

Original Paper

“Always in Red”. The Lark: Great Patriotic War, T.34, Flower Power, Rock and Roll

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Abstract

*Here, we discuss the 1965 Soviet film *The Lark, Zhavoronok*, narrating the escape of the III Reich from a soviet T-34 main battle tank during the Second World War. The film reveals the reception in the USSR of flower power, Allen Ginsberg, and Western counterculture movements connected to the desire for change in the country. The film makes literary and critical intermediations, innovations in the use of the camera, montages, and the presentation of the enemy.*

Keywords

Counterculture movements, Barbarossa, Prisoners, Homo Faber, Tank, URSS, III Reich

“Hitler’s generals, raised on the dogma of Clausewitz and Moltke, could not understand that war is won in the factory.” — Joseph Stalin, 1949.

“Naomi reading patiently, story out of a Communist fairy book—Tale of the Sudden Sweetness of the Dictator—Forgiveness of Warlocks—Armies Kissing—” Allen Ginsberg, Kaddish, 1955.

1. Introduction

Can an industrially manufactured object, a machine, a T34 battle tank, escape alone to the USSR? This is what the ending of *The Lark, Zhavoronok* suggests, a Soviet movie that clashes with the canonical production in force in the country. Despite the tragic impact of the unparalleled destruction carried out in the USSR during the Second World War, the film alters the stereotype of the hated Nazi. It shows them as brutal but caricatured and capable of a friendly gesture. In the final scene, the Soviet tanker who escaped from the Stalag stops the T34, avoiding crushing a child and his dog. The Nazis who were ambushing him suspend their accurate fire on the tank, watching the boy’s rescue by the fugitive when the tragic outcome occurs. A sniper kills the tanker, and the T34 continues its way alone.

The Lark, (1964-1965) *Zhavoronok* in Russian was presented in 1965 at the Cannes Festival in France. Held during the thaw in the USSR after Stalin died in 1953, when his successor, N. S. Khrushchev, made the regime more flexible. Soviet cinema, in contact with cinematic avant-garde, produced magnificent productions applauded by the West. References to this film, nonetheless, are scarce, reticent, and challenging to find.

In 1964 (when the writer Vasily Grossman died), the film *Hamlet*, by Grigorii Kozintzev, received the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival. Lyrical and reflective war films such as Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood*, *Ballad of a Soldier* and Chukray's *Clear Skays*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *The Cranes are Flying*, and Bondarchuk's *Fate of a Man* produced their sense of avant-garde. Its exciting narratives, innovative photography, and dynamic editing created the Soviet-Russian visual memory of WW2, rejecting the official aesthetic. (Prokhorov, 2001)

1.2 The Tank and Industrial Modernity

Zhavoronok is a subtle protest against political oppression, reflecting the USSR's desire for reform and liberalization in the Russian way. Messages inserted reflect the arrival in the country of the global cultural revolution of the 1960s, whose components, among others, are rock and roll and the poetics of flower power by Allen Ginsberg. (1926-1997) The film articulates Gilles Deleuze's notion of image movement with the agile camera, dynamic editing, and accelerated narrative time. Also, Jacques Rancière's perception is that reading authors and filmmakers results in films full of recurrences and reciprocal and mutual influences. Films like *Zhavoronok*, according to the explanations of Roland Barthes and Michel de Certeau, should be read like a book. However, just as a samizdat book contains hidden and forbidden and Hidden messages, film directors also have hidden and forbidden messages to reveal and explain.

A crucial character in the film is an object, a machine, a T-34 main battle tank. In mechanized warfare, the Italian writer and journalist Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957) pointed out in the first week of Operation Barbarossa in 1941 tankers are authentic children of industrial modernity. For Hannah Arendt, they are Homo Faber, manufacturers of objects intended for consumption, such as the tank. The Nazi Stalag command decides to employ Soviet prisoners in Soviet tanks as live targets, training German gunners. A tanker escaped from its destination, and the Stalag in a T-34 tank. Persecuted relentlessly. in their *diegesis* through German fields and cities, they humiliate Nazis and destroy monuments until the unexpected outcome at the bridge when the T-34 alone continues its march towards the sun and the USSR.

2. Operation Barbarossa: The Background

Since 1936, the Nazi regime's militaristic policy has accumulated victories in Europe using the strategy of blitzkrieg, a quick war, eliminating militarily weak opponents, allowing Nazi Germany to plunder the resources of the conquered and nourishing its economy. The blitzkrieg, which had become routine since 1939, adapted to the ethos of a modern industrial, mass, and totalitarian society. After

incorporating Czechoslovakia and Austria, the Third Reich would turn Eastern Europe into a Germanic hinterland. (Kayser, 2000)

The *Ostkrieg*, or the War in Western Europe, was so significant for the Nazi project that Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) maintains that National Socialism only constituted complete totalitarianism with the invasion of the USSR on June 22, 1941. (Arendt, 2019) Operation Barbarossa did the trick. World “holds its breath,” mobilizing three and a half million hardened veterans, five times more than Napoleon and his Grand Armée. This effective force in inter-arms cooperation comprised 120 divisions and seven armies. Six hundred thousand vehicles, 3580 tanks, 1784 artillery pieces, and 1830 aircraft. (Erickson, 1994)

2.1 The USSR between War and Repression: The Tenacity of the Russian People

Since 1917, the newly formed USSR had threatened to invade Europe, weakened by WWI. The rapid reconstitution of the Red Army by Leon Trotsky, starting in 1918, prepared troops and weapons, a guarantee of the survival of the Soviet regime threatened by capitalist countries. (Glantz, 2005) The army demonstrated its capabilities in the Russian-Polish war of 1919-1921, when it besieged Warsaw, making Europe tremble at its foundations. In 1922, after the founding of the USSR, the Red Army consolidated its general staff, organizing superior military functions. (Bayer, 1987)

Stalin took power in 1924 and, following the determinations of the XV Congress of the CPSU in 1925, the doctrine of socialism in one country was consolidated, abandoning internationalism, and strengthening the USSR. The country’s rapid industrial advance and forced collectivization produced an increasing amount of war material. Movement war theorists such as Frunze, Tukachevsky, and G.S. emerged in the Red Army. (Lennart, 2009) However, the great purges of 1937 decapitated a talented officer, reducing the efficiency and capacity of the USSR. (Rogovin, 1998)

The invasion of Finland in 1940 made the tiny country’s resistance expose the failures of the Red Army, extolled by state propaganda as invincible. In the German-Soviet pact of August 13, 1939, secret clauses divided Poland between the Third Reich and the USSR. In the Soviet area, Ukrainian nationalism and anti-communist sentiment were intense. Stalin, trying to keep peace with Hitler, tried to appease him, but it was a severe mistake. A character in *Life and Fate*, a posthumous work by Vasily Grossman (1905-1964), concluded that Stalin was mistaken about the most obvious things, such as “the strengthening of our ties of friendship with the Germans only a few days, before the outbreak of war he was sending to Hitler entire trainloads of “rubber and other raw materials of strategic importance.” (Grossman, 1985) Stalin dismissed warnings of attack in a report from his intelligence infiltrated into the Luftwaffe high command as disinformation! Five days later, the invasion took place, the impact of which on the USSR is still debated. (Murphy, 2005)

2.2 Too Big to Conquer

The Nazi invasion of the USSR was reckless, constituting, in van Creveld’s opinion, a “Russian roulette.” The initial spectacular successes, amplified by the press and propaganda, confirmed the victory of the blitzkrieg. (Van Creveld, 1977) For the Italian writer Curzio Malaparte, journalist and

witness of the first operations, the nazi invasion was doomed to failure. (Malaparte, 2000) The spectacular victories and sieges, called *Kesselschlachts* in Germany, showed that after the annihilation of the Soviet divisions, new and more new ones appeared. (Kershaw, 2020)

The USSR's human reservoir was inexhaustible, and the desperate resistance of Soviet troops wore down and reduced the momentum of the Nazi advance, which in December 1941 stopped in front of Moscow. The Soviet winter counteroffensive demonstrated to the Nazis and the world that the defeat of the USSR was distant, despite new German advances in 1942. In 1943, the annihilation of the Nazi 6th Army in Stalingrad definitively turned the tide of the war.

Vasily Grossman described these initial battles as being decisive in stopping the rising tide of the invasion, forging the desire to resist and defeat Nazism. According to Grossman, this feeling increased the desire among the Soviet people for a future humanization of the regime, but it would not be an easy task. "The triumph at Stalingrad-he wrote-determined the war's outcome, but the silent dispute between the victorious people and the victorious State continued. The destiny of man and his freedom depended on this dispute." (Grossman, 1985)

2.3 Soviet Prisoners

The Ostkrieg was a war of extermination. The elimination of communists and the suppression or enslavement of Slavs were part of the projects of Nazi ideology. The directive of June 6, 1941, issued by the High Command of the Wehrmacht, the *Kommissarbefehl*, determined the shooting of political commissars and the brutality toward female Red Army soldiers highlighted the racial and ideological character of the Ostkrieg. (Stahel, 2009) General Halder ordered his commandos to forget the camaraderie that existed with the Western troops, and Field Marshal von Reichenau, commanding the 6th Army, in October ordered his troops to destroy the "Jewish-Bolshevik system", order that Field Marshal Heinz Guderian (1888-1954), in his memoirs, claimed not to comply.

For Kershaw, both the Soviets and the Germans extolled the heroic exploits of their troops, hiding the atrocities committed by them. Totalitarian countries such as the Third Reich and the USSR pressured their citizens to remain silent about criminal deviance. The number of soldiers involved was immense. Of 19-20 million German soldiers called up, around 17-19 million fought in the USSR. Nazi violence and brutality and, at the same time, the lack of German celebrations celebrating their victories in the USSR made the Landseer call the *Ostkrieg*, "*Kein Blumenkrieg*" or war without flowers. (Kershaw, 2020) The film *Zhavoronok* needed to bring flowers to the images of the fighting.

3. Depersonalization: Modern Enemies Are Animals

The Ostkrieg was also a modern industrial war. German historian Ernest Nolte considered it "The most horrendous war of conquest, enslavement, and annihilation that the modern world has seen." It was an ideological clash between Nazism and the "Jewish plutocracy" that dominated the world's resources and raw materials in alliance with the USSR. Victory would allow Nazi Germany to achieve a standard of living by its racial superiority. Nazism considered the "Asian" people of the USSR a threat to

Germany and the West. By annihilating or enslaving the Slavic and Jewish peoples, he would resettle millions of German settlers. The destruction planned by the Wehrmacht reached 100 percent in the areas of Voronezh, Rostov, or Warsaw. (Fritz, 2020)

3.1 *Learning to Hate the Germans*

To defeat the Nazi invader, the USSR adopted extreme measures. Stalin reinforced resistance by promulgating order number 227, “not a step back,” on July 28, 1942. Frank Ellis, an expert on the work of Vasily Grossman, Stalin, and the Stavka, reinforced social and military discipline. At the same time, for Andrew Christopher, the Stavka created penal battalions, summary trials, and shootings, allowing the NKVD to investigate and monitor the military. (Christopher, 2011) Progressively, Soviet resistance and the difficulties of the terrain led Nazi human losses to alarming rates, like the conquest of Kharkiv. After the terrible year of 1942, the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, in 1943, the USSR’s advance only ended in Berlin.

Russian obstinacy gained a particular topic: hatred of Germans. Westerners also shared a feeling, such as General Eisenhower (1890-1969), supreme commander of the SHAEF. In a letter to his wife in 1944, he applauded each Allied victory, allowing the “destruction of Hun (sic) forces... There is still much suffering to go through. God, I hate the Germans!” Unlike the 1914-1918 War, which concluded with an armistice, WWII would only end with Hitler’s death due to the gift of speech and the oath that the Germans swore to him. To win, Eisenhower concluded, it was necessary to fight “to the bitter end.” (Ambrose, 1997)

The brutality of the Ostkrieg facilitated the task of transforming peaceful, orderly, and disciplined Soviet citizens into beings thirsty for the invader’s blood. For Alexander Werth, a significant part of this task fell to intellectuals and writers. (Werth, 1964) The poet Konstantin Simonov wrote a hugely popular poem: *Kill Him*. The work, painting a vivid picture of the Soviets’ love for their country, their culture, and their slaughtered compatriots, urged them to kill the invader:

So, kill at least one of them

And as soon as you can.

Still, you have a chance to see each one!

Kill him! Kill him! Kill! (Sandomirsky, 1994)

According to Denise Youngblood, the 1941 invasion led the Soviet authorities to transfer the film studios and the strategic cigarette and military material factories. (Youngblood, 2007) Everything was dismantled and reassembled in safe zones beyond the Urals. Poetically, Grossman records that on these trains were photographs, personal letters, old documents, paintings by “Rafael and Répin,” microscopes and telescopes, and the memory and culture of the country.

It is no wonder that the war led Soviet filmmakers to present the Nazis as “merciless, cruel and inhumane,” as Alexei Tolstoy and Mikhail Sholovok wrote: “All Germans are evil.” Alexei Surkov, “the soldier-poet,” writing works of excellent widespread penetration such as “The School of Hate,”

demonstrated that the hate campaign morally sustained the army and the rear during the Grimm Summer of 1942, when the USSR almost succumbed to the Nazis. (Werth, 1964)

For Vasily Grossman, both communism and fascism were transitory ideologies; only the human being remains. For him, the typical individual is capable of generous gestures, even against the most perverse antagonist. It describes a long-suffering Russian woman who, in 1943, in the ruins of Stalingrad, comes across an imprisoned German officer. Her first impulse was to attack him with a brick. Upon seeing the prisoner's hungry face, the woman took pity. She placed the brick on the ground and took a piece of bread from her pocket, feeding the captured enemy. (Grossman, 1985)

The central character of the film, *She fights for the Motherland*. The villager Praskovya Lukyanova, played by Vera Maretskaya, lost her husband in the war. The Nazis invaded her and crushed her baby under a tank. Maddened, she arms herself with an ax and throws herself at the Nazis, shouting, "Kill them! Kill the beasts!" (Fedorov, 2010) As the Soviets liberated Russian territories and invaded German-rich provinces, the Red troops saw surprises in German cities' wealth, cleanliness, and order. They took revenge for the insane depredations that occurred in their country, killing and destroying. The hate campaign ceased after the conflict due to the demands of the Cold War and the review of the war. For many Soviets, the Germans were suffering people deluded by Nazism.

3.2 *The Ostkrieg and Cinema*

Soviet cinema before the Nazi invasion produced films supporting the Stalinist regime, mobilizing the masses for a future war. They were illusory and jingoistic, like, "If war comes tomorrow," assisted by journalist Alexander Werth. Invaders were quickly defeated by the Red Army, driving the Muscovite audiences into delirium. (Werth, 1964) Suggesting an easy Soviet victory, they were described by Grossman as "fairy tales." Titles like *Depth Air Raid*, *Squadron Five*, and *Tank Crews* proved to Liehm that "the official aesthetics enforced optimism and strict police control result is absolute artistic impotence." (Liehm, 1980) According to Fedorov, "The real historical events which took place during the pre-war period destroyed the virtual stereotypes" of "wars with small losses and in the enemy's territory" which dominated in "defensive" films of the second half of the 1930s, *If Tomorrow Brings War*, *The Motherland Calls*, *Tankmen*, and others. None of the Soviet films shot during the two years after 22 June 1941 showed the War in the enemy's territory (except for bombings of German cities and guerrilla warfare). (Youngblood, 2007)

After Operation Barbarossa, Soviet war films followed binary formulas. Their application facilitated the perception of friend and foe for the public. Fedorov points out that "Moreover, contrary to the stereotypes of military-utopian films of the second half of the 1930s, Lubov Orlova's heroine says in War Collection of Films №4 (1941) that "we know that the victory will be hard." The common dichotomies were the Nazi order, militaristic, brutal, capitalist, versus the Soviet order, peaceful, happy children, and optimistic builders of a new social order. While the Nazis were perfidious and insane, the Soviets represented sacrifice for the country, devotion, and fraternal humanity.

For Denise Youngblood, the USSR produced a reduced number of War films when compared to other countries. The films showed the heroic resistance of the Soviet people, avoiding questioning the state's authority and, even given the impact of the first year of the War, it was forbidden to show the carnage that occurred. (Youngblood, 2007)

Operation Barbarossa brutally destroyed the myths proclaimed by the regime, and the invasion forever changed the USSR and its cinema. According to Fedorov, "The war has dramatically changed the thematic and genre spectrum of Soviet cinema. After the "pilot" short films *Battle Collections* there appeared full-length films about the War" (*Rainbow, Invasion, She defends the Motherland, Zoya, etc.*), where the War was no longer a series of easy victories over the caricatural weak enemy. (Fedorov, 2018)

However, the Soviet people knew that Stalin's mistakes almost led to the destruction of the USSR. The dictator knew his mistakes and saw himself reflected in the dark and embittered Tsar. Perhaps that is why the second part of Sergei Eisenstein's masterpiece, the tragedy "*Ivan the Terrible*", was banned by Stalin because in the image of the brilliantly played Nikolai Cherkasov's cruel and insane Tsar Ivan, it is not so hard to see the hints of vicious absolutism." Ivan, the mad Tzar, kills his grandson's son and pregnant daughter-in-law, destroying the dynasty." (Neuberger, 2014)

3.3 The Tragedy of Soviet Prisoners

The plight of Soviet prisoners captured at Ostkrieg was one of the great tragedies of WW2. Between November and December 1941, 300,000 to 500,000 prisoners died of hunger each month. Currently, the exact killings are a secret, and estimates vary. Officially, around 6 million Soviet prisoners were captured, with around 3 million perishing in captivity. (Fritz, 2011) At the end of the War, Stalin referred to 7 million individuals captured. A commission made up of military personnel and experts reached the figure of 9 million in a report hidden until 1988. New research carried out in 1999 calculates 14.6 million deaths. (Kay, 2012) In 1943, the Third Reich employed Soviet enslaved labor for its industry and agriculture, as seen in *Zhavoronok*.

4. Tanks Are the Masters of the Modern Battlefield

A protagonist of *Zhavoronok* is an industrial product, the T-34 tank. Edgar Morin believes in the magical capacity of cinema, giving soul and life to inanimate objects. They act in films as "heroic objects, complicit objects," revealing a soulful and mystical role. (Morin, 1956) Artificial objects for consumption and diegesis are exciting protagonists like the locomotive in Buster Keaton's film *The General* (1926) and the T34 main Battle tank in *Zhavoronok*.

This tank was an icon of WWII and for Marshal Guderian, the T-34 overwhelmed German soldiers whose artillery could not penetrate the tank's armor, outperforming the German Mark IV. (Guderian, 1954) A Grossman character, Novikov, explained: "Everyone knows that the tank is the master of mobile warfare". Soviet tankers were specialized and celebrated soldiers and treated their machines lovingly.

After Stalingrad, the Red Army's relentless advance led the Third Reich to destroy as many Russian tanks as possible. According to Grossman, these machines led Adolf Hitler, shaken after the surrender of the 6th Army in Stalingrad, to awaken to the "Russian roulette" committed. The Russian tanks "returned him to where he came from. His ideas, decisions, and envy today were not directed at God, or at destiny, or the world. The Russian tanks gave it back to the people." (Grossman, 1985)

4.1 The Wehrmacht Are Fully Mechanized?

Despite the deep-rooted belief in the opposite, the Wehrmacht's mechanization was partial. German industry needed to supply it with tanks and vehicles in the desired quantity. Between 1939 and 1945, it manufactured around 50,000 tanks. The USA manufactured around 95,000 tanks, and the USSR produced around 103,000 tanks. The German 88 mm cannon. Its opponents boasted it, but the German industry focused on quality when it came to tanks, while the North Americans and English preferred quantity. The complex Tanks Tiger and Panther models required many working hours and presented repeated defects capable of immobilizing entire units. (Kaiser, 2000)

The acute lack of raw materials and fuel limited Nazi motorization. At the height of the blitzkrieg, the French campaign, on May 10, 1940, only 16 of the 135 divisions involved were mechanized; the other 119 were hippo mobiles and pedestrians. The number of Nazi armored divisions was increased thanks to an accounting device. The number of armored vehicles per division has been reduced. Then, new armored divisions were equipped using captured or reconverted tanks, such as the Czechoslovak Skoda. (Guderian, 1954)

5. Soviet Cinema and Culture of the 1960s

After 1945, Soviet leaders transformed the initial catastrophic defeat into a resounding victory, changing the USSR and Europe. Internally, the war stopped being a national trauma, creating unity and pride for the USSR. (Tumarkin, 1994) The elimination of criticism of the regime made the apothetic final victory a work of the Party, the Red Army, and the people under the correct leadership of Stalin. (Sokolov, 2019) Grossman wrote that a new feeling towards reality was latent in the USSR before the war. This only accelerated the manifestation of national consciousness: the word "Russian," the dignity of Russian man," began to have a sense of pride. It was no longer associated with adverse factors but with the emergence of a strong national consciousness, which manifested itself as a powerful and incredible force because it was human and not because it was national. Human dignity, human trust in freedom, and human faith in goodness manifest themselves in the form of national consciousness. (Grossman, 1985)

For Fedorov, "The victory over Nazism", conquered at the cost of tens of millions of fellow citizens, has triggered a new "personality cult" outbreak. In the films of the Kremlin court director Mikhail Chiaureli (*The Oath*, *The Fall of Berlin*), *Stalin* looked like a real god, causing the ecstasy of mass worship of the Kolkhoz flock. (Fedorov, 2018)

War films after 1945, according to Denise Youngblood, celebrated the “Great Patriotic War” “as a national triumph, but the war also was a national tragedy that remained virgin territory for directors,” remembering the heroic deeds and inspiring the people to victory. (Youngblood, 2007) In the novel *Life and Fate*, Grossman shows a silent Stalin upon being informed that Soviet troops surrounded von Paulus’s 6th Army: “It was the hour of his victory not only over his living enemies. It was time for victory over the past. (Stalin) knew better than anyone: the victors do not go to trial.” (Grossman, 1985) However, that is different from what happened. The losses were excessive to forgive the most brilliant leader of the masses so easily. During the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, Premier Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin’s mistakes that cost millions of human lives.

With the resulting thaw, artists and the public experienced a painful version of World War II. Until 1956, the trauma of the conflict was not explored by filmmakers, but then new films presented on Soviet screens terrified and seduced the public.

6. 1960s: The Era of Global Contestation

For Hannah Arendt, the generation 1950 was “the silent Generation,” apathetic and submissive. (Arendt, 2018) In the USA, McCarthyism left American society in anguish, poisoning everyday life as European totalitarianism did. The 1960s brought about profound social and cultural transformations. Their global reach recalls those that occurred between the years 1920 and 1939. The culture of the 1960s, dynamic and contesting, was opposed to the restrictions of the establishment. In 1968, an explosion of unrest and vitality shook the world when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated in the USA. The transformations were, for Warwick, a mini Renaissance accepting equal rights, sexual tolerance, and individual expression, resulting from the naive belief of a generation capable of believing that “all we needed is love.” (Warwick, 2011)

6.1 Transformations in the USSR

Soviet cinema presented new productions acclaimed at prestigious international festivals, media, and worldly celebrations, ensuring foreign visibility and national prestige for directors such as “Grigory Chukhrai (*The Forty-First*, *The Ballad of a Soldier*, *The Clear Sky*).” However, “the filmmakers of the older generation did not rush to leave the carpet. *The Cranes Fly*—a true masterpiece by director Mikhail Kalatozov and cameraman Sergei Urusevsky—deservedly won the *Palme d’Or* at Cannes. In my opinion, in the 1960’s he directed his best films—*Nine Days of One Year* and *Ordinary Fascism*” (Fedorov, 2018)

During the Cold War, the maximum expansion of nuclear arsenals and ballistic missiles of MAD capacity occurred, consolidating the military-industrial complex. (Snouw, 1979) Bipolar leaders, however, could compete peacefully for prestige. At film and music festivals, they demonstrated the superiority of their system over that of their rival.

In the USSR, the existing order was slowly shaken by the Cuban missile crisis, by Khrushchev’s secret speech, emulated by the launch of Sputnik, and disrupted by the Soviet occupation of Prague. Starting

under Stalin, the consumption of goods such as apartments and vehicles grew, being for Gyorgy Péteri, an attempt by Khrushchev to create an alternative communist modernity.

Part of the Soviets who adopted the new consumption habits reflected their Western counterparts. They originated from educated circles and enjoyed a high standard of living. Its descendants attended the acclaimed international youth or music festivals celebrated in the 60s and 70s. The existence of an enlightened, broad, and widespread public, suggested in the text of a Soviet tourism agency, that “the sweet spot of socialism” oriented towards the future a “system transparent and accessible, to all -where the masses—not just the elite—were provided for.” (Gorsuch, Anne, & Koenker, 2013)

The Cold War, like September Eleven in the USA, placed discretionary power in the hands of the governments of Western democracies. In the opposite direction, dissatisfaction with governments and their repressive strategies grew. American intellectuals, imbued with counterculture ideas, defended civil liberties while liberal activism grew in universities. (Arendt, 2018) The generational gap created tensions and conflicts, giving rise to feminism, sexual liberation, the pill, and drug culture.

Uncontrolled industrialization awakened environmental activism based on the activity of Dr. Rachel Carson and the decisions of the Club of Rome. The intellectuals of the Beat Generation rose to “helped to fill this artistic void, in conjunction with the jazz age, and the movement eventually blossomed into the much larger cultural, political, societal and artistic upheavals of the 1960s.” (Smith, 2019)

6.2 The Contestation in the USSR

Despite police surveillance in the USSR, the Beat Movement, rock and roll, and the New Wave spread across the country, reaching neighboring Czechoslovakia. Young and non-conformist music criticized and protested against repressive politics. Writers and scientists, such as the acclaimed New Wave poet Andrei Voznesensky, in a 1984 interview, connected the global, North American, and Soviet liberation movements: “I think it is first of all a democratization, that is, an appeal to the street, to the lower parts, against conservatism, against hierarchy, both there and here... We knew Allen Ginsberg in the sixties, but at that time, we only knew Ginsberg. We liked his style, but we didn’t know much of what he stood for. Our conditions were different.” (Dalgard & Thorup, 1990)

In the USSR, during the thaw, there was tension, as Donald Filtzer points out, between the necessary changes and reforms and the fear that these reforms would bring down the entire socialist edifice. The diffuse desire for reform, detected by intellectuals and transmitted by music and cultural practices, was not aimed at changing the Soviet system completely. His opposition to certain establishment practices was moderate, and his socialism was reformist. (Filtzer, 1993) A significant part of the population of the Second World, as the communist countries within the USSR’s sphere of influence and the country, traumatized by the war, expanded the desire for a culture of peace and harmony. This did not prevent revolutions such as the cultural one from breaking out in China and Cuba.

In 1969 and 70, a Third World emerged after decolonization, made up of new countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Angola, and Mozambique. The hegemonic blocs tried to attract them into their orbit, generating an atmosphere of optimism regarding the future and the expected transformations.

6.3 *The Lark: Where Flower Power and Concord Are Present*

As Alexander Fedorov explains, Soviet cinematography during the 1960s maintained contact with cinematographic centers, receiving “experienced tangible influences from the leading world cinematographic movements of those years—“Cinema vérité,” French and Czech “new waves.” At the same time, these were not only stylistic and visual influences but also plot, thematic, of course, adapted to the conditions of the requirements of the Soviet censorship.” (Fedorov, 2021) Therefore, the directors of *Zhavoronok* were part of a cinematographic culture where authorship was valued and honored by their presentation at the celebrated Moscow Festival. Soviet cinema and its qualities began to be recognized alongside Italian and French cinema. (Kaganovsky, 2013)

In this context, the idea for the film *Zhavoronok* arose. According to the Russia Beyond website, Leonid Menaker, the film’s director, was inspired by an actual event. He read in a newspaper that Soviet prisoners from a Stalag escaped in a T-34, pursued by the Nazis through German roads and villages. When they arrived at a bridge, they crushed a group of German children. The German soldiers captured the Soviets “and their commander were hanged on the same night. That is where I got the idea for the film.” In the periodic *The Jacobin*, Greg Afinogenov states that during the War, Soviet films made in 1943, such as *Two Soldiers* or *The Invasion*, are “focused on human relationships as the experience of conflict warped them” but without any criticism or political reflection. (Russia Beyond, 2023)

Newspapers, books, and films are read and watched. Moreover, as Certeau insinuates, both reading and viewing (reading) a film are actions of “poaching,” making the words and images read the core of future works. Michel de Certeau considers this creative and authorial reading of books and films memorable since the reader and spectator remove the film “read” and see, discovering a different world beneath it. This world of cross-references is a practical support for new productions. (Certeau, 1990) Roland Barthes believes that what has been read or seen “becomes a mandala of an entire literary cosmogony” because when reading Stendhal, we find a text by Proust marked by a minor detail. (Barthes, 1973)

The Lark carries out an interlocution with our well-known “She Defends the Motherland,” directed by the notable filmmaker Fridrikh Ermler. The village heroine, whose husband died in the war, and her baby crushed by a German tank, which for Youngblood constitutes “the greatest crime a Russian can imagine by knowingly a child under a tank.” (Youngblood, 2007)

In *The Lark*, *Zhavoronok*, faced with the tragic possibility of crushing a German child, the Soviet tanker stops his machine. He interrupts his escape by saving the child, repeating the human gesture of the Russian woman in Stalingrad, who, instead of taking revenge on the German prisoner with a brick, fed him with a piece of bread. (Grossman, 1985)

7. The Film: Perception, Characters, and Movement-image

War films resort to stereotypes, making viewers understand friend and foe more easily. In this way, Mussolini and Hitler appear on the screen as hysterical gesticulators, while Japanese people are buck-toothed and wearing glasses, wielding sharp sabers. Soviet soldiers, on the other hand, look like robots wearing large cloaks and suddenly dance to the sound of accordions. British soldiers in shorts, on the other hand, have punctual five o'clock tea in the Western Desert. Irreverent American soldiers chew gum and suck cigars with gestures that are more civil than military. (Whiteclay, 1996)

The use of stereotypes was the norm in all war films. Soviet cinema until 1945 employed dichotomous formulas. It represents the conflict in an arena where good fought against evil. The Nazi order was perverse, aggressive, imperialist, and addictive. The USSR, representing good, was peaceful and friendly, and the communist ideology was positive and "correct." Soviets were loyal and patriotic, and their antagonists were soulless, dishonest, cruel villains. Fedorov explains, "German characters (soldiers, officers, spies) are shown as malicious, rude and cruel fanatics with primitive vocabulary, active gesticulation and annoying timbres of their shrill yells. However, already in films made in 1942, the Nazis were sometimes depicted as vicious but clever enemies". (Fedorov, 2014)

For Denise Youngblood, the image of German invaders in Soviet cinema during the War had no nuances, "anywhere, and certainly not in the Soviet Union in 1943. The vicious, monocle-sporting, semi-hysterical, distinctly un-Aryan-looking killer would prevail in films throughout the War. (Youngblood, 2007) For Chambers II and Culbert, Soviet films inserted the War into a historical and political background. Unlike North American practice, this didactic form allowed the public to understand the role played by regimes in History. The Soviets did not employ special effects, focusing on the hero's actions and determination in the fight. (Chambers II, Whiteclay, & Culbert, 2007)

7.1 A film Like a Book

The Lark begins with images reminiscent of the Great Patriotic War in front of the monument commemorating the victory in Stalingrad. Then, the camera shows the Nazi Stalag, housing prisoners of War, the environment disciplined and regulated by violence. Nazi officers and soldiers circulate in their flashy uniforms with the lives of prisoners hanging at their whims.

At first, the camera is slow, building the plot with images, but the narrative acquires excellent speed after the escape. According to Deleuze, the moving image is the image of time where the spectator "reads" ideas and points of view in a book. (Deleuze, 1983) The essential key to understanding the film is reading as a book. Metz explains that in the 1960s, "new" cinemas and their directors had "things to say." The narratives contained in the films criticize the repressive and ideological mechanisms and suggest an alternative to the status quo. (Metz, 1968) Progressively consolidated in the 1920s and 1930s, the notion of movie director-author with robust North American directors such as Griffith, Chaplin and Wells.

The film's director, like the ruler in totalitarian regimes, became the sole authority on the film set. He was endowed with ideas and principles, enjoying a status in history similar to novelists, poets, painters,

and sculptors. The author's genius and personality projected his convictions into the film. (Lucas, 2013) In the 1950s, avant-garde filmmakers employed agile sequences and executed innovative movements and bold editing, put into practice by directors of Italian neorealism and the French New Wave. This way of filming is characterized by the "sense of spontaneity, preferring location shooting, fast editing, including jump cuts and unmatched shots, and avoiding establishing shots. Examples are Truffaut's, *Les quatre cents coups*, 1959, (The 400 Blows) and Resnais'. In the films of the 1960s, Soviet New Wave directors, in tune with international cinema movements, produced films that, in Prokhnov's sense, confirm the "primacy of the auteur". (Prokhorov, 2001)

Literature was the most valued and popular art in the USSR, and cinema played a secondary role. There was official literature whose printing and free circulation reaffirmed the regime's values. The use of professional printers requires official registration and access permission. Then came texts challenging the system, whose circulation was hidden. Eager to try something new, which is often prohibited in Soviet society, she turned to books by controversial or banned authors. (Wikipedia) A book whose core was handwritten or mimeographed, whose anodyne cover camouflaged its content, evading censorship, was called *samizdat*. "Dissident and censored individuals produced Samizdat literature in the Eastern bloc and the 'underground press'; a text or texts produced by this". "Samizdat was the chief activity of Soviet dissidents." (O'Kane, 1996)

Films like *Zhavoronok* were a Samizdat for cinema. In principle, it was a war film whose plot was tragic and heroic, like the frustrated escape of a Soviet tank and its crew. Inside, however, the film embraced reformist principles in the Soviet and Russian ways.

7.2 Work Sets You Free

In his powerful and disturbing posthumous novel *Life and Fate*, Vassily Grossman describes the Stalag as a cosmopolitan prison, with Soviet prisoners of different political stripes alongside Europeans of different nationalities. The discussions are the dialogue of blind people in this "thick mixture of people united by terror," in misunderstanding and enmity, composing the tragic experience of one of the great calamities of the 20th century. Concentration camps were essential laboratories for the exercise of totalitarian power whose economies used large amounts of slave labor. In the concentration regime, man produced the maximum energy while consuming the minimum amount to live. (Arendt, 2018)

Hannah Arendt's book *Human Condition* presents her concept of *vita activa*, which is comprised of three human activities: work, work, and action. Arendt rescues from Latin the expression living as a daily life of men because, for the ancient Romans, the action would be composed of deeds of men who, recorded and remembered, would enter history. Work ensures the survival of the individual and the species, while the work or product manufactured is disposable and rapidly obsolete, reflecting the ephemerality of human life. (Arendt, 2018)

7.3 Homo Faber

For Arendt, produced to be destroyed objects like a tank in the logic of the war economy, the ideal state of consumption. The process of "fabrication and production of use objects"—points out Arendt, the

inevitable end of production is to be replaced by an entirely new thing, with sufficient durability to remain in the world commonly independent, is added to human artifice. Fabricating means giving the object a beginning and a defined and predictable end, “transformed into a worldly object.” (Arendt, 2018)

Men, on the other hand, belong to two categories: homo faber, masters of other men, of nature, of themselves and their actions. Homo Faber is the Nazis in their uniforms, masters of biopower, according to Foucault, determining who lives and who dies. Moreover, there are others without power, subjected, and enslaved.

At the Stalag, the command decided to use Soviet prisoners manning tanks without ammunition to train Nazi anti-tank artillery, eliminating the enemies. Killing them as live targets would be an unconscious way of granting the prisoner the honor of dying as a soldier on the battlefield, contrary to racist legislation. (Vernant, 1988) The film’s directors dress some Soviet prisoners in striped pajamas, signifying to Olga Gershenson that the *Zhavoronok* “takes place in the Nazi camps, where Soviet prisoners of war unite with foreign inmates in efforts to escape. Despite their visual imagery of the Holocaust (striped uniforms of the emaciated inmates and barbed wire of the camp), there are no references to Jews in the film. (Gershenson, 2013)

In September 1942, Hitler incorporated foreign POWs into the Reich’s labor system, sealing cooperation between industry and the SS, whose Stalag was close to the factories. Around 1943, however, the war surpassed all predictions of Nazi industrial production. German labor gaps Pows filled in agriculture, especially in the Ruhr metallurgical industries, which lacked 2.6 million workers. The work of physically weakened Soviet soldiers would reduce productivity, although forced labor is more a punishment than production. Thus, Soviet Pows were sent to the industry. (Wachsmann, 2015)

8. The Ost Women and an Orgiastic Dance under the Flowers

In the Stalag, prisoners move around while the Nazis listen to the Liechtensteiner Polka and chat calmly. There are two *SS-Obersturmführer*, one starring the Estonian actor Bruno O’Ya, tall and burly, exemplifying Aryan beauty. The Nazis seem good-natured, and one of them, still young, prosaically plays with a miniature white dog. Nazi officers watch the training unfold from inside a bunker equipped with optical instruments while destroyed a machinegun targets Soviet tanks and crews. Nazi officials debate, evaluate, discuss, and consult charts.

The tankers, commanded by the charismatic driver Ivan (Vyacheslav Gurenkov), decide to escape together with a French prisoner and two Soviet prisoners, one older and the other young. Waiting for the right moment, he threw the T-34 over the Nazi cannons, escaping. On his way, he comes to a plantation operated by a group of enslaved Ost women working under the sun.

The plantation owner, a young German woman dressed elegantly, has her Nordic beauty contrasting with the ragged prisoners. She is the image of the lordly race and the dominated Slavs. They saw the Soviet armored vehicle and surrounded it, imagining themselves freed and returning to their homes.

The tanker, whose military obligation is to flee, continuing the fight, cannot stop. He has no way of freeing or leading the screaming prisoners surrounding the vehicle, frantic. It is a frenzy of Orphic rite in front of the Dionysian tank, whose cannon penis crosses the flowery meadow triumphant, although useless. The wind lifts the ragged skirts of the prisoners, whose thighs rub orgasmic ally.

A beautiful brunette with short black hair runs excited by the sight of the armored vehicle but, defeated, falls onto the lawn full of flowers and picks some, savoring the perfume that reminds her of her Motherland. The t-34 sails among the flowers, in an image that recalls the Israeli film *Lebanon* (2009), directed by Samuel Maoz, who, like *Zhavoronok*, was awarded at Cannes. Lebanon addresses the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982, seen from inside a Sho't, Centurion, framed in a beautiful picture in a field full of sunflowers.

8.1 *The Power of the Flower: Ginsberg's Peace and Love*

In the 1960s, American poet Allen Ginsberg, employing his “flower power” philosophy, promoted counterculture, the values of peace and love. He opposed wars and authoritarianism, making the “use of flowers, bells, smiles, and mantras (sacred chants) become common among demonstrators for some time.” In 1965, the anti-establishment values of Allen Ginsberg’s poetic work were reflected in the battle fought within the USSR, where opponents had their agenda. The arrival in the Second World of rock and roll, young and, interestingly, international music, contradicted the Party’s and the nomenklatura’s guidelines. It amplified the sensitivity of young Soviets, whose positions were more independent in nonconformist behaviors, opinions, and ideas. (Smith, 2019)

For Max Smith, there is a connection between African American rhythms and the questioning and underground movements of the USSR, “and its contemporary counterpart in the US as exemplified by such writers as Allen Ginsberg (particularly his groundbreaking effort, “Howl,” Jack Kerouac, and other members of the Beat Generation.” (Smith, 2019)

The Lark obsessively shows flowers. The Nazi officer, the SS-Sturmbannführer, when he playfully attacks the tanker Ivan with a flower. Flowers are in the scenes of enslaved women swimming in a sea of flowers while the caterpillars of the T-34 leave a deep groove between them.

At that moment, we still remember the words of a poem by Ginsberg:

“Russia manufacture feeds

Millions but no crunk can

Dream Mayakovsky suicide” (poetry foundation)

For Jonah Raskin during the Cold War, “that the two nations mirrored each other, but this time the mirror images were more menacing”. Abandoning his initial sympathy for the Soviets, he concluded that the USA and the USSR were two “evil superpowers.” Ruskin, visiting in 1966 the bombed Democratic People’s Republic of Vietnam, observed with dismay that the local ruling elite grew rich as the country entered capitalism. Ruskin believed that capitalist or communist states were equal: “Communists and capitalists could change places, and nothing would be different. And both countries

were antagonistic to genuine poets and poetry.” (Ruskin, 2009) The USA and USSR fueled the Cold War by keeping their power systems afloat.

8.2 The Stuff of Soldiers Is More than a Thin Can: It Is a New World

After defeating the Axis powers in the Second World War, the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, felt powerful and dominant in the economy and culture. A sense of superiority permeated the USSR’s practices despite the immense losses suffered in WW2 as the country rebuilt its economy and devastated cities through unprecedented efforts. With the Cold War, the USSR engaged in an arms race, slowing consumer production and generating shortages and popular dissatisfaction. (Roberts, 2006)

During the occupation of Germany after 1945, Soviet soldiers, officers, diplomats, and employees returned to the USSR after being exposed to Western influence. (Schechter, 2019) They were impressed by new and unusual objects, clothing, music, food, and material progress. They inoculated their compatriots with these feelings, faced with new and unusual objects. Police and cultural repression made the liberalization of the USSR a slow and painful process.

After WWII, a popular movement called the Stilyagi movement emerged in the USSR, generated by the “youth counterculture that emerged around the start of the Cold War.” The name originated from the film *Stilyagi*, shot in 1955, “two years after the death of Stalin. In the totalitarian Soviet Union, rebellious youth and Russians fanning for jazz and rock found out-of-the-box, innovative ways to score records: bootleggers pressed forbidden music on x-ray films. The films were riddled with skulls and rib cages, the broken human form. They called it music on the ribs or bone music (roentgenizdat).” (Komaroni, 2012)

8.3 The Escape Time

After the flowery countryside and the enslaved Ost women, the t34 passes through clean cities inhabited by people well-fed and clothed, thanks to the plundering of Europe. (Aly, 2008) This prosperity angered Soviet troops, who remembered the insane destruction wrought by the Nazis on their Motherland. Enraged Soviet soldiers broke and destroyed everything in the houses and streets of bourgeois homes; as the saying goes, “Being so prosperous, why did they invade and vandalize our land?” (Merridale, 2007)

The passage of the T-34 in some villages recalls the Roman festival of Saturnalia, celebrated on December 17th, when a social inversion occurred. The T-34 crew took over clothes, food, and beer and terrified the German authorities and civilians who served them. The T-34 is a deus ex-machina, turning the object, the Soviets, into masters or subjects. The Nazis rush to serve the Untermenschen, who, empowered, destroy Nazi symbols. One of them is a statue wearing a helmet and a sword, like the Teutonic knights in Eisenstein’s film *Alexander Nevsky* (1938). After knocking them down, the T-34 resumes its frantic race, and, in this diegesis, the cuts made in the images from the fast camera leave the viewer anxious. Footage taken from inside the tank framed by the hatch as the gaze of the magical object.

A Nazi military convoy relentlessly pursues the impertinent T-34. Two tankers, one elderly and the other young saw the dangerous proximity of the enemy, got out of the vehicle, and began to distract him. Its delaying action will allow the T-34 to flee. The older soldier remains in the room while the young man crawls along a concrete pipe, wearing a flower on his cap. As it is visible above the protection of the wall, the Germans aim at the flower and, as it moves, machine-gun it until they kill the young soldier.

A group of rocks on a slope section comes loose in a natural movement without connection to the action. Could it be that the authors wanted to mention the North American music that infected Soviet youth and represented a counterculture that also protested against the regime? Stones are rolling, rock and roll, and the image is from 1965, the same year the work by Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) was released, a strong influence on the anti-war flower power movement. Remember his poem Howl:

Carl Solomon! I'm with you in Rockland
where you're madder than I am. (Poetry Foundation)

8.4 From Moses to Hitler: The Art of Speaking and Hearing Your Own Voice

The T-34, with its crew reduced to its heroic driver, enters a cinema empty of spectators. On the stage, a Nazi propaganda film showed rescuing images recovering the memory of the years of the constitution of Nazism and the invasion of the USSR.

Paul Virilio believes that, from silent cinema onwards, films made for crowds an experience that led to totalitarianism. Directors, like dictators, exercised their charismatic authority over the masses, actors, and spectators, guiding them in a divinely revealed direction. (Virilio, 1989) On the cinema screen, in front of the tanker, Hitler spoke to the people, like Moses, in his speech. He would lead the German people to the bounty of the USSR's Promised Land through Operation Barbarossa. When asked if the leader who inspired him was the German Chancellor Bismarck, Hitler replied: "Moses." (Deleuze, 1985) According to Godard, the adoption and development of the recording industry and radio broadcasting gave rise to the figure of the speaker. Seducers of crowds in Europe, "Hitler was a magnificent speaker, and also Mussolini, Churchill, de Gaulle, Stalin. The sound was the triumph of the theatrical script against the visual language." (Lucas, 2013)

The tanker watches a film of a Nazi military parade, where the troops marching at a goose step are "impressive ornamental masses of soldiers," hauntingly marking the symbiosis between military superiority and national socialism. As Krakauer points out, the army should have a prominent role over the Nazi Party, not allowing the party to penetrate the army. (Krakauer, 2019) On-screen, Hitler delivers an apocalyptic speech, frantically applauded by the crowd of supporters. The documentary on the screen could be the image of Stalin waving from the balcony of Red Square before a parade of troops, workers, peasants, and gymnasts. Both parades create fictional images carrying out imaginary production with real effects embedded in the loud sound of drums.

8.5 Sounds and Spaces: A Modern Way of Measuring

Soviet experimental filmmaker and newsreel director, Dziga Vertov (1896-1954) in the 1930s, researched sound by recording in Soviet industrial areas. The editing of Zhavoronok in the cinema scene recalls Vertov's editing, adding four forms in a dialectical process such as: "old image, new sound, new image. At the end of the process, the old world is overcome by the industrialized one." In Vertov's case, the synchrony is in the sense of Soviet power, but in Zavoronok, it reflects the clash with Nazism. In 1960 and 1979, French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard (1930-2022) reviewed his connection with Vertov's principles after the student and Maoist revolts, criticizing himself for using too many extremely "loud" sounds in some of his films. (Lucas, 2013)

Levaco considers Vertov to have an unusual background as a filmmaker. His formation occurred with a sound medium, the radio providing Vertov with the possibility not of including music but of daring to replace spatial organization with "auditory and temporal organization (...) a method that freed him from the confinement of the scene, the plot, the actors and the presence/absence of the camera-spectator. "Thus, thanks to this experience, a new element emerged in the organization of the film: the intermission". In this way, the film edition became "relationships between apparently disparate images. These disparate images are always connected" based on some categorical similarity: "a gesture, a theme, a formal arrangement in the frame, and so on."

This point of view means that the weight of literature in the reception of Soviet art led the "experimentalists of Soviet cinema" to adopt the shot as an essential element in film editing. For Vertov, such a conception tied Soviet filmmakers to "the scale, the actor and the fictional plot—in short, to all the trappings of the 19th-century bourgeois novel and play—as the *modus operandi* of his films." (Mann, 1940)

Interestingly enough, Levaco's analysis of Vertov's notion of the past is the same as that of Marc Ferro when the French Historian conceptualizes the historical film. Ferro believes that, historical films visit more of the time they filmed than the era they intend to represent. Vertov considers that our knowledge about the time we live shapes everything we know about the past, the present, and the future. So, one need only look at Soviet society "in the present to see signs of the past: drunkenness, homelessness, unhappiness, prostitution, and the triumph of disease. Just look at the same society [...] to see what is present" and work to build a better future free from these harms. (Levaco, 1984)

8.6 Describing the Real through the Fantasy of the Unlived

Roland Barthes, describing the pleasure of reading, explains that intelligence provides a limiting capacity for representation justified by two realisms. The first deciphers the real by demonstrating that it cannot be seen. The second demonstrates the reality that is not visible but demonstrable. This combination leads to the reading of fictional texts that faithfully reproduce a reality never actually experienced. (Levaco, 1984) Adolph Hitler, the speech-loving Nazi leader, was an admirer of the imagined and not lived. He was a fan of the German writer Karl May (1842-1912), a fiction author who, according to Klaus Mann, built literary territories set in distant and exotic regions such as Arabia, the

American Wild West, and Kurdistan. Never having gone through them, he was able to create accurate descriptions of setting situations and creating local characters such as the Apache chief Winnetou. Winnetou befriended a German traveler on the North American prairies, always a German, *Old Shatterhand*.

In Mann's words, "an experienced deus ex machina, just in the nick of time—a fascinating blend of young Siegfried and Tom Mix: smart and bold, tough and charming, generous and swift, exceedingly attractive, fairly cultured," Hitler captured effectively the mythical and irrational orientation of Germanic culture, not as it boasted of achieving the victory of the will, but of the wild imagination. (Barthes, 1973)

For Paul Virilio, Hitler built a regime based on cinematic illusion, constantly stating that "The masses need illusion," transforming European and world life between 1939 and 19545 into a gigantic cinema screen. However, if this cinematic process deceived the German masses, the Soviet masses saw Operation Barbarossa destroy decades of immense national effort, ending millions of human lives in a few months. (Virilio, 1989)

The tanker watches the documentary on the screen while the loud sound of a military march of drums, beating like a heart, throws the T34 onto the stage, knocking down the screen and a wall. Since then, the movement of the camera, placed inside the tank and hatches, has become faster, and the cuts have accelerated.

Zhavoronok, like the two westerns analyzed by Ranci  re, has shooting and the pursuit of the Germans, and a moral lesson that is the escape from the Soviets. The child was saved and formed another interlocation of images. The presence of the boy carelessly crossing the bridge in front of the T-34 grants the action anguish and identification with danger, grants the subsequent action, despite the drama, a curious serenity. (Ranci  re, 2001) At this moment, the German soldiers remain calm while one of them, seeing the tanker within range, raises his machine gun and fires, fatally striking the Soviets. An expression of triumph appears on the face of the Nazi machine gunner, but in the eyes of the others, a veil of sadness, frustration, and perplexity descends. As if ashamed, they lower their heads. One of them, visibly moved, takes his glasses off his eyes.

The badly wounded tanker staggers on the road while the tank, this animated, living object, this soulful machine with its engine running, continues towards the Motherland. Ivan would be like Christ, who, obedient to the Father's will, is crucified in the pool, letting his body die to gain eternal life. It was as if, through the sacrifice of tanker Ivan's life, the world began again. The film ends with the image of the monument to the Soviet dead in Stalingrad, where the gigantic statue of a Soviet soldier holds a child in his arms, who look at each other intensely.

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