

## HISTORY AND THEORY OF CULTURE

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### THE UNKNOWN PAGES OF CREATIVE WORK OF JULIA SOLNTSEVA OVER THE FILM «VISUNSKA REPUBLIC»

This article investigates the unknown pages of creative work of famous actress and film director Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva during her work on the film «Visunska Republic» at Kyiv Film Studios (feature film studio): the reasons were analysed why the tandem of a screenwriter and a film director J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarski appeared; the role and place of each participant of this creative tandem is clarified; we considered variants of creative tandems with film directors in the Ukrainian cinematography; the main motives why the work on this film project was stopped have been indicated; the next full-length feature film, on which J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj started to work together has been pointed.

**Keywords:** Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva, «Visunska Republic», Kyiv Film Studios (feature film studio), film director, creative tandem, screenwriter.

In the 30s of the XX century, famous Russian and Ukrainian actress and film director Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva (7.08.1901, Moscow – 28.10.1989, Moscow) made many efforts to become a film director at Kyiv Film Studio (Kyiv Movie Factory).

As recorded in the declassified «Operational message about J. Solntseva from January 24, 1939» of the Branch archive of Security Service of Ukraine: «Last years Solntseva intensely aspired independent work without Dovzhenko. She said she wanted to work without Dovzhenko's help, because her work under the supervision of Dovzhenko would be estimated by all as his own (and not her) success»<sup>1</sup>.

However, J. Solntseva who had great work experience in the cinematography as an actress in such feature films as «Aelita» (1924, Aelita), «Cigarette Girl From Mosselprom» (1924, Zina Vesenina), «Leon Couturier» (1927, Katya), «Storm» («Lighthouse in the Black Sea», «A Story of One Night», 1928, Katya), «Jimmi Higgins» (1928, Ellen), «Eyes Which Saw» (1928, Rosa), «Two Women» (1928, Krekshina), «Earth» (1930, daughter of Opanas) and as film director assistant (in films by O. Dovzhenko «Earth», «Ivan», «Aerograd») needed a young film director who knew the latest achievements in the field of film direction, but had not own projects, so she could enjoy all the fame in the creative tandem.

For this role as a perfect match served the graduate of S. Eisenstein film direction workshop Mychajlo Borisovich Vinjarskyj (21.11.1912, Bobrinetc, Elizavetgradska guberniya (today – Kropivnickiy reg.) – 30.03.1977, Kyiv), who attended a course of great lectures by leading Soviet cinema teachers at the Higher State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK, today – S. Gerasimov All-Russian State University of Cinematography, however, he did not manage yet to prove oneself as an independent film director. Moreover, he came to the Kyiv Film Studios to shoot a debut film.

Despite the references on personal life and career of J. Solntseva (in most cases in respect to O. Dovzhenko) in the publications by S. Trymbach<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>, R. Korogodskiy<sup>6</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Оперативне повідомлення про Ю. І. Солнцева (1939). *Галузев. держ. архів Служби Безпеки України (ГДА СБ України)*, Ф. 11, Спр. С–836, Т. 2, Ч. І, 19–21.

<sup>2</sup> Довженко, А. (2013). *Щоденникові записи, 1939–1956*. Харків: Фоліо, 879.

<sup>3</sup> Агеева, В., Тримбач, С. (2014). *Довженко без гриму: листи, спогади, архівні знахідки*. Київ: КОМОРА, 471.

<sup>4</sup> Тримбач, С. (2001). Не віднесена вітром: 100 років Ю. Солнцевій. *Дзеркало тижня*, вип. 30, 11–17 серпня, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Тримбач, С. (2007). *Олександр Довженко: загибель богів: ідентифікація автора в національному часопросторі*. Вінниця: ГЛОБУС-ПРЕС, 800.

<sup>6</sup> Коргодський, Р. (2000). *Довженко в полоні: розвідки та есеї про Майстра*. Київ: Гелікон, 352.

M. Shchudrya<sup>1 2 3</sup>, L. Cherevatenko<sup>4 5</sup>, V. Marochko<sup>6</sup>, V. Popyk<sup>7 8</sup>, T. Derevyanko<sup>9</sup>, V. Ageeva<sup>10</sup>, V. Prigorovskiy<sup>11</sup>, E. Sverstyk<sup>12</sup>, V. Kudin<sup>13 14</sup>, V. Myslavskiy<sup>15</sup>, O. Bezruchko<sup>16 17 18</sup> and others, we can acknowledge that Ukrainian art historians in fact did not research the creative work director and screenwriter J. Solntseva during her work on the film «Visunska Republic» remains unknown.

J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj got acquainted during shooting of «Aerograd», where the trainee was under supervision not only of the film director Oleksandr Dovzhenko, but also film director assistant J. Solntseva, that was described by S. Talskyj in the All-Soviet newspaper «Kino»: «The daily joint work with the film director assistant Solntseva ensured the conditions for the really fruitful production training of M. Vinjarskyj»<sup>19</sup>.

As it was noted in the article «Chronicle of Screenplay Portfolio» from November 28, 1936 J. Solntseva started to work on the screenplay of «Visunska Republic» at Kyiv feature film studio and became the major film director of the future film: «The screenplay of «Visunska Republic» is written and is going to be shot at the Kyiv feature film studio by a merited actress J. Solntseva. This film is about heroic struggle of peasants of the village Visun against White Russians»<sup>20</sup>.

But just in one and a half month in the same newspaper «Za Bil'shovvyskyj Film» it was noted that creative tandem Solntseva-Vinjarskyj, who were authors-directors of «Visunska Republic», in modern terms authors of the screenplay, who later became producers of this screenplay.

Although in most cases there was usually in a tandem a co-director or in modern terms the second director as for example by the feature film from 1937 «Tom Sawyer», shot in 1936 at Kyiv Film Studios. In most cinema guides, it is noted, that the directors of this film were Lazar Frenkel and Glib Zatvornytskyj. At Gosfilmofond the case of the film «Tom Sawyer» was revised. In the authorization permit #510/36 the only director is stated: Lazar Frenkel<sup>21</sup>. To clarify the situation with the status of Glib Zatvornytskyj helps the second page of editorial scripts of «Tom Sawyer»: «Director – L. Frenkel. <...> Co-director – G. Zatvornytskyj»<sup>22</sup>.

Therefore, Lazar Frenkel was a film director (in modern terms producer), and Glib Zatvornytskyj a co-director (in modern terms – film director or second director).

At the same time there were also director tandems as for example Oleg Pavlenko – Grygorij Lipshyts on the film «Willows and Pavements» with the screenplay by Vanda Vasylevska, where both directors were producers.

However, most likely taking into account the higher status of J. Solntseva, M. Vinjarskyj was in this creative tandem a co-director. To set the record straight finally helped a declassified document from

<sup>1</sup> Шудря, М. (2005). *Геній найциришої проби. Нариси. Розвідки. Рецензії. Інтерв'ю. Публікації*. Київ: Юніверс, 382.

<sup>2</sup> Шудря, М. (2004). Священні миті осяяння. *Дніпро, вип. 9/10, 72–79*.

<sup>3</sup> Шудря, Н. (2004). Юлька и ее Запорожец. *Аспекти, 1–7 октября, 7*.

<sup>4</sup> Череватенко, Л. (1994). *Олександр Довженко: Літопис життя. Фільми. Малюнки. Задуми*. Київ, 144.

<sup>5</sup> Череватенко, Л. (2005). Довженко визволений. *КІНО–КОЛО, вип. 25, 108–135*.

<sup>6</sup> Марочко, В. (2006). *Зачарований Десною: іст. портрет О. Довженка*. Київ: Видавн. дім «Києво-Могилянська академія», 285.

<sup>7</sup> Попик, В. (1995). Під софітами ВЧК–ДПУ–НКВС–НКДБ–КДБ. *Дніпро, вип. 9/10, 21–59*.

<sup>8</sup> Попик, В. (2000). *Під софітами спецслужб*. Київ, 406.

<sup>9</sup> Дерев'янка, Т. (1994). Неопубліковані листи Олександра Довженка. *Дніпро, вип. 9/10, 26–37*.

<sup>10</sup> Агеєва, В., Тримбач, С. (2014). *Довженко без гриму: листи, спогади, архівні знахідки*. Київ: КОМОРА, 471.

<sup>11</sup> Пригоровський, В.М. (2011). *Довженко О. Його Юліана: з епістоляр. спадщини О. Довженка*. Ніжин: Аспект-Поліграф, 107.

<sup>12</sup> Сверстук, Є. (2005). *Олександр Довженко вчора і сьогодні: затемнені місця в біографії*. Луцьк: Терен, 200.

<sup>13</sup> Кудін, В. (2004). *Зоряний шлях: худож.-докум. Повість*. Київ: Парлам. вид-во, 224.

<sup>14</sup> Кудін, В. (2004). *Сашко: худож.-докум. повість*. Київ: ЕКМО, 263.

<sup>15</sup> Миславський, В.Н. (2015). *Олександр Довженко: маловідомі сторінки*. Харків: Дім реклами, 280.

<sup>16</sup> Безручко, О. (2008). *Невідомий Довженко*. Київ: Фенікс, 312.

<sup>17</sup> Безручко, О. (2012). *Архівна спадщина Олександра Довженка: монографія*. Київ: КиМУ, Т. 8, 204.

<sup>18</sup> Безручко, О. (2008). Таємниці щоденників Олександра Довженка. *Пам'ятки: археогр. щорічник, вип. 9, 208–230*.

<sup>19</sup> Тальський, С. (1935). Студенти на виробництві. *Кино, 4 июля*.

<sup>20</sup> Хроніка сценарного портфелю (1936). *За більшовицький фільм, 28 листопада*.

<sup>21</sup> Справа кінострічки «Том Сойер» (1937). *Держфільмофонд РФ «Білі стовпи», Ф. 7, Оп. 1, Спр. 2544, 1*.

<sup>22</sup> Справа кінострічки «Том Сойер» (1937). *Держфільмофонд РФ «Білі стовпи», Ф. 7, Оп. 1, Спр. 2544, 2*.

the archive of Security Service of Ukraine: «Solntseva was appointed a single producer of the film «Visunska Republic»»<sup>1</sup>.

At the lecture on April 1, 1936 to the students of the Director Academy of VGIK Oleksandr Dovzhenko remembered M. Vinjarskyj, who at the villages of Mykolaiv oblast met such people, found out about such life cases, full of deep social meaning and dramatic tension that one could make up for years and would never reach such a result»<sup>2</sup>.

Such trips M. Vinjarskyj made in the framework of material gathering for the screenplay of «Visunska Republic». On January 21, 1937 in the editorial article «Screenplay Portfolio of Kyiv Film Studios», it was noted that among screenplays of the second queue there was a film by the tandem: ««Visunska Republic» – authors- directors – Solntseva and Vinjarskyj»<sup>3</sup>.

January 22, 1937 the head of the trust «Ukrainfilm» M. Tkach in the All-Union newspaper «Kino» informed: «The division of the civil war and defence of the USSR in our thematic schedule includes one more film, the screenplay to which finish J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj – «Visunska Republic», devoted to one of the extremely important and heroic episodes of struggle of Ukrainian working peasantry against White Russians for the Soviet power»<sup>4</sup>.

In February 1937 M. Galperin in the article «Target of the Anniversary Year» (and the year 1937 for the Soviet Union was in fact anniversary – The Great October Revolution turned 20 years) informed that Kyiv Film Studios would work on 11 films, among which there was also «Visunska Republic» (authors-directors – J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj)»<sup>5</sup>. Though it was noted in this article, that they are short of finally worked out screenplays, among which he listed «Visunska Republic»<sup>6</sup>.

Doubtless, that the screenplay «Visunska Republic» by his beloved wife and a student O. Dovzhenko read and corrected, however, he was not able to help them actively because he worked hard on «Shchors» movie ordered by Stalin.

However, in summer 1937 this director tandem, where the major role was played J. Solntseva gradually started to switch on to the project, which was politically more significant. As Semen Gets reported in the main Ukrainian newspaper for the youth in those times «Komsomoets Ukrainy», Solntseva and Vinjarskyj «were assigned by the Chief Department of Kino and Photo Industry to produce «How the Steel Was Tempered»»<sup>7</sup>. That is why one and a half month after the speech of S. Gets in the All- Soviet newspaper «Kino» appeared information that at the Kyiv Film Studios «there is a screenplay not oriented on the certain director «Visunska Republic» by Solntseva and Vinjarskyj»<sup>8</sup>.

From this we can draw a conclusion that the screenplay on which Solntseva and Vinjarskyj worked more than a year and which they wanted then shoot themselves, stayed free. Strange is another fact why it was given to other young directors who as it is noted in the same article by J. Borisov, had no screenplay: «There is still reservation for 15 unengaged directors among whom definitely there are talented people»<sup>9</sup>.

One of such young directors under reservation was M. Trjaskin, who in the beginning of 1937 graduated from Director Academy of VGIK and was sent to the Kyiv Film Studios to shoot his diploma work, in the beginning of September furiously asked on the pages of the newspaper «Za Bil'shovytskyj Film» in the article with the crying title «Bunglers at Screenplay Department»: «Seven months have been gone since I graduated from director faculty of the academic course in VGIK, I was sent by Chief Department of Kino and Photo Industry to Kyiv Film Studios to fulfil my trial assignment. And I have been waiting for the screenplay already 7 months»<sup>10</sup>.

Most likely Solntseva and Vinjarskyj having worked more than a year on the screenplay «Visunska Republic» and having attained the honoured assignment to shoot more significant feature film «How the

<sup>1</sup> Оперативне повідомлення про Ю. І. Солнцева (1939). *Галузев. держ. архів Служби Безпеки України (ГДА СБ України)*, Ф. 11, Спр. С–836, Т. 2, Ч. 1, 19–21.

<sup>2</sup> Довженко, А.П. (1959). Беседа с молодыми режиссерами-слушателями Режиссерской академии ВГИК (1 апр. 1936 г.). *Из истории кино : материалы и документы*. Москва: АН СССР, вып. 2, 8–28.

<sup>3</sup> Сценарний портфель Київської кіностудії (1937). *За більшовицький фільм*, 21 січня.

<sup>4</sup> Ткач, М. (1937). На пороге 1937 года. *Кино*, 22 января.

<sup>5</sup> Гальперін, М. (1937). Завдання ювілейного року. *За більшовицький фільм*, 10 лютого.

<sup>6</sup> Гальперін М. (1937). Завдання ювілейного року. *За більшовицький фільм*, 10 лютого.

<sup>7</sup> Гец, С. (1937). Вирощувати майстрів радянського кіно *Комсомолец України*, 22 серпня.

<sup>8</sup> Борисов, Е. (1937). Студия без сценариев. *Кино*, 4 октября..

<sup>9</sup> Борисов, Е. (1937). Студия без сценариев. *Кино*, 4 октября.

<sup>10</sup> Тряскін, М. (1937). Головогетси у сценарному відділі. *За більшовицький фільм*, 4 вересня.

Steel Was Tempered», decided to hold the screenplay of «Visunska Republic» back for themselves in order after having shot «How the Steel Was Tempered», to shoot «Visunska Republic».

At least to such action a young beginning director M. Krasij, who recently graduated from Moscow cinematographic institute, called in the newspaper of Kyiv Film Studios: «Quite expected and possible that one director consults two screenplays; one of it is going to be a reserve just in case of creative failure of the author or withdrawal of the screenplay from the thematic plan due to thematic considerations»<sup>1</sup>.

The version with «holding back» of the screenplay «Visunska Republic» for themselves is reasonable because in the Ukrainian press (November–December 1937<sup>2</sup>), unlike the Russian (in October 1937<sup>3</sup>) was stated that, firstly, Solntseva and Vinjarskyj were still improving the screenplay «Visunska Republic»; secondly, in 1938 they would work as directors on this project. In the newspaper of Kyiv Film Studios M. Plysetskyj reported that in November-December 1937: «In the phase of reworking and improving ... ««Visunska Republic». As a positive sign it should be noted that in 1938 for the first time Solntseva and Vinjarskyi will work as directors ... The target is only to create favourable conditions for their creative production work»<sup>4</sup>.

At first, there was a version, that party leaders and editors from screenplay department exhausted the authors of the screenplay Solntseva and Vinjarskyj with numerous remarks and correction, so they were ready to reject own project as it happened with others screenplay and direction tandem V. Galytskyj – V. Dovbyshchenko, who on September, 14 1937, on the peak of repressions of the 30-s, were not afraid to public in the newspaper «Komsomolets Ukrainy» the true story of working with screenplays at Kyiv Film Studios: ««Critics» of the screenplays «One Way Love» and «Hanna» spoiled our idea and crippled our screenplays so much that we were forced to reject the work. For the debut work one of us was offered the screenplay «Where Do You Wander, My Destiny» by the screenplay writer komsomolets Aleksejev. Shooting was scheduled in summer this year. But the literature department again offered «corrections», that neither director, nor screenwriter could not acknowledge, – and the screenplay stays still unrealised»<sup>5</sup>.

We shall state, that the film by V. Dovbyshchenko «Where Do You Wander, My Destiny», as well as mentioned in this article screenplays «One Way Love», «My Own Home», «100 Thousands» (after the play by I. Karpenko-Karyj), «Hanna», «Trial» (after the novel by Willy Breddel «Examination») screenwriter and director tandem V. Galytskyj–V. Dovbyshchenko were not shot, although some of them were in the plan of Kyiv Film Studios.

However, due to the declassified document from the Security Service of Ukraine it was found out that Solntseva and Vinjarskyj did not reject the shooting of «Visunska Republic», this film project was finished as a result of its «dismissal of this theme from the plan»<sup>6</sup>.

At this point the functioning of the tandem work screenwriter and director Solntseva – Vinjarskyj was not finished, as they later in the same team worked at Kyiv Film Studios on the feature film «How the Steel Was Tempered» after a play by M. Ostrovskyj.

The further creative career of a pupil of L.V. Kulieshov, S.M. Eisenstein, O.P. Dovzhenko, director of feature and popular science films Mychajlo Borisovich Vinjarskyj was not as successful in comparison with J. I. Solntseva, but he also shot a line of feature and popular science films at the Kyiv motion picture studio, the Odessa motion picture studio and the Kyiv Movie Studio.

Concluding the above mentioned, we can state, that the set scientific targets are reached: the unknown pages of creative work of famous actress and film director Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva during her work on the film «Visunska Republic» at Kyiv Film Studios (feature film studio) are studied; the reasons why the tandem screenwriter and film director J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarski appeared analysed; the role and place of each participant of this creative tandem is clarified; we considered variants of creative tandems with film directors in the Ukrainian cinematography; little known pages of the tandem work screenwriter and film director J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj on the film «Visunska Republik» have been reconstructed;

<sup>1</sup> Красій, М. (1940). За співдружність режисера з автором. *За більшовицький фільм*, 5 липня.

<sup>2</sup> Плисецький, М. (1937). Обговорюємо темплани. *За більшовицький фільм*, 1 грудня.

<sup>3</sup> Борисов, Е. (1937). Студія без сценариев. *Кино*, 4 октябрю.

<sup>4</sup> Плисецький, М. (1937). Обговорюємо темплани. *За більшовицький фільм*, 1 грудня.

<sup>5</sup> Галицький, В., Довбищенко, В. (1937). Два роки обіцянок. Ще про долю молодих кінорежисерів. *Комсомолец України*, 14 вересня.

<sup>6</sup> Оперативне повідомлення про Ю. І. Солнцева (1939). *Галузев. держ. архів Служби Безпеки України (ГДА СБ України)*, Ф. 11, Спр. С–836, Т. 2, Ч. I, 19–21.

the main motives why the work on this film project was stopped have been indicated; the next full-length feature film, on which J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj started to work together has been pointed.

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