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THE UNKNOWN PAGES OF CREATIVE WORK OF JULIA SOLNTSEVA OVER THE FILM «HOW THE STEEL WAS TEMPERED»

This article investigates the unknown pages of creative work of famous actress and film director Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva during her work on the film «How the Steel Was Tempered» at Kyiv Film Studios (feature film studio): the preconditions of creation and the previous stage of work of the script writer and the film director tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj were told about; the role and the place of each participant of this creative tandem were found out; out-of-the-way pages of work of the scriptwriter and the film director tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj on the movie «How the Steel Was Tempered» were reconstructed; the main reasons for termination of the work on this film project were named.

Keywords: Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva, «How the Steel Was Tempered», Kyiv Film Studio (Kyiv Movie Factory), film director, creative tandem, scenario writer.

Despite the references on personal life and career of famous actress and film director Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva (7.08.1901, Moscow – 28.10.1989, Moscow) (in most cases in respect to O. Dovzhenko) in the publications by S. Trymbach^{1,2,3,4}, R. Korogodskiy⁵, M. Shchudrya^{6,7,8}, L. Cherevatenko^{9,10}, V. Marochko¹¹, V. Popuk^{12,13}, T. Derevyanko¹⁴, V. Ageeva¹⁵, V. Prigorovskiy¹⁶, E. Sverstyuk¹⁷, V. Kudin^{18,19}, V. Myslavskiy²⁰, O. Bezruchko^{21,22,23} and others, we can acknowledge that Ukrainian art historians in fact did not research the creative work of J. Solntseva during her work on the film «How the Steel Was Tempered» at Kyiv Film Studio (Kyiv Movie Factory) remains unknown.

The art director of the O.P. Dovzhenko Kyiv Feature Film Studio in his speech at the party and production conference in early 1941 the Studio, spoke against the phenomenon of two film directors

¹ Довженко, А. (2013). *Щоденникові записи, 1939–1956*. Харків: Фолио, 879.

² Агеєва, В., Тримбач, С. (2014). *Довженко без гриму: листи, спогади, архівні знахідки*. Київ: КОМОРА, 471.

³ Тримбач, С. (2001). серпень, 11–17). Не віднесена вітром: 100 років Ю. Солнцевої. *Дзеркало тижня*, 30, 16.

⁴ Тримбач, С. (2007). *Олександр Довженко: загибель богів: ідентифікація автора в національному часо-просторі*. Вінниця: ГЛОБУС-ПРЕС, 800.

⁵ Корогодський, Р. (2000). *Довженко в полоні: розвідки та есеї про Майстра*. Київ: Гелікон, 352.

⁶ Шудря, М. (2005). *Геній найциррішої проби. Нариси. Розвідки. Рецензії. Інтерв'ю. Публікації*. Київ: Юніверс, 382.

⁷ Шудря, М. (2004). Священні миті осяяння *Дніпро*, 9/10, 72–79.

⁸ Шудря, Н. (2004, жовтень, 1–7). Юлька и ее Запорожец. *Аспекти*, 7.

⁹ Череватенко, Л. (1994). *Олександр Довженко: Літопис життя. Фільми. Малюнки. Задуми*. Київ, 144.

¹⁰ Череватенко, Л. (2005). Довженко визволений. *KINO–КОЛО*, 25, 108–135.

¹¹ Марочко, В. (2006). *Зачарований Десною: іст. портрет О. Довженка*. Київ: Видавничий дім «Кисво-Могил. академії», 285.

¹² Попик, В. (1995). Під софітами ВЧК–ДПУ–НКВС–НКДБ–КДБ. *Дніпро*, 9/10, 21–59.

¹³ Попик, В. (2000). *Під софітами спецслужб*. Київ, 406.

¹⁴ Дерев'яно, Т. (1994). Неопубліковані листи Олександра Довженка. *Дніпро*, 9/10, 26–37.

¹⁵ Агеєва, В., Тримбач, С. (2014). *Довженко без гриму: листи, спогади, архівні знахідки*. Київ: КОМОРА, 471.

¹⁶ Пригоровський, В.М. (2011). *Довженко О. Його Юліана: з епістоляр. спадщини О. Довженка*. Ніжин: Аспект-Поліграф, 107.

¹⁷ Сверстюк, Є. (2005). *Олександр Довженко вчора і сьогодні: затемнені місця в біографії*. Луцьк: Терен, 200.

¹⁸ Кудін, В. (2004). *Зоряний шлях: худож.-докум. Повість*. Київ: Парлам. вид-во, 224.

¹⁹ Кудін, В. (2004). *Сашко: худож.-докум. повість*. Київ: ЕКМО, 263.

²⁰ Миславський, В.Н. (2015). *Олександр Довженко: маловідомі сторінки*. Харків: Дім реклами, 280.

²¹ Безручко, О. (2008). *Невідомий Довженко* Київ: Фенікс, 312.

²² Безручко, О. (2012). *Архівна спадщина Олександра Довженка: монографія*. Київ: КиМУ, 8, 204.

²³ Безручко, О. (2008). Таємниці щоденників Олександра Довженка. *Пам'ятки: археогр. щорічник*, 9, 208–230.

working on one movie, common in the Soviet cinematography in the second half the 1930ies, which, according to him even led to the appearance of a problem of co-film directors: «As a rule, a film director should be single, and we now have co-film directors, because we have recently faced the need to enhance our production; there are no film directors, we cannot charge one person with a movie, and it always seems to us that one plus one is two, or, maybe, one and a half. It is much better to entrust short movies to an individual film director, and we'll see what exactly he did independently for, when two people work, it's impossible to know who is really better»¹.

Although, in the middle 1930ies, O.P. Dovzhenko did not object against the script writer and film director tandems of debutant film directors on the Kyiv Movie Factory. One of such creative tandems consisted of his wife, the actress Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva, famous for that time, and the graduate of the S.M. Eisenstein Film Director Workshop, Mychajlo Borisovich Vinjarskyj (21.11.1912, Bobrynets, Yelyzavetgrad province (now – Kropivnitska Oblast) – 30.03.1977, Kyiv), who, after graduating from the Higher State University of Cinematography (VGIK, now – Russian State University of Cinematography named after S. Gerasimov) came to work to the Kyiv Movie Factory in order to shoot his debut movie.

M. Vinjarskyj met J. Solntseva in summer 1935 during the production practice on the movie «Aerograd». In 1936–1937, the creative tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj was jointly working in the inclusion of the script of «Visunska Republic», dedicated to «one of the extraordinary bright and heroic episodes of the struggle of the working Ukrainian peasantry against the Denikin regime for the Soviet power», to the thematic plan of the Kyiv Movie Studio².

On June 27, 1937 N. Ratmanska informed in her article «Honorary work» that «our Studio had the honor to shoot the movie «How the Steel Was Tempered». It is a honorary work which should be performed excellently by the Studio»³.

In the Soviet times, the permission, and, most importantly, the duty to do honorary work was given to the best professionals, and among them were the Honored Artist J. Solntseva and the young film director-activist M. Vinjarskyj. So, in the second half of August 1937, according to the report in the main Ukrainian newspaper for youth «The Komsomol member of Ukraine» by Semen Getz, «the party committee discussed the issue of young film directors, having nominated for a team of five persons, whom, as to two debutants from the Dovzhenko Studio (J. Solntseva, M. Vinjarskyj) the directorate promised to charge with the responsibility to shoot the independent movies. Although, no nominees except Solntseva and Vinjarskyj (The Main Administration of Film and Photo Production charged them with the production of the movie «How the Steel Was Tempered») can start their work... for scripts are absent»⁴.

After O.P. Dovzhenko Laboratory of Film Directors was closed, Solntseva and Vinjarskyj tried to start shooting their own movie «How the Steel Was Tempered» within the new creative and art association, the School for preparation of young film directors headed by G.D. Zatvornytskyj.

In 1937, instead of movie schools closed in 1937 at the Kyiv Movie Studio, the new director S.L. Orelovych, who replaced P.F. Nechesa, who, essentially, was opening these schools, allowed G. Zatvornytskyj to develop for the education department of the «Ukrainfilm» Trust a project of a school for training young film directors⁵, where Glib Zatvornytskyj was the art director of the so-called trainee film directors (graduates of KDIK and VGIK, the O.P. Dovzhenko Laboratory of Film Directors and the I. Kavaleridze Brigade (Laboratory) of Film Directors) during the preparation of shooting the debut short or the first full-length film, in particular, the film «How the Steel Was Tempered»⁶.

In no small measure due to arrest of the managements of both the Kyiv Movie Studio (Pavlo Nechesa, Semen Orelovych) and the «Ukrainfilm» Trust (Mark Tkach and the others), all scripts were many times remade because every new director was afraid to start shooting a film earlier led by his arrested predecessors.

Demyan Semenov, the new director of the Kyiv Movie Studio, stated in his program article «Our tasks» of October 11, 1937, that «in 1938 we are trying to release such a production on screens, «How

¹ Рос. держ. архів літератури і мистецтв, Ф. 2081, Оп. 2, Спр. 62, Арк.18.

² Ткач, М. (1937, январь, 22). На пороге 1937 года. *Кино*.

³ Ратманська, Н. (1937, червень, 27). Почесна робота. *За більшовицький фільм*.

⁴ Гец, С. (1937, серпень, 22). Вирощувати майстрів радянського кіно. *Комсомолец України*.

⁵ Орелович, С. (1937, червень, 27). Про режисерів-дебютантів. *За більшовицький фільм*.

⁶ Затворницький, Г. (1937, вересень, 04). Шлях творчого зросту. *За більшовицький фільм*.

the Steel Was Tempered» (by directors Solntseva and Vinjarskyj). The script is ready; the director's draft is finished»¹.

In the second half of December 1937, i.e., when, according to G. Zatvornitskyj, this film must have already been in progress within the work of the School for training young film directors², the all-USSR newspaper «Kino» published an article dedicated to the anniversary of death of M. Ostrovskyi, where, in particular, A. Maksimov stated that M. Ostrovskyi participated in work on the script within his lifetime, but only one year after his death, «the film director J. Solntseva starts working on the film based on a book by M. Ostrovskyi' on the Kyiv Movie Studio 'Ukrainfilm'»³.

So, as we see from the context of the aforementioned article, Moscow regarded J. Solntseva as the only film director of this movie, and M. Vinjarskyj, respectively, was a co-director, or, in modern terms, the second film director. We should mention that the same distribution of roles in the creative tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj was also in their previous film project «Visunskia Republic».

The management disliked both scripts, by M. Ostrovskyi and by J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj, so, in order to shoot a politically significant film, the debutants received help represented by the experienced playwright Isaak Emmanuilovich Babel, «The studio has been working on the production of «How the Steel Was Tempered» for a rather long time so far. But the absence of a high quality script was an obstacle. At last, the decision was made to engage the writer I. Babel to work on the script»⁴.

But even this did not help to finish the script until November 25, 1937, according to the agreement with playwrights. Even in the second half of January 1938, the script wasn't finished. Skyba, the author of the article «Stop delaying» named the guilty ones, not only J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj, but the director D. Semenov who «called Babel only once by telephone and was content with that»⁵.

The critic notices were effective, so, already on February 13, 1938, according to Ie. Lokshyna, the script was already finished and, moreover, the film directors J. Solntseva and M. Vinjarskyj even performed auditions: «I was reading the script of «How the Steel Was Tempered» with great pleasure, and was even more pleased by watching the auditions. But I should say honestly that pace of the film «How the Steel Was Tempered» pre-production is rather inert»⁶.

Although, the last phrase about the rather inert pace of pre-production and even the name «Stop delaying» indicated the rather unsatisfactory condition of the film «How the Steel Was Tempered» pre-production.

On March 5, 1938, Kogorodskyi, the director of the planning and economical department of the Kyiv Movie Studio stated in his article «For what the Studio will fight in 1938' that the Movie Studio management had recently prepared a new project of the production plan for 1938, lacking all projects which as of early 1938 had no scripts tested, i.e., finally approved by the management, «Thus, in 1938, it is planned to release seven full-length sound feature films, including «Shchors», «The Bolsheviks», «How the Steel Was Tempered»...»⁷. In March 1938, the script of «How the Steel Was Tempered» was finally approved on all levels and was included into the production plan of the Kyiv Movie Studio for 1938.

In headlines and during speeches at numerous meetings and conferences, party and cinematography leadership of all levels actively supported the launch of films by young and promising film directors, but in reality, in the terrible times of repressions everyone was afraid to take responsibility for the final approval. This was the reason why more and more obstacles, as for «improvement» and «final revision», were created. We would like to note that in the second half of the 1930ies, numerous revisions of scripts both by young film-makers and by acknowledged artists were very frequent.

With regard of high (and in most cases, even self-defeating) responsibility artists (script writers, associate producers, etc.) for their own works (scripts, films) in the USSR of those times, Julia Solntseva and Mychajlo Vinjarskyj were repeatedly rewriting first the literary script, and then its film version with a wish to take into account the remarks of cinematography and party officials of all ranks. Being the individuals maximally close to Oleksandr Dovzhenko, they saw that even he had to remake the script

¹ Семенов Д. (1937, жовтень, 11). Наші завдання. *За більшовицький фільм*.

² Затворницький, Г. (1937, вересень, 04). Шлях творчого зросту. *За більшовицький фільм*.

³ Максимов, А. (1937, декабрь, 22). Николай Островский. К годовщине со дня смерти. *Кино*.

⁴ Скиба (1938, січень, 16). Досить затягувати. *За більшовицький фільм*.

⁵ Там само.

⁶ Локшина, С. (1938, лютий, 13). Припинити відставання. *За більшовицький фільм*, 13 лютого.

⁷ Корогодський (1938, березень, 05). За що боротиметься студія в 1938 р. *За більшовицький фільм*.

of «Shchors» many times – a movie ordered by Stalin himself. Changes and revisions, sometimes really considerable, were made even during the filming process, for example, as in the scene where Mykola Shchors is dying.

In a newspaper «For the Bolshevik Film» by the Kyiv Movie Studio, the script writers Vinjarskyj and Solntseva were requested to finish their work on a politically topical production, «The inadmissible procrastinating of work on the script because of both Solntseva and c. Vinjarskyj, should be immediately removed. If such work pace on the movie remains, it will raise doubts concerning the movie completion in this year»¹.

The doubts appeared to be righteous – the film «How the Steel Was Tempered» was not shot by the film director tandem of Julia Solntseva – Mychajlo Vinjarskyj neither in 1938, as it was planned, nor later. It happened in no small measure due to the argument between J. Solntseva with I. Babel, which can be found out from one denunciation by a «secret employee» of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, disclosed by V. Popik, «Babel and Solntseva, working together on the script of «How the Steel Was Tempered», disagree and slander each other»².

It is rather surprising, for, according to another unclassified document of the Branch Record Office of the Security Service of Ukraine, Julia Solntseva has known Isaak Babel for a long time, and rather well, «The circle of her close acquaintances included: I. Babel, K. Zelinskyi, E. Shub, N. Shengelai and the others»³.

As it was found out after declassification of a part of documents from the registration document case «Zaporozhets» for O.P. Dovzhenko, J. Solntseva was supported not only by her husband but also by the director of the Soviet Cinematography, Boris Zakharovych Shumiatskyi. A special investigative agent of the 5th division of the 2nd Main Directorate for State Security department, Senior Lieutenant of State Security Podolskyi in «Operative report on J.I. Solntseva of January 24, 1939», was drawing the management attention to the report of one «secret employees», judging from the report context, a filmmaker of the higher rank, who noted that «recently (in 1936–37) I have been repeatedly observing Shumiatskyi's exclusive benevolence to Solntseva. For example, only at his personal assistance, Solntseva was assigned the independent associable producer of the movie «Visunska Republic», and then (after the removal of this subject from the plan), of the movie «How the Steel Was Tempered». This project remained implemented as well because in March 1938 it was also removed from the plan»⁴.

The film project «How the Steel Was Tempered» was closed in March 1938 in connection with dismissal, arrest and shooting of the director of the Soviet Cinematography, Boris Zakharovych Shumiatskyi, and arrival in early 1938 a new director of the Cinematography Committee at the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Semen Semenovych Dukelskyi, who was afraid of implementing projects started by his predecessor, who turned from the al director of the Soviet Cinematography into the «public enemy» in a twinkling of an eye.

Thus, the script writer and the film director tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj, despite of the support of O. Dovzhenko, who was at that time in favor of the almighty master of the USSR I. Stalin, was unable to shoot both movies, «Visunska Republic», and «How the Steel Was Tempered».

Due to the unclassified reports from the Branch Record Office of the Security Service of Ukraine, it is possible to define time limits of the creative tandem of J. Solntseva – M. Vinjarskyj: «During the production of «Aerograd» and until 1938, Solntseva was working together with M. Viniarskyi – the cinematography university graduate who was very close to her»⁵.

After breaking of the script writer-film director tandem of Julia Solntseva – Mychajlo Vinjarskyj in 1938, J. Solntseva switched to work in a film «Shchors» by O. Dovzhenko, and became a co-director (the second director) of her famous husband's outstanding film in the very beginning.

Further, Julia Ippolitovna Solntseva shot, both in collaboration with her husband and independently, documentaries and feature films, for which she was awarded with the title of People's Artist of the RSFSR (1964), the title of People's Artist of the USSR (1981), became a laureate of the State (Stalin) Prize (1949) for the film «Michurin» (in collaboration), was awarded with the order of Badge of Honor, the medal

¹ Скиба (1938, січень, 16). Досить затягувати. За більшовицький фільм.

² Попик, В. (1995). Під софітами ВЧК-ДПУ-НКВС-НКДБ-КДБ. *Дніпро*, 9/10, 21–59.

³ Галузев. держ. архів Служби Безпеки України (ГДА СБ України), Ф. 11, Спр. С–836, Т. 2, Ч. 1, 19–21.

⁴ Там само.

⁵ Там само.

«St. Mark's Golden Medal» (1975) for her participation in design of the film-book «The Earth», and O.P. Dovzhenko Golden Medal for the film «The World in Three Dimensions» (1980).

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