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ARTICULATION, DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSFERENCE OF EROTIC POWER IN THE SOVIET HISTORICAL-REVOLUTIONARY FILMS AND “ARTISTIC DOCUMENTARIES”

Abstract

My study aims to analyze the anatomy and the mechanisms of constructing and showcasing the erotic power in so called “Artistic documentaries” produced in the 1930s and 1940s. In my research I will focus on the cinematic representations of the Party leaders (and the Party power in general) and their erotic dimension. I shall argue that that from 1930s to 1940s Stalin not only steps out from Lenin’s shadow as a genuine leader of working class and, subsequently, of the Soviet Union, as it has been noted by Slavic Studies, but he also outshines the eroticism of Lenin’s character in these films. My argument is that if Stalin appears as a locus of heterosexual desire, Lenin first of all evokes a homosexual one. I shall try to contextualize this rechanneling of desire in the light of 1930s homophobic stands and policies of the Party.

Keywords: erotic power, Soviet films, “Artistic documentaries”, Lenin, Stalin

Evgeny Dobrenko famously notes that Stalinist art has to be understood not so much as a style, but as a grand political-aesthetic project, which becomes a museum in itself; a museum showcasing not only the Stalinist era, but also the post-Soviet one. A museum to be lived both within it and with it. Dobrenko argues that the post-Soviet culture (culture understood in its widest meaning) cannot escape the system of images of the past, since history comes together with ready-made images “just as thought comes with speech. This is why a contemporary analysis of the origins of these images is so important. Their realm is to be found in the Soviet past.”¹ He sees cinema, “the most constitutive and advanced artistic practice in Stalinist culture”, as a device for the production of history.² The history

produced through the cinematic device embodies not only History, as a revised and distorted version of past events, but, as it has recently been argued, the very formation of the Soviet citizens' subjectivities. The means for this is the constant promotion of the New Soviet Man and the New Soviet Woman on screen, dictating and shaping not only their political and ideological desires, but also their erotic and sexual ones.³ Even if, compared to other artefacts and sources, film documents are relatively recent resources for the study of the past, especially feature films, today the importance of studying them as cultural artefacts which testify for the "spirit of the time" and provide evidence on the period in question is undeniable. As Maya Turovskaya remarks, through the study of newsreels we gain additional knowledge about past events, and we "embrace not only the rational but also the emotional".⁴ Marc Ferro argues that fiction films also constitute a part of history, thus representing a legitimate topic for study, in so much as they affect the imaginary of people and even if one considers them as "dreams", they are not cut away from reality, just like dreams themselves are a part of reality.⁵ Even if every kind of film reflects the dominant ideology (with rare exceptions), films gain additional weight in this sense when they are funded and produced by the State, with the State's direct intervention, with the sole and clear aim of ideological propaganda.

Cinema has played an enormous role in the building of Stalinist mythology. Its propaganda potential was quite evident for Bolsheviks starting even from the October Revolution. From the very early years they put huge emphasis on its importance for building the new society, legitimizing the revolution, in particular for influencing the vast illiterate masses, and it was declared to be the most important weapon of propaganda. It does not come as a surprise that Stalin was more than aware of it. Lenin's alleged remark that "for us cinema is the most important of all arts"⁶ was one of the most frequently cited slogans in the press of the 1920s. Stalin himself said in 1924, at the thirteenth Party Congress, that "cinema is the greatest means for mass agitation."⁷ Nikita Khrushov in his speech at the Twentieth Party Congress of 1956 said that the dictator came to depend on Soviet Cinema for his own distorted perception of the realities of Soviet life.⁸ Recently, Maria Belodubrovskaya has suggested in her research that for Stalin, the cinema did not occupy the primary place and his cinema policy was not necessarily different from the art policy in general.⁹ However, even if he paid less attention to the censorship of cinema than to that of the printed media, this claim does not invalidate

another one made by Peter Kenez, mainly that Stalin was ironically the first “victim” of his own propaganda. Withdrawn from the real world in the 1930s and spending the rest of his life either in Kremlin or on his personal dachas, he never really interacted with ordinary people in villages, collective farms, not even on the streets of Moscow and his view was more and more determined by what he witnessed on the screen.¹⁰ At the same time, as previous Soviet research has demonstrated, in the period from the signature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 until the unleashing of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, while the rest of Europe was at war, Stalin devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy to closely monitor the activities of Soviet film-makers.¹¹

Regardless of the exact amount of attention Stalin was paying to the cinema, the way in which feminist psychoanalytic film critics revisit the Lacanian concept of the mirror stage as screen proves to be most useful for the analysis of Socialist Realist cinema under Stalin. In Christina Vatulescu’s words, “This socialist realist art [cinema] is a mirror stage for adults. [...] Unlike in Lacan’s mirror stage, the subject does not admire her own, however distorted vision of herself, but the regime’s.”¹² Although here, in this specific context, she talks about gulag prisoners and documentaries made about them, this statement can be applied to practically everything and everyone: starting with how impoverished, empty collective farms and unhappy peasants were regardless portrayed as wealthy and happy, ending with representation of historical events and of Stalin himself, who in artistic documentaries was portrayed larger than life. To summarize in one sentence: Socialist Realism was the past that had never occurred, and the present that never took place.

Richard Taylor brings forward, however tentatively, a categorisation of the films which had a more precise role in the preparation and/or promotion of the personality cult.¹³ However, as he remarks, this is a very preliminary ordering and films in these categories do overlap. Still, he distinguishes proto-cultic, quasi-cultic and cultic proper films. In proto-cultic films a linear narrative revolves around a hero(ine) figure who is in one way or another transformed by the depicted situations. These films are usually set in the present day and take place either in a factory, or in a collective farm. As Taylor notes, the message of the film and the transformation of the main character have political significance, but that significance is neither as explicit, nor as foregrounded as in other categories.

Quasi-cultic films build upon the model provided by the proto-cultic category. In this group the hero(ine)'s tale unfolds against an overtly political background: it might be the events of 1905 or even earlier, the October Revolution, the Civil War, the Communist International, or it might be a contemporary Party or government setting. The leading figure will begin from a standpoint of political commitment, whereas the hero of a proto-cultic film acquires political commitment over the course of the development of the plot. The Civil War film, which predates the Stalinist period with its heroic myth legitimizing the Bolshevik regime, plays an important part in this category.

Cultic films are placed later than the first two categories, because both the proto-cultic and quasi-cultic films were in a sense a preparation of them. In the early cultic films the hero is Lenin, although Stalin is there too as Lenin's closest confidant. In late cultic films (Staliniana), Stalin's figure becomes larger than life, whereas Lenin moves to the background (Mikheil Chiaureli, *The Unforgettable Year 1919*), and in the WWII-themed films, the so called artistic documentaries,¹⁴ he is totally absent.

Socialist Realist cinema has been the subject of numerous studies from various perspectives and the domain of gender and sexuality constitutes a relatively recent contribution to the existing research. John Haynes and Lilya Kaganovsky in their respective works have demonstrated that regardless of the powerful representation of the New Soviet Man as the Bolshevik/blacksmith/Stakhanovite, associated with Stalinist masculinity, the very same Stalinist masculinity is frequently compromised. John Haynes has argued that the New Soviet Man of the Socialist Realist cinema always remains in the "coming of age" process. He is always a model "son", but never surpasses the "father" who is always personified in the films by a wise Party member and sometimes by the Father of the Soviet Union nations-Stalin himself.¹⁵ Lilya Kaganovsky has gone further and has effectively shown the layers of the compromised masculinity of the New Soviet Man. She has argued that simultaneously with the "fantasy of extravagant virility", embodied by the "iconic"/"ideal" New Soviet Man, there existed a different kind of New Soviet Man, with a castrated and dismembered subjectivity and body, always portrayed as "«less than» and «not quite»" Stalin.¹⁶ Even if the two authors take different approaches to the question, they both share the view that it was only Stalin who embodied that very real masculinity and power, and this was always shown in various cultural texts. Kaganovsky has drawn attention to a plot pattern that repeatedly shapes Stalinist socialist

realist films – this is a triangular desire, which emerges between two male friends and a female representing “an object of affection” for them.¹⁷ However, what makes this scenario unique is its typical development: “the conflict is resolved not in favour of heterosexual marriage but in favour of homosociality: the men remain men together, while the woman is left on the side.”¹⁸ Consequently, revisiting Eve Sedgwick’s paradigm, she developed the concept of “heterosexual panic”, based on recurring plot patterns where the narrative line avoids heterosexual union and “inadvertently produces desire at the site of male bonding.”¹⁹ Ann Eakin Moss, in her paper entitled “Stalin’s harem: The spectator’s dilemma in late 1930s Soviet film” has argued that in Stalinist films, there was no place for the male gaze in the classical understanding of this concept, as applied to Hollywood cinema, although it does not necessarily mean that this had a liberating effect. Rather, the viewer, regardless of gender, was always placed in a female role by the film, in a twisted manner: both men and women were simultaneously asked “to identify with and desire the heroine.”²⁰ Whereas the only powerful masculinity belonged to Stalin alone, the viewer was left in a female position, as hand in hand with the only powerful masculinity, the possessive male gaze obviously also belonged to him exclusively. Thereby it was Stalin who was “the implicit object of the heroine’s erotic gaze, and the sole possessor of the controlling male gaze.”²¹ However, the above-mentioned authors in their respective works do not focus on representations of the Party leaders and Party power, neither in historical-revolutionary nor in artistic documentary films, even though these often happened to play a crucial role in the development/creation of the romantic union. Moreover, what is most striking is that the sole focus is on Stalin alone, whereas Lenin’s representation/implications of his presence/absence have been totally ignored. This research shall focus specifically on this scope. My particular interest lies in the following: firstly, how Lenin’s and Stalin’s figures are portrayed in films comparatively: what are the similarities and differences between their depictions? And secondly, how and through which channels Party leaders manage to embody erotic power, how it is channelled and for what purpose(s). Consequently, the films selected for the analysis include only those films from the above-mentioned genre, where the theme of love affair is present. However, it must be mentioned that love affairs never occupied a major place. It was never an interesting topic for the Socialist Realist aesthetics, which was the only artistic style in the Stalinist period. As Ann Eakin Moss notes, considering that socialist realism composed

the Soviet reality, framing Stalin's erotic power by Soviet films must have had profound and enduring effects. Therefore, exploring this aspect is also important for a further consideration of the full picture of the period.

Turovskaya claims that in Stalinist films we are confronted with the emergence of a kind of "social Freudianism."²² This phenomenon, she states, is characteristic of totalitarian art as a whole:

However impeccable the Utopian consciousness might be thought to be, within it there are powerful mechanisms of displacement and substitution at work. Nowadays it is hardly necessary to prove that the declared abolition of religion was compensated for by the sanctification of reality itself and the creation of cult forms which were much more universal and all-pervasive than the religious ones had ever been. This sanctification touched all forms of social life and found its apotheosis in cinema [...].²³

In this context it is particularly interesting to investigate the erotic dimension of Party leaders' representations.

Socialist Realism

The term Socialist Realism was coined only in 1932, and defined and imposed on all artists during the First All-Union Congress of Soviet writers of 1934. Jeffrey Brooks notes that once it was approved, the term was attributed to Stalin.²⁴ The classical definition of the socialist realist aesthetics stated by the congress was the following:

Socialist realism is the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism. It demands of the artist the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic representation of reality must be linked with the task of ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism.²⁵

As Peter Kenez remarks, Socialist Realism

is best understood in negative terms. By replacing genuine realism with an appearance of realism it prevents the contemplation of the human condition and the investigation of social issues. In order to accomplish its task, Socialist Realist art must have an absolute monopoly, for it must

convince the audience that it alone depicts the world as it really is. This art form can exist, therefore, only within a definite political context. No country has ever had Socialist Realist art without at the same time having concentration camps.²⁶

Katerina Clark has established a master plot that is to be found in Socialist Realist novels and, as Peter Kenez remarks, they can be found in Socialist Realist films as well. A Socialist Realist novel is always about the acquisition of consciousness. In the process of fulfilling a task, the hero or heroine under the tutelage of a Party worker, acquires an increased understanding of self, the surrounding world, the task of building Communism, the class struggle, the need for vigilance, etc.

However, when it comes to how this kind of art was created, especially after the avant-garde art of the 1920s, it is worth quoting Turovskaya:

The phenomenon of Soviet cinema in the 1930s as “the most democratic of all the arts” was not born in a vacuum and was not self-generated. It was preceded by more general processes. First, the global change in cultural paradigms: leadership everywhere passed from the avant-garde of the “roaring twenties” to a stabilised type of consciousness; that is to narrative, “generally accessible” structures in art as a whole. Second, the technical revolution associated with the arrival and mastering of sound made this process in the cinema particularly inevitable and obvious.²⁷

The introduction of sound in cinema also had its share: it facilitated the development of individual characters on screen, fastened the diegesis through the use of dialogue and helped to bring back the hegemony of conservative linear forms, and “confined films more rigidly within linguistic, national and ideological boundaries, and reinforced the ideological hegemony of the Party and ultimately of Stalin himself.”²⁸

As stated by Freud in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, the pattern with charismatic leaders is that while they generally are sexually attractive to their followers, they are themselves sexually aloof. However, in my opinion, the most interesting thing is that even if Party leaders (be they Lenin, Stalin, or any other remarkable Bolshevik, whose biography was captured on film) are never involved in love affairs, they are still highly erotically charged, because they direct, manage and channel the erotic desires of the other protagonists. That is to say that even if love affairs do not occupy the main place in the socialist realist narrative,

functioning only as a subplot of the main story, their realisation, making the supporting characters' sexual union possible, is only attainable through the Party leader's direct involvement. It is a kind of variation of the major plotline in Nikolai Ostrovsky's classic Socialist Realist novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*, that only the loyalty to the Party makes life possible, as demonstrated by Kaganovsky: here the embodiment of the Party (*vozhd*) makes the sexual union possible.

In this research I only focus on the portrayal of Lenin and Stalin, but a good example is Fridrick Erlmler's two part biopic *The Great Citizen*, which represents a fictionalized biography of Sergei Kirov (the character in the film is named Shakov), who was murdered in 1934, four years before the release of the film. Shakov's character is without any romantic interest, he is admired by everyone, hence remaining sexually aloof, but I nevertheless argue that he is the sole source and carrier of the erotic power (as much as he is the embodiment of the Party): in the first part of the film, a marriage of the two Party members becomes possible only because there is a need for Shakov to secretly meet with workers. Hence the wedding is used as a cover for such a meeting to take place, to make sure that the enemies of the people remain unaware of it. And in the second part, it is Shakhov's direct involvement, advice and instructions that push two factory workers, who are constantly fighting with each other, to create a union. Shakov is the only one capable to identify the real reason behind their quarrels which is sexual tension. This issue will be addressed later in the paper.

Emergence of the Personality Cult: Leniniana and Staliniana

As it is widely accepted, the personality cult was built under Stalin: it first started by building a personality cult around Lenin – which was called Leniniana after his death (the term originally referred to a collection of post stamps depicting Lenin's life, and places/people connected with him, and in the widest sense it is used nowadays to describe all visual tributes to his life, including posters and films). It is also a well-established fact that Lenin was against his personality cult and would not give permission to print his face on postal stamps. Rashit Yangirov has researched Lenin's reaction to the suggestion of having an agitation propaganda film about him made by Pyotr Ivanovich Voyevodin, an old Bolshevik who was the head of All-Russian Photographic and Cinematographic Department, one of the founding organisational structures of the nationalised Russian

cinema industry from May 1921 to June 1922.²⁹ As Yangirov shows, the basis for Voyevodin's motivation was a complex combination of political potential and personal benefits. If a film about Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks who had just come to power, were to be successfully completed, it would become "a spectacular statement of the triumph of ideology in cinema and a convincing confirmation of the serious potential of Party art."³⁰ However, Voyevodin's personal ambition also had its share in this project: if the film were as successful as he anticipated, it would anoint him as one of the first biographers and interpreters of Lenin's life and works, with all the deriving advantages.³¹

However, the proposal was met with rejection, first by Lenin and later by his wife Nadezhda Krupskaya. Neither of them wanted the leader's biography to be exposed to the masses. Yangirov explains that this was due to Lenin's character, as well as to what he calls the conspirational reflexes of a revolutionary. He states that his biography was a taboo subject even to his closest circle. "The biography of the leader had to be, from the very beginning, completely identified with the history of the political organisation that he created and led. Nokolay Valentikov's proposal had been met with a similar response from Lenin even in 1904."³²

However, considering this episode, it is a bit paradoxical that it was Lenin who led the way in creating a heroic legacy for the new regime. As Victoria Bonnell remarks in *Iconography of Power*, Lenin was highly attuned to the popular mood and realized very well that ordinary people needed substitutes for the political and cultural heroes of the old regime, "whose splendid images adorned buildings and squares in the capital cities and throughout the country."³³ So in a way, for the newly-installed regime it was a question of reclaiming the public spaces as well and creating its own legitimacy. Consequently, on August 14, 1918 a decree was issued, entitled "On the dismantling of monuments erected in honour of the tsars and their servants, on the formulation of projects for monuments of the Russian Socialist Revolution", which aimed to provide guidelines and instructions for the political appropriation of public spaces, in particular urban spaces.³⁴ Lenin's plan was the following: in some cases, the pre-revolutionary moments of tsarist heroes were to be replaced by new statues that celebrated the Bolshevik revolution, and in other cases, a change in inscription or emblem was considered sufficient to transmit the new meaning. In 1918, artists who were sympathetic to the Bolshevik regime created images of the "worker" and the "peasant", symbolizing entire social classes. These figures were transformed into archetypal

figures, and as Bonnell remarks, they became the icons of Soviet Russia and bore semblance to the representation of religious icons as they were standardized with remarkable consistency. In 1919, these iconographic images were widely circulated in political posters, holiday displays and monumental sculptures. However, Lenin's plan paradoxically intended to celebrate individuals rather than social classes. As it mentioned in the decree, it called for the erection of "busts of full-length figures, perhaps bas-reliefs" dedicated to "predecessors of socialism or its theoreticians and fighters, as well as to those luminaries of philosophical thought, science, art and so forth, who, while not having direct relevance to socialism, were genuine heroes of culture". And this, as Bonnell concludes, was the first endeavour of the Bolsheviks to identify and monumentalize individuals.³⁵

Most interesting is the fact that the figures chosen to be monumentalized did not include a single leader of the new Bolshevik Russia, unless this person had already been dead. This was an established practice of this monumentalization machine which would in theory not interfere and avoid the glorification of either Lenin or his fellow Bolshevik leaders. Still, again according to Bonnell's observation, the very fact that such a project was under way at Lenin's initiative, it meant that the door was opened for the practice of singling out individuals for glorification and that it had legitimacy. Lenin was often contradictory on this issue. Even if he stated in 1918 that "All our lives we have waged an ideological struggle against the glorification of personality of the individual; long ago we settled the problem of heroes", this plan for monumental propaganda carried the opposite message, leading to the conclusion that his attitude towards this matter was in fact ambiguous. And as Bonnell remarks, it did not take long for this practice of monumentalization to extend to contemporary Bolshevik leaders and to Lenin himself. It was in February 1919 when Lenin's first official bust was made by sculptor Grigory Alekseev at the order of the Moscow Soviet. It was the first public statue depicting a living Bolshevik leader. Even if Lenin was unenthusiastic about the public idolization of himself and other leading Bolsheviks, in 1920 he agreed to organize a contest among artists who were attempting to gain access to him in order to create sketches, sculptures and paintings. The image of Lenin began to take shape and acquire a form that would last throughout the Soviet era from 1920 onwards. In the development of Leniniana it was his fiftieth birthday celebration, on April 22, when the key elements of this aesthetic were established: the superhuman qualities of the *vozhd*-leader, his simplicity and humanness, the *narodnost* – that is his allure and ability

to connect to ordinary people –, and his power. These qualities were later transmitted to Stalin, where they gained extraordinary magnitudes. Lenin's cult became more and more grandiose after his death, when he dominantly began to have saint-like qualities attributed to him, allegedly acquired in the 1920s, after Fania Kaplan attempted to assassinate him. After Lenin's death the Party tightly controlled his visual representations by establishing a special commission that was supposed to review all works of art depicting Lenin. His cult was progressing without any constraint. For several years after his death new rituals, images and symbols were created and produced, which, as Bonnell observes, were incorporating both Russian Orthodox and traditional Russian folk rhetoric and practice. Lenin was invoked as a "dear father", and at the funeral some mourners carried Lenin's portrait on tall sticks, like the religious banners in a Russian Orthodox procession, which became an everlasting attribute of the Soviet rituals of all kinds, such as May Day parades or other similar occasions and events. Bonnell calls it the beginning of the "aestheticization of power" in Soviet Russia. The creation of Lenin's corners was another sovietized religious ritual, where instead of icons of saints, there would be Lenin's pictures to worship and inspire. Posters, stamps and holiday displays with his image or with references to him were now available in larger quantities and variety than ever before or immediately after his death, many of them emphasizing his immortality. I will not elaborate on the significance of the decision to create a mausoleum to keep Lenin's embalmed body on display for Soviet pilgrims, a practice which has its roots in Christianity.³⁶

Just as the iconography of Lenin was becoming more established in the first half of the 1930s, another major change was taking place: the pairing, for the first time, of Lenin's image / name with that of Stalin: "Political art performed a vital function in promoting the new cult of Stalin. Posters graphically depicted the relationship between the two men, creating a visual subtext that implied a connection between Stalin's sacred aura and his association with Lenin."³⁷

After Lenin's death there was a question of succession. The charismatic energy that was embodied in Lenin cult, which started being shaped as a result of the illness forcing him to stay away from the current political life, first got transferred to the Party itself. Only that there was a need for a leader to take over that position. As the rivalry between Trotsky and Stalin ended in Stalin's favour, the latter, as the new leader, started building his own cult, which was directly linked to that of Lenin's by demonstrating their close ties. The process employed propaganda emphasizing a certain

kind of heredity, a seemingly natural succession. Initially however, this development started in a rather implicit way. Victoria Bonnell recounts a very interesting example: in April 1925 Tsaritsyn was renamed as Stalingrad and on May 1 Lenin's statue was erected. (However it should be mentioned that after Lenin's death, Trotsky and Zinoviev were also honoured by having a city to be named after them.) The statue represented a bareheaded Lenin standing with his right hand raised on a giant screw and bolt, as depicted in a poster which was circulating at the same time. Bonnell offers an interesting analysis both of the poster and of the meaning of erecting the statue modelled on this poster in Stalingrad. The poster's brief caption was stating that Lenin equals Steel and Granite, which was alluding to the fact that "Lenin's legacy called above all for the construction of a great and powerful state".³⁸ Moreover, by verbal means the poster implied that there was a genuine connection between Lenin, the man of steel, and Stalin, whose pseudonym literally means "made of steel". As Bonnell observes, this suggestion must have been evident for contemporaries, even if Stalin's name was not mentioned explicitly, due to the very fact that earlier posters and the statue modelled on this poster appeared in the city which had just been renamed in Stalin's honour.³⁹

Only that, in early 1929, Stalin's cult started to increase. Before, there were very few images of Stalin to be seen in public spaces, but once he seized power in the internal Party struggle, the process was extremely accelerated. From 1930 onwards, all forms of mass propaganda were mobilized by the regime to praise Stalin and declare him the only true and genuine disciple of Lenin. These concepts were most vividly expressed in political posters, newspaper articles, public speeches, etc. Shaping the narrative that would produce a dominant discourse about Stalin's persona was a huge stake, and as Natalia Skradol notes, the Stalinist purges were

to a great extent a macabre exercise in solving what Evgeny Dobrenko in a different context calls "the problem of the past"; with the increasingly powerful dictator becoming gradually more suspicious and fearful of those "awkward witnesses" who may have remembered some facts from his biography as they had been – and not as they should have been.⁴⁰

For example, the cultivation of the aforementioned myth, stating the self-evident, genuine ties between Lenin and Stalin, as his only true disciple and follower, could be disputed by those who remembered that Stalin was actually never as close associate of Lenin as he was portrayed by the

dominant discourse, and that he might not have played such a crucial role during October Revolution or the Civil War. However, as Robert Service suggests, the perception of Stalin as a totally grey man who practically found himself accidentally on top of the power and had not been involved in the Party's work, could only be attributed to those who were not part of or aware of the Party's clandestine life in those times.⁴¹ Defining and determining historical accuracy or exploring to what extent depicting Stalin's political life in historical-revolutionary films was exaggerated is not the purpose of this paper. My only interest lies in the symbolic meanings of these exaggerations were, so to say.

It is remarkable that even though Stalin's cult was actively promoted through printed media (including newspapers and posters, discourses, memories, speeches, etc.), his cult in cinema was developed a bit later. Stalin as a character appears on screen at the beginning of the 1930s, in historical-revolutionary films, but it took some time for his character to embrace the same grandiosity on screen as he was embodying in the above-mentioned posters, for example. As Peter Kenez observes, it is in Mikheil Chiaureli's ("the major architect of Stalin cult") 1938 film *The Great Dawn* that Stalin's character steps out of Lenin's shadow for the first time. The plot takes place at the end of WWI, on the eve of the October Revolution, and it is to Stalin, not Lenin, that the revolutionaries look for leadership. Consequently, Lenin is given a lesser role. The Soviet Party historians' collective work on the *Short Course of History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, edited and revised several times by Stalin himself, opens an interesting perspective on the plots of historical revolutionary films. In one of the revisions, Stalin diminished Lenin's practical work in labour organisations and presented him instead as more of a theoretician.⁴² However, in yet another revision on the October Revolution, he interestingly diminished his own role in the narrative, and in general placed more emphasis on Lenin and the Party, leading to an interpretation by which he deliberately weakened his personality cult (although as authors of *Stalin's Master Narrative* state, the personality cult was never totally absent during the Stalin period⁴³). However, it seems more likely that this reduction and the increased emphasis on the Party, as an abstract entity, was a way of reliving himself from the purges of the Bolshevik leaders during the Great Terror, which many regarded as an undermining of the faith in the legitimacy of the political system itself, by eradicating its role models.⁴⁴ When it was a question of purging the kulaks and nepmen, Stalin did not hesitate to express his direct involvement in

this process: in 1930 *Pravda* published Viktor Deni's illustration on its front page, "puffing a wrecker, a nempan and a kulak from his pipe in a swirl of cleansing smoke", which, according to Jeffrey Brooks would not have happened, "had he not wished to take personal responsibility for the persecutions in progress".⁴⁵ Moreover, in the mass culture (in print or in celluloid) he was always portrayed as a paternal figure of the Soviet Union and the embodiment of the Party, to which Stalin never objected in practice.⁴⁶

Leniniana and Staliniana: Shifts in Cinematic Representations

The representation of Stalin in a fictional context started in 1937, with Igor Goldstab portraying him in Mikhail Romm's *Lenin in October*, a "masterwork of political correctness" of the Purges period.⁴⁷ After 1939, when Mikheil Gelovani took over the role in Kozintsev and Trauberg's *The Vyborg Side* and Romm's sequel *Lenin in 1918*, it became a common practice to include scenes involving Stalin whenever possible, with the role increasing with every film. After WWII, Stalin became a larger than life figure of the Soviet cinema.

Andre Bazin, who wrote an exemplary essay on these films, hypothesized that Stalin used his fictional representation to transcend the "contradictions of subjectivity" and the contingency of his relations with Soviet politics by presenting an image of himself as "History incarnate."⁴⁸ Bazin drew a telling contrast between the mummified figure of Lenin, at the centre of the Lenin cult, and the "living mummification" of Stalin in cinema – which effectively gave him the magical attributes and powers of the film star: all-knowing, all-powerful, paternal sexual, immortal. Inevitably, most critical attention has focused on Stalin's rewriting of history through the later films of his cult, but what concerns us here is the effect this trend in Soviet cinema had on its makers.

The films included in my analysis are the following: *Lenin in October* (Mikhail Romm, 1937), *Lenin in 1918* (Mikhail Romm, 1938), *The Great Dawn* (Mikheil Chiaureli, 1938), *The Vow* (Mikheil Chiureli 1946), *The Fall of Berlin* (Mikheil Chiaureli 1950). The selection of the films was based on the following criteria: I wanted to focus on films which deliver fictional representations of Lenin and Stalin, and on films in which they function as match-makers. These films are part of Leniniana and Staliniana. The first instance of Lenin and Stalin acting in between lovers appears in Mikheil

Chiaureli's *The Great Dawn* (1938). Although this aspect is not as present in Mikhail Romm's *Leniniana*, I consider these films especially important, because, contrary to Staliniana films, these films are strongly charged by homoeroticism. It was already mentioned above that Bolsheviks applied the same devices present in Christianity to the Leader's representations. In *Leniniana*, Lenin's character is literally represented as a walking saint, where everyone factually adores him, nurtures him, protects him, dreams to meet him, wonders what he actually looks like in reality. It is worth mentioning that these features of public adulation do not appear in Staliniana films, as contrary to Staliniana, Romm's films are situated in a conspiracy-driven period, and in Chiaureli's films everyone has Stalin's portrait on the wall, watching them in a "Big Brotherish" manner. In fact, as the scholars have argued, the total admiration enveloping Christ by itself is not free of eroticism and homoeroticism, to mention only the "mystical marriages with Christ" of Saint Catherine and other female saints.⁴⁹

Lenin in October has a very interesting history. In March 1936, the Central Committee decided to invite nine playwrights and ten scriptwriters to take part in a competition to "create a major public performance" to celebrate the 1917 Revolution as "the turning point in the history of humanity."⁵⁰ The winner was A. Ya. Kapler's screenplay, and the resulting film was directed by Mikhail Romm. It portrays Lenin as a locus of energy and movement, and even a locus of sexual energy. This is very explicit in a scene where Vasily, the main character, hides Lenin in his apartment and does not initially reveal his identity to his pregnant wife. Nevertheless, the wife still guesses who the guest is and the husband confirms it, but happens without speaking a word explicitly, it is shared like a great religious mystery. And the most intimate moment that the long separated couple shares is when they watch Lenin sleeping. The scene lasts for a total of 60 seconds (including a shot on a ticking clock) and represents one of the most intense sequences of the film.

Stalin does not take much part in the development of the plot, but he appears in the crucial moments, especially in the end, when Lenin gives a public speech after the Revolution is accomplished and the Bolsheviks have assumed power, Stalin moves close to Lenin and appears as his heir.

The sequel, *Lenin in 1918*, is even more charged with erotic husband-wife couple metaphors. The film's opening scene represents a sequence when Vasily returns home to his wife, who has already given birth. A long speech follows about how their baby's life will be far better

and how he will survive the hunger. Then Vasily departs to accomplish his mission of delivering bread to the city.

This parallels with the closing scene, when Stalin comes to visit wounded Lenin (previously shot by Fania Kaplan in a murder attempt) and talks to him in the presence of an orphan girl who, having been lost in the governmental building (!), was in a way adopted by Lenin, portrayed as the only one capable of getting through to her. It is remarkable that Lenin is far more “feminine” in terms of approaching the crying child, calming her down and taking her under his wing in a motherly and nurturing manner, than the woman who has found her and clearly does not know how to deal with children. He is more gifted with motherly instincts than a “natural born” woman. Lenin and Stalin also discuss the future of the child and those of the same generation, while the kid plays on their lap.

Of course, their conversation is an optimistic one, because the obstacles have been overcome and it is the end of the film. We, the viewers, are reassured that from now on everything will be fine, the Civil War will be won and the glorious Soviet Union will be created with Bolsheviks at its helm.

This scene creates a kind of “holy family” and Vasily, who comes to say goodbye to Lenin, does not dare to disturb the holy union. He distantly watches the duo while nervously playing with the buttons on his coat.

Here too, the sequel repeats the act of announcing Lenin’s heir, just like in the prequel: when he (Stalin) arrives, Lenin makes him sit in the armchair he was just napping on, as if giving him the “throne”. Natalia Skradol, in her analysis of remembrance speeches published in *Pravda* in 1929, makes a similar point. She shows that there were two co-existing metaphors in Christian tropes tradition: one, Lenin as an invisible father-God living in emigration and Stalin as his representative among human beings, guiding the proletariat of the Russian capital; and the second was Stalin, as a loving father who was nurturing the new born Bolshevik state, after death of Lenin – the mother who died giving birth to the miraculous baby. So the metaphor present in a verbal discourse found its representation on screen as well.

We can find an instance of match-making in *The Great Dawn*. There is a love story between a Russian nurse and a Georgian soldier, Svetlana and Giorgi, who meet each other on the battlefield and end up in Petrograd, because “that’s where the worker’s heart is”, according to the intertitle. Even if Lenin and Stalin are busy organizing the October Revolution, they are still ready to fix relationship problems: the nurse’s mother does

not fancy the Georgian soldier. It is interesting to observe the roles Stalin and Lenin assume in this affair: Lenin always notices everything and asks Svetlana what is wrong, whereas Stalin always knows the answers and responds to him in Svetlana's place that she has "serious heart matters". Lenin volunteers to talk to Svetlana's mother and miraculously manages to change her attitude towards Giorgi in seconds, without disclosing his identity. It is the Party, with Lenin and Stalin as its incarnations, that makes it possible for a Russian nurse and a Georgian soldier to unite. As soon as Lenin leaves, Giorgi is integrated in the Russian family, serving as a metaphor of the Russia-Georgia union and of Georgia's integration in the Soviet Union family. If someone is to question such interpretation on the basis that, most often, the small countries, or "Oriental others", are represented and gendered as female, contrary to the conqueror-male, I shall respond that even if this is most often the case, here the reverse gendering works very well: first of all, Svetlana is not someone who needs to be saved: yes, Giorgi helps her when she fights with a tsarist Russian officer on the front, but his intervention is more a symbolic one, and, furthermore, she is more "advanced" than Giorgi. She personally knows Stalin and Lenin, it is her who arranges Giorgi's and other soldiers' meeting with them, and in opposition to a Georgian peasant, she has medical knowledge and education and saves him when he is wounded during a demonstration in Petrograd. So if Giorgi's act of saving Svetlana is more symbolic in nature, Svetlana's saving Giorgi is very literal and crucial. There is an interesting episode at the beginning: when Giorgi meets Svetlana on the battlefield and learns her name, he is enchanted and starts singing a classical Georgian romance "Tsitsinatela", the title of which translates to "firefly." The song is an association with the meaning of Svetlana's name, which is deliberately mistranslated in order to justify the song's inclusion in the film, as it was Stalin's favourite song. The correct equivalent of Svetlana's name in Georgian would have been Natela. A very interesting thing happens afterwards: as Giorgi sings, his brother, who is also on the battlefield, hears his voice singing and they are able to reunite for a while, before the brother gets killed. So this erotic impulse triggered by a Russian nurse that makes Giorgi sing also serves as a mediating link for the reunion of two lost brothers.

The Vow is probably the most strange and absurd film in Chiaureli's Staliniana. Here Stalin's rise to power parallels with a family story from Tsaritsin, and it is no coincidence that this is the town which was later renamed as Stalingrad. The events start in 1924, with a "purloined letter"

type of plot: a veteran Bolshevik, Petrov, embarks on a journey to deliver a letter to Lenin to inform him about the misbehaviour of kulaks, but he is murdered on the way by them. His wife, Varvara, continues his mission, joining a group that travels to Moscow. They arrive exactly when Lenin dies. While suggesting that Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev are busy with fighting for power and attacking the Party, Stalin is the only one who truly mourns Lenin's death. He goes for a walk in the snow to stand in front of the bench where their last conversation took place. He stares at the bench, where, as if Lenin's shadow were present on the snow, happens what Andre Bazin describes as a mythic anointment of the new Moses: Lenin's holy spirit literally descends to him. He then delivers his vow to maintain Lenin's legacy at the funeral. When Varvara sees Stalin at the funeral, she directly goes to him and hands him over the letter marked "To Lenin", stained by the blood of her husband. Thus Stalin is elected as Lenin's disciple not only by Lenin (who miraculously appears to him) but by the people as well.

The stories of the Soviet Union and Varvara's family develop in parallel: her son becomes an inventor and designs the first tractor with Stalin's encouragement. Her other son becomes the manager of Stalingrad Tractor Factory. During the five-year plan an American saboteur burns the tractor factory and Varvara's daughter dies in the fire. During WWII, Varvara's both sons go to war and one of them dies in battle. So this family symbolizes an archetypal Russian family who at every stage of the Soviet Union's progress had to sacrifice a part of themselves: a husband, a daughter, a son. It is no coincidence as well that Varvara bears a strong resemblance to the "Motherland is calling" poster by Irakli Toidze, making her an archetypal mother.

In the end, Varvara meets Stalin in Kremlin, and Stalin kisses her hand in recognition of this Soviet mother's contribution to victory, telling her that soon everything Lenin has foreseen will be fulfilled. If Varvara stands as an archetypal mother, symbolizing mother Russia – Rodina Mats, Stalin stands as an archetypal husband, father, and brother – a replacement of the lost male family members, starting after the murder of Varvara's husband. This attunes with Kaganovsky's observation on Dziga Vertov's *Lullaby*:

... [it is] a dream of a country without men: in Vertov's fantasy, Stalin appears not just as the metaphorical but also as the literal father of the people, the only man among all those women and children. This fantasy of

the total elimination of men is an extension of the motif of heroism present in socialist realist novels and films and promoted in the pages of *Pravda*.⁵¹

Chiaureli's other monumental two-part film *The Fall of Berlin* of Mosfilm, a present for Stalin's 70th birthday, takes the depiction of Stalin to a totally new level. If *The Vow* represents Stalin as an apostle of Lenin, a Moses-like figure who receives messages from heaven, *The Fall of Berlin*, as Denise Youngblood remarks, deifies him.⁵² He had never been portrayed to such monumental dimensions before, not even by Chiaureli himself. It might sound paradoxical at first, but WWII actually brought some freedom to the Soviet Union after the great terror of the 1930s. In Leonid Kozlov's words

the first year and half of the war, with all its catastrophes and countless sacrifices, did in fact lead the Soviet people (millions of them) into a new existential consciousness of freedom of choice, freedom of action and freedom of decision... From that moment of desperation at the end of June 1941, when it became obvious to everyone that this earthly god was not omnipotent, there emerged a tangible and recognisable realisation of human independence, of human sovereignty. The Stalin cult was not overthrown, but its hypnotic effect weakened and the influence of ideological dogmas lessened. The intelligentsia felt significantly freer than they had been before the war.⁵³

In this context, the primary mission of *The Fall of Berlin* – “the most famous cinematic artefact of the Stalin cult” in Denise Youngblood's words,⁵⁴ restores Stalin's hypnotic power and his authority, portraying him as the sole architect of the victory, whereas the reality was totally opposite. The plot tells the story of Alexei Ivanov, a shy steel factory worker, who due to his working record is chosen to receive the Order of Lenin and to meet Stalin in person. Kaganovsky describes him as “the very picture of inadequate masculinity” – and the role model son is exactly like that. He is “a true man of the people” and of the Revolution – he was born the same day the October Revolution began⁵⁵ and in a way, as suggested by his occupation, he is “related” to Stalin – the man of steel. Alexei is in love with a teacher, Natasha, but he is too clumsy to approach her. When he meets Stalin, he opens up to him and Stalin, as he has time to advise everyone on love affairs (since the preparation of the October Revolution in *The Great Down*), advises him to “love her and she will love you”. This gives Alesha courage, but their new born union (which is about to be

consumed as, after declaring his love, Alesha carries Natasha in his arms in the field) is disrupted by German bombs. While Alesha is unconscious, Natasha is taken away by Germans in a labour camp near Berlin, and Alesha is going to war to find her. They both meet at the fall of Berlin, where Stalin descends from the plane dressed in white, like a god-like figure, and they both receive his blessing in person. Most interesting in this story is the comparison between two sequences: first, when Natasha delivers a speech about Alexei in front of Stalin's huge portrait, and second, when the reunited couple receives blessings from Stalin.

During the speech, it is evident (in an extreme way) that she is totally enchanted and hypnotized by Stalin. As Kaganovsky observes on this sequence, "it is quite obvious from Natasha's speech and from her subsequent actions that Stalin stands directly in the way of her appreciation of Alesha. Despite his exemplary masculinity (steelworker, handsome, tall, record-setter), she cannot see him because her eyes are turned to Stalin."⁵⁶ So there seems to be a contradiction: it is true that Stalin's direct involvement makes it possible for Alesha to declare his love to the teacher, but at the same time, it is also Stalin that makes Alesha invisible for her.

It seems to me that Alesha's love only becomes acceptable for Natasha when she learns that Stalin has "ordered" her to love him back. And as Kaganovsky rightly remarks, when Natasha dreamingly confesses her love, it is not quite clear or rather it is ambiguous whether she addresses it to Alesha or whether she talks to Stalin in her imagination. When Natasha delivers her speech to talk about Alexei's achievements, she bizarrely shifts to saying what happy times she (and all the others in the audience) are living owing to Stalin and to expressing what she would say to him, if she ever met him. At this moment she modestly hides her face and continues her speech by saying: "but it is never going to happen..."

However, in Socialist Realist Soviet Union all precious dreams come true (just like in Hollywood) and Natasha meets Stalin in Berlin (even though Stalin has never been there in real life), and what she says to him (which assumingly is what she was too ashamed to confess in public, in front of a huge audience) is the following: "Comrade Stalin, may I kiss you?"

Slavoj Zizek claims that "World War II serves as the obstacle to be overcome so that the hero can reach his beloved, like the dragon the knight has to kill to win the princess imprisoned in the castle. The role of Stalin is that of a magician and matchmaker who wisely leads the couple to their reunion."⁵⁷ However, in my opinion WWII serves as a

means to fulfil Natasha's dream that was announced in the beginning as something totally unrealistic and unimaginable: to meet Stalin and to ask permission for a kiss. After a half paternal, half erotic embrace (we never see Mikheil Gelovani's face in this scene, even if before the meeting the camera monumentalizes him with intense close ups from every angle), she retires back to Alesha, who functions as a poor substitute for Stalin.

Conclusion

In guise of a conclusion, I would like to return to the concept of public sexuality or Social Freudianism, as Turovskaya puts it. I have already mentioned above that love/sexuality never occupied an important position in Socialist realist novels and/or films, if it hardly had any. But sexuality, whether and to what extent is present in Socialist realist films, serves only one function: to be channelled from the private to the public realm and to serve public purposes. Michael Tratner, in his book *Crowd Scenes: Movies and Mass Politics*, argues that Hollywood uses crowd scenes or great mass movements, wars, catastrophes, etc. (The October Revolution in Doctor Zhivago, for example) in order to channel the mass energy into a private and individual one.⁵⁸ In *Gone with the Wind*, for example, the Civil War is needed for Scarlett to get rid of her husband and reunite with Rhett, the same way as the October Revolution is needed for Zhivago and Laura to find themselves together. I would argue that contrary to the pattern elaborated by Tratner on the example of Hollywood movies, in the films that have been discussed, the private romance, the private sexual desire is needed in order to be used or benefit mass movements. The purpose of Giorgi and Svetlana's romance is to symbolize the conjoint participation of two nations in the October Revolution and the purpose of Alesha and Natasha's romance is to win WWII, so they could have a real chance to meet Stalin in person. And of course, any of these reunions would have been impossible without the Party leader's erotic impulses, underlying that sexual fulfilment of any kind is possible only under ideological guidance. Katerina Clark observes that meeting with Stalin in the films may, as in tribal initiation, simultaneously serve as a kind of sexual initiation, but he (or other Party figure) sends the initiate out into the world, thus directing the erotic energy out.⁵⁹ Even if the films suggest that there is a sexual arousal from the hero's part, this is never mutual, as Stalin belongs to the other, unearthly dimension, as we have seen in Natasha's case. At the

same time, there is a remarkable difference between the representations of political leaders in the films of the 1930s and the 1940s: in the films produced in the 1930s there is a noticeable homoerotic tension between the leader Lenin and others. Whereas in the 1940s the erotic tension becomes strictly heterosexual: Stalin does not inspire dedicated admiration in his “sons”, but rather a fearful anxiety. Dan Healey, a historian who researches homosexuality and LGBT issues in Soviet Russia, remarks in his most recent publication that male friendship and bonding in early twentieth century Russia were several degrees warmer than anything we are familiar with in the Anglo-American world, stating that it was probably the increased visibility of the LGBT community from the 1990s onwards that triggered concerns about what had previously been regarded as “innocent” (quotation marks in the original) tenderness and affection between men.⁶⁰ In this context, when talking about the Stalinist films of the 1930s and 1940s, I am inclined to think that this twist might have to do with the changed policy towards homosexual men, as homosexuality was recriminalized in 1936, after an initial decriminalization in 1917. And it might sound speculative, but I intend to argue that this criminalisation also made the directors more sensitive to the manner in which they should depict the range of emotions towards the *vozhd*. However, as Kaganovsky has shown, this did not impact films of other genres, in which the portrayal of these tensions remained unchanged throughout the 1940s.

NOTES

- 1 Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History: Museum of the Revolution* (trans. Sarah Young), Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p. 2.
- 2 Ibid. p. 2.
- 3 See Lilya Kaganovsky, *How the Soviet Man was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity under Stalin*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008, and Ann Eakin Moss (2009) "Stalin's Harem: The spectator's Dilemma in late 1930s Soviet film", *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, 3:2, 157-172.
- 4 Turovskaya Maya, "Soviet films of the Cold War", in Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.) *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, 131-141.
- 5 Marc Ferro, *Cinema and History*, translated by Naomi Green, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.
- 6 Lunacharsky, "Conversation with Lenin I. Of all the Arts...". In Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (eds.) *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939* (pp. 56-57). Rutledge, London and New York.
- 7 Cited in Richard Taylor, "Red Stars, positive heroes and personality cults." In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, p. 70.
- 8 Cited in Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin*, I.B. TAURIS, 2009
- 9 Maria Belodubrovskaya, *Not According to plan: Filmmaking under Stalin*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017, p. 216.
- 10 Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society*, p. 134.
- 11 Cited in Richard Taylor, "Red Stars, positive heroes and personality cults." In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, pp. 69-89.
- 12 Christina Vatulescu, *Police Aesthetics: Literature, Film and the Secret Police in Soviet Times*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. p. 158.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Peter Kenez defines artistic documentaries as those films in which the subject matter were "the most significant moments of contemporary history", i.e. different episodes of WWII. Their significance is huge, as besides Stalin's intervention in the scripts, the leaders of the regime wanted every Soviet person to see them and they were officially considered to have "documentary value". (*Cinema and Soviet Society*, p. 207).
- 15 John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, Machester University Press, 2003.
- 16 Kaganovsky, 2008, p. 10.
- 17 Ibid, p. 68.
- 18 Ibid, p. 68.
- 19 Ibid, p. 72.

- 20 Moss, 2009, p. 154.
- 21 Ibid, p. 164.
- 22 Maya Turovskaya, 1993, p. 134.
- 23 Ibid, p. 134.
- 24 Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank you Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton University Press, 2000, p.108.
- 25 Cited in Kenez, 2009, p. 143.
- 26 Ibid, p. 55.
- 27 Maya Turkovskaya, "The 1930s and 1940s: Cinema in Context." In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.) *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, p. 42.
- 28 Richard Taylor, "Red Stars, Positive Heroes and Personality Cults". In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.) *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, p. 77.
- 29 Rashit Yangirov, "Onwards and Upwards!: The Origins of the Lenin Cult in Soviet Cinema". In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.), *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, Routledge, 1993, pp. 15-33.
- 30 Ibid, p. 18.
- 31 Ibid. p.18.
- 32 Ibid. p. 24.
- 33 Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*. University of California Press, 1997, p.137.
- 34 Ibid. p. 137.
- 35 Ibid. p. 138.
- 36 In this regard see Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*, Harvard University Press, 1983
- 37 Ibid. pp. 155-156.
- 38 Ibid. p. 150.
- 39 Ibid. p. 150.
- 40 Natalia Skradol, "Remembering Stalin: Mythopoetic Elements in Memories of the Soviet Dictator." In *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 10:1, 19-41, DOI 10.1080/14690760903105307.
- 41 Robert Service, *Stalin: A biography*, Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard Press, 2004.
- 42 David Brandenberger and Mikhail Zelevon, *Stalin's Master Narrative: A Critical Edition of The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Short Course*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019. p. 44.
- 43 Ibid. pp. 16-17.
- 44 David Brandenberger, *The Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011. p. 161, p. 197.
- 45 Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin*, p. 128.

- 46 David Brandenberger, *The Propaganda State in Crisis*, p. 160.
47 Ibid. p. 167.
48 Andre Bazin, "The Stalin Myth in Soviet Cinema", translated by Georgia Gurrieri. *Film Criticism* (ARCHIVE); Fall 1987, 11,1/2; *FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals Database*, p.161.
49 In this regard see for instance John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay people in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, University of Chicago, 1980 and Margaret D. Kamitsuka (ed). *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires and Sexuality in Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
50 Brandenberger, 2011, p. 156.
51 Kaganovsky, p. 205.
52 Denise Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005*. University Press of Kansas, 2007.
53 Leonid Kozlov, "The Artist and the Shadow of Ivan". In Richard Taylor and Derek Spring (eds.) *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema* (pp. 109-130), London and New York: Routledge. 1993, p. 120.
54 Denise Youngblood, *Russian Warm Films On the Front*, p. 97.
55 Ibid. p. 98.
56 Kaganovsky, p. 206.
57 Slavoj Zizek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London: Verso, 2008. p. 59.
58 Michael Tratner, *Crowd Scenes: Movies and Mass Politics*. Fordham University Press, 2008.
59 Katerina Clark, "Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space." In Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (eds.) *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (pp. 3-18). Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003. p. 18.
60 Dan Healey, *Russian Homophobia from Stalin to Sochi*. Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2017. p. 86.

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