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## Stalin's Trophy Films, 1946-56: A Resource

### Introduction

One need not spend much time in the world of Stalin era cinema before encountering the unusual case of postwar trophy films. These works, known as *trofeinye* (captured) films, consisted primarily of Hollywood and Nazi productions from 1930-1944 that were reprocessed according to Soviet censorial strictures and released in cinemas across the USSR from mid-1946 until 1956.<sup>1</sup> To date, scholarship has concentrated on two key questions in relation to these films. The first question is why these films were permitted to screen. This issue is particularly relevant given the challenges faced by Soviet-made productions at the time in navigating censorship and securing release, which resulted in a period of *malokartin'e* (or film famine) from 1947-52. Early discussions by Maya Turovskaya, Peter Kenez, and Richard Taylor make a clear connection between the two postwar phenomena—trophy films and *malokartin'e*—pointing out that the dearth of Soviet features no doubt motivated the release of foreign pictures to supplement the domestic industry's meager offerings. This supplementary function only added to their value as escapist fare for an audience enduring the hardships of postwar recovery (Kenez, 1992, pp. 213–214; Taylor, 1998, pp. 48–49; Turovskaya, 1993, p. 51). More recently, earlier supposition as to the financial benefits of screening unlicensed foreign films has also been confirmed through the archival investigations of Natacha Laurent into the economics of censorship, and underlined by Kristin Roth-Ey in her holistic study of Soviet media (Laurent, 2000, pp. 234–239; Roth-Ey, 2011, pp. 39–43).

The second central question in the scholarship boasts greater implications beyond cinema history, and as such, has been pursued by scholars outside of film studies. This is because this second theme pertains to reception: how did Soviet audiences respond to trophy films? To this end, film historian Sergei Kapterev not only uses comparative film analysis to trace the influence of Hollywood trophy films on Soviet cinema, but also assesses official attitudes toward America in light of the motivations and manipulations of the Soviet attempt to negotiate a film trade agreement with the US after the war (which was not successful until 1958) (Kapterev, 2009). Further, historians of postwar youth culture and Soviet identity analyze anecdotal accounts of trophy film viewing drawn from memoirs and the Harvard Émigré Interview Project in order to identify the nuances and range of attitudes towards America during the early Cold War (Edele, 2002, pp. 53–56; Fürst, 2010, pp. 205–209, 237; Johnston, 2011, pp. 191–198, 206; White, 2015).<sup>2</sup> Finally, although trophy films have yet to be explored fully in their Cold War context, several Cold War cultural historians nevertheless identify cinema and the Soviet use of Western cultural production as fruitful topics for future research (Kachurin and Glants, 2002, p. 4; Starck, 2010, p. 4).

Despite the growing interest in trophy film, much of the data fundamental to defining the phenomenon—numbers and titles of films, genres, release rates and distribution patterns, viewership statistics—has hitherto been fractured across various studies or lacking altogether from the scholarship. This resource seeks to begin to redress this deficiency by providing as comprehensive an accounting as possible of the trophy films that were released. To this end, Table 1 identifies the 122 titles for which Soviet release during this period is certain, having been confirmed by cross-referencing archived directives for the processing of specific films, accounts of film purchases during the short-lived wartime exchange between the Allies, and secondary sources identifying foreign films that were shown. This cross-checking has enabled the identification of which films were actually screened, and which were captured and screened illegally (trophies) as opposed to purchased and licensed for distribution.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent tables break down this list of titles in terms of release rates (Table 2), genre (Table 3), and country of origin (Table 4). Finally, Table 5 enumerates those films that were excluded from release following initial approval. When this resource was first compiled two years ago, it included a number of potential trophies and unidentified films in Table 5, along with a note as to the need for future updates as additional trophy films were confirmed. The recent discovery (by Birgit Beumers) and translation (by Richard Taylor) of the Ministry of Culture's 1955 "Catalogue of Foreign Sound Films Released on the Soviet Screen, 1927-1954" has made the first such update possible, and removed lingering doubts regarding over a dozen films while shedding light on a handful

more. I have also gone back over earlier sources to expand the list to include trophies screened after the death of Stalin (something originally beyond the scope of my research). The result is an additional thirty-six confirmed trophy titles. As ever, this resource remains a work in progress.

### Origins and Contents of the Trophy Film Archive

Practically from the first moment of Soviet military involvement in the conflict in Europe in September 1939, the Red Army began amassing trophies of war, not least among these the reels of celluloid that would become known as *trofeinye fil'my*. These prizes were collected from Western Ukraine and Belorussia, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and even Bessarabia (Moldova), and conveyed to *Glavkinoprokat* (*Glavnoe upravlenie massovoi pechati i prokata kinofil'mov* or General Directorate for the Mass Printing and Distribution of Films), the state agency for film distribution and promotion (archival documents reprinted in (Levitova, 2008a, p. 38, 2008b, p. 224). It was not until May of 1945, however, that the jewel was added to the crown with the capture of the *Reichsfilmmarchiv*, an expansive collection of films compiled both by and in honor of Nazi Minister of Propaganda and notorious cinephile Joseph Goebbels. Within a week of the German surrender, Soviet Committee of Cinematography functionary I. Manevich was in Babelsberg surveying the holdings of 17,300 films secured by Red Army soldiers (Roth-Ey, 2011, p. 39). Manevich filled two train cars with 3,500 feature films and 2,500 shorts for immediate shipment to Moscow, whence they were transported to Belye Stolby by early August to join the rest of the Soviet film collection (Levitova, 2008a, p. 37; Roth-Ey, 2011, p. 40). By November, another two train cars and two plane loads of celluloid had been added to the collection (archival documents reprinted in (Levitova, 2008a, p. 38)), bringing the total to 100,000 reels or 30 million meters of celluloid, constituting 10,669 films. Of these, 8,813 were fiction films, with 3,730 full-length sound features, 68 of which were in color. They hailed from 28 different countries, primarily America, Germany and France (see Table 4), and covered a wide range of genres, with drama, comedy, musical and crime leading the way (see Table 3) (RGASPI 17/132/88/2-6).<sup>4</sup> The remaining fiction films consisted of 2,336 silent pictures, 1,913 talkie shorts, and 834 color shorts and cartoons, while the non-fiction films included ethnographic pictures, popular science, and several thousand reels of news chronicles. Additional films continued to trickle in to Belye Stolby over the next few years with, for instance, 95 features added in early 1952 (RGASPI 17/133/386/51-52).

Cataloguing the films commenced in August 1945 and took three years to complete, at which point Minister of Cinema Ivan Bol'shakov was tasked by the *TsK* (*Tsentral'nyi Komitet Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza* or Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) with compiling a list of films for release on Soviet screens (RGASPI 17/132/88/2, 7; archival documents reprinted in (Levitova, 2008a, p. 37)). By this time, six films had already been drawn from the new cinematic store, “Sovietized”, and distributed across the Soviet Union—two American dramas and four German musicals—while another six musicals had been approved for release six weeks earlier as part of the 1948 cinema production plan. What started as a trickle soon escalated to a flood so that by the end of the trophy phenomenon at least 122 captured films had been released—a rate nearly commensurable during the final Stalin years with that of Soviet-produced features (see Tables 1 and 2). Let us now consider more closely these 122 titles and what they reveal of the oddity that was the Soviet trophy film.

**Table 1: Confirmed Trophy Film Releases, 1946-56**

Country of Origin	Original Film Title	Soviet Release Title	Soviet Release Date	Director	Original Release Date	Studio	Genre*
Aus	Immer wenn ich glücklich bin..!	Звезда варьете	1949	Karl Lamac	1938	Projektograph Film	Mus
Aus	Zauber der Boheme	Богема	1948†	Geza von Bolvary	1937	Interglorio Film, Standard-Film	Mus
Aus-Ger	Schrammeln	Венский квартет	1949	Geza von Bolvary	1944	Wien-Film	Mus
Brit	Chu Chin Chow	Восточная сказка (Чу-Чин-Чоу)	1948	Walter Forde	1934	Gainsborough Pictures	Mus
Brit	Jungle Book	Джунгли	1954	Zoltan Korda	1942	Alexander Korda Films	Adv
Brit	Pagliacci/A Clown Must Laugh	Любовь паяца	1949	Karl Grune	1936	Trafalgar Films	Mus

Brit	The Mikado	Познакомьтесь с императорским двором Микадо	1954	Victor Schertzinger	1939	Geoffrey Toye Productions	Mus
Brit	The Thief of Bagdad	Багдадский вор	1954	Ludwig Berger	1940	Alexander Korda Films	Adv
Brit-Fr	The Adventures of Don Quixote	Дон Кихот	1953	G.W. Pabst	1933	Vandor Film & Nelson Film	Adv
Czech	Port Arthur	Спасенные знамена	1948	Nicolas Farkas	1936	FCL, Slavia Film	Hist
Fr	Un Grand Amour de Beethoven	Лунная соната	1949	Abel Gance	1936	Général Productions	Bio
Fr-It	Le comte de Monte-Cristo	Граф Монте Кристо 1 & 2	1950	Robert Vernay	1942	Regina Films, Excelsa Film	Ekran (Lit)
Ger	Andalusische Nächte	Андалузские ночи	1948	Herbert Maisch	1938	Carl-Froelich Film	Mus
Ger	Damals	Кто виноват	1955	Rolf Hansen	1943	UFA	Mus
Ger	Das Herz der Königin	Дорога на эшафот	1948	Carl Froelich	1940	UFA	Anti-Brit
Ger	Das Herz muss schweigen	Сердце должно молчать	1956	Gustav Ucicky	1944	Wien-Film	Drama
Ger	Das indische Grabmal	Индийская гробница 1 & 2	1948	Richard Eichberg	1938	Richard Eichberg-Film	Adv
Ger	Das Lied der Wüste	Восстание в пустыне	1949	Paul Martin	1939	UFA	Mus
Ger	Das Lied einer Nacht	Под чужим именем	1948	Anatole Litvak	1932	Cine Allianz	Mus
Ger	Der Bettelstudent	Нищий студент	1949	Georg Jacoby	1936	UFA	Mus
Ger	Der Dschungel ruft	Встреча в джунглях	1949	Harry Piel	1936	Ariel-Film	Adv
Ger	Der ewige Traum	На вершине Монблана	1949	Arnold Fanck	1934	Cine Allianz	Adv
Ger	Der Fuchs von Glenarvon	Возмездие	1949	Max W. Kimmich	1940	Tobis Filmkunst	Anti-Brit
Ger	Der Kaiser von Kalifornien	Золотая горячка	1949	Luis Trenker	1936	Luis Trenker-Film	Western
Ger	Der letzte Runde	Последний раунд	1949	Werner Klingler	1940	Tobis Filmkunst	Drama
Ger	Der weiße Traum	Снежная фантазия	1949	Geza von Cziffra	1943	Wien-Film	Mus
Ger	Der Zigeunerbaron	Цыганский барон	1949	Karl Hartl	1935	UFA	Mus
Ger	Die drei Codonas	Воздушные акробаты	1948	Arthur Maria Rabenalt	1940	Tobis	Bio
Ger	Die Frau meiner Träume	Девушка моей мечты	1946	Georg Jacoby	1944	UFA	Mus
Ger	Die Frau ohne Vergangenheit	Женщина без прошлого	1955	Nunzio Malasomma	1939	Euphono-Film	Drama
Ger	Du bist mein glück	Ты мое счастье	1946	Karl Heinz Martin	1936	Bavaria-Filmkunst	Mus
Ger	Ein Lied für dich	Песнь для тебя	1948	Joe May	1933	Cine Allianz, UFA	Mus
Ger	Ein unsichtbarer geht durch die Stadt	Невидимый идет по городу	1949	Harry Piel	1933	Ariel-Film	Adv
Ger	Eine kleine Nachtmusik	Ночная серенада	1948	Leopold Hainisch	1940	Tobis	Mus
Ger	Fanny Elssler	Судьба балерины	1948	Paul Martin	1937	UFA	Hist
Ger	Friedrich Schiller	Призвание поэта	1949	Herbert Maisch	1940	Tobis Filmkunst	Bio
Ger	Geheimnis Tibet	Тибет	1949†	Ernst Schäfer & H.A. Lettow	1943	UFA	Doc
Ger	Kautschuk	Охотники за каучуком	1948	Eduard von Borsody	1938	UFA	Anti-Brit
Ger	Lache Bajazzo	Где моя дочь?	1947	Leopold Hainisch	1943	Tobis Filmkunst	Mus
Ger	Madame Bovary	Мадам Бовари	1949	Gerhard Lamprecht	1937	Euphono-Film	Ekran (Lit)
Ger	Maria Ilona	Ошибка дипломата	1949	Geza von Bolvary	1939	Terra	Hist
Ger	Mein Leben für Irland	Школа ненависти	1949	Max W. Kimmich	1941	Tobis Filmkunst	Anti-Brit
Ger	Meine Tochter lebt in Wien	Моя дочь живет в Вене	1956	E.W. Emo	1940	Wien-Film	Com
Ger	Nora	Брачном круге	1949	Harald Braun	1944	UFA	Ekran (Thea)
Ger	Ohm Krüger	Трансвааль в огне	1948	Hans Steinhoff	1941	Tobis Filmkunst	Anti-Brit
Ger	Operette	Оперетта	1948	Willi Forst	1940	Deutsche Forst Film, Wien-Film	Mus

Ger	Paracelsus	Чудесный исцелитель	1949	G.W. Pabst	1943	Bavaria-Filmkunst	Bio
Ger	Rembrandt	Жизнь Рембрандта	1948	Hans Steinhoff	1942	Terra	Bio
Ger	Starke Herzen im Sturm	Флоря Тоска	1948	Herbert Maisch	1937	UFA	Mus
Ger	Tierparadies Südamerika	В лесах Южной Америки	1949	Werner Buhre & K. Krieg	1940	UFA	Doc
Ger	Titanik	Гибель Титаника	1949	Herbert Selpin	1943	Tobis Filmkunst	Hist
Ger	Träumerei	Грезы	1948	Harald Braun	1944	UFA	Bio
Ger	Truxa	Артисты цирка	1949	Hans H. Zerlett	1937	Tobis-Magna	Drama
Ger	Unsterblicher Walzer	Знакомые мелодии	1948	E.W. Emo	1939	Wien-film & Tobis	Bio
Ger	Vergiss mein nicht	Не забывай меня	1947	Augusto Genina	1935	Itala Film	Mus
Ger	Wasser für Canitoga	Торговцы жизнью	1949	Herbert Selpin	1939	Bavaria-Filmkunst	Anti-Brit
Ger	Wen die Götter lieben	Моцарт	1948	Karl Hartl	1942	UFA	Bio
Ger-It	Traummusik	Гибель мечты	1949	Geza von Bolvary	1940	Itala Film	Mus
It	Casta diva	Девушка из Неаполя	1948	Carmine Gallone	1935	Alleanza CI	Mus
It	Giuseppe Verdi	История одной жизни	1949	Carmine Gallone	1939	Grandi Film Storici	Mus
It	Il re si diverte	Риголетто	1948	Mario Bonnard	1941	Scalera Film	Mus
It	Il sogno di Butterfly	Премьера "Чио-Чио-Сан"	1948	<a href="#">Carmine Gallone</a>	1939	Grandi Film Storici	Mus
US	Black Legion	Черный легион	1953	Archie Mayo	1937	Warner Bros	Crime
US	Camille	Дама с камелиями	1954	George Cukor	1937	MGM	Drama
US	Captain Blood	Остров страданий	1953	Michael Curtiz	1935	Warner Bros	Adv
US	Captain Fury	Долина Гнева	1948	Hal Roach	1939	United Artists	Adv
US	Cardinal Richelieu	Кардинал Ришелье	1952	Rowland V Lee	1935	20th Century Pictures	Hist
US	Dancing Pirate	Тацующий пират	1955	Lloyd Corrigan	1936	Pioneer Pictures	Mus
US	David Copperfield	Тяжелые годы	1949	George Cukor	1935	MGM	Ekran (Lit)
US	Dead End	Трущобы большого города	1948	William Wyler	1937	United Artists	Crime
US	Emile Zola	Я обвиняю	1948	William Dieterle	1937	Warner Bros	Bio
US	First Love	Первый бал	1948	Henry Koster	1939	Universal Pictures	Mus
US	Fury	Ярость	1953	Fritz Lang	1936	MGM	Crime
US	Gaslight	Газовый свет	1955	George Cukor	1944	MGM	Crime
US	Geronimo	На земле предков	1950	Paul Sloane	1939	Paramount	Western
US	Give Us this Night	Песнь о любви	1951	Alexander Hall	1936	Paramount	Mus
US	Grapes of Wrath	Дорога бедствий	1948	John Ford	1940	Fox	Ekran (Lit)
US	I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang	Побег с каторги	1947	Mervyn LeRoy	1932	Warner Bros	Crime
US	I Dream Too Much	Её мечта	1949	John Cromwell	1935	RKO Radio	Mus
US	It Started with Eve	Брак поневоле	1954	Henry Koster	1941	Universal Pictures	Mus
US	Last of the Pagans	Невольник из Тафоа	1954	Richard Thorpe	1935	MGM	Adv
US	Les Misérables	Именем закона	1949	Richard Boleslawski	1935	20th Century Pictures	Ekran (Lit)
US	Let Freedom Ring	Друзья и враги	1953	Jack Conway	1939	MGM	Mus
US	Mad About Music	Секрет актрисы	1948	Norman Taurog	1938	Universal Pictures	Mus
US	Maytime	Весенние дни	1952	<a href="#">Robert Leonard</a>	1937	MGM	Mus
US	Meet John Doe	Познакомьтесь с Джоном Доу	1951	Frank Capra	1941	Frank Capra Prod.	Com
US	Mr Deeds Goes to Town	Во власти доллара	1949	Frank Capra	1936	Columbia	Drama
US	Mr Smith Goes to Washington	Сенатор	1947	Frank Capra	1939	Columbia	Drama

US	Mutiny on the Bounty	Мятежный корабль	1949	Frank Lloyd	1935	MGM	Adv
US	Naughty Marietta	Строптивая Мариэтта	1955	W.S. Van Dyke	1935	MGM	Mus
US	New Moon	Таинственный беглец	1948	Robert Leonard	1940	MGM	Mus
US	Robin Hood of El Dorado	Мститель из Эльдорадо	1949	William Wellman	1936	MGM	Adv
US	Romeo & Juliet	Ромео и Джульетта	1949	George Cukor	1936	MGM	Ekran (Thea)
US	Rose-Marie	Роз Мари	1949	W.S. Van Dyke	1936	MGM	Mus
US	Sequoia	Необыкновенная дружба	1953	Chester M. Franklin	1935	MGM	Adv
US	Seventh Heaven	Седьмое небо	1955	Henry King	1937	20th Century Fox	Drama
US	Snow White and the Seven Dwarves	Белоснежка и семь гномов	1955	David Hand	1937	Walt Disney	Skazka
US	Stagecoach	Путешествие будет опасным	1948	John Ford	1939	United Artists	Western
US	Suez	Трудный путь	1948	Allan Dwan	1938	Fox	Adv
US	Tarzan Escapes	Тарзан в западне	1952	Richard Thorpe	1936	MGM	Adv
US	Tarzan Finds a Son!	Тарзан находит сына	1952	Richard Thorpe	1939	MGM	Adv
US	Tarzan the Ape Man	Тарзан	1952	W.S. Van Dyke	1932	MGM	Adv
US	Tarzan's New York Adventure	Приключения Тарзана в Нью-Йорке	1952	Richard Thorpe	1942	MGM	Adv
US	The Adventures of Marco Polo	Приключения венецианца	1948	Archie Mayo	1938	United Artists	Adv
US	The Adventures of Robin Hood	Приключения Робин Гуда	1952	Michael Curtiz & William Keighley	1938	Warner Bros	Adv
US	The Cisco Kid and the Lady	Случай в пустыне	1952	Herbert Leeds	1939	Fox	Western
US	The Count of Monte Cristo	Расплата	1948	Rowland V Lee	1934	United Artists	Ekran (Lit)
US	The Crowd Roars	Восьмой раунд	1948	Richard Thorpe	1938	MGM	Drama
US	The Firefly	Двойная игра	1949	Robert Leonard	1937	MGM	Mus
US	The Gladiator	Гладиатор	1952	Edward Sedgwick	1938	David L. Loew Prod./Columbia	Com
US	The Hunchback of Notre Dame	Собор Парижской Богоматери	1949	William Dieterle	1939	Columbia	Ekran (Lit)
US	The Man in the Iron Mask	Железная маска	1950	James Whale	1939	Edward Small Prod./United Artists	Ekran (Lit)
US	The Mark of Zorro	Таинственный знак	1949	Rouben Mamoulian	1940	Fox	Adv
US	The Prince and the Pauper	Двойники	1948	William Keighley	1937	Warner Bros	Ekran (Lit)
US	The Roaring Twenties	Судьба солдата в Америке	1952	Raoul Walsh	1939	Warner Bros	Crime
US	The Sea Hawk	Королевские пираты	1952	Michael Curtiz	1940	Warner Bros	Adv
US	The Story of Louis Pasteur	Жизнь для науки	1949	William Dieterle	1936	First National Prod./Warner Bros	Bio
US	Tower of London	Башня смерти	1948	Rowland V Lee	1939	Universal Pictures	Hist
US	Viva, Villa!	Капитан армии свободы	1949	Jack Conway	1934	MGM	Western
US	Waterloo Bridge	Мост Ватерлоо	1955	Mervyn LeRoy	1940	MGM	Drama
US	Wild Cargo	В джунглях	1953	Armand Denis	1934	RKO Radio	Doc
US-Brit	Under the Red Robe	Под кардинальской мантией	1952	Victor Seastrom	1937	New World Pictures/Fox	Adv

\* The collection itself was sorted according to genre by the original team of Soviet cataloguers in 1945-48, but the report preserved in the *Agitprop* archives at RGASPI only provides total numbers within each genre with a few titles as examples, rather than an enumeration of the generic designation of each film. Only the generic categories used by the original Soviet cataloguers are used here in assigning the trophy releases to genres. Ministry of Cinema descriptions of the films have been consulted wherever possible in order to garner insights into how they were perceived in generic terms, that is, as comedies, adventures, and so on. This scant information has been heavily supplemented, however, by the author's personal assessment of the films and by the genre designations used by the Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)).

† Screening permits were granted for these two films the previous year (Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, 2016, pp. 127, 181), however annual film production plans date their screening to the year indicated here. It is possible that the films did not screen until the following year due to delays in processing.

## Table 2: Annual Rates of Trophy Film Release Under Stalin, 1946-1953

Note: The figures for 'Soviet feature film releases' include all full-length features, but exclude all filmed concerts (*kontserty*) and theatrical performances (*fil'my-spektakli*), of which there were five and twenty-three, respectively, during these years.

Year	Soviet feature film releases	Trophy film releases	Trophies as % of Soviet releases
1946	18	2	11.1%
1947	24	4	16.7%
1948	21	37	176.2%
1949	12	39	325.0%
1950	13	3	23.1%
1951	9	2	22.2%
1952	10	12	120.0%
1953	26	7	26.9%
<b>TOTALS:</b>	133	106	79.7%

### Comments:

Initially, the Ministry of Cinema seemed to treat the trophy film archive as a more affordable replacement for foreign imports, which averaged between five and eight per year by the end of the war (RGASPI 17/125/576/3). To this end, a modest two were released initially in 1946, followed by four more in mid-to-late 1947, while a further six were approved on 14 June 1948 for release that same year. However, this cautious approach was abandoned once the entire collection had been catalogued in August, so that by the end of the month the Politbiuro had commissioned a startling fifty trophy films for release during 1948-49. By May 1949, the majority of these films had been reprocessed—edited for content, dubbed or subtitled, and prefaced with an ideological disclaimer as to what the film revealed of the depravity of capitalism—and many already screened. On the basis of this success, seven more were selected, followed by a further eighteen in June. After this latter batch, the rate of trophy film production returned to the earlier, more moderate pattern with approval being granted for individual and small groups of films throughout the remainder of the trophy period. For instance during 1951, the four Tarzan films were sanctioned in January, and a third Frank Capra film—*Poznakom'tes' s Dzhonom Dou* or *Meet John Doe* (1941)—in August.

In addition to relatively high release rates, trophy films also benefitted from wide distribution, although *Glavkinoprokat* did not dedicate equivalent resources to their circulation and promotion as to that of Soviet feature films. (For instance, the four German musicals released in 1946-47 warranted only 150-200 copies apiece compared with the 600-800 copies that was usual for Soviet features at that time [RGASPI 17/125/576/60].<sup>5</sup>) The Sovietized foreign films nevertheless permeated every corner of the Union, from the cities of the Russian heartland to the towns and villages of Altai; from the Baltic states, Ukraine and Moldova to Georgia and Azerbaijan (RGASPI 17/125/576/57-58; (Roth-Ey, 2011, p. 41)). *Glavkinoprokat* records for 1947 show that regions as far-flung as Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan, and the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic received copies of nearly all available foreign (predominantly trophy) films that year, in numbers of copies at least equivalent to those of Soviet titles, if not slightly higher. For instance, Kirgizstan received 111 copies of 25 Soviet titles (an average of 4.4 copies per title) and 37 copies of 9 foreign films (4.1 copies); Kabardino-Balkar ASSR received 83 copies of 64 Soviet titles (1.3 copies each) and 14 copies of 10 foreign titles (1.4 copies); and Turkmenistan, 168 copies of 60 Soviet titles (2.8 copies each) and 34 copies of 9 foreign titles (3.7 copies) (RGASPI 17/132/88/139-142).

The trophy films were also viewed widely. In fact, despite the disadvantage in numbers of copies, at least some trophies enjoyed more screenings per day and longer runs than did even the most popular of Soviet features. Turovskaia found that turnover rates per copy of the German musical *Devushka moei mechty* (*Die Frau meiner Träume*, Jacoby, 1944), for instance, out-screened Barnet's box office leader, *Podvig razvedchika* (1947) by a factor of five (Turovskaya, 1993, p. 51).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, a letter of complaint from *Komsomol* head Nikolai Mikhailov notes countless cases from across the USSR of trophy films commanding a disproportionate amount of screen time. For example, in Barnaul (Altai) the cinema *Oktiabr'* showed five foreign films for a total of 45 days, while Chiaureli's Stalin epic *Kliatva* (1946) entertained audiences for only two days, and the re-release of Romm's classic *Lenin v Oktiabre* (1937), only one day. Meanwhile in Riga, screenings of *Devushka moei mechty* began at 11am and continued until the final showing at 1am (RGASPI 17/125/576/57-58).

Although box office data are available for only twelve trophy films, these few figures confirm their popularity.<sup>7</sup> Seven of the twelve ranked within the top five films for their year, with *Tarzan* films taking the top four spots in 1952, relegating Chiaureli's final Stalin epic, *Nezabyvaemyi 1919 god*, to a distant fifth place. Despite widespread perceptions in both scholarship and memoir literature of the unrivalled popularity of *Devushka moei mechty* (or more precisely, of Hungarian singer-dancer Marika Röck and her scandalously displayed legs) (Fürst, 2010, p. 206; Roth-Ey, 2011, p. 39), it actually ranked the lowest amongst the trophies for which there is box office data. At 15.7 million in the first twelve months,<sup>8</sup> ticket sales for the memorable musical were 3.4 million less than the Hollywood trophy release of the same year, *Pobeg s katorgi* (LeRoy's *I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, 1932), and but a fraction of those of the four *Tarzan* films, which garnered between 38.6 and 42.9 million ticket sales each (Kudriavtsev, n.d.). It was in fact the first installment of this *Tarzan* quadrilogy that outperformed every other film screened in the late Stalin era—apart from one: the *fil'm-spektakl' Liubov' Iarovaia* (Frid, 1953), which earned an unprecedented 46.4 million ticket sales in 1953. Overall, the trophies for which box office data is currently available averaged 27.5 million ticket sales per film, compared with 22.9 million per Soviet feature film.<sup>9</sup> These figures leave no room for doubt that trophy films played to packed houses.

**Table 3: Generic Breakdown of Trophy Film Archive and Releases, 1946-56**

Genre	# in trophy archive	% of trophy archive	# of trophy releases	% of trophy releases	% of the genre released
Adaptation	66	2.2%	11	9.0%	16.7%
Adventure	103	3.4%	23	18.9%	22.3%
Anti-British/ Colonial	41	1.4%	6	4.9%	14.6%
Biography	133	4.4%	10	8.2%	7.5%
Comedy	512	16.9%	3	2.5%	0.6%
Crime	213	7.0%	6	4.9%	2.8%
Drama	1,267	41.9%	10	8.2%	0.8%
History	82	2.7%	6	4.9%	7.3%
Musical	232	7.7%	38	31.1%	16.4%
Western	62	2.1%	5	4.1%	8.1%
Other	312	10.3%	4	3.3%	1.3%
<b>TOTALS:</b>	3,023		122		4.0%

**Comments:**

In terms of genre, trophy films were a valuable supplement to Soviet releases during these years. Musicals and adventure films had long since been popular with Soviet audiences and were considered desirable by the regime, yet encountered great difficulty in passing censorship after the war. As a result, a mere eight Soviet-



made adventure films premiered, of which only six were on wide release, while Aleksandrov's *Vesna* (1947) and Pyr'ev's *Kubanskiie kazaki* (1950) were the only proper musicals—meaning that they were advertised specifically as *musical* comedies and featured songs with lyrics relevant to the plot. It is therefore no mere happenstance that the most well-represented genres among trophy releases were in fact those underrepresented in Soviet production. Interestingly, trophy films have also been credited with reintroducing Westerns to Soviet audiences (Kartseva, 2005, p. 210).

**Table 4: Trophy Collection & Releases According to Country of Origin, 1946-56**

Country of Origin	# in trophy archive	% of trophy archive	# of trophy releases	% of trophy releases	% of trophy archive actually released
Austria*	47	1.3%	3	2.5%	6.4%
Britain*	183	5.2%	7	5.7%	3.8%
Czechoslovakia	55	1.6%	1	0.8%	1.8%
France*	572	16.1%	2	1.6%	0.3%
Germany*	906	25.6%	45	36.9%	5.0%
Italy	42	1.2%	4	3.3%	9.5%
United States*	1531	43.2%	60	49.2%	3.9%
Other	208	5.9%	-	-	-
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>3544</b>		<b>122</b>		<b>3.4%</b>

\* Figures include one co-production with another country on the list (but which is not credited with the release).

**Comments:**

When they were released, the films from the various national cinemas were processed and distributed differently. While German films were dubbed and distributed *na shirokii ekran* or through the public cinema network, American films were subtitled and circulated *na zakrytyi ekran*, through the “closed” network of workers’ clubs and houses of culture. The distinction was rooted in the respective abilities of the producer nations to retaliate for Soviet non-payment of screening licenses. The Minister of Cinema Ivan Bol'shakov was concerned that America would boycott Soviet cinema in protest should unlicensed Hollywood films be screened openly, whereas there were no such fears with regard to the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany (later the German Democratic Republic) and the unlicensed screening of Nazi-era films (Laurent, 2000, p. 238).

A further distinction to be made along national lines pertains to production dates: while the Hollywood and Western European pictures held in the trophy collection were filmed almost exclusively during 1936-39, with some from the early 1930s and the occasional early war era film, German and French films dominated the wartime productions from 1940-45.

**Table 5: The Trophies that Might Have Been:** films initially sanctioned for release but later excluded

Country of Origin	Original Film Title	Soviet Title	Director	Original Release Date	Studio	Soviet Genre
Brit	Jew Süß	Еврей Зюсс	Lothar Mendes	1934	Gaumont British Picture Corp	Ekranizatsiia
Ger	Carl Peters	Карл Петерс	Herbert Selpin	1941	Bavaria Film	Historical
Ger	Der Tanz auf dem Vulkan	Танец на вулкане	Hans Steinhoff	1938	Majestic-Film	Revolutionary

Ger	Die - oder keine	Эта, или никакая	Carl Froelich	1932	Carl Froelich Filmproduktion	Musical
Ger	Die 3 Groschen-Oper	Опера нищих	G.W. Pabst	1931	Tobis Filmkunst	Comedy
Ger	Durch die Wüste	Через пустыню	J.A. Hübler-Kahla	1936	Lothar Stark-Film	Adventure
Ger	Geheimnis Tibet*	Таинственный Тибет	Ernst Schäfer & H.A. Lettow	1943	UFA	Documentary
Ger	Ich bin Sebastian Ott	Я, Себастьян Отт	Viktor Becker & Willi Forst	1939	Bavaria Film	Crime
Ger	Kora Terry	Кора Терри	Georg Jacoby	1940	UFA	Musical
Ger	Romanze in Moll	Романс в миноре	Helmut Käutner	1943	Tobis Filmkunst	Drama
Ger-Aus	Schrammeln†	Братья Шраммельн	Geza von Bolvary	1944	Wien-Film	Musical
Ger-Fr	Mamsell Nitouche	Мадмуазель Нитуш	Carl Lamac	1932	Ondra-Lamac-Film	Musical
It	La figlia del corsaro verde	Дочь Корсара	Enrico Guazzoni	1940	Pisorno Studios	Adventure
It-Fr	Angélica	Ночь возмездия	Jean Choux	1940	DisCina & Scalera Film	Drama
US	Captain January	Капитан Январь	David Butler	1936	20th Century Fox	Comedy
US	Cardinal Richelieu‡	Кардинал Ришелье	Rowland V Lee	1935	20th Century Pictures	Historical
US	Juarez	Президент Хуарец	William Dieterle	1939	Warner Bros	Historical
US	Of Mice and Men	О мышах и людях	Lewis Milestone	1939	United Artists	Ekranizatsiia
US	Test Pilot	Летчик-испытатель	Victor Fleming	1938	MGM	Adventure
US	The Crusades	Крестовые походы	Cecil B. DeMille	1935	Paramount Pictures	Historical
US	The Good Earth	Добрая земля	Sidney Franklin	1937	MGM	Revolutionary
US	The Last of the Mohicans	Последний из могикан	George B. Seitz	1936	Edward Small Productions	Adventure

\*Despite being excluded from processing in a report dated 11 August 1948, *Geheimnis Tibet* received a screening permit on 11 November 1948 and was included in the 7 May 1949 list of trophies approved for release, under the title *Тибет* (RGASPI 17/132/92/19, Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, 2016, p. 181, RGASPI 17/3/1075/82-83).

†*Schrammeln* was ultimately granted a screening permit on 6 October 1949 and released as *Венский квартет* (Ministerstvo kul'tury SSSR, 2016, p. 130).

‡*Cardinal Richelieu* was eventually reconsidered and released in 1952.

### Comments:

Trophy film processing was not without its hiccoughs, and not every film initially selected for release actually saw the silver screen. Nineteen were abandoned on 11 August 1948 at the beginning of the trophy film deluge before editing work had begun, while three more were deemed to be impossible to repurpose for Soviet audiences shortly into the process. In a report on the completion of the August 1948 Politbiuro order to prepare fifty trophy films, officials explained that *Evrei Zius* (the British version of *Jew Süss*, Mendes, 1934) was permeated with nationalistic, Zionist ideas, while *O myshakh i liudiakh* (*Of Mice and Men*, Milestone, 1939) depicted farm laborers as defective and dangerous to society and, as such, neither would be beneficial for Soviet audiences. The following month, when Bol'shakov filed an official request to exclude the films from production, a third had been added to the list, leaving one to assume that the violent depiction of the eponymous *Prezident Khuarets* (*Juarez*, Dieterle, 1939) noted in earlier Ministry correspondence similarly proved too difficult to reframe for the Gor'kii studio technical team responsible for reprocessing trophy films.<sup>10</sup>

A great many more captured films were, of course, not even considered for release. The complete trophy collection boasted works from many nations in addition to those from which releases were drawn, including: France (572 films), Britain (183), Poland (58), Japan (49), Austria (47), Hungary (40), Sweden (11), Switzerland (8), Finland (7), Belgium, Mexico and Spain (5 each), Norway (3), Australia, Holland, Rumania and Denmark (2 each), and India, Tunisia, Palestine, China, Canada and Egypt (1 each) (RGASPI 17/132/88/2-6). Silent films and animation were likewise overlooked, while fairy tales, a substantial collection of war films, detective and spy thrillers, and horror films were ignored.

### Closing Remarks:

In spite of its limitations, this resource is intended to initiate the discussion of the more practical side of trophy film production, equipping the film historian with a tangible starting point for assessing the significance of the trophy film collection. Much research remains to be done simply to complete this starting picture of the extent of the trophy film phenomenon—particularly with regards to trophy film distribution, and viewership statistics—let alone to develop a clearer understanding of the processes involved in transforming what were essentially enemy films into cultural products suitable for Soviet consumption.

<sup>1</sup> German trophies apparently continued to premiere until 1956, while American trophies screened until 1955, albeit under license from 1954, ending their run as pirated pictures (Kapterev, 2009, pp. 804–805; Kartseva, 2005; Turovskaia, 1989, pp. 45–46). These findings contradict Kenez’s assertion that trophy films, being foreign productions, disappeared from Soviet screens with the intensification of the xenophobic anti-cosmopolitanism campaign (Kenez, 1992, p. 214).

<sup>2</sup> Key memoirs for trophy film anecdotes include: (Aksyonov, 1987; Brodskii, 2012; Okudzhava, 1988). All three link trophy films to postwar youth culture, with Brodskii even crediting them with contributing to the burgeoning dissident movement. The Harvard Émigré Interview Project was conducted from 1951-53, see (“Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System,” n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> Key sources in undertaking this cross-referencing include: *Agitprop* archives held in RGASPI 17/125/576 and 17/132/88, 92, 250, and 427; (Anderson and Maksimenkov, 2005, pp. 801–11, 851–56; Artizov and Naumov, 1999, pp. 638–39, 651–52; Kartseva, 2005; Kudriavtsev, n.d.; Ministerstvo kul’tury SSSR, 2016; Sul’kin, 2002; Turovskaia, 1989, pp. 45–46).

<sup>4</sup> Of the 68 colour films, 47 were American (although one was incomplete), 11 German, 9 British and 1 Czech.

<sup>5</sup> It is of course quite possible that subsequent trophy releases were reproduced in larger or smaller quantities.

<sup>6</sup> There were, however, far more copies of the Soviet-made film, meaning that it took first place at the box office with 30% more ticket sales overall.

<sup>7</sup> Box office figures for trophy and foreign films have been collated by film critic Sergei Kudriavtsev and made available on his webpage, Kinanet.livejournal.com. These figures coincide with the gaps in *Domashniaia sinemateka*’s box office rankings of Soviet features, although several tantalizing blank spots remain.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, films continued to circulate and earn sales well past their initial year of release, so it is likely that overall ticket sales for the film were higher, particularly given that two more colour copies were added to the trophy collection in early 1952 (RGASPI 17/133/386/51). Unlike Soviet features, however, trophy films were not replaced when copies wore out beyond repair (RGASPI 17/132/429/54, reprinted in (Anderson and Maksimenkov, 2005, p. 856).

<sup>9</sup> These averages are based on box office data for the 12 out of 99 trophy films and 26 out of 107 Soviet features released during Stalin’s lifetime, 1946-52.

<sup>10</sup> For more on how trophy films were edited, see Claire Knight, “Enemy Films on Soviet Screens: Trophy Films during the Early Cold War, 1947–52,” *Kritika* 18.1 (Winter 2017), *forthcoming*.

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