³¹ Ibid, pp. 5-6.

⁵³² Ibid, p. 6.

⁵³³ Dmitrii Sel'tser, 'Regional'naia nomenklatura KPSS: Razmyshleniia o granitsakh dozvolennogo' in *Ellis-Tsentr: Arkhiv konferentsii: KPSS i nomenklatura*, 2006.
<http://elis.pstu.ru/index.php?a=9&pod_id=33&pod3_id=209#_ftn1>
[accessed 3 October 2018].

⁵³⁴ Sel'tser, 'Regional'naia nomenklatura KPSS'.

⁵³⁵ *Deiatel'nost' leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii*, p. 268.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, p. 266.

⁵³⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 158, l. 128.

⁵³⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 164, l. 19.

⁵³⁹ For Yurchak, 'the rise of the performative dimensions of authoritative discourse during late socialism was a consequence of the Party's efforts to legitimate rhetorically its rationale for ideological rule after the death of Stalin, which began 'the disappearance, in the 1950s, of the external editorial voice that commented on that discourse' (Yurchak, *Everything was Forever*, pp. 14 and 25). The Brezhnev era represents the apotheosis of 'normalized, ubiquitous and immutable authoritative discourse' in late-Soviet society because of the entrenchment – often through official speeches and CPSU *Postanovleniia* – of a 'citational temporality' whereby 'all types of information, new and old, were presented as knowledge previously asserted and commonly known' (ibid, pp. 32 and 61).

⁵⁴⁰ See n. 473; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 151.

⁵⁴¹ See n. 474.

⁵⁴² See n. 310; and Fomin, *Polka* (2006), p. 105; and Willerton, *Patronage and Politics*, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁴³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 158, ll. 14-15, 40-41, and 42-43.

⁵⁴⁴ In familiarly auto-citational terms, the CC *Postanovlenie* deemed it essential that Soviet studios produce films that 'deeply imprint the heroic path that the Soviet people have trod under the direction of the CPSU, [...] more attention must be paid to the depiction of the Soviet people's labour and great deeds'. 'Postanovlenie Tsk KPSS 'O merakh po dal'neishemu razvitiuu Sovetskoi kinematografii', p. 105.

⁵⁴⁵ Party Secretary Ida Rumiantseva announced that, 'as of 20 June 1975, the [budgetary] deficit for ongoing productions came to 1,207,000 roubles – an unheard-of situation for many years.'
TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 164, l. 132.

⁵⁴⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 8.

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- ⁵⁴⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 72.
- ⁵⁴⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 66.
- ⁵⁴⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 67.
- ⁵⁵⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 67.
- ⁵⁵¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 2.
- ⁵⁵² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 2.
- ⁵⁵³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 181, l. 1.
- ⁵⁵⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, ll. 2 and 3.
- ⁵⁵⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 2.
- ⁵⁵⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 3.
- ⁵⁵⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 3.
- ⁵⁵⁸ *Deiatel'nost' leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii*, p. 267.
- ⁵⁵⁹ 'V Tsentral'nom Komitete KPSS: Tsentral'nyi Komitet KPSS rassmotrel vopros 'O rabote po podboru i vospitaniiu ideologicheskikh kadrov v partiinoi organizatsii Belorussii'', *Kommunist*, 1974, 13, 3-7 (pp. 4-5).
- ⁵⁶⁰ 'Party Committees and ideological cadres are recommended to take a stand on decision-making for all production-related and educational challenges in working collectives. [...] The Belorussian Communist Party CC is recommended to broaden the practice of promoting the qualifications of workers in Propaganda and Agitation Departments, from Party Raikomy and Gorkomy to Obkomy, and from the ideological departments of the Obkom to the CC of the Republic's Communist Party'. Ibid, pp. 6 and 7.
- ⁵⁶¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 5.
- ⁵⁶² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 157, d. 19, l. 2.
- ⁵⁶³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 159, l. 126.
- ⁵⁶⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 159, l. 126.
- ⁵⁶⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 159, l. 126.
- ⁵⁶⁶ Aksenov, *Kak stat' direktorom Lenfil'ma*, pp. 22, 52, and 56. We may note that Aksenov's appointment in 1982 coincided with the retirement of Andrei Kirilenko from the Politburo, which removed Ermash's highest-ranking ally from the central apparatus.
- ⁵⁶⁷ Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu*, p. 136.
- ⁵⁶⁸ Medvedev, *Territoria kino*, p. 227.
- ⁵⁶⁹ Golovskoi, *Mezhdu ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu*, pp. 136-37.
- ⁵⁷⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 7.
- ⁵⁷¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 8.

⁵⁷² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 8.

⁵⁷³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 8.

⁵⁷⁴ Golovskoi, *Mezhdú ottepel'iu i glasnost'iu*, p. 136.

⁵⁷⁵ Despite Romanov insisting to Kashin that he enjoyed ‘a wonderful relationship with the artistic intelligentsia’, the flight of prominent cultural figures from Leningrad had so intensified by the end of the 1970s that, in 1979, Aleksei German was able to assert: ‘It is obvious and no secret to anyone that many of the studio’s directors, quietly or loudly, are conducting negotiations in Moscow [for transfer to Mosfil’m]’ (TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 393, l. 48). See also Kashin, ‘Khoziain Leningrada’; Boris Vishnevskii, ‘Apostol zastoia’, *Novaia gazeta Sankt-Peterburg*, 5 June 2008, <<http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/4313>> [accessed 3 October 2018]; and Viktor Stepakov, *Leningradtsy v bor'be za Kremli'* (Moscow: Iauza, 2004), pp. 141-42.

⁵⁷⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, ll. 9-10.

⁵⁷⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 10.

⁵⁷⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 159, l. 111.

⁵⁷⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 97.

⁵⁸⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 99.

⁵⁸¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 161, l. 99.

⁵⁸² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 67-68.

⁵⁸³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 19.

⁵⁸⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 3.

⁵⁸⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 5.

⁵⁸⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 5.

⁵⁸⁷ *Vtoraia popytka* was accused by the Gorkom – and reactively, by Goskino – of depicting communal apartments during the immediate post-war years with ‘excessive gloom and harshness’. Other corrections demanded of this story about a wayward young Soviet boxer from a disadvantaged Leningrad home concerned ‘tactless’ uses of the Soviet anthem and flag; inappropriate depictions of German prisoners of war; the removal of frank songs sung by Vladimir Vysotskii; and a reference to Stalin in the reproduction of a radio broadcast. Fomin has described the ‘shelving’ of *Vtoraia popytka* as a ‘commonplace story from those ignominious years’. In reality, the Leningrad Party’s formal reversal of Goskino’s approval for release – a point not acknowledged by Fomin – makes the case highly uncommon at USSR-level. See TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 5; and Fomin, *Polka* (1992), p. 3.

⁵⁸⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 38, l. 157.

⁵⁸⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 38, ll. 118-118(b).

⁵⁹⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 38, ll. 147-48; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, ll. 66-67.

⁵⁹¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 152.

⁵⁹² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 83.

⁵⁹³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 208, l. 34.

⁵⁹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 3.

⁵⁹⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 149.

⁵⁹⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 67.

⁵⁹⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 84. The four productions brought forward were *Letniaia poezdka k moriu / A Summer Seaside Trip*, dir. by Semen Aranovich (1978); *Ukhodia – ukhodi / Go, If You're Going*, dir. by Viktor Tregubovich (1978); *Molodaia zhena / A Young Wife*, dir. by Leonid Menaker (1978); and *Rytsar' iz Kniazh-gorodka / The Knight from Princetown*, dir. by Vadim Mikhailov (1978). See TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 5.

⁵⁹⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 2.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. Provotorov reported positive plan-fulfilment percentages for 'production by unit' (106.5%), 'output' (101.2%) and 'services' (115.9%). Only 'core operational production' – a category inseparable from the losses on *Oshibki* – fell under the formally expected 100% threshold (98.5%).

⁶⁰⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 84.

⁶⁰¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 84.

⁶⁰² On 25 January 1978, the Partkom lifted its own critical *Postanovlenie* from 20 January, 'On the Directorial Five-year Plan of the Second Creative Unit', as having been remedied. Blinov praised 'positive results' and remarked that 1979 'will be the first year in a long time when the Second Creative Unit will be where it ought to with screenplays, relative to Goskino, and to works-in-progress'. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, ll. 21 and 23.

⁶⁰³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 36.

⁶⁰⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 93.

⁶⁰⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 6.

⁶⁰⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 6.

⁶⁰⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 6.

⁶⁰⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 6, op. 39, d. 24, ll. 66-66(b).

⁶⁰⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 149.

⁶¹⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 46.

⁶¹¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, ll. 53-54.

⁶¹² This was a legally binding disciplinary measure at late-Soviet enterprises. A *vygovor* [reprimand] amounted to a ‘formal warning’ with limited personal consequences; a *strogii vygovor* [severe reprimand] involved the removal of many workplace privileges and benefits of CPSU membership; and a *strogii vygovor s zaneseniem v uchetnuiu kartochku* [severe reprimand logged on the personnel-card] was recorded, like points on a driving license, without the prospect of removal from the employee’s record. In these circumstances, any further wrongdoing – even minor infringements – were likely to prompt exclusion from the CPSU.

⁶¹³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 170, d. 31, l. 54.

⁶¹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 69.

⁶¹⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 176-79.

⁶¹⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 177.

⁶¹⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 180.

⁶¹⁸ Tamara Denisova, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 25 December 2014.

See *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 574-75.

⁶¹⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 173.

⁶²⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 179.

⁶²¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 154.

⁶²² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 160.

⁶²³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 160-61 and 164.

⁶²⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 161.

⁶²⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 156-57.

⁶²⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 157.

⁶²⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶²⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶²⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 124.

⁶³⁰ See n. 459; and Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, pp. 385-86.

⁶³¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 162.

⁶³² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 84.

⁶³³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 157.

⁶³⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 157 -58.

⁶³⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶³⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶³⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 158.

⁶³⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶³⁹ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶⁴⁰ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶⁴¹ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶⁴² TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 158.

⁶⁴³ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 158.

⁶⁴⁴ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

⁶⁴⁵ Ol'ga Shervud, 'Boris Frumin: Konspektirovat' nastoiashchee', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2006, 2, 117-33 (pp. 121-22).

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. The writer Nina Katerli has described Romanov as 'the number-one anti-Semite in town' and complained that Jewish managers in Leningrad enterprises were often not accorded the official titles of the posts they exercised, as a matter of principle (Vishnevskii, 'Apostol zastoia'). The most notorious recorded example of Romanov's personal anti-Semitism concerns the denial of publication for *Vizantiiskie legendy/Byzantine Legends*, a monograph by the renowned academic, Dmitrii Ligachev, because the latter employed an 'undesirable' Jewish editor. Recounting word-for word to Kashin the indisputably anti-Semitic comments that he made to Ligachev, Romanov argued that 'this offended [Ligachev] for some reason, but I was right: at that time, Jews were standing on anti-Soviet positions and we were obliged to prohibit their activities'. Kashin, 'Khoziain Leningrada'; and Stepakov, *Leningradtsy*, pp. 140-41.

⁶⁴⁷ Ol'ga Shervud, 'Boris Frumin', p. 121.

⁶⁴⁸ Lavrentii Vasil'evich Sokolovskii was one of eighteen operatives from the Fourth Department of the NKVD ('special operations' and military counterespionage) to be awarded the rank of Junior Lieutenant of State Security in 'Prikaz Narodnogo komissara vnutrennikh del Soiuzu SSR No. 328 ot 23.02.1939', in *Kadrovyi sostav organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR: 1935-1939*.

<http://memo.nablawiki.ru/index.php/Dokument:Prikaz_NKVD_SSSR_No_329_ot_23.02.1939> [accessed 3 October 2018. The final section of this URL is written in Cyrillic script].

⁶⁴⁹ Ol'ga Shervud, 'Boris Frumin', p. 122.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 83.

⁶⁵² TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 187.

⁶⁵³ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 219, l. 131.

⁶⁵⁴ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 219, ll. 131-32. Ruble draws on Soviet statistics published in 1974 and 1981 to produce a table on the 'Nationality composition of Leningrad population, 1959-1979'. There, the city's Jewish population is shown to have fallen by 15.2% over that twenty-year period. Although this decline is expressed as a drop of only one percentage-point per decade

in relation to Leningrad's overall population (5.1% in 1959, 4.1% in 1970, 3.1% in 1979), the numerical fall between 1970 (162,900) and 1979 (143,000) is markedly more dramatic than between 1959 (168,700) and 1970. Although interpreting this as reflective of 'national and international influences rather than purely local ethnic impulses and tendencies', Ruble acknowledges that '[t]he decline of the city's Jewish population more recently reflects local discriminatory practices that have prompted many Jews to leave Leningrad for Moscow, Israel, or the United States'. Ruble, *Leningrad*, pp. 55-56.

⁶⁵⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 188.

⁶⁵⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 188.

⁶⁵⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 188.

⁶⁵⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 189.

⁶⁵⁹ Riazantseva, interview with the author, Moscow, 10 September 2016.

⁶⁶⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 188.

⁶⁶¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 158.

⁶⁶² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 159.

⁶⁶³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 6, op. 39, d. 26, ll. 65-66.

⁶⁶⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 6, op. 39, d. 26, l. 66.

⁶⁶⁵ The measurement of 'youth' at Lenfil'm in the TO-era seems to have depended more on assessments of cineastes' filmographies than on their actual ages (see TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 69, l. 139; TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 83, l. 19; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 104, l. 91). In 1975, Maslennikov expressed the long-familiar frustration of filmmakers with these conventions: 'It turns out that people filed as debutants are of a fairly ripe old age, have been working at Lenfil'm for a long time, and [so] there is no basis for looking upon them as youngsters and expecting some kind of youthful traits from them. [...] There are only two comrades at the studio who can be called 'young': that's Frumin, twenty-eight, and Danilin, twenty-seven'. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 164, l. 44.

⁶⁶⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 84.

⁶⁶⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 46.

⁶⁶⁸ Zvonkine describes how, in 1975, the new editor-in-chief of the Odessa Studio, Galina Lazareva, encouraged Muratova to develop a literary adaptation from the classics, rightly considering this a safer option for production than a contemporary theme. After extraordinary meetings in Odessa and Moscow, the production of *Kniazhna Meri* was closed by the Ukrainian branch of Goskino. Muratova also told Zvonkine that the screentests were destroyed by the studio. Of the production, Zvonkine writes that 'even if the film remains an unrealized project, it

is still a crucial stage in the work of [Muratova], who considers it to be a moment of rupture in her aesthetical development'. Zvonkine, *Kira Muratova*, pp. 80-83 and 559.

⁶⁶⁹ Grigorii Baklanov, 'Shelestiat na vetru berezy', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1977, 5, pp. 167-91.

⁶⁷⁰ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014; and Viktor Bozhovich, 'Rentgenoskopiia dushi', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1987, 9, 51-70 (p. 64).

⁶⁷¹ Zara Abdullaeva, *Kira Muratova: Iskusstvo kino* (Moscow: NLO, 2008), p. 45.

⁶⁷² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 20 and 28.

⁶⁷³ Fomin (ed.), *Letopis' rossiiskogo kino: 1966-1980*, p. 586.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 590.

⁶⁷⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 22.

⁶⁷⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 37-38; and Zvonkine, *Kira Muratova*, p. 329.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 357.

⁶⁷⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 5.

⁶⁷⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 6.

⁶⁸⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 6.

⁶⁸¹ Viktor Matizen, 'Zhenshchina, kotoroi skuchen alfavitnyi poriadok', *Film.ru*, 20 July 2001.

<<http://www.film.ru/article.asp?ID=2645>> [accessed 3 October 2018].

⁶⁸² Zvonkine, *Kira Muratova*, p. 346.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 357.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 333.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 333-34.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 340.

⁶⁸⁸ Andrei Plakhov, *Vsego 33: Zvezdy mirovoi kinorezhissury* (Vinnitsa: Akvilon, 1999), p. 208.

⁶⁸⁹ Zvonkine, *Kira Muratova*, p. 340.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 345-46.

⁶⁹¹ Pimenov's death in September 1977, when Muratova was writing the directorial screenplay, may have brought this painting to the filmmaker's attention as a specific aesthetical influence.

⁶⁹² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, ll. 16-17. The three remaining 'novellas' were released as the portmanteau film, *Zav'ialovskie chudiki/Zav'ialovskoe Oddballs*, dir. by Valerii Gur'ianov, Anatolii Dubinkin and Ernest Iasan (1978).

⁶⁹³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 193.

⁶⁹⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, ll. 200 and 205.

⁶⁹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 204.

⁶⁹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 37; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 101.

⁶⁹⁷ ‘Rezhisser Kira Muratova: ‘Ia stavliu etoi planete ‘nol’!’ , *Bol’shoi*, 14 March 2012.

<<https://bolshoi.by/persona/rezhisser-kira-muratova-ya-stavlyu-etoj-planete-nol>>

[accessed 3 October 2018].

⁶⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 37.

⁶⁹⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 37.

⁷⁰⁰ Zvonkine refers to an unpublished source, in which Muratova described her original vision for the scene of Liuba and Nikolai arguing over a bottle of milk to an audience of film-critics at Leningrad’s Dom Kino in 1981: ‘Nikolai’s buffoonery and the shouting ought to have reached the technical limits of sound-power, and then – silence; the scene with the removal of dust from [Liuba’s] eye ought then to have given the viewer a rest’ (Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, pp. 347-48). The production-files confirm this omission as a correction demanded of Muratova: ‘In the scene of Liuba and Nikolai’s row over a bottle of milk, shots in which the row becomes hysterical have been excluded’. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 67.

⁷⁰¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 37 and 39; and Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, pp. 333-34.

⁷⁰² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 37, 47 and 49; and Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, p. 334.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 40.

⁷⁰⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 40.

⁷⁰⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 40.

⁷⁰⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 42.

⁷⁰⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 42.

⁷⁰⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 42.

⁷¹⁰ Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, p. 352.

⁷¹¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 57-58 and 68.

⁷¹² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 100.

⁷¹³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 101.

⁷¹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, l. 101.

⁷¹⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, ll. 101-02.

⁷¹⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, ll. 102-03.

⁷¹⁷ In the unpublished Dom kino article (1981), from which Zvonkine quotes Muratova, the filmmaker remarked that the ‘milk bottle’ scene ought to have been double its final length (Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova*, p. 348). The studio’s final screening-report confirmed that *Poznavaia*

had been shortened by 310 metres. Cuts are then listed for sixteen different sequences, some of which disappeared from the film entirely. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, ll. 67-68.

⁷¹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 67.

⁷¹⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 64.

⁷²⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 65.

⁷²¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 31, d. 338, l. 66.

⁷²² Ivaneev, “*Lenfil’ m*”: *Den’ za dnem*, p. 61.

⁷²³ Gukasian, interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 26 December 2014.

⁷²⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 81.

⁷²⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 13.

⁷²⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 218, l. 14.

⁷²⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 393, ll. 26-27.

⁷²⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 393, l. 49.

⁷²⁹ Solomon Shuster thought *Poznavaia* ‘a truly extraordinary film, not only for *Lenfil’ m*, but for cinema’. Nadezhda Kosheverova spoke of ‘the impression of an astounding poetics [...] an undoubtedly talented, unusual film, highly unusual for us. We do not make films this way’. Semen Aranovich praised ‘this gaze, precisely a gaze, that is individual, auteurist, directorial, civic, whichever you like. I do not want to pull it apart in detail, I just accept it all’.

TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, ll. 169, 171, and 175.

⁷³⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 171.

⁷³¹ Irina Golovan’ drew attention to the film’s radical sound-editing and the ‘strange manner in which people speak, [...] addressing their lines to no-one, all over the place’, thus anticipating Zvonkine’s interest in the idea of ‘dissonance’ as a key organizing principle of Muratova’s work (TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 180; and Zvonkine, *Kira Muratova*, especially pp. 229-325). Iurii Klepikov spoke of Liuba as ‘a character – I will be rude here – on the level of an animal, who before our eyes goes through a very complex, interesting process of becoming a person’ (TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 177), which draws similar conclusions from Muratova’s anthropological constructs as the ‘zoo world’ of human behaviour identified by Nancy Condee in *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 139.

⁷³² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, ll. 173 and 201.

⁷³³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 185.

⁷³⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 36, d. 33, l. 193.

⁷³⁵ ‘Odin: Dmitrii Bykov’, Ekho Moskv, 8 June 2018.

Chapter Six

⁷³⁶ Roza Kopylova, *Il'ia Averbakh* (Leningrad: Vsesoiuznoe biuro propagandy kinoiskusstva, 1987), p. 155.

⁷³⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 205, ll. 135-36.

⁷³⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, l. 113.

⁷³⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 221, l. 77.

⁷⁴⁰ In March 1981, a Partkom presentation by Provotorov discussed an ongoing official campaign against vagrancy [*tuneiadstvo*] in Leningrad. Youth unemployment was unprecedentedly high in the city: Provotorov referred to increasingly frequent cases of young men coming to the studio in search of work, receiving documentation confirming their status as hired labourers, then never being seen again (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 244, ll. 52-53). At the 1980 LOSK conference, Provotorov closed his speech by mentioning severe energy-outages in Leningrad, requiring a 'heroic fight to use sources that will prevent crises in future' (TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 421, l. 74). In 1982, the filmmaker Vladimir Bor'tko continued his outspoken rise through the studio's CPSU branch, here introducing the language of food-shortages to the rhetorical arena of late-Soviet Lenfil'm debates: 'There is no need to talk about the importance of the [CC] food programme. It suffices to look at the queues in shops, at the fact that there is no butter, no meat, that we're badly off for sausages' (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 258, l. 96).

⁷⁴¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 478, l. 118.

⁷⁴² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 50.

⁷⁴³ Riazantseva, '*Ne govori mame*', pp. 61-62.

⁷⁴⁴ Semen Aranovich was briefly the First TO's preferred candidate in 1976, when the literary screenplay was in development. Subsequently, Solomon Shuster was approved by Lenfil'm in January 1978. Averbakh, Riazantseva's civil partner, was approved in 1980 and went on to direct *Golos* as the third and final of their realized collaborations.

⁷⁴⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 37.

⁷⁴⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 49.

⁷⁴⁷ Fomin (ed.) *Letopis' rossiiskogo kino: 1966-1980*, pp. 544-55.

⁷⁴⁸ Natal'ia [sic] Riazantseva, *Golos i drugie kinostsenarii* (St. Petersburg: Seans Amfora, 2007), p. 11.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 668.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷⁵¹ Rick Altman, 'Introduction', *Yale French Studies*, 60 (1980), 3-15 (p. 4).

⁷⁵² Rick Altman, 'Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism', *ibid*, 67-79 (p. 69).

⁷⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 68.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 67.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 74.

⁷⁵⁶ Riazantseva, 'Ne govori mame', p. 60.

⁷⁵⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 51.

⁷⁵⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 4.

⁷⁵⁹ Michel Chion, *La Voix au cinéma* (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1982), p. 14.

⁷⁶⁰ Dominic Lennard, 'Jacques Lacan: Giving All the Right Signs', in *Thinking in the Dark: Cinema, Theory, Practice*, ed. by Murray Pomerance and R. Barton Palmer (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 89-100 (pp. 89-90). Intriguingly, psychoanalytic language occasionally appeared in Lenfil'm cineastes' reflections on production in these years. In September 1979, Mel'nikov decried thematic plans 'addressed to management and not viewers', arguing that the individual artists would always determine the 'complex psychic apparatus' of a film, but that 'the lack of a return-connection with audiences leads to [filmmakers'] fetishization of film-production processes. At the 1980 LOSK conference, Irina Golovan' – free to contribute as an advisor with the authority of a former editor-in-chief – called in an eloquent speech for 'more subtlety and free association' in studio-output (TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 421, l. 47).

⁷⁶¹ Lennard, 'Jacques Lacan', p. 91.

⁷⁶² Chion, *La Voix*, p. 15.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 31.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 18.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 13.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 14.

⁷⁶⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 55.

⁷⁶⁹ Dmitrii Dolinin, Averbakh's longstanding collaborator and camera-operator on *Golos*, discusses the verisimilitude of this shot and other sequences filmed at Lenfil'm in Vasilii Stepanov, 'Dmitrii Dolinin: Obzhitoe prostranstvo', in *Peterburg kak kino*, ed. by Liubov' Arkus and Konstantin Shavlovskii (St. Petersburg: Seans, 2011), 356-63 (p. 358). Iurii Klepikov's voiceover identifies the location in a documentary film on Averbakh, *Obratnaia tochka/Reverse-angle*, dir. by Andrei Kravchuk (2003).

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 357.

⁷⁷¹ Averbakh concluded the post-screening Lenfil'm *Khudsovet* with this exact description of the film's main theme [*nepovtorimyi golos kazhdogo cheloveka*]. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 17, l. 175.

⁷⁷² Oksana Bulgakova, *Golos kak kul'turnyi fenomen* (Moscow: NLO, 2015), pp. 218-19.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁷⁷⁴ Like Averbakh, Pankova was born into a prominent family in the world of Leningrad theatre. However, both entered artistic professions at odds with the career paths that their fathers had chosen for them. Pankova left to study acting in Moscow after completing a degree in maths and physics, while Averbakh made the same journey to screenwriting on the VKSR, having abandoned medicine after an early-career placement as a provincial village doctor. 'PANKOVA Tat'iana Petrovna', <<http://www.newdramafest.ru/info/person/p/pankova-tatjana-petrovna.php>> [accessed 30 July 2017]

⁷⁷⁵ Oleg Kovalov, "Chrez zvuki liry i trubny...", *Seans*, 1 (1990), 10-13 (p. 11).

⁷⁷⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 17, l. 173.

⁷⁷⁷ In his memoirs, Mel'nikov refers to this ban and regales readers with anecdotes about Karavaichuk's eccentricity, including the story of his first summary dismissal from Lenfil'm in 1959. When an unexpected reform to film-musicians' rates changed their remuneration to a system of pay dependent on the length of the written music, Karavaichuk is alleged to have reacted to their slapdash work by 'showering the orchestra pit in banknotes from his own pocket, taking the score and disappearing'. Vitalii Mel'nikov, *Zhizn', kino* (St. Petersburg: Sad iskusstv, 2005), pp. 221-22.

⁷⁷⁸ The *Short Literary Encyclopaedia* of 1971 defined *publitsistika* thus:

Pictures and details of reality, human characteristics, and destinies surface in the production of *publitsistika* as arguments drawn from real life, which is vivid and not concocted; as a system of evidential reasoning; as a tool for analysis; or serving as an emotional foundation, an 'irritant', and a pretext for handing down a 'verdict', for exposés or 'enquiries in the upper echelons of power' [...] Authentic *publitsistika* is the highest form of journalism. Using almost all newspaper and journalistic genres (articles, *feuilletons*, portraits, commentaries, reviews, pamphlets), it distinguishes itself by its representation of polemics, debate, and the struggle for *new* ideas. The *publitsist* is a social activist and citizen of her fatherland. Her work is incompatible with

timidity and triteness of thought, or an outlook that is illustrative and lacks independence.

Igor' Dedkov, 'Publitsistika', in *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, 9 vols (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1962-1978), VI (1971), pp. 72-73.

⁷⁷⁹ Petr Bagrov, 'Chelovek-Otvét: O protivorechii lichnosti i fil'mov Gerasimova', <<https://chapaev.media/articles/2722>> [accessed 15 July 2017]

⁷⁸⁰ During a 1977 roundtable between Lenfil'm cineastes and Izhorskii Factory workers, Averbakh himself repeated a euphemism frequently applied to his work in official publications. His avowed interest in 'the link between current generations and the progressive intelligentsia of the previous [nineteenth] century' thinly veiled the absence of any affinity whatsoever with official Soviet culture in his films. See M. Dorfman and V. Ishimov, 'Iskusstvo prinadlezhit narodu...', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1977, 11, 66-89 (p. 82); and Bakhilin, *Kinostudiia "Lenfil'm"*, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁸¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 219, l. 87. Later in this speech, Averbakh described *Premiia* – the most officially lauded Lenfil'm production of the 1970s – as a 'flop', to the immediate protestations of Gukasian and Zhuravin, who defended Mikaelian's film with reference to its box-office of 13 million ticket sales. Averbakh took his words back, but insisted that *Premiia* was still a 'run-of-the-mill picture', putting it in the same bracket as the embedded film in *Golos*.

⁷⁸² *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 43.

⁷⁸³ Kovalov, "Chrez zvuki", p. 13.

⁷⁸⁴ This situation, though uncommon, was far from unknown in late-Soviet Lenfil'm production. In May 1972, Kiselev complained to the Partkom that 'we sure do modify a lot of screenplays during shoots. Currently, we have two films in production that do not have an ending'.

TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 119, l. 67.

⁷⁸⁵ Bulgakova, *Golos*, p. 219.

⁷⁸⁶ Riazantseva has Sergei Anatol'evich compare cutting to Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* in conversation with Veronika (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 240, d. 182, l. 33). Iuliia's final farewell to Arkadii by the hospital fence names Simone Signoret in her parting question to him, rather than the film's anonymous, 'Do you remember the exit your favourite actress made in some old, old film?' (ibid, l. 56).

⁷⁸⁷ In 1982, *La Règle du jeu* occupied second place in *Sight and Sound* magazine's Top Ten list of all-time greatest films, as voted by critics, academics and journalists. Renoir's film figured in each of this publication's previous ten-yearly Top Ten lists published since 1952. 'The Top Ten 1982', *Sight and Sound*, 51.4 (1982), pp. 242-43.

⁷⁸⁸ Bulgakova, p. 220.

⁷⁸⁹ See Oleg Kovalov, 'Prervannyi monolog', *Cinematheque.ru*.

<<http://www.cinematheque.ru/post/141143>> [accessed 25 July 2017]

⁷⁹⁰ Kovalov, "Chrez zvuki", p. 13.

⁷⁹¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 17, l. 160.

⁷⁹² The first new draft, approved by Lenfil'm in 1980, is one of only three productions commenced between 1980 and 1985 to have its screenplay preserved in the archival holdings of the Leningrad Obkom Culture Department for these years (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 240, d. 182).

⁷⁹³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 240, d. 182, l. 29.

⁷⁹⁴ Riazantseva, *Golos*, p. 297.

⁷⁹⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 240, d. 182, l. 6.

⁷⁹⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 278, l. 18.

⁷⁹⁷ Riazantseva, interview with the author, Moscow, 10 September 2016.

⁷⁹⁸ 'Veronika rewound the scene, having evidently found some flaw of her own in the cutting. Her face became stern and business-like, her hands worked skilfully and noiselessly. She made some cuts and splices'. Riazantseva, *Golos*, p. 265.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 290.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 272.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 252-53.

⁸⁰² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 24, op. 240, d. 182, l. 8.

⁸⁰³ Riazantseva, *Golos*, pp. 273-77.

⁸⁰⁴ In her address to the Lenfil'm Partkom in June 1978, Raikom secretary Serova reported that the studio figured in the top ten of the district's 270 state enterprises for reports of on-the-job drunkenness. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 203, ll. 162-64.

⁸⁰⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 33, l. 7. Iuliia Martynova was not the only dying actor to be played by Nataliia Saiko at Lenfil'm during this period. *Ia – aktrisa / I Am an Actress*, dir. by Viktor Sokolov (1980), in many ways fleshes out the film-within-the-film described in Riazantseva's proposal: this biopic of Vera Komissarzhevskaiia (1864-1910), the celebrated Petersburg stage actor and founder of the Dramaticheskii teatr, dwelt at length on the actor's revolutionary sympathies and indirect donations to underground printing-presses during the first decade of the twentieth century.

⁸⁰⁶ Kovalov, "Chrez zvuki", p. 10.

⁸⁰⁷ Riazantseva read this diary entry aloud and offered her own reflections:

At forty years-old, everyone gets what is due to them, what they deserve. I deserve a loneliness that is pitch-black and absolute for galloping onwards on the back of my feigned abilities, just as all my life I have passed myself off as more talented and cleverer than is really the case. For supplanting someone else's place in art, I am rightly punished with black loneliness and the simultaneous loss of the two closest people to me. Back to square one. In a vacuum. Utterly alone. Even a sincere conversation happens only with myself.

[Riazantseva:]... this very much surprised me, when I found it after his death. Because Il'ia was basically a jolly person and not very given to complaining, and it is strange to me that he even thought that way. But he genuinely did fear loneliness, very much, because he was used to people loving him and needing him, and many of those people even loved him just like that, for no particular reason.

‘Ostrova: Il'ia Averbakh’, Telekanal Kul'tura, 26 July 2010.

⁸⁰⁸ Unusually, Moldavskii was alone at this *Khudsovet* in daring to suggest that the film was principally addressed to its own cohort, citing several examples of editing that risked a ‘non-professional viewer’ missing the meaning of a sequence. Hinting at the dense subtexts of *Golos*, Moldavskii concluded that ‘we are looking at a talented piece of work, but with a bar set high enough that you bump your head trying to reach it’. TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 33, d. 17, l. 168.

Chapter Seven

⁸⁰⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 266, l. 93.

⁸¹⁰ Medvedev, *Territoria kino*, p. 252. Medvedev makes this assertion on the basis of statistics presented to the GSRK by the head of Goskino's film-distribution [*kinoprokat*] division, Evgenii Voitovich, whose data was a frequently cited source of information on box-office performance during debates at Lenfil'm in perestroika.

⁸¹¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 259, l. 1.

⁸¹² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 244, l. 144; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 245, l. 56.

⁸¹³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 258, ll. 5-6.

⁸¹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 258, l. 19.

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- ⁸¹⁵ In 1966, Aksenov was among those ‘young’ filmmakers held by Kiselev to be insufficiently talented to continue working at Lenfil’ m (TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 18, d. 1462, l. 70). Aksenov’s subsequent departure for Lennauchfil’ m and televisual work was, at least in part, the consequence of a 1970 Obkom-led campaign to clear out Lenfil’ m TOs of untested or underperforming ‘young’ filmmakers (TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 21, d. 41, ll. 155-74).
- ⁸¹⁶ In April 1982, Aleksei German expressed this hope to the 1981 LOSK conference on Lenfil’ m (TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 478, ll. 36-38).
- ⁸¹⁷ Aksenov, *Kak stat’ direktorom*, pp. 22 and 52.
- ⁸¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 48-52.
- ⁸¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 59.
- ⁸²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 69.
- ⁸²¹ Archie Brown, ‘The Soviet Leadership and the Struggle for Political Reform’, *The Harriman Institute Forum*, 1:4 (1988), 1-8 (p. 1).
- ⁸²² Aksenov, *Kak stat’ direktorom*, pp. 199-200.
- ⁸²³ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 131. Ruble describes Zaikov as ‘a skilled manager with extensive practical experience’ whose ‘rise to local dominance following Romanov’s elevation to the Central Committee’s Secretariat had been rather unpredictable’. In his transition from factory-work to politics along the state (Soviet) line of city administration, ‘Zaikov apparently held no major Communist Party post’ until 1983, helping him to ‘fit the initial mould of the new “Gorbachev Man”’ after 1985. Ruble, *Leningrad*, pp. 133-34.
- ⁸²⁴ Pozdniakov, *List’ia akanta*, p. 279.
- ⁸²⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Nastoichivo dvigat’sia vpered: Vystuplenie na sobranii aktiva Leningradskoi partiinoi organizatsii: 17 maia 1985 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), pp. 9-12.
- ⁸²⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 269, ll. 49-50 and 64-65.
- ⁸²⁷ Pozdniakov, *List’ia akanta*, p. 279.
- ⁸²⁸ Maslennikov, *Beiker-strit*, p. 188.
- ⁸²⁹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 332.
- ⁸³⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 129. On the myth that Golutva was appointed studio-director, see *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 332.
- ⁸³¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, ll. 35-39.
- ⁸³² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 127.
- ⁸³³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 258, ll. 187-88. For contrasting accounts of the submission and initial ‘shelving’ of *Lapshin*, see Aksenov, *Kak stat’ direktorom*, pp. 114-31; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast’*, pp. 202-06.

⁸³⁴ Medvedev, *Territoria kino*, p. 245.

⁸³⁵ Dmitrii Savel'ev, 'Odnokii golos cheloveka (1978-87 gg.)' in *Sokurov*, ed. Liubov' Arkus (Saint Petersburg: Seans, 1994), 25-32 (pp. 30-32); and Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, p. 223.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.

⁸³⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 231, l. 86.

⁸³⁸ Aksenov, *Kak stat' direktorom*, pp. 155-56; and Fomin, *Kino i vlast'*, pp. 224-25.

⁸³⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 270, ll. 3 and 46.

⁸⁴⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 259, ll. 132-37; and *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 570-71.

⁸⁴¹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 85-87.

⁸⁴² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 252-54.

⁸⁴³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 258, l. 24.

⁸⁴⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 389, l. 54; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 231, l. 83.

⁸⁴⁵ Aristov was screenwriter on Dinara Asanova's *Zhena ushla/The Wife Left* (1979) and – crucially – German's assistant-director on *Lapshin*. His *Porokh/Gunpowder* (1985), one of the highest profile Lenfil'm releases commemorating the 40-year anniversary of victory in the Second World War, was seriously criticized by the Leningrad Party for its representation of the city's wartime defence; Aksenov cited this fallout as bearing significantly on his resignation (Aksenov, *Kak stat' direktorom*, pp. 200-01). Only with perestroika could Aristov continue a career that would otherwise have been seriously jeopardized by this episode.

The short *Solo* (1980), an ascetic depiction of an orchestral performance during the siege of Leningrad, was Lopushanskii's VKSR graduate-film, repackaged by the First TO. A feature materialized only in 1985, when *Pis'ma mertvogo cheloveka/Dead Man's Letters* was commenced but subsequently halted by Khokhlov at Goskino's behest, having accused Lopushanskii of deviating wildly from the approved screenplay (TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, ll. 79-80). The film's eventual release – on an improbably large print-run for a debut of this status – was secured after Gorbachev's personal intervention. and gained further resonance by coinciding with emerging news of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in April 1986 (interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 20 December 2014).

Ovcharov converted two VKSR shorts – *Neskladukha/Doggerel* (1979) and *Barabaniada/Drumroll* (1980) – into Lenfil'm releases that demonstrated his interest in Russian folkloric motifs and absurdist satire. *Nebyval'shchina/Tall Tales* (1983) combined these registers in a surreal musical

comedy, which Medvedev claims provoked an exceptionally divisive GSRK meeting to assign the film's categorization (Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, p. 253). In 2009, Ovcharov recalled how Gleb Panfilov, his VKSR tutor, encouraged him to move to Lenfil'm after graduation in 1979, given the greater likelihood of progressing to feature-filmmaking than at Mosfil'm (officially, Panfilov himself only left that same year). Andrei Morozov, 'Sergei Ovcharov: V iskusstve segodnia bezvremen'e', *Daily Talking*, 25 December 2009.

<<https://dailytalking.ru/interview/ovcharov-sergey-mihaylovich/264/>>

[accessed 8 March 2019].

⁸⁴⁶ Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, p. 252.

⁸⁴⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 131-33.

⁸⁴⁸ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 187.

⁸⁴⁹ Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, pp. 261-62; and *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 145.

⁸⁵⁰ See, for example, Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, p. 264; and *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 145 and 148.

⁸⁵¹ Petr Orekhin, "Perestroiku mogla spasti liberalizatsiia tsen", *Novaia gazeta*, 23 April 2015.

<https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2015/04/23/reformy_gorbacheva.shtml>

[accessed 15 February 2019].

⁸⁵² Iurii Arabov, presentation to a post-screening discussion of *Gospodin oformitel' / Mr. Designer*, dir. by Oleg Teptsov (1988) at 'Kinoproza', Kinoteatr Avrorra, St. Petersburg, 10 October 2015.

⁸⁵³ Mel'nikov later described the Fifth Congress as a 'provincially minded carve-up' of powers ('Istoriia kinonachal'nikov, ili Stroiteli i perestroishchiki: 80-e: Gibel' imperii Filippa Ermasha', Telekanal Kul'tura, 2011). This view reinforces the abiding discursive split in Russian and Soviet film historiography over the Congress, which Medvedev, Klimov and screenwriter Anatolii Grebnev all frame with the ironic assertion of its 'historic' status for some, and 'hysterical' meaning for others. See Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, p. 252; Dmitrii Savel'ev, 'Elem Klimov: Master i nevesta chelovechestva', *Chaika*, 28 July 2003. <<https://www.chayka.org/node/33/>> [accessed 18 February 2019], and – for the fullest development of this theme – Anatolii Grebnev, *Zapiski poslednego stsenarista* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2000), pp. 261-80.

⁸⁵⁴ Igor' Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf: Mezhdú proshlym i budushchim* (Moscow: Rossiiskii fond kul'tury, 2001), p. 54.

⁸⁵⁵ Valerii Fomin, 'Konets sovetskogo kino: Letopis' perestroiki 1986-1991 gg.', *Kinostsenarii*, 1999, 3, 181-191 (p. 186). Kokarev is more measured, where he writes that 'At Dom kino [the SK headquarters on Vasil'evskaia ulitsa in Moscow] the management was also quickly replaced,

converting it swiftly from a closed professional club into a political club for the country's democratic forces' (Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 37).

⁸⁵⁶ Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 35.

⁸⁵⁷ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 67.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹ "U menia eshche est' adresa...": Iosif Kheifits: Postskriptum: Chast' 1', TRK Peterburg, 2000.

⁸⁶⁰ Under scrutiny, these *Postanovleniia* extended beyond criticism of Goskino and SK leaderships to include what became many of the key principles of perestroika in the film industry. These were to reduce bureaucratic obstructionism; for Goskino and the SK to jointly develop a new production-model for studios; for authorial rights and remuneration policies to be redefined; for 'shelved' films to be individually reassessed for potential release; for young and debuting filmmakers to be given better prospects for feature-length commissions; for the relationship with Gosteleradio over broadcast rights to be simplified and tightened; and for the SK and Goskino to develop a plan for technological modernization at all Soviet studios. See *Piatyi s"ezd kinematografistov SSSR: 13-15 maia 1986 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, ed. by G.V. Senchakova (Moscow: Vsesoiuznoe biuro propagandy kinoiskusstva, 1987), pp. 240-45.

⁸⁶¹ Bykov criticized the SK and Mosfil'm elite for their self-interest, their failure to support young filmmakers politically, and their neglect of children's cinema (*Piatyi s"ezd*, pp. 64-68). Plakhov highlighted SK corruption, ideologically motivated publishing restrictions, and the promotion of mediocre films out of protectionism and nepotism (ibid, pp. 72-77). Tolstykh focused on the political anachronisms of Goskino and the need for macroeconomic reforms (ibid, pp. 169-74). Men'shov vociferously attacked the Mosfil'm establishment and lamented studios' lack of resolve to improve the audience-appeal of Soviet films. (ibid, pp. 201-04). Solov'ev, having denounced widespread corruption at Mosfil'm, the censorial practices of Goskino, and inadequate teaching at VGIK, called for a revolution in administrative practice, beginning with the central structures (ibid, pp. 268-72).

⁸⁶² *Piatyi s"ezd*, p. 170. This intervention bolstered Tolstykh's subsequent prominence in perestroika through the SK and in the press. See, for example, in G. Simanovich, 'Drama khoroshikh idei', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 20 June 1987, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁶³ *Piatyi s"ezd*, p. 57.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 58.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Postanovlenie Ts. K. R. K. P. (b.) o profsoiuzakh', *Pravda*, 17 January 1922, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁶⁷ See, for example, Evsei Liberman, 'Plan, pribyl', premiia: Sovershenstvovat' khoziaistvennoe rukovodstvo i planirovanie', *Pravda*, 9 September 1962, p. 3.

⁸⁶⁸ 'Tsentral'nyi komitet KPSS: Sovet ministrov SSSR: Postanovlenie ot 4 oktiabria 1965 g. N. 729: O sovershenstvovanii planirovaniia i usilenii ekonomicheskogo stimulirovaniia promyshlennogo proizvodstva', *Biblioteka normativno-pravovykh aktov Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*, <http://www.libussr.ru/doc_ussr/usr_6308.htm/> [accessed 10 April 2019].

⁸⁶⁹ Golutva stressed the importance of 'democratized management' to the prospects of economic reform as early as 1986. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 72.

⁸⁷⁰ For Chukhrai's perspective on the ETK, see Chukhrai, *Moe kino*, pp. 165-87.

⁸⁷¹ Vladimir Mikhailov, 'Ne ko vremeni rodivshaiasia' in Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, 234-44 (p. 241).

⁸⁷² Ibid, p. 239.

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁴ Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, pp. 232-33.

⁸⁷⁵ Mikhailov, 'Ne ko vremeni', p. 242.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 240.

⁸⁷⁷ Leonid Gurevich, 'Vremia prishlo', in Fomin (ed.), *Kinematograf ottepli*, 246-55 (pp. 250-54). These were *Angel*, dir. by Andrei Smirnov, and *Rodina elektrichestva/ The Motherland of Electricity*, dir. by Larisa Shepit'ko. Both were 'unshelved' by the SK Conflict Commission in 1987.

⁸⁷⁸ Kristen Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 61.

⁸⁷⁹ Mikhailov, 'Ne ko vremeni', p. 241.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 242-43.

⁸⁸¹ G. Kapralov, 'Chto "kormit" kinostudiiu...: Beseda s rezhisserom Grigoriem Chukhraem', *Pravda*, 14 February 1986, p. 14.

⁸⁸² Irina Tcherneva, 'Imiter le marché, une recette pour le cinéma soviétique? L'histoire du Studio artistique expérimental (1965-1976)', *Cahiers du monde russe*, 54:3/4 (2013), 589-621 (pp. 610-15 and 620-22).

⁸⁸³ Ibid, p. 620.

⁸⁸⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, l. 89.

⁸⁸⁵ The provisions of the LSE and subsequently the law itself were published in quick succession. See 'Osnovnye polozheniia korennoi perestroiki upravleniia ekonomikoi', *Pravda*, 27 June 1987, pp. 2-3, and 'Zakon Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik o gosudarstvennom

predpriiatii (ob "edinenie)’, *Pravda*, 1 July 1987, pp. 1-4. On the difficult negotiations between the SK and Goskino, see Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 36.

⁸⁸⁶ Richard E. Ericson, ‘The New Enterprise Law’, *The Harriman Institute Forum*, 1:2 (1988), 1-8 (p. 1).

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸⁹¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 104.

⁸⁹² Ericson, ‘The New Enterprise Law’, p. 4.

⁸⁹³ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 145 and 148.

⁸⁹⁴ Reporting to the Partkom, Maslennikov attested to the creativity and methodological dexterity of the Saratov academics, but ruefully concluded that ‘the happy atmosphere in which the *delovye igry* began gradually faded, and by the fifth day of discussions and debates on the subject, the eyes of these jolly Saratov sociologists blurred, the mood fell, and at the end of the session they admitted that, in all their experience, they had never come into contact with such a complex system – economic, ideological, whichever kind – as cinema’. TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 55.

⁸⁹⁵ At the time of writing, the documental material of the *delovye igry*, the ‘Bolshevo Manifesto’ and the final draft of the *bazovaia model’*, remain unavailable for consultation in the central Russian state-archival holdings for the SK during perestroika, which have been indexed, but not catalogued at RGALI. Kokarev’s authoritative citation of this last document allows this chapter to orientate its analysis of Bolshevo in the context of *khozraschet* reforms.

⁸⁹⁶ See Medvedev, *Territoriia kino*, pp. 275-78 for an insider’s summary of the political processes that led from these negotiations to CM *Postanovlenie* 1003.

⁸⁹⁷ For an assessment of Iakovlev’s centrality to the cultural policies of the Gorbachev administration, see Riita H. Pittman, ‘Perestroika and Soviet cultural politics: The case of the major literary journals’, *Soviet Studies*, 42:1 (1990), 111-32 (pp. 114-15).

⁸⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 82.

⁸⁹⁹ Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 52.

⁹⁰⁰ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 145; and Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 50.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 50.

⁹⁰² *Ibid*.

⁹⁰³ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, l. 137.

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- ⁹⁰⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 126; and *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 148.
- ⁹⁰⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, ll. 2 and 4. ‘Intensification-90’ [*Intensifikatsiia-90*] was an economic-reform initiative specific to Leningrad from 1984 onwards. Industrial practices were to be shifted through technological innovations, computerization, and greater automation as a response to labour shortages. Building upon the promotion of scientific research in production from the late-Romanov era, *Intensifikatsiia-90* sought to maximize the automation and technological renewal of industry between 1985 and 1990, alongside a corresponding draft-plan for social development and civic infrastructure in 1985-2000. See Ruble, *Leningrad*, pp. 132-36.
- ⁹⁰⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 6.
- ⁹⁰⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 51.
- ⁹⁰⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 51.
- ⁹⁰⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, l. 134.
- ⁹¹⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, ll. 134-36.
- ⁹¹¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 71.
- ⁹¹² Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, pp. 48-49.
- ⁹¹³ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, p. 332; and V, pp. 61, 76, and 78.
- ⁹¹⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, ll. 72-75.
- ⁹¹⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 278, ll. 128-30; and TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 104.
- ⁹¹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 113.
- ⁹¹⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 96; TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 274, l. 77; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, ll. 4-6.
- ⁹¹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 112-13.
- ⁹¹⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, ll. 7-8; and TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 111.
- ⁹²⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 236, ll. 33-36.
- ⁹²¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 108-09.
- ⁹²² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 103 and 108.
- ⁹²³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 108.
- ⁹²⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 107 and 111.
- ⁹²⁵ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 332 and 555-58.
- ⁹²⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 278, l. 102.
- ⁹²⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 278, ll. 97-98.
- ⁹²⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 282, ll. 49-50 and 75.

⁹²⁹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 616.

⁹³⁰ By 1989, CPSU authority in Leningrad had all but collapsed. According to Igor' Chubais, not a single standing Leningrad Party official was elected to the First Congress of USSR People's Deputies [*Pervyi s'ezd narodnykh deputatov SSSR*] in May 1989 by any of the city's voting districts. 'Grani Nedeli', Ekho Moskvyy, 25 May 2019.

⁹³¹ A. Skakov, 'Kinoprokat: Poisk reshenii: Za shirmoi bodrykh reliatsii', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 25 November 1986, p. 4.

⁹³² *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 332; and A. Skakov, 'Kinoprokat', p. 4.

⁹³³ Ibid.

⁹³⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 32.

⁹³⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, ll. 137-38.

⁹³⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 235, ll. 217.

⁹³⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 235, ll. 234.

⁹³⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 97-98 and 104; and Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 49.

⁹³⁹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 276, l. 107.

⁹⁴⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 20.

⁹⁴¹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, IV, pp. 140-41; and Pittman, 'Perestroika and Soviet cultural politics', p. 115.

⁹⁴² TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 89.

⁹⁴³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 91.

⁹⁴⁴ A decade on, Furikov had somewhat revised his assessment of *Pokaianie*, describing Soviet cinema's 'first film-exposé' [*pervaia razoblachitel'naia kartina*] as the catalyst for a fall in audience demand for entertainment cinema [*zrelishchnye fil'my*], as Soviet society swiftly became more politicized. At the same time, Furikov praised its box-office performance of 13.6 million viewers as 'a great amount for its [release] category'. Nonetheless, Furikov's industrial overview clearly presents perestroika as Soviet cinema's least lucrative period. According to his data, the biggest grossing films of 1980 attracted between 70 and 87 million viewers in their first runs alone, allegedly generating 35 times more income than costs, on the basis of an average ticket price of 24 kopecks and average production-costs of 450,000 roubles per film. Arguing that proportionally fewer *zrelishchnye fil'my* appeared in each year after 1986, Furikov referred again to the 5 million ticket-sales threshold as a benchmark that ever larger percentages of Soviet films failed to meet in their domestic runs: 55.6% in 1986, 62.9% in 1987, 75.9% in 1988, 86.3% in 1989 and, with

incomplete data, 95% in 1990. See Viktor Matizen, 'Lev Furikov: Kinorezhissura kak vid samoubiistva', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1998, 12, 108-11 (pp. 108-09).

⁹⁴⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 88.

⁹⁴⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 88.

⁹⁴⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 109.

⁹⁴⁸ Medvedev, *Territorii kino*, pp. 271-73; and Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to Plan*, pp. 12-51.

⁹⁴⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 110.

⁹⁵⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 259, l. 111.

⁹⁵¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 28.

⁹⁵² TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 244, l. 241.

⁹⁵³ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 122.

⁹⁵⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 122.

⁹⁵⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 123.

⁹⁵⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 115.

⁹⁵⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 119.

⁹⁵⁸ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 29.

⁹⁵⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 115. Maslennikov was especially blunt:

At the moment, we value our art cheaper than a bottle of Pepsi Cola. Worldwide, a cinema-ticket costs around three roubles in conversion to our money. And the majority of people are in a position to pay that kind of money to watch a good film in good conditions. But if we continue to exhibit our films on the cheap, then it will not recoup the money needed to make them.

Igor' Maslennikov, 'Idealizm modeli', *Seans*, 1 (1990), 18-19 (p. 19).

⁹⁶⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, l. 115.

⁹⁶¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 145.

⁹⁶² TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 145.

⁹⁶³ Viktor Matizen, 'Lev Furikov', p. 109.

⁹⁶⁴ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 67.

⁹⁶⁵ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 67.

⁹⁶⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, ll. 67-68. This project could not help but evoke the closure of the original Third TO. Indeed, Maslennikov sought – unsuccessfully – to encourage an

inactive Vengerov, who had shot his final film in 1983, to contribute to the artistic direction of this unit, with its focus on maximizing audience-appeal. See TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 256, ll. 172-73.

⁹⁶⁷ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 280, l. 67.

⁹⁶⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 257, op. 37, d. 236, l. 92.

⁹⁶⁹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 127.

⁹⁷⁰ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 283, ll. 40 and 132-33.

⁹⁷¹ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 283, ll. 59-61 and 74-75. According to PiEF alumnus and animation specialist Irina Evteeva, Sokurov’s principal involvement in production-development at PiEF was to assess the work of candidate directors whose experimental practice fell outside of German’s frame of artistic reference for the promotion of prospective feature-filmmaking at the unit. Interview with the author, St. Petersburg, 22 December 2014.

⁹⁷² *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 76 and 127.

⁹⁷³ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid, V, p. 128; and *Lenfil’ m: Annotirovannyi katalog*, pp. 160-62.

⁹⁷⁵ Filmmaker Svetlana Proskurova advanced this position at the time, describing Troitskii most as the most diverse and artistically ambitious of the new ‘studios’. Svetlana Proskurina, ‘Troitskii most’, in *Lenfil’ m i osvobozhdenie Sovetskogo kino*, ed. by Marco Müller and Elena van der Meulen (Rotterdam: Tijgerreeks, 1991), pp. 17-20.

⁹⁷⁶ See, for example, assertions stressing the full artistic and administrative independence of all new ‘studios’ from their peers in Frizheta Gukasian, ‘Segodniashnii den’ “Lenfil’ma”’, in *Lenfil’ m i osvobozhdenie sovetskogo kino*, 8-12 (pp. 9-10).

⁹⁷⁷ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 308.

⁹⁷⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 54-55.

⁹⁷⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 55 and 60.

⁹⁸⁰ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 54.

⁹⁸¹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 58.

⁹⁸² *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 308.

⁹⁸³ Mosfil’ m produced the box-office leader of 1989 with *Interdevochka/Intergirl*, dir. by Petr Todorovskii, which told the melodramatic story of a Leningrad nurse who turns to prostitution before marrying a Westerner and emigrating. Gor’kii Studio scored huge popular successes with two of perestroika’s most iconic cinematic works: *Malenkaia Vera/Little Vera*, dir. by Vasilii Pichul (1988), a bleak examination of domestic violence, alcoholism, and deprivation in contemporary Soviet life, famous for the first explicit Soviet sex-scene; and *Vory v zakone/Kings of Crime*, dir. by

Iurii Kara (1988), a kitschy crime thriller that was the first Soviet feature to depict organized criminal bosses in the USSR.

⁹⁸⁴ Among the credits of their formative period at Lenfil'm, Rogozhkin was a set-designer's assistant on *Vtoraia popytka*, while Snezhkin was a junior assistant-director to Averbakh on *Golos*.

⁹⁸⁵ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 621-22.

⁹⁸⁶ For a perceptive analysis of the 'Sakalauskas case' and its hesitant press-coverage, see Dmitrii Bykov, 'Spasitel'', in Dmitrii Bykov, *Blud truda* (St. Petersburg: Limbus Press, 2014), pp. 378-92.

⁹⁸⁷ Bykov supports Rogozhkin's assertion that *Karaul* was not about Sakalauskas on the basis of comments made at a 1991 screening in Vilnius: Ivan Loshchilin's screenplay was written in 1979 and drew inspiration from a hunt for a similarly murderous soldier which, Rogozhkin claimed, he himself had been made to participate in during his military service (Bykov, 'Spasitel'', p. 390):

If similarities exist, then it is not because the 'Sakalauskas case' is some kind of exceptional case, as the military people would like to present it, but that the 'Sakalauskas case' – as society has become aware of it – is a typical example of a rather commonplace phenomenon [...] The Ministry of the Interior expressed its negative opinion of the screenplay, but not all of the services were against it [...] Admittedly, ministerial leaderships were against it. I think this was not even because they were trying to protect themselves from [the exposure of] such things, but more of a conscious ignorance of everything that goes on.

(Aleksandr Rogozhin, 'Piatoe koleso', Leningradskaia programma, 1989).

⁹⁸⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 145.

⁹⁸⁹ Difficulties securing regional distribution exposed *Karaul*, a film with urgent societal resonance, to one of the greatest challenges facing reformers: videotape piracy. Maslennikov denounced its entrenchment in 1990: 'When I was at the Odessa film-sales market [*kinorynok*], we spent half a day looking for [our] copy of *Karaul*. But some underground distributors had stolen it to make video-copies [...] I realised then what kind of atmosphere we are living and breathing in. Above all, it's the total absence of legislative acts. Nowhere in the world is there such a situation'. Maslennikov, 'Idealizm modeli', p. 18.

⁹⁹⁰ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 334-35.

⁹⁹¹ 'Odin: Dmitrii Bykov', Ekho Moskv, 15 March 2019.

⁹⁹² TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 55.

⁹⁹³ Oleg Kovalov, ‘My’, *Seans*, 3 (1991), <<https://seance.ru/n/3/nevozvrashenez/we/>> [accessed 18 March 2019].

⁹⁹⁴ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 335 and 352.

⁹⁹⁵ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 110.

⁹⁹⁶ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 107-08.

⁹⁹⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 108.

⁹⁹⁸ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 167-68.

⁹⁹⁹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 334 and 352.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

¹⁰⁰¹ Prominent critic Liudmila Donets wrote that ‘Lenfil’ m studio conducts the most considered work on dramaturgy, which has shown results. I think that Lenfil’ m today – largely for this reason – is the best film-studio in the country [...] Even in its failures, the studio’s ambitions are apparent. They are always considered, honest, and hold art to be an inherent aspect of cinema’. Liudmila Donets, ‘Individual’ naia trudovaia deiatel’nost’: Zametki o Moskovskikh stsenaristakh’, *Iskusstvo kino*, 1987, 11, 86-96 (pp. 88-89).

¹⁰⁰² Ol’ga Shervud, ‘Aleksandr Golutva: “Esli prodiuser ne progorit, to i direktor ne potonet”’, *Iskusstvo kino*, 1991, 1, 48-50 (p. 48).

¹⁰⁰³ Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰⁴ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 115-16.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 352.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 308.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Natal’ia Pakhomova, ‘Pora privykat’’, *Seans*, 4 (1991), p. 13.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁹ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 116.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Lenfil’ m: Annotirovannyi katalog*, pp. 154-63.

¹⁰¹¹ *Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, p. 308.

¹⁰¹² In October 1989, several Lenfil’ m cineastes threatened immediate strike action when they became aware that the Leningrad Obkom leadership of Boris Gidaspov was actively encouraging Golutva to transfer to the politically crucial role of executive director at Leningrad Television. At this point, Golutva admitted to those gathered at an LOSK meeting that Medvedev had also approached him to become Goskino deputy chairman, but that he had refused, saying that it was ‘not the right time’. TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, ll. 127-28 and 134-38.

¹⁰¹³ It is in this light that we may remind ourselves of Marcel Martin's insistence: 'It is at Lenfil'm that the only cineastes in 1980s production who we can call *auteurs* have appeared, in the sense of [their being] creators whose work displays continuity and coherence in both theme and style'.

Martin, *Le Cinéma soviétique*, p. 157.

¹⁰¹⁴ Many of the *khozraschet* activities that CM *Postanovlenie* 1003 formally sanctioned for cinema were already occurring at studios, as a consequence of the LSE and of 1988's high-political battle over the legality of cooperatives in economic sectors where state monopolies remained dominant. Ultimately, the exhibition side of *prokat* was not one of these areas: although cinema-theatres were already being rented to private enterprises on an informal and illegal basis, all other aspects of *prokat* – from funding and tickets prices to schedules and staffing – remained formally under the control of a crumbling central *prokat* administration at Goskino (*Noveishaia istoriia otechestvennogo kino*, V, pp. 103-05). As legislation, this *Postanovlenie* was no less abstract, vague or totalizing in its ambitions than the idealistic *bazovaia model'* from which it came. Clause Ten formally enshrined the new *khozraschet* imperatives with an improbable accompanying demand that this process be completed by the end of the following year. 'Postanovlenie Soveta ministrov SSSR ot 18.11.1989 n.1003 "O perestroike tvorcheskoi, organizatsionnoi i ekonomicheskoi deiatel'nosti v sovetskoi kinematografii"', *Seichas.ru*, <<https://www.lawmix.ru/sss/3996/>> [accessed 16 March 2019].

¹⁰¹⁵ Kokarev, *Rossiiskii kinematograf*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁰¹⁶ TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 278, ll. 128-30; and TsGAIPD–Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 283, l. 61.

¹⁰¹⁷ TsGALI–Spb f. 183, op. 1, d. 613, l. 113.

¹⁰¹⁸ Viktor Tregubovich, 'Khozraschet dolzhen popast' v tsel'', *Seans*, 1 (1990), 18-19 (p. 19).

¹⁰¹⁹ 'Leningrad, noiabr' i bol'she nikogda', *Seans*, 6 (1992), 38-40 (p. 40).

¹⁰²⁰ Liubov' Arkus, 'Pravda khorosho, a schast'e luchshe', *Seans*, 3 (1991).
<<https://seance.ru/n/3/pravda-horosho-a-schaste-luchshe/>> [accessed 18 March 2019].

¹⁰²¹ Aleksei German, 'Aleksei German: "Vse nachinaetsia posle...": Monolog rezhissera', *Kinostsenarii*, 1995, 4, 3-6 (p. 3).

Conclusion

¹⁰²² Sergei Dobrotvorskii, 'Priamaia rech': V prisutstvii Bergmana: Otechestvennyi teatr i skandinavskoe kino', *Seans*, 13 (1996), 86-96 (pp. 88-89).

¹⁰²³ See, for example, Kheifits' impassioned speech to a Lenfil'm Party meeting in October 1980, where the studio's 'provinciality', 'conveyer-belt' mentality, and growing 'artistic defects' were

reminders that Lenfil'm had lost sight of a fundamental truth: 'the ultimate purpose of our Party concerns [...] is art alone, and nothing else!' (TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 231, ll. 41-47).

¹⁰²⁴ TsGAIPD—Spb f. 1369, op. 5, d. 270, l. 64.

¹⁰²⁵ This was a comedy set in Ukraine during the Civil War, *Svad'ba v Malinovke/Wedding in Malinovka*, dir. by Andrei Tutyshkin (1967) with 74.6 million first-run tickets sold in 1968. See 'Chempiony prokata kinostudii "Lenfil'm"', *Seans*, 8 (1993), p. 96, and Soviet box-office data compiled in *Domashniaia sinemateka: Otechestvennoe kino, 1918-1996*.

¹⁰²⁶ Martin, *Le Cinéma soviétique*, p. 157.

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Filmography

<i>8½</i>	1963
<i>À Bout de souffle</i>	1960
<i>Andrei Rublev</i>	1971 (1967)
<i>Angel</i>	1987 (1967)
<i>Ballada o soldate</i>	1959
<i>Barabaniada</i>	1980
<i>Beloe solntse pustyni</i>	1969
<i>Blokada</i>	1973-1978
<i>Bol’shaia sem’ia</i>	1954
<i>Chelovek-amfibiia</i>	1961
<i>ChP raionnogo masshtaba</i>	1988
<i>Dama s sobachkoi</i>	1960
<i>Delo Rumiantseva</i>	1955
<i>Deputat Baltiki</i>	1937
<i>Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle</i>	1967
<i>Dolgaia, schastlivaia zhizn’</i>	1966
<i>Dolgie provody</i>	1987 (1971)
<i>Don Kikhot</i>	1957
<i>Dorogoi moi chelovek</i>	1958
<i>Druz’ia i gody</i>	1965
<i>Dvadtsat’ dnei bez voiny</i>	1976
<i>Gamlet</i>	1964
<i>Golos</i>	1982
<i>Gospodin oformitel’</i>	1988
<i>Ia – aktrisa</i>	1980
<i>Iaroslavna, koroleva Frantsii</i>	1978
<i>Ia shagaiu po Moskve</i>	1963
<i>Iul’skii dozhd’</i>	1966
<i>Il Deserto rosso</i>	1965
<i>Il Generale Della Rovere</i>	1959
<i>Interdevochka</i>	1989
<i>Interventsiia</i>	1987 (1968)
<i>Istoriia Asi Kliachinoi, kitoraia liubila, da ne vyshla zamuzh</i>	1987 (1967)
<i>Karaul</i>	1989
<i>Kommunist</i>	1957
<i>Korol’ Lir</i>	1970
<i>Kryl’ia</i>	1966
<i>La Dolce Vita</i>	1960
<i>La Notte</i>	1961
<i>La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc</i>	1928

<i>La Règle du jeu</i>	1939
<i>L'Atalante</i>	1934
<i>L'Avventura</i>	1960
<i>L'Eclisse</i>	1962
<i>Les Quatre Cent Coups</i>	1959
<i>Letiat zhuravli</i>	1957
<i>Letniaia poezdka k moriu</i>	1978
<i>Levsha</i>	1986
<i>Malenkaia Vera</i>	1988
<i>Mal'chik i devochka</i>	1966
<i>Mama vyshla zamuzh</i>	1969
<i>Mne dvadtsat' let</i>	1965 (1962)
<i>Moi drug Ivan Lapshin</i>	1984 (1982)
<i>Molodaia zhena</i>	1978
<i>Morozko</i>	1965
<i>Nachalo</i>	1970
<i>Nebyval'shchina</i>	1983
<i>Neskladukha</i>	1979
<i>Nevozvrashchenets</i>	1990
<i>Obratnaia sviaz'</i>	1977
<i>Obratnaia tochka</i>	2003
<i>Odna</i>	1931
<i>Odinokii golos cheloveka</i>	1987 (1978)
<i>Ono</i>	1989
<i>Oshibki iunosti</i>	1989 (1978)
<i>Osvobozhdenie</i>	1968-1972
<i>Pered sudom istorii</i>	1965
<i>Pervorossiiane</i>	1967
<i>Pis'ma mertvogo cheloveka</i>	1986
<i>Podniataia tselina</i>	1959-1961
<i>Pokaianie</i>	1984
<i>Porokh</i>	1985
<i>Poznavaia belyi svet</i>	1980 (1978)
<i>Premiia</i>	1975
<i>Proshu slova</i>	1975
<i>Prosti</i>	1986
<i>Prostye liudi</i>	1945
<i>Proverka na dorogakh</i>	1985 (1971)
<i>Psevdonim: Lukach</i>	1976
<i>Rodina elektrichestva</i>	1987 (1967)
<i>Rytsar' iz Kniazh-gorodka</i>	1978
<i>Sed'moi sputnik</i>	1967
<i>Semero smelykh</i>	1936
<i>Siniaia ptitsa</i>	1976
<i>Skorbnoe bezchuvstvie</i>	1987 (1983)
<i>Sorok-pervyi</i>	1956
<i>Stanitsa Dal'niaia</i>	1939
<i>Starik Khottabych</i>	1956
<i>Stepen' riska</i>	1968
<i>Svad'ba v Malinovke</i>	1967

<i>Svetlyi put'</i>	1940
<i>Svoiaki</i>	1987 (1978)
<i>Taksi-bliuz</i>	1990
<i>Tema</i>	1987 (1979)
<i>Tillie's Punctured Romance</i>	1914
<i>Tri tovarishcha</i>	1935
<i>Trudno byt' Bogom</i>	2013
<i>Touchez pas au grisbi</i>	1954
<i>Tvoi sovremennik</i>	1967
<i>Ukhodia – ukhodi</i>	1978
<i>Une Femme mariée</i>	1964
<i>Vesnoi</i>	1929
<i>V ogne broda net</i>	1967
<i>Voina i mir</i>	1965-1967
<i>Vory v zakone</i>	1988
<i>Vtoraia popytka Viktora Krekhina</i>	1987 (1978)
<i>Zalp "Avrory"</i>	1965
<i>Zamri, umri, voskresni!</i>	1990
<i>Zav'ialovskie chudiki</i>	1978
<i>Zemlia</i>	1930
<i>Zéro de conduite</i>	1933
<i>Zhena ushla</i>	1979
<i>Zvezda plenitel'nogo schast'ia</i>	1975

Interviews

St. Petersburg

Nelli Arzhakova, December 2014

Tamara Denisova, December 2014

Irina Evteeva, December 2014

Frizheta Gukasian, December 2014

Evgenii Iufit, July 2016

Oleg Kovalov, October 2015

Konstantin Lopushanskii, December 2014

Vladimir Persov, December 2014

Moscow

Nataliia Riazantseva, September 2016