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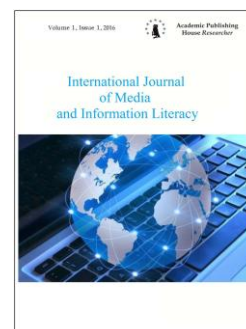
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## The Image of the White Movement in the Western Feature Cinema (1931–2016)

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### Abstract

This article gives the way for hermeneutic analysis of the topic of the White movement in the mirror of the Western cinema (1931–2016). The hermeneutical analysis suggests media text comprehension through comparison with historical, cultural tradition and reality; penetration of its logic; through comparison of media images in historical and cultural context by combining historical, hermeneutical analysis of the structural, plot, ethical, ideological, iconographic / visual, media stereotypes and analysis of media text characters. An analysis of this kind of media texts, in our opinion, is particularly important for media literacy education of future historians, culture and art historians, sociologists, psychologists and educators. Thus, the comparative analysis of plot schemes, characters, and ideology of the Western feature films of 1931–2016, in varying degrees of affecting the subject of the White movement, leads to the conclusion about the essential similarity of their media stereotypes. Content analysis of screen media texts of 1931–2016 on the topic related to the White movement allows generally to submit their basic narrative schemes.

As for the film of CIS countries, here is, as before, the history of the civil war in Russia, probably will be somewhere in the periphery of the repertoire.

**Keywords:** White movement, Western cinema, films, Russia, film studies, media literacy.

### 1. Introduction

Based on the research of Western scientists (Keen, 1986; Lafeber, 1990; Levering, 1982; Small, 1980; Strada, 1989; Strada and Troper, 1997), we can conclude: the political, ideological, historical, socio-cultural aspects of the theme of the evolution of the screen image of the White movement is still poorly understood. Of course, some aspects of this subject were touched on before. For example, Western scientists have published many books and articles about “the image of enemy”, i.e. Red Russia on the screen (Keen, 1986; Strada, and Troper, 1997; Taylor and Spring, 1993, etc.). However, these authors did not set a goal of comparative analysis of the transformation of the image of the White movement in the Soviet, Russian and Western cinema.

### 2. Materials and methods

The main materials for this article was the area: the books, articles and Western films about the White movement in Russia. I used also the method of hermeneutic analysis of the cultural context of media texts (Eco, 1976; Silverblatt, 2001). This method connected with the key concepts

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of media literacy education (*media agencies, media categories, media language, media technologies, media representations, media audiences* etc.).

### 3. Discussion

In general, foreign feature films rarely refers to the events of the Civil War in Russia and the White movement, but on the heels, in the 1920s, this theme was reflected in Western movies more noticeable.

I believe that among the main reasons of ignoring by Western cinema of the 1930s – 1940s the topic of the White movement was relatively expensive show of fighting the civil war in Russia with dubious prospects for big box-office. That's why in those rare films that have had at least some relation to the specified topics, White officers, the Cossacks, etc. were shown already in exile, where they boozed, sang songs and danced in restaurants (*Balalaika*) fell in love with beautiful women, etc.

Many of the films that will be analyzed further, for decades found themselves outside the field of view of local and foreign culture experts, political scientists, historians and film experts. For example, in Soviet time it was "not accepted" in general to mention that in Nazi Germany films on a Russian theme were made. Even in solid monograph by N.I. Nusinova devoted to Russian cinematic frontier of 1918-1939, published in the XXI century, this topic gets round (Nusinova, 2003). And this despite the fact that in the cinema of the Third Reich there were active not only famous star Olga Chekhova (1897-1980), and director Victor Turzhansky (1891-1976), actors Nicholas Kolin (1878-1966), Boris Alekin (1904-1942) and others. The researcher of the history of the Nazi A.V. Vasilchenko in his book about the cinema of the Third Reich (Vasilchenko, 2010) did not focus their attention on the Russian subjects of German films of the period as well.

On the shooting of German films on a Russian theme, of course, specific events that occurred during the 1930s – 1940s influenced. With the coming to power of Hitler a trend of confrontation of the Third Reich and the USSR was clearly denoted. Therefore, in a Nazi movie there were two concepts of reflection "Russian world": Russian Tsars and Russian emigrant which could receive positive cinematic interpretation (*Favorite of the Empress, This ravishing ballroom night, Midnight* and others.), while Bolshevism and the Council, on the contrary, always look negative on the screen.

In this respect, it is interesting movie by Karl Anton (1898-1979) under the eloquent title *Battleship "Sevastopol" - White slaves* (1937), where clearly used myth of the rebellious *Battleship "Potemkin"* (1925), brilliantly created by Sergei Eisenstein. And this is no accident as yet in 1933 at a meeting with German filmmakers then leader of culture department - Minister Joseph Goebbels said the following about the movie *Battleship "Potemkin"*: "This is a wonderful film. From a cinematic point of view, it is incomparable. One who is not firm in his beliefs, after its seeing, perhaps could become a Bolshevik. It proves once again that a masterpiece can be successfully incorporated a certain tendency. Even the bad ideas can be promoted by means of art" (Vasilchenko, 2010: 5). So, it was a sort of state order for the creation of the Nazi analogue to film by Eisenstein.

And in 1937 this order was made by K. Anton. In the movie *Battleship "Sevastopol" - white slaves* on the ship, like Eisenstein, sailors revolted as well. But this event was given with the opposite sign - the rebellion on *Battleship "Sevastopol"* is raisin by evil and cruel Bolsheviks who kills the noble officers, priests, raping women, burning Orthodox icons... But, thank God, there is a Russian officer, Count Konstantin Volkov, who collects these loyal Russian sailors, disarms the rebels and frees prisoners. At the end of the film count Volkov says the conceptual phrase: "This trouble is not only Russia. The enemies of civilization must be destroyed. The struggle continues!". And then some of the companions echoes: "People do not notice this danger...".

It should be noted that after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June of 1941, the royal and the émigré Russian went clearly in the cinematic shadow of the Third Reich, at best, found themselves on the periphery of the subjects (e.g., in the form of images of individual Russian in the episodes), while in melodrama *We live* (1942) in fascist Italy representatives of the Russian "old world", rendered under the power of the Bolsheviks, were shown a close-up and highly positive. But unlike the Soviet cinema, where from July 1941 to December 1942, was filmed over 70 shorts and full-length feature films, directly reflecting the current events of the war with Germany, the Nazi cinema made a major bet for operational military chronicle.

As for the Western cinema as a whole, it, like German, being the product of the mass / popular culture in films on a Russian theme, was based on folklore and mythological sources, including traditional ideas of the Western world about the "mysterious Russian soul".

As a result, in the western films it is clearly felt these promotional messages:

- Greatness of Russia was left in the distant past, when it was an empire in which culture flourished (a comedy about the life of Russian nobility epoch of Empress Elisabeth - *A favorite of the Empress*, musical melodrama about the life of P.I. Tchaikovsky *This ravishing ballroom night* and others);

- However, in the past imperial policy of Russia could be dangerous for other European countries (*Warsaw Citadel*, *Cadets*);

- After 1917 the sympathy may cause only Russians, suffered from the Bolsheviks, / or have emigrated to the West (*Battleship "Sevastopol"* - *White slaves*, *Midnight*, *Crimson Dawn*, *Knight without armor*, *Balalaika*, *We live*, and others.);

- The Bolsheviks carried out mass terror - both in relation to the elite of society and the civilian population, and strive to turn the Russian people into slaves (*Battleship "Sevastopol"*, *Heroes of Siberia*);

- Armed resistance to the Bolsheviks is justified and necessary (*Battleship "Sevastopol"*, *Heroes of Siberia*).

Since the beginning of the "cold war" the topic of the White movement almost completely disappeared from the Western screens, apparently lost all relevance in the eyes of Western filmmakers. Subjects of Soviet military threat and espionage came to the fore (Fedorov, 2015). Russian in last appeared on the screen as a relatively frequent film adaptations of Russian classics (A.P. Chekhov, F.M. Dostoevsky, L.N. Tolstoy, N.V. Gogol), novel *Michael Strogoff* by Jules Verne, in the history of the murder of Rasputin and miraculous resurrection of the murdered daughter of Nicholas II – Anastasia.

The most notable Western movies, somehow relating to the topic of the White movement, became melodramatic adaptation of Boris Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* (US, 1965) by David Lean and the drama of the death of the royal family *Nicholas and Alexandra* (UK, 1971) by Franklin Schaffner. In 1974, a small episode of the execution of the Romanov family by the Bolsheviks appeared in a large-scale drama *The whole life* by C. Lelouch. The drama of the era of the Civil War in Estonia *Shot of Mercy* (1976) by German director F. Schlöndorff and British teleplay *The White Guard* (1982) taken after had far less international attention.

The events of the second half of the 1980s in the Soviet Union a significantly influenced upon the reflection of the Russian theme on the Western screen, for example, it is appeared quite friendly movies depicting the Soviet people. However, the growing interest in the subject of the White movement didn't find its reflection in the foreign movie. On the contrary, I could not find a single Western film of 1986-1990, where the Whites have appeared, even in exile.

In the post-Soviet 1990s Russian topic remained quite popular in Western cinema. However, but it was a special the demand - in the form of a series of films about the brutal Russian mafia, prostitution for export, the atrocities of Stalinism and the other negative (I want to note for justice that there were other foreign films about Russia in the 1990s, for example, adaptation of Russian literary classics). In the cinema the theme "far abroad" of the White movement was touched upon in the last quarter of a century in only two films - melodramatic adaptation of the novel *Zoya* (US, 1995) by D. Steele and another film version of *Doctor Zhivago* (UK-Germany-United States, 2002). In both films Western cinema reflected the Russian topic in line with previous decades, showing sympathetic representatives of the "old world" and negatively - representatives of the new, Red.

Undoubtedly, the history of the White movement was much closer to Russian neighbors from the Baltic countries, Finland and Poland, which from the 1940s to the 1980s for obvious ideological reasons, avoid touching this subject in their films. But, having found support from the European Union, these countries over the last decade have put some dramatic movies on the theme of the Civil War: *Guards of Riga* (Latvia, 2007), *Order* (Finland-Germany, 2008), *1920. War and Love* (Poland, 2010) and *Battle of Warsaw, 1920* (Poland, 2011).

Drama *Order*, which talks about the cruelty of the civil war, looks White crow among these films in Finland in 1918. In fact, the authors decided to go against the current basic cinema-treatment of White movement inherent in XXI century: the White Finns are shown in the "Order" as severe brutalized animals who raped and then shot captured Red girls. And one of the Whites,

using his authority, vile induces another to intimate relations (again somehow "un-European", it turns out quite politically incorrect!).

In the *Guards of Riga* Whites are also shown very negative, but here, on the contrary, respected and politically correct, and patriotic component is not forgotten by them: it's Russian White Guards, who, in the autumn of 1919 entered into an alliance with unwilling to admit defeat by German armies, set out to capture the independent Riga ...

Prince led the Whites P.R. Bermont-Avalov (1877-1974) appears in the *Guards of Riga* grotesquely, almost in the spirit of the comedy *The Wedding in Malinovka* - sulfate, drunken bully. His German ally - General Rudiger von der Goltz (1865-1946) is given with a great enjoyed respect as a worthy adversary.

But the author of *Battle of Warsaw, 1920* – Jerzy Hoffman – seeks to show the balance of opposing forces: on the one hand on the side of the army of Marshal Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935) brave White Cossack troops fight, and on the other – no Red monsters, but worthy opponents with their believe.

In a realistic interpretation of J. Hoffman crushing defeat of the Red Army from the Polish troops led by Józef Piłsudski, the incident was on the August, 13-25, 1920, was the dramatic history of the collision not only the Red and White ideas, but also the Communist obsession with world revolution...

However the Polish film *1920. War and Love*, screened the year before, depicts a little Red as well as in the Soviet cinema of the 1930s were shown "White Poles" (a vivid example of this - *Fiery Years*, 1939). The Russian soldiers in this Polish TV series look like vile, arrogant, brutal boors who kill civilians, cut drafts captive, raped girls and noble Polish, etc. Polish officers and soldiers, on the contrary are the heroic defenders of their homeland, charming and intelligent people, loyal military oath and code of honor.

It is known that the Polish military campaign in 1920 was one of a few examples of the final victory of the anti-communist forces over the Reds during the Civil War. In times of socialist Poland, the topic was, of course, strictly censored in the film – as in Soviet and so in Polish. But now, during the anti-Russian sanctions, which since 2014 actively supported by the Polish government (as well as the governments of the Baltic countries), it is safe to assume that certainly the war of 1920 would just become a source for the demonstration of the Polish (and Baltic) patriotism and anti-Russian trends on the screen.

#### 4. Results

*The structure of the stereotype image of the White movement in the Western movies of the 1930s - 1940s*

*Historical period, the place of action:* any period of time from 1918 to 1924, taking into account the presentation of life in exile this period can capture 1920–1940.

*Furnishings, household items:* there are the modest dwellings, forms and objects of everyday life of the poor characters (as they may be former White officers in exile), neat houses and household items of the rich characters, luxurious furnishings life of the Russian aristocracy before the Bolshevik revolution. Household items of Bolsheviks are shown with the share of the grotesque.

*Methods of representation of reality:* as a rule, it is a quasi-romantic image of the life of the characters of the White movement, grotesquely exaggerated image of the Reds.

*Characters, their values, ideas, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, and gestures:* Red and White characters are differentiated: on the one hand, it is negative Red-Communist personages – the carriers of inhumane ideas, on the other hand – these are people who defend their principles and notions of honor, good and evil (the representatives of the White movement). Characters are shared by not only social, but also material status. Whites dressed richer the poor Reds. As for the body, there is allowed options – Whites on the screen (depending on the task) are either intellectuals or athletic looking men. These White characters are shown as generally refined and charming man with impeccable manners and refined vocabulary. Red characters – on the contrary, are rude, cruel, with a repulsive appearance and unpleasant voice tones. Characters Bolsheviks are usually wearing uniforms with the appropriate attributes (leather jacket, gun belts, revolver, etc.), They have a strong constitution, although they may have mediocre physical data; physiognomically they look unpleasant in most cases.

Male characters, personified the White movement, continue to dominate, however, among the enemies of the Communists you may find a beautiful and charming woman.

Russian characters of tsarist times as Russians, who emigrated from the Bolshevik regime to the West, are dressed according to the social status: the luxury of the imperial court, the expulsion of modesty, etc. Appearance of these characters is usually attractive, especially for persons of aristocratic descent;

Characters-victims of Bolshevik terror are dressed according to their social status, their physique varies widely and depends on the context of a particular film; the appearance of female characters as a rule are attractive.

*Traits characters:* cruelty, meanness, sexual obsession, dedication, hostility, cunning, strength (Bolshevist characters); nobility, strength, determination, courage (positive characters - the Whites, aristocrats, immigrants, people of creative professions, intellectuals and so on.). In general, the nature of all the characters of foreign films on a Russian topic is depicted by a dotted line, without going into psychology.

*A significant change in the lives of the characters:* the destruction peaceful, serene and happy life of the people by the Bolsheviks, the seizure of a ship and the town by them, the massive communist terror (shootings, executions, torture, etc.) against the civilian population, including women;

*A problem:* the life of the White characters, for that matter, and the existence of the state as a whole are at risk: charming and intelligent life characters who are trying to remain neutral is at risk too...

*The search for solution to the problem:* this is the struggle of the best representatives of the Russian people - Whites - to the Bolsheviks; there is the emigration of characters from the circle of the White movement in one of the Western countries.

*Solution to the problem:* there is the conscious of destruction / arrest White characters by Bolsheviks; there is the salvation of the White characters in exile.

#### *The structure of the stereotype image of the White movement in the Western films of 1950s – 1980s*

*Historical period, the place of action:* any period of time from 1918 to 1924, taking into account the presentation of life in exile during this period, it can capture 1920–1950.

*Furnishings, household items:* there are the modest dwellings, forms and objects of everyday life of the poor characters, neat houses and household items of the rich characters, luxurious furnishings life of the Russian aristocracy and the bourgeoisie before the Bolshevik Revolution. Household items of Bolsheviks are usually shown without much grotesque.

*Methods of depicting reality:* they are mainly relative to conventionally romantic characters, to some extent related to the White movement and Tsarist Russia.

*Characters, their values, ideas, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures:* Red and White characters are differentiated: on the one hand, they are negative communist characters having inhumane ideas, on the other hand – these are people who defend their principles and ideas of honor, good and evil (the representatives of the White movement or intellectuals who have fallen under the Bolshevik hammer). Characters are shared not only by social, but also material status. Whites are dressed richer the poor Reds. As for the body, there is allowed options - Whites on the screen (depending on the task) are either intellectuals or athletic looking men. These White characters are shown as generally refined and charming man with impeccable manners and refined vocabulary. Red characters, on the contrary, are brutalized, with repulsive looks, gestures and facial expressions of the power and unpleasant voice tones. Characters victims of Bolshevik terror are dressed according to their social status, their physique is varied widely and depends on the context of a particular film; the appearance of female characters are attractive.

*A significant change in the lives of the characters:* it is the destruction of peaceful, calm and happy life of the people by the Bolsheviks;

*A problem:* the life of the White characters, for that matter, and the existence of the state as a whole are at risk; charming and intelligent life characters who are trying to remain neutral is at risk too.

*The search for solution to the problem:* it is the struggle of the best representatives of the Russian people - Whites - to the Bolsheviks; there is the emigration of characters from the circle of the White movement in one of the Western countries.

*Solution to the problem:* the conscious destruction / arrest White characters by Bolsheviks; there is the salvation of the White characters in exile.

*The structure of the stereotype image of the White movement in the Western movies of the 1990s – 2000s*

*Historical period, the place of action:* any period of time from 1918 to 1924 years, taking into account the presentation of life in exile, this period may be extended.

*Furnishings, household items:* there are the modest dwellings, forms and objects of everyday life of the poor characters, neat houses and household items of the rich characters, luxurious furnishings life aristocracy and bourgeoisie before the Bolshevik revolution. Household items of Bolsheviks are usually shown without much grotesque.

*Methods of depicting reality:* conventionally romantic (*Zoya, 1920. War and Love*), realistic (*Battle of Warsaw, 1920, Order*) with respect to the characters, to some extent related to the White movement.

*Characters, their values, ideas, clothes, physique, vocabulary, facial expressions, gestures:* In the films of Western countries (*Zoya, Doctor Zhivago*), all presented as former cinema decades: negative communist characters are the carriers of inhumane ideas (Reds) and the people who defend their principles and ideas of honor, good and evil (the representatives of the White movement or intellectuals who have fallen under the Bolshevik press). Characters are shared not only by social, but also material status, etc.

In the series *1920. War and Love* Polish officers and soldiers are charming patriots and Reds are brutalized, often they are with a repulsive appearance and unpleasant voice tones.

In the drama *Guards of Riga* charming patriots are shown Latvians, but the Russian Whites are failed invaders confused with the Germans.

*A significant change in the lives of the characters:* Bolsheviks destructed of the peaceful, serene and happy life of the people;

*A problem:* the life of all the characters, as, indeed, and the existence of the state as a whole are at risk: the lifes of charming and intelligent characters who are trying to remain neutral is at risk too.

*The search for solution to the problem (in the Polish-Baltic film version):* there the fight of the best representatives of the people with Red troops or Russian Whites.

*Solution to the problem (in the Polish-Baltic film version):* a victory of patriotic forces over the Red and White danger.

## 5. Conclusion

Western screen in Soviet times preferred to interpret the topic of the White movement in the genre of melodrama, sympathetically developing the theme of enemy's exile of Soviet power. This movie about the White movement in 1931-2015 occupied a very modest place in the Western repertoire. So from 1931 to 1991 on Western screens out only 12 films that are at least in part can be attributed to the subject of the White movement: romance *Crimson Dawn* (USA, 1932), the drama *The world and the flesh* (US, 1932), drama *Heroes of Siberia* (Poland, 1936) and *Battleship "Sevastopol"* (Germany, 1937), a melodrama *Knight without armor* (US, 1937), *Balalaika* (USA, 1939), *We live* (Italy, 1942), *Doctor Zhivago* (USA, 1965), the drama *Nicholas and Alexandra* (UK, 1971), *The whole life* (France-Italy, 1974), *Shot of mercy* (Germany-France, 1976), *The White Guards* (UK, 1982).

In the post-Soviet period, interest in the history of the White movement in the West is almost disappeared: the American and English cinema in a quarter century was marked by only two films – melodrama *Zoya* (US, 1995) and the drama *Doctor Zhivago* (UK-Germany-USA, 2002).

In the XXI century the topic of civil war was naturally more interested in the country that were included at one time in the part of the Russian Empire. In the movies (*Guards of Riga, 1920, War and Love, Battle of Warsaw. 1920*) patriotic theme of liberation of the motherland from invaders (both Reds and Whites) was on first place.

Apparently, in the Russian cinema in the nearest years, "balanced" trend images of the Civil War and the White movement will get its further development, while in Eastern Europe and the Baltic's theme of the Civil War, most likely, will be developed in the military-patriotic spirit.

As for the film of CIS countries, here is, as before, the history of the civil war in Russia, probably will be somewhere in the periphery of the repertoire. A screened-scale film about alien and distant Civil is expensive and financially risky. And the image of the enemy – If you need it – you can always dazzle much more cheaply: for example, using a proven period of "cold war" spy mania...

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