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French Films in the USSR and France Film Distribution (1945–1991)

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Abstract

During the second half of the 1940s and into the 1950s, attendance at French films at the French box office was at its peak. The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” of the French film distribution was diverse, but in general it was based on films of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, attendance at French films began to gradually decline (largely due to competition from television and Hollywood productions). An even greater decline in cinema attendance in France began to be felt in the 1980s. This was affected not only by strong competition from Hollywood products and television, but mainly by the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

In the second half of the 1940s, there were very few French films in Soviet film distribution. This was largely due to the fact that it was during this period that so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) were shown on USSR screens.

Due to the fact that by the mid-1950s the screening of so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) in the USSR was completed, in the second half of the 1950s more new European films, including French ones, began to be released in Soviet cinemas. The “thaw” that came to the USSR brought significant changes to procurement policy. For example, of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1958, exactly half were shown on USSR cinema screens.

The work of the Soviet film purchasing commission in the 1960s was quite liberal, which (especially after the start of the “Prague Spring” of 1968) could not escape the conservative wing of the “ideological front”: a number of articles were published in the Soviet press with sharp criticism of the distribution policy regarding Western film products, “promoting the bourgeois way of life.”

Among the reasons why French films were not included in Soviet film distribution are the following:

- Taboos on erotica, accentuated religious and Jewish themes;
- The fear that Soviet viewers might somehow misunderstand shocking plot twists from the point of view of official Soviet morality, which were often found even in artistically significant films;
- Exclusion from candidates for the purchase of films with an interpretation of Russian and Soviet themes (and accordingly, Russian and Soviet characters) that is unacceptable for Soviet ideology;
- The struggle of Soviet censorship with incorrectly (from its point of view) ideological accents on military topics;
- Undesirability for Soviet censorship of films “promoting the bourgeois way of life”;

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- The undesirability of images of charming criminals appearing on Soviet screens;
- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of famous actors who publicly criticized the policies of the USSR;
- Too high prices offered by copyright holders;

True, in the Soviet film distribution in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, French films began to increasingly appear, one way or another violating former censorship taboos. This was due to the fact that with the advent of perestroika, the work of the purchasing commission of the USSR State Cinema Committee became more liberal and in many ways began to focus on the purchase of highly artistic foreign films, and the former strict ideological and moral prohibitions ceased to apply...

Keywords: film studies, France, USSR, distribution, box office, cinema, film, movie, cinematography.

1. Introduction

The number of French films produced each year sometimes varied significantly.

From 1945 to 1950 it ranged from 28 to 79 movies. In the 1950s – from 70 to 133. In the 1960s – from 117 to 154. In the 1970s – from 127 to 326. In the 1990s – from 108 to 150 (Jeancolas, 1985: 22; Savary, 2020: 17).

At the same time, French film critic Jean-Pierre Jeancolas noted that the unusual surge in the production of French films in the late 1970s was due to the fact that (in the absence of mass distribution of VCRs) a stream of cheap erotic films poured onto the screens, of which in 1978, for example, there were removed 157 (Jeancolas, 1985: 22).

The profitability threshold for French films in theatrical distribution depends on many factors. So the French film expert J.-P. Jeancolas wrote that in the 1970s in France, a film that managed to attract approximately 170 thousand – 200 thousand spectators and above was considered commercially quite successful (Jeancolas, 1985). At the same time, of course, we were talking about the fact that 200 thousand spectators were gathered by an intimate, low-budget film, and not by a hugely expensive action film, for which, for example, even a million spectators can be considered a commercial failure.

The top ten champions of French film distribution in the entire history of French cinema are films that attracted from 10.3 million viewers to 20.5 million viewers. And in order to get into the top hundred leaders of the French film box office, the film had to overcome the threshold of 5 million viewers.

Considering that the population of the USSR was approximately five times larger than the population of France, 5 million viewers at the French box office corresponded to 25 million viewers at the Soviet box office, which is very impressive, because in the entire history of film distribution in the USSR, there were about 430 Soviet films that attracted more than 25 million viewers (out of more than seven thousand Soviet full-length feature films shown in cinemas).

As for the figure of the leader of the French film distribution, which attracted 20.5 million viewers, it is similar to one hundred million Soviet viewers or 40 million viewers in modern Russia.

However, to make the analogy more correct, let us turn to Gerard Oury's comedy *The Big Walk* (*La Grande Vadrouille*, 1966), which until 2011 retained the title of champion of French film distribution: 17.3 million viewers (which is similar to 85 million viewers in the USSR, and this figure was achieved in the Soviet film box office is surpassed only by the action movie *Pirates of the 20th Century*).

In the USSR film distribution, *The Big Walk* attracted 37.8 million viewers. Thus, if in France *The Big Walk* was watched by 35 % of the population, then in the USSR – 15 %.

Analysis of the data in Table 1 shows that, due to changes in the sociocultural and media situation, the number of French films annually attracting an audience of 1 million to 5 million viewers has generally been declining since the mid-1960s, while the number of films attracting an audience on the contrary, it increased from 0.1 million to 0.4 million viewers.

It is also clear from the table data that the number of French films that failed to attract an audience of 100 thousand viewers has been steadily increasing since the 1970s.

Table 1. Attendance ranges for French films from 1945 to 1991

<i>Attendance ranges for French films in France (in millions of viewers)</i>										
Year	above 10,0	above 5,0 to 10,0	above 3,0 to 5,0	above 1,0 to 3,0	0,5 – 1,0	0,2 – 0,4	0,1	0,05 – 0,09	0,02 – 0,04	from 0,01 and less
<i>The number of films released at French distribution in a given year:</i>										
1945	0	1	5	19	2	1	*	0	0	0
1946	0	5	7	38	4	*	*	0	0	0
1947	0	4	8	27	10	*	*	0	0	0
1948	0	2	10	35	7	*	*	0	0	0
1949	0	1	7	48	11	1	*	0	0	0
1950	0	1	5	53	16	3	*	0	0	0
1951	0	1	5	44	19	1	*	0	0	0
1952	1	2	12	32	23	*	*	0	0	0
1953	0	4	7	41	20	*	*	0	0	0
1954	0	3	12	42	17	*	*	0	0	0
1955	0	2	12	46	10	1	1	0	0	0
1956	0	2	13	56	8	1	*	1	0	0
1957	0	0	6	60	16	1	*	0	0	0
1958	0	1	8	41	28	0	1	0	1	0
1959	0	2	9	46	23	8	1	0	0	0
1960	0	2	9	31	35	4	1	0	0	0
1961	0	0	8	33	30	17	1	3	0	3
1962	0	1	3	35	31	11	8	1	0	0
1963	0	1	2	33	23	8	7	2	3	1
1964	0	1	6	36	25	9	8	2	0	4
1965	1	1	4	28	28	11	2	1	6	1
1966	1	0	3	20	17	15	6	3	2	4
1967	0	2	3	16	26	13	8	1	1	0
1968	0	2	1	24	16	10	5	4	4	5
1969	0	1	3	15	4	1	*	*	*	*
1970	0	0	5	18	16	19	9	2	9	8
1971	0	3	3	18	19	13	8	4	12	2
1972	0	2	4	19	17	16	4	6	6	6
1973	0	1	3	22	16	25	6	6	12	12
1974	0	2	3	17	21	23	13	3	12	2
1975	0	0	4	20	21	17	16	6	8	6
1976	0	2	0	17	27	14	14	2	9	10
1977	0	0	1	14	25	15	7	6	8	1
1978	0	1	0	17	20	14	8	1	7	1
1979	0	1	2	13	21	18	8	5	19	4
1980	0	0	4	14	21	8	14	3	10	9
1981	0	2	4	16	25	17	7	2	5	3
1982	0	1	7	18	15	17	2	6	10	9
1983	0	1	6	18	22	27	7	4	11	15
1984	0	2	2	23	24	12	12	2	11	1
1985	1	1	0	14	28	16	14	7	4	2
1986	0	2	4	10	17	16	15	4	9	0
1987	0	0	3	3	21	14	14	2	12	5
1988	0	2	2	6	12	17	7	10	11	2
1989	0	0	0	8	12	16	9	5	9	7
1990	0	1	3	7	6	9	16	5	11	10
1991	0	0	0	11	12	12	10	2	15	12

* no data.

Table 2 summarizes data on the number of French films that attracted more than 1.0 million viewers and less than 200 thousand viewers at the French box office (from 1945 to 1991).

Table 2. Ranges of attendance of French films that attracted more than 1.0 million viewers and less than 200 thousand viewers at the French box office (from 1945 to 1991)

Year	<i>Number of French films that gathered more than 1.0 million viewers at the French box office</i>	<i>Number of French films with less than 200,000 viewers at the French box office</i>
1945	25	
1946	50	
1947	39	
1948	47	
1949	56	
1950	60	
1951	50	
1952	47	
1953	52	
1954	57	
1955	60	1
1956	71	1
1957	66	0
1958	50	2
1959	57	1
1960	42	1
1961	41	7
1962	39	9
1963	36	14
1964	43	14
1965	34	10
1966	24	15
1967	21	10
1968	27	18
1969	19	*
1970	23	28
1971	24	26
1972	25	22
1973	26	36
1974	22	30
1975	24	36
1976	19	35
1977	15	22
1978	18	17
1979	16	36
1980	18	36
1981	23	17
1982	26	27
1983	25	37
1984	27	26
1985	16	27
1986	16	28
1987	6	33
1988	10	30
1989	8	30
1990	11	42
1991	11	39

* no data.

Analysis of the data in [Table 2](#) shows that the peak number of French films (71), which attracted over 1.0 million viewers at the French box office, occurred in 1956, and the minimum (6) in 1987.

As for the number of French films that attracted less than 200 thousand spectators at the French box office, their peak values occurred in the early 1990s. If until the mid-1960s the appearance of this kind of mostly unprofitable films could be considered accidental, then later it became a pattern.

In 1984, the number of French films that attracted more than one million viewers managed to exceed twenty for the last time (in 1984 there were 27 such films).

In 1982 and 1984, for the last time in the history of French film distribution, the number of films that attracted more than one million spectators was approximately equal to the number of outsider films that lured fewer than 200 thousand spectators into cinemas. Further, the number of outsider films invariably exceeded (often several times) the number of films with millionaires...

Table 3. Number of French films shown in Soviet film distribution (1945–1991)

Year	<i>Number of French films (including coproductions), from the French distribution repertoire of a particular year, shown (in different years) in Soviet film distribution</i>
1945	2
1946	1
1947	1
1948	4
1949	3
1950	3
1951	2
1952	5
1953	6
1954	4
1955	6
1956	13
1957	4
1958	12
1959	6
1960	8
1961	13
1962	9
1963	13
1964	16
1965	14
1966	11
1967	14
1968	11
1969	7
1970	4
1971	5
1972	11
1973	8
1974	10
1975	14
1976	12
1977	8
1978	9
1979	13
1980	16
1981	18
1982	10

Year	<i>Number of French films (including coproductions), from the French distribution repertoire of a particular year, shown (in different years) in Soviet film distribution</i>
1983	13
1984	14
1985	9
1986	10
1987	14
1988	7
1989	3
1990	0
1991	0

Analysis of the data in [Table 3](#) shows that during the expansion of the so-called “trophy” cinema (mainly American and German films) – in the second half of the 1940s – the first half of the 1950s – the number of French films in Soviet film distribution was insignificant (in on average about 3 movies per year).

However, with the advent of the Thaw, the number of French films purchased for distribution in the USSR increased significantly, and from 1956 to 1968 the number of French films in Soviet film distribution averaged 11 per year.

Further, starting from 1969 (due to tightening censorship in purchasing policy after the Czechoslovak events of 1968), the number of French films in Soviet film distribution decreased to approximately 7 per year, and a new increase in the number of purchases of French film products in the USSR became noticeable, starting from the second half of the 1970s (in the range from 1975 to 1985, the number of French films (including co-productions) in Soviet film distribution averaged 12 per year).

Not a single French film from the French film distribution repertoire of 1990 and 1991 managed to be released in Soviet film distribution (these films were already shown in the Russian period of the 1990s).

In the last years of the existence of the USSR (1990–1991), fewer French films were purchased (and they were released in theaters already in post-Soviet times). This is partly explained by the sharp increase in Hollywood production that poured onto Soviet screens, partly by the expansion of video, and partly by crisis phenomena in Soviet film distribution as a whole.

The highest-grossing French directors of the 20th century

Based on the results of film distribution in France, the top ten highest-grossing full-length feature films were formed annually.

From 1945 to 2000, the top ten leaders in French film distribution in one year or another included films by many directors: René Clair, Marcel Carné, Jacques Tati, Julien Duvivier, Francois Truffaut, Claude Chabrol, Louis Malle, Bertrand Tavernier, Bertrand Blier, Yves Boisset and etc.

However, only the films of 32 French directors managed to get into the top ten box office leaders of the year five or more times:

1. Claude Zidi: 18 films.
2. André Hunebelle (1896–1985): 15 films.
3. Henri Verneuil (1920–2002): 13 films.
4. Jean Giraud (1924–1982): 13 films.
5. Gerard Oury (1919–2006): 11 films.
6. Yves Robert (1920–2002): 10 films.
7. Jean Delannoy (1908–2008): 9 films.
10. Christian-Jacques (1904–1994): 9 films.
11. Claude Lelouch: 9 films.
12. Georges Lautner (1926–2013): 9 films.
13. Claude Berry (1934–2009): 8 films.
14. Luc Besson: 8 films.
15. Philippe de Broca (1933–2004): 8 films.
16. Jean Boyer (1901–1965): 8 films.
17. André Cayatte (1909–1989): 8 films.
18. Claude Autant-Lara (1901–2000): 8 films.
19. André Berthomieu (1903–1960): 7 films.

20. Bernard Borderie (1924–1978): 7 films.
21. Gilles Grangier (1911–1996): 7 films.
22. Edouard Molinaro (1928–2013): 7 films.
23. Denys de La Patellière (1921–2013): 7 films.
24. Jean Dréville (1906–1997): 6 films.
25. René Clément (1913–1996): 6 films.
26. Patrice Leconte: 6 films.
27. Richard Potier (1906–1994): 6 films.
28. Jean-Marie Poiré: 6 films.
29. Claude Sautet (1924–2000): 6 films.
30. Roger Vadim (1928–2000): 5 films.
31. Francis Veber: 5 films.
32. Jacques Deray (1929–2003): 5 films.
33. Henri-Georges Clouzot (1907–1977): 5 films.
34. Jean-Paul Rappeneau: 5 films.

2. Materials and methods

Object of study. The situation with attendance of French films in the USSR and France in the period from 1945 to 1991 was chosen as the object of our research.

Subject of study: evolution of attendance of French films in the USSR and France in the period from 1945 to 1991.

Project objectives: to carry out classification, analysis of the range of reasons for differences in attendance French films in the USSR and France in the period from 1945 to 1991.

Research methods: comparative analysis, classification, comparison, analogy.

3. Discussion and results

Top box office leaders in France in 1945 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1945 attracted from 2.7 million to 5.1 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1945, 25 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark.

The genre spectrum of the leaders in the “golden ten” box office of 1945 was diverse, but approximately half of the films were dramas.

The top ten of the French film box office in 1945 included films by directors who were among the leaders of box office success in the 1950s: Jean Dréville (two films in the top ten of 1945), Christian-Jacques (two films in the top ten of 1945), Marcel Carné, etc. In first place was the film by Jean Dréville *The Cage of Nightingales (La Cage aux rossignols)* (5.1 million viewers).

In general, the French mass market relied on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

In the second half of the 1940s, there were very few French films in Soviet film distribution. This was largely due to the fact that it was during this period that so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) were shown on USSR screens.

Only two films from the French repertoire of 1945 were released into the USSR: *Children of Paradise (Les Enfants du paradis)* and *Carmen*.

At the same time, ironically, the famous film *Children of Paradise* by Marcel Carné (4.8 million viewers), which took second place in the French film distribution in 1945, was released on Soviet screens in... 1969. As a result, the mass Soviet audience perceived it as archaic, and the film was watched by an insignificant number of viewers for the Soviet film distribution of those years: 2.2 million.

But the melodrama *Carmen* by Christian-Jacques (4.3 million viewers) ended up in Soviet film distribution after only... ten years of its production – in 1954.

Top box office leaders in France in 1946 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1946 attracted from 3.6 million to 6.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1946, 50 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” of the 1946 box office was diverse.

Compared to 1945, the number of French films in theatrical release in 1946 increased sharply. At the same time, as before, films of entertainment genres dominated, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by famous directors Jean Delannoy, René Clément, Jean Cocteau, André Cayatte and others.

As a result, only one film from the French repertoire of 1946 was released into cinema distribution in the USSR: René Clément's drama *Battle on the Rails* (*La Bataille du rail*).

Top box office leaders in France in 1947 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1947 attracted from 3.6 million to 8.6 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1947, 39 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the "golden ten" box office of 1947 was diverse.

Despite the fact that the military drama *Heavenly Battalion* (*Le Bataillon du ciel*) became the leader of the French film distribution in 1947, in general, as before, films of entertainment genres dominated, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by famous directors Henri-Georges Clouzot, Claude Autant-Lara, René Clair, André Cayatte and others.

As a result, only one film from the French film repertoire of 1947 made it onto Soviet screens (in 1955): *Antoine and Antoinette* (*Antoine et Antoinette*) by Jacques Becker.

Top box office leaders in France in 1948 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1948 attracted from 3.2 million to 6.1 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1948, 47 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the "golden ten" of the 1948 box office was diverse, but most of all there were comedies.

The leader of the French film box office in 1948 was the film adaptation of Stendhal's *The Parma Monastery* (*La Chartreuse de Parme*) with Gérard Philipe in the leading male role.

This film hit the USSR cinema screens in 1953, and its director, Christian-Jacques, became the darling of the Soviet box office for a long time.

In general, as before, the French film box office in 1948 was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by famous directors Christian-Jacques (two films), Jean Dréville (two films), Jean Delannoy, Gilles Grangier and others.

From the top ten leaders of the French film distribution in 1948, *The Parma Monastery* (*La Chartreuse de Parme*) (in 1953) and *Clochemerle* (in 1950 under the name *Scandal in Clochemerle*) were released on the screens of USSR cinemas.

The melodrama *The Parma Monastery* attracted 6.1 million viewers in France (the equivalent of approximately 30 million Soviet viewers). This picture attracted approximately the same number of viewers in the USSR: 26.6 million.

The comedy *Clochemerle* was not so successful on Soviet screens (most likely, it could not withstand the competition with "trophy" films). In France, it attracted 5 million spectators to cinema halls (analogous to 25 million Soviet spectators), and in the USSR (in 1950) – 8.6 million spectators in the first year of demonstration.

In 1953-1956, two more films from the French film distribution repertoire of 1948 were shown on Soviet screens:

– *Ruy Blaz* (titled *Dangerous Similarities*). In France, this picture attracted an audience of 2.4 million viewers (analogous to 12 million Soviet viewers), and in the USSR it was much larger: 20.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

– *L'Idol*. In France, this film attracted an audience of 1.2 million viewers (unfortunately, there is no data on the Soviet film distribution of this film in 1956).

In total, 4 films from the repertoire of French films of 1948 were released in Soviet film distribution in different years.

Top box office leaders in France in 1949 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1949 attracted from 2.6 million to 6.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1949, 56 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark.

Comedies dominated the genre spectrum of the leaders in the "golden ten" box office of 1949.

The leader of the French film box office in 1949 was Jacques Tati's comedy *Festive Day* (*Jour de fête*).

In general, as before, the French film box office in 1949 was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by famous directors Jacques Tati, Henri-Georges Clouzot, Henri Decoin and others. The films of Julien Duvivier and Jean-Paul Le Chanois came quite close to this top ten.

It is interesting to note that the top ten leaders in the French box office included two comedies with the participation of Fernandel.

Of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1949, not a single film was able to reach the screens of the USSR.

In total, only three French films from the 1949 repertoire were shown at the Soviet box office at different times: the comedy *School for Idlers* (*L'École buissonnière*) by Jean-Paul Le Chanois, the drama *Behind Bars / At the Walls of Malapaga* (*Au-delà des grilles / Le mura di Malapaga*) by René Clément and *Dawn* (*Le Point du jour*) by Louis Daquin.

Top box office leaders in France in 1950 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1950 attracted from 2.7 million to 6.7 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1950, 60 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” of film distribution in 1950 was diverse, but in general, as before, films of entertainment genres dominated on French screens in 1950, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten leaders in French film distribution included films by famous directors André Cayatte, Jean-Paul Le Chanois, Jean Delannoy and others. The attendance of films by Marcel Carné, René Clair, and André Hunebelle was very close to this top ten.

It is interesting to note that the top ten leaders at the French box office included two comedies with the participation of Fernandel and two comedies with the participation of Bourvil.

Of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1950, not a single film was able to reach the screens of the USSR.

In total, only three French films from the 1950 repertoire were shown at the Soviet box office at different times: the drama *Prelude to Glory* (*Prélude à la gloire*), the comedy *Casimir* with Fernandel, and the most famous film by Jean Cocteau, *Orpheus* (*Orphée*) (with Jean Marais in the title role).

But if the first two films were released in Soviet film distribution in the 1950s, *Orpheus* was significantly delayed: it was released on USSR screens only in the fall of 1988...

Top box office leaders in France in 1951 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1951 attracted from 2.6 million to 5.7 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1951, 50 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

A striking proof of the active attendance of French films in 1951 was that the completely unentertaining film by Robert Bresson – *The Diary of a Country Priest* (*Journal d'un curé de campagne*) – attracted 2.2 million viewers at the box office. And this despite the fact that none of R. Bresson's masterpieces in the 1960–1980s was able to attract more than 300 thousand spectators to cinema screens...

In the genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” of the 1951 box office, comedies predominated. And in general, as before, the French box office was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

It is interesting to note that the top ten leaders at the French box office were again included in two comedies with the participation of Fernandel.

Of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1951, not a single film managed to reach the screens of the USSR.

In total, only two French films from the 1951 repertoire were shown in Soviet distribution (in 1951–1955): *Address Unknown* (*Sans laisser d'adresse*) by Jean-Paul Le Chanois and *Shadow and Light* (*Ombre et lumière*) by Henri Calef.

Top box office leaders in France in 1952 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1952 attracted from 3.3 million to 12.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1952, 46 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1952 was diverse, but in general, as before, the French film box office was dominated by films of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

The top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1952 included films by Julien Duvivier (*The small world of Don Camillo / Le Petit Monde de don Camillo*: 12,8 million viewers, first place in the box-office), Christian-Jacques, René Clément, René Clair and other famous French directors.

When viewed from the 21st century, it seems completely incredible that the legendary film by Christian-Jacques *Fanfan la Tulipe* (6.7 million viewers) ended up in third place at the box office in France, giving way, for example, of the long-forgotten film operetta *Imperial Violets (Violettes impériales)* (8,1 million viewers)...

It is also interesting to note that the top ten leaders at the French box office included two comedies with the participation of Fernandel and two films with the participation of Gerard Philipe.

From the films of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1952, three films appeared on Soviet screens: *Fanfan la Tulipe*, *Forbidden Games (Jeux interdits)* and *Night Beauties (Les Belles de nuit)*.

The sparkling *Fanfan la Tulipe* by Christian-Jacques was released on the screens of the USSR in 1955, and the drama *Forbidden Games* by René Clément – only more than twenty years later – in 1973.

The distribution success of *Fanfan la Tulipe* (taking into account the difference in the population of the countries) in the USSR was quite comparable to that of France.

If *Forbidden Games* had been released on Soviet screens in the 1950s, perhaps their success would also have been considerable, but in Soviet film distribution in 1973 this film was modest: 4.4 million viewers.

As for the exquisite *Night Beauties* by René Clair, they apparently frightened the Soviet censors of the 1950s with erotic motifs, although from the point of view of today (and not only) the picture captivates viewers with its tactful chastity... But, alas, this picture was released onto USSR cinema screens only in... December 1989.

Of the French films of 1952 that were not included in the “golden” ten, two more films were shown on USSR screens (in 1953–1954): the comedy *Mr. Taxi (Monsieur Taxi)* and the melodrama *There Were Five (Ils étaient cinq)*.

In total, 5 films from the repertoire of French films of 1952 were released on USSR screens in different years.

Top box office leaders in France in 1953 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1953 attracted from 3.6 million to 7.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1953, 52 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1953 was diverse, but in general, as before, the French film box office was dominated by films of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by Julien Duvivier, Henri-Georges Clouzot, André Hunebelle, Jacques Tati, Henri Verneuil, Christian-Jacques and other famous French directors.

It is also interesting to note that the top ten leaders at the French box office once again included two comedies with the participation of Fernandel, who, undoubtedly, was the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s...

The leading comedy at the French film box office in 1953 (7.4 million viewers) *Return of Don Camillo (Le Retour de Don Camillo / Il ritorno di Don Camillo)* was not purchased for Soviet screens, apparently due to the benevolent interpretation of the image of the priest.

But the legendary drama by Henri-Georges Clouzot, *The Wages of Fear* (*Le Salaire de la peur*) (6.9 million viewers), which was in second place at the box office, was released in Soviet mass distribution quite quickly: its showing in cinemas in the USSR began on January 28, 1955.

The rest of the films from the top ten leaders in French film distribution bypassed the screens of the USSR...

At the same time, five more films from the French film repertoire of 1953 were released on Soviet screens (in 1954-1958): *Thérèse Raquin*, *Julietta*, *Call of Destiny* (*L'Appel du destin*), *Midnight Lovers* (*Broken Dreams*) (*Les Amants de minuit*) and *Women's Love* (*L'Amour d'une femme*).

In total, 6 films from the repertoire of French films of 1953 were released on USSR screens in different years.

Top box office leaders in France in 1954 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1954 attracted from 4.0 million to 7.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1954, 57 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the "golden ten" box office of 1954 was diverse. In general, as before, the French film distribution was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by Robert Verneuil, Jean-Paul Le Chanois, Jacques Becker, Claude Autant-Lara, Henri Verneuil, André Hunebelle, and other famous French directors.

It is also interesting to note that the top ten leaders at the French box office for a year in a row included two comedies with the participation of Fernandel...

Due to the fact that by the mid-1950s the screening of so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) in the USSR was completed, in the second half of the 1950s more new European films, including French ones, began to be released in Soviet cinemas.

Thus, from the top ten leaders of the French film distribution of 1954, three films were bought and shown in mass Soviet film distribution: *The Count of Monte Cristo* (*Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*) by Robert Verneuil, *Papa, Mama, the Maid and Me* (*Papa, maman, la bonne et moi*) by Jean-Paul Le Chanois and *Red and Black* (*Le Rouge et le Noir*) by Claude Autant-Lara.

True, if the films of Le Chanois and Autant-Lara were released promptly in Soviet cinemas – in 1955, then *The Count of Monte Cristo* had to wait until 1961 for showing on Soviet screens.

Taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and France, the films *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Red and Black* were watched by approximately the same number of viewers.

In total, 4 films from the repertoire of French films of 1954 were released on USSR screens in different years. The fourth was the comedy *Mademoiselle Nitouche* with Fernandel, which was released in Soviet cinemas in 1961.

Top box office leaders in France in 1955 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1955 attracted from 3.4 million to 5.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1955, 60 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre range of the leaders of the "golden ten" box office of 1955 was diverse, although in general comedies predominated. As before, the French film distribution was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by Sacha Guitry, René Clair, Jean Renoir, Jean Delannoy, Jean-Paul Le Chanois, Henri-Georges Clouzot and other famous French directors.

At the same time, for the first time in several years, not a single comedy with the participation of Fernandel entered the top ten leaders of the French box office...

The continuation of the comedy by Jean-Paul Le Chanois *Daddy, Mommy, the Maid and Me* (*Papa, maman, la bonne et moi*) – *Daddy, Mommy, My Wife and Me* (*Papa, maman, ma femme et moi*) (6th place in the French box office in 1955: 3.8 million viewers) was successfully released on USSR screens in 1959. Another film by Jean-Paul Le Chanois, *The Runaways* (*Les Evadés*) (5th place at the French box office in 1955: 3.8 million viewers) appeared on the screens of the USSR even faster: from November 21, 1955. *Men in White* (*Les Hommes en blanc*) (7th place at the

French box office in 1955: 3.7 million viewers) were released in Soviet box office a little later – from February 11, 1957.

But with other leaders of the French film distribution in 1955 it turned out differently.

One can also understand the political reasons why the 1955 French box office triumph *Napoléon* (5.4 million viewers) was not to the taste of the Soviet purchasing commission.

But the famous Great Maneuvers (*Les Grandes Manœuvres*) by René Clair (5.3 million viewers and second place in the French film box office in 1955) appeared in mass Soviet release only in 1969. And the no less famous *French Cancan* (3rd place in the French box office in 1955: 4 million viewers), in general, in... 1989!

In total, from the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1955, five films were released in Soviet distribution in different years.

Of the films that were not included in the top ten leaders of the French film distribution, the melodrama *Days of Love* (*Giorni d'amore / Jours de amour*), a joint French-Italian production with the participation of Marina Vladi and Marcello Mastroianni, was also shown on the screens of the USSR.

So, in different years, 6 films from the repertoire of French films of 1955 were released on the screens of the USSR.

Top box office leaders in France in 1956 (among French films)

As before, the French film box office in 1956 was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1956 attracted from 3.8 million to 6.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1956 was diverse, although in general comedies predominated.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1956, 71 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark without any problems.

Even completely devoid of entertainment, Robert Bresson's philosophical drama *Condemned to Death Escaped* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*) attracted 2.8 million viewers at the French box office (a record for R. Bresson's work), while taking quite a high place – twenty-first place in attendance... By the way, when was this picture In 1963, it appeared in Soviet film distribution, then (taking into account the five-fold difference in the population of the USSR and France), it did not gain any tangible success, attracting 3.4 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

The top ten box office leaders included films by Jean Delannoy, Claude Autant-Lara, René Clément, Christian-Jacques and other famous French directors.

At the same time, after a year-long break, a comedy with the participation of Fernandel again entered the top ten leaders of the French box office... But his main rival in terms of comedies of the 1950s, Bourvil, had two films in the top ten box office of the year (*Through Paris / La Traversée de Paris*) and *The Mexican Singer / Le Chanteur de Mexico*).

The 1956 box office year was truly triumphant for the rising star of the French screen, Brigitte Bardot: two films with her participation (*And God... Created Woman / Et Dieu... créa la femme*) by Roger Vadim and *The Shrew / Cette sacrée gamine* by Michel Boisrond) entered the top ten favorites, grossing approximately 4 million each. viewers each. At the same time, Roger Vadim's film may have become the trigger for the subsequent erotic film revolution that took place on the Western screen in the 1960s and 1970s. And Brigitte Bardot became an icon of the French style of emancipation on the screen for at least ten years.

It is clear that both of these films, due to their unacceptable frivolity for the USSR, were not included in the Soviet film distribution...

It is clear that the interpretation of Russia in the plot of the leader of the French film distribution: the film adaptation of Jules Verne's novel *Michel Strogoff* (6.7 million viewers) was liked by strict Soviet censors no more than the frivolous films with Bardot, so the film distribution of the USSR also did without this film.

By the way, this was practically the only French film on a Russian theme that ever, since 1945, managed to top the top ten box office films of the year.

But the “silver medalist” of the French box office – *Notre Dame de Paris* by Jean Delannoy with Gina Lollobrigida and Anthony Quinn, although with a decent delay (in 1961), still made it to Soviet cinemas. Apparently, the authority of the spectacularly filmed novel by Victor Hugo had an effect.

In the same 1961, René Clément's melodrama *Gervaise* was released on Soviet screens (6th place in the French film box office in 1956: 4.1 million viewers).

By all Soviet standards, Christian-Jacques's progressive and democratic film *If the Boys of the World...* (*Si tous les gars du monde...*), 10th place in the French box office in 1956: 3.8 million viewers) was released in USSR cinemas much earlier – on April 8, 1957.

The documentary film *In a World of Silence* (*Le Monde du silence*) by Jacques-Yves Cousteau and Louis Malle was also shown on Soviet screens. In France, it attracted a record 4.6 million viewers for documentary cinema (which roughly corresponded to 23 million Soviet viewers). But the distribution of this film in the USSR in 1959 was much more modest: 5.4 million viewers (although this figure, of course, exceeded the average distribution figures for documentary films in the USSR).

In total, four films from the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1956 were released on Soviet screens.

The following films from the French cinema of 1956 were also released in Soviet cinemas over the years: *The New Don Juan* (*Don Juan / El amor de Don Juan / Il Grande seduttore*) by John Berry, *Condemned to Death Escaped* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé*) by Robert Bresson, *The Adventures of Till Epiègle* (*Les Aventures de Till l'Epiègle*) by Gerard Philip and Joris Ivens, *The Fairy Unlike others* (*Une fée pas comme les autres*) by Jean Tourane, *The Best Years* (*La meilleure part*) by Yves Allégret, *The Witch* (*La Sorcière*) by André Michel, *The Roof* (*Il Tetto / Le Toit*) by Vittorio De Sica, *Main Street* (*Calle Mayor / Grand-rue*) by Juan Antonio Bardem, *The Red Ball* (*Le ballon rouge*) by Albert Lamorisse.

At the same time, the greatest success in the USSR fell to the melodrama *The Witch* (based on the story *Olesya* by A. Kuprin) with Marina Vladi and Maurice Ronet in the leading roles.

In France, according to the results of attendance, this film took a rather modest 48th place (1.6 million viewers). But in the Soviet film distribution in 1959, *The Witch* attracted 36.5 million viewers and became a kind of cult for many years. And many Soviet girls aspired to be like the movie star Marina Vladi, who instantly turned into one of the most popular foreign actresses in the USSR.

In total, 13 films from the repertoire of French films of 1956 were released on USSR screens in different years.

Top box office leaders in France in 1957 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1957 attracted from 3.0 million to 4.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1957, 66 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1957 was diverse, although in general comedies predominated. In general, as before, the French film distribution was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by René Clair, Jacques Becker, Yves Champy, André Hunebelle and other famous French directors.

Traditionally for the French film distribution of the 1950s, the top ten leaders of the French box office once again included a comedy with the participation of Fernandel, who, undoubtedly, was the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s...

But the time of Louis de Funès has not yet come: the comedy with his participation – *Like a Hair in Soup* (*Comme un cheveu sur la soupe*) – although it attracted 1.8 million viewers in 1957, at the end of the year it took 35th place in the box office, quite far from the leaders...

Of the top ten leaders at the French box office, only the third-placed film by René Clair *Port de Lila* (3.9 million viewers), which was released in the USSR under the title *On the Outskirts of Paris* in 1959, made it onto Soviet screens...

As for three more films from the French box office champions of 1957 – *Folies-Bergère* by Henri Decoin (fourth place at the box office: 3.5 million viewers), *La Parisienne* by Michel Boisrond (fifth place at the box office: 3.5 million viewers) and *Casino de Paris* directed by André Hunebelle (seventh place at the box office: 3.0 million viewers), they were clearly considered too frivolous by the Soviet censors, especially since Brigitte Bardot looked clearly immodest in *La Parisienne*...

Probably, *The Portuguese Washerwomen* (*Les Lavandières du Portugal*) (eighth place at the box office: 3 million viewers) did not seem very modest to the “responsible comrades”, although the title seemed to fully fit the Soviet ideological standards of the “oppressed working class”...

But here's a paradox: the same "thaw" censors were not at all embarrassed by the profession of the main character of the famous Italian-French film by Federico Fellini *Nights of Cabiria* (*Le Notti di Cabiria / Les Nuits de Cabiria*) (17th place in the French film box office in 1957: 2.6 million viewers).

With a relatively slight delay (in 1960) *Nights of Cabiria* was released on Soviet screens, attracting almost two tens of millions of viewers (and in 1971, "at the request of the workers," this film was also re-released in the USSR).

Two more films from the French repertoire of 1957 were also released in Soviet film distribution: the comedy *Hello, Doctor* (*Bonjour Toubib*) and the melodrama *Dear Friend* (*Bel Ami*).

The film adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's novel was relatively modest in France (0.6 million viewers, which corresponded to approximately 3 million Soviet viewers), while in the USSR its audience amounted to over two tens of millions.

So, in different years, 4 films from the repertoire of French films of 1957 were released on the screens of the USSR.

Top box office leaders in France in 1958 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1958 attracted from 2.9 million to 9.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1958, 50 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre range of the leaders of the "golden ten" of 1958 was diverse, but this time dramas predominated.

However, in general, as before, the French film distribution was dominated by films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders included films by Jean-Paul Le Chanois, Marcel Carné, Jacques Tati, Denys de La Patellière, Christian-Jacques, Claude Autant-Lara, Jean Delannoy and other famous French directors.

Traditionally for the French film distribution of the 1950s, the top ten leaders of the French box office once again included a comedy with the participation of Fernandel, who, undoubtedly, was the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s... The top ten also included a film with the participation of Bourvil.

But it was the 1958 release that marked a triumphant return to the ranks of audience favorites for Jean Gabin: four (!!!!) films with his participation (*Les Misérables* by Jean-Paul Le Chanois, *The Powers That Be / Les Grandes Familles* by Denys de La Patellière, *In the Case of Misfortune / En cas de malheur* by Claude Autant-Lara and *Maigret Lays a Net / Maigret tend un piège* by Jean Delannoy) entered the top ten of French film distribution.

It is interesting that *Les Misérables* and *The Powers That Be* very quickly – in 1959 and 1960 – appeared on the "thaw" Soviet screen. Apparently, this was due to respect for the primary sources – the novels of Victor Hugo and Maurice Druon, whose work was interpreted very positively in the USSR.

It should be noted that the "thaw", which was at its peak, brought significant changes to the purchasing policy of Soviet film officials: of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1958, exactly half were shown on USSR cinema screens (*Les Misérables*, *The Powers That Be / Les Grandes Familles*, *My Uncle / Mon oncle*, *The law is the law / La Loi, c'est la loi*, *Without a family / Sans famille*). And not ten or twenty years later, but precisely at the turn of the 1960s.

However, given that the population of the USSR was five times larger than the population of France, it turned out that "in per capita terms" *Les Misérables* was a much greater success with the French: 9.9 million viewers corresponded to approximately 50 million Soviet viewers, whereas in reality in the USSR this film was watched by 23.1 million viewers.

Things were somewhat better with the sparkling comedy by Christian-Jacques *The Law is the Law*. In France in 1958 it was watched by 3.4 million viewers (analogous to the Soviet 17 million viewers), and in the USSR in 1960: 12.5 million viewers...

However, this is not surprising: for the French, the novel *Les Misérables* is approximately the same as for the Russians the novel *War and Peace*, which is proven by the consistent audience success in France of the film adaptations of *Les Misérables* in subsequent decades...

But André Cayatte's drama *The Double Door Mirror* (*Le Miroir à deux faces*), which took 11th place in the French film box office in 1958, was released on the Soviet screen (under the title "Phantom Happiness") nine years later – in 1967...

Tenth place in the French film box office in 1958 was taken by Henri Decoin's drama *The Cat (La Chatte)* (2.9 million viewers). And here the reasons for its rejection by the Soviet purchasing commission are completely clear: the film takes place during the Nazi occupation of France in the first half of the 1940s, but the Germans and French are, in principle, shown here as people of the same circle, respectful of each other...

Why? Yes, because, according to the Western concept of the Cold War, on the Western Front there was a war between representatives of the civilized world among themselves, and on the Eastern Front there was a war between representatives of the civilized West and barbarians...

Yes, there were exceptions to this rule. But in general, the well-known thesis was observed: "The West is the West..."

Based on this, the plots for Western films of the Cold War era were selected accordingly, that is, Nazi characters were depicted in situations of "maximum favored nation".

For example, in *The Cat* (France, 1958), an intelligent Nazi officer in occupied Paris fell in love with a charming French woman associated with the underground...

Thus, Western cinema of the Cold War era created a persistent stereotype about "good Germans" who, by the will of bad Hitler, were forced to fight not only with Russian barbarians, but also, alas, with good French, Americans and British...

Is it possible to say that the stereotypes of "another war" in Western cinema are forever a thing of the past? Alas, in my opinion, the answer can only be negative. West is West...

And in the films of the 21st century, the Western screen as a whole continues to use the same stereotypes. As for the image of Russia, even now on the Western screen it in most cases appears as a barbaric country with laws, customs and characters incomprehensible to the Western mentality...

On the other hand, the space successes of the USSR in the second half of the 1950s made such a strong impression on the French that in 1958, a comedy quite friendly towards the Soviet people called *On Foot, on Horse and in Sputnik (A pied, à cheval et en spoutnik)* by Jean Dréville was released on French screens (24th place in the French film box office in 1958 and 2.2 million viewers). However, due to the "cranberry" image of Russia and Russians, this film was not released in the Soviet Union.

From the general picture of good film adaptations and traditionally entertaining "daddy" films at the French box office in 1958, two outstanding films by Louis Malle with Jeanne Moreau in the leading female roles stood out: *Lovers (Les Amants)* (15th place and 2.6 million viewers) and *Lift to the scaffold (Ascenseur pour l'échafaud)* (30th place and 1.9 million viewers). *Lovers* never made it to Soviet mass film distribution. But the masterfully made noir style *Lift to the scaffold* arrived, but... in 1981. And the mass Soviet audience, apparently considering this black and white picture too archaic, was in no hurry to fill the cinema halls...

Claude Chabrol's debut film *Beau Serge* became a sensation of sorts. It was shot for very modest money, but in 1958 it attracted 1.1 million viewers and took a place in the middle of the box office list of French films.

Soon this film by Claude Chabrol will be classified as part of the so-called French "new wave", which will bring fresh breath to traditional genre cinema. But the banner of the "new wave," of course, will be Jean-Luc Godard's film *Breathless (À bout de souffle)*, which will be released in France on March 16, 1960...

True, the French "new wave" (including all the films of Jean-Luc Godard) practically did not make it into Soviet film distribution... One of the rare exceptions was, for example, Francois Truffaut's film *The 400 Blows (Les Quatre Cents Coups)*, which was allowed to appear on the screens of the USSR...

From the repertoire of French films of 1958, the Soviet film distribution (in 1959–1960) also included the drama *Tamango*, the comedy *Bourgeois in the Nobility (Le Bourgeois gentilhomme)*, the fairy tale *A Kite Around the World (Le Cerf-volant du bout du monde)* and (ten years late) the melodrama *Montparnasse 19* with Gerard Philipe... All these films were shown in Soviet cinemas with greater success than in France...

Particular success in the Soviet film distribution fell to the funny comedy with Louis de Funès, *If Not Caught, Not a Thief (Ni vu... ni connu...)*: in France in 1958 it was watched by 2.5 million viewers (analogous to 12 million Soviet viewers), and in the USSR in 1961 this The film was watched by nearly 28 million viewers...

So, 12 films from the repertoire of French films of 1958 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Top box office leaders in France in 1959 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1959 attracted from 3.3 million to 8.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The 1950s were truly the golden age of French film distribution. So in 1959, 57 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1959 was diverse, although in general comedies predominated.

Despite the fact that even in the French film distribution of 1959, outstanding and largely new in language and material films appeared by the then young directors François Truffaut (*The 400 Blows*) and Claude Chabrol (*Cousins*), French screens in 1959, like Previously, they were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres, in which the favorites of the French public starred.

The top ten box office leaders of 1959 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Henri Verneuil, Claude Autant-Lara, Christian-Jacques, Roger Vadim, Gilles Grangier, Denys de La Patellière and other famous French directors.

However, two innovative films unexpectedly made their way into the top ten: the autobiographical drama *The 400 Blows (Les Quatre Cents Coups)* by a recent film critic and debut director – François Truffaut (5th place in the French box office in 1959 and 4.1 million viewers) and the exotic parable of Marcel Camus *Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro)*, distinguished by its bright color and musical design (7th place in the French film box office in 1959 and 3.7 million viewers).

The number of viewers who watched F. Truffaut’s modest black-and-white, starless drama *The 400 Blows* is still astonishing today: not a single subsequent film by this director, including the very successful drama *The Last Metro (Le Dernier Métro)* at the box office, could gather such an audience!

Suffice it to say that the film *The 400 Blows* significantly outpaced the popular comedy with Brigitte Bardot *Would You Like to Dance with Me? (Voulez-vous danser avec moi?)* at the French box office in 1959 (11th place in the French box office in 1959 and 3.2 million viewers)...

Black Orpheus also became the highest-grossing work of Marcel Camus. After the Cannes triumph of 1959 (Palme d’Or), great hopes were pinned on M. Camus, but, alas, he never lived up to them...

It should be noted here that at first *Black Orpheus* was planned to be purchased for screening in Soviet cinemas. But here a Note from a department of the Central Committee of Communist Party dated December 10, 1960, “On serious shortcomings in the practice of selecting films from capitalist countries for showing on the screens of the Soviet Union”, intervened in the distribution fate of this film, where, in particular, it was noted that “as a result of insufficiently clear the organization of the work of the (purchasing) commission turned out to be recommended for the acquisition of films that were unacceptable to us. In 1959–1960. The Central Committee of Communist Party was forced to reject 9 films approved by the commission. Among them, for example, is the French-Italian film (with the participation of Brazil) *Black Orpheus*, which gives an incorrect impression of the life of blacks in Brazil. In this picture, blacks are depicted essentially from a colonialist position, as primitive “children of nature”, in the grip of blind biological instincts and religious ecstasy” (*Ideologicheskaya...*, 1998: 265).

It is clear that after such a note from the Central Committee of Communist Party, *Black Orpheus* did not appear on Soviet screens, leaving for the USSR audience only the famous melody (surprisingly similar to Russian melody “Coachman, don’t drive the horses...”), which was sung by many pop music fans in the 1960s music...

Traditionally for the 1950s, the top ten leaders at the French box office of 1959 once again included a comedy (*The Cow and the Prisoner / La Vache et le Prisonnier*): first place and 8.8 million viewers) with the participation of Fernandel, who, undoubtedly, was the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s.

In second place was the comedy *The Green Mare (La Jument verte)* (5.3 million viewers) with the participation of Bourvil.

The 1959 box office was again successful for Jean Gabin: two films at once with his participation: *The Tramp Archimedes (Archimède le clochard)* by Gilles Grangier (6th place in the French box office and 4.1 million viewers) and *Prairie Street (Rue des Prairies)* by Denys de La Patellière (6th place at the French box office and 4.1 million viewers) 1st place in the French box office and 3.4 million viewers).

Brigitte Bardot, who became a superstar of the European screen after Roger Vadim's film *And God Created Woman (Et Dieu... créa la femme)*, continued to attract the public.

Christian-Jacques's comedy *Babette Goes to War (Babette s'en va-t-en guerre)*, where Bardot played the leading female role, took an honorable third place in the French film box office in 1959 (4.7 million viewers), and another comedy with her participation, *Do you want to dance with me? (Voulez-vous danser avec moi?)* Michel Boisrond – ended up in eleventh position.

Of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1959, three films were eventually released on Soviet screens (and quite quickly in 1960): *Babette Goes to War*, *The Four Hundred Blows* and *Prairie Street*. And this despite the very frivolous nature of *Babette Goes to War*, not to mention the “world's oldest” profession of the main character performed by Bardot!

In French film distribution, *Babette Goes to War* attracted 4.7 million viewers in 1959, which corresponded to approximately 23.5 million Soviet viewers. In the USSR in 1960, *Babette...* attracted 22.7 million viewers, that is, we can say that the interest of this comedy by Christian-Jacques in both countries was absolutely the same.

By the way, the purchase of *Babette...* caused outrage in the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. In a note from a department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, dated December 10, 1960, “On serious shortcomings in the practice of selecting films from capitalist countries for display on the screens of the Soviet Union”, it was noted that many members of the purchasing commission “expressed sharply critical remarks on the French film *Babette Goes to War*. Nevertheless, this film was presented for purchase” ([Ideologicheskaya..., 1998: 264](#)).

Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party also noted that in the USSR, “film distribution organizations still set the circulation of films from capitalist countries, guided mainly by commercial interests, losing sight of the ideological side of the matter. As a result, those American, English and French films in which the bourgeois way of life is shown in an embellished light are released in higher circulations. Circulations of such bourgeois films, imbued with ideas unacceptable to us, such as *Roman Holiday* – 1157 copies, *12 Girls and a Man* – 1304 copies, *Mr. Pitkin Behind Enemy Lines (The Square Peg)* – 1350 copies, *Babette Goes to War* – 1367 copies exceeded the circulation of a number of Soviet films and films from other countries of the socialist camp that have serious ideological and artistic significance” ([Ideologicheskaya..., 1998: 258-262](#)).

The film with Jean Gabin *Prairie Street* in 1959 attracted 3.4 million viewers at the French box office, which corresponded to approximately 17 million Soviet viewers. In the USSR in 1960, *Prairie Street* attracted 17.9 million viewers, that is, again there is a coincidence of interests of the audiences of the two countries.

But what happened with the film *The Four Hundred Blows (Les Quatre Cents Coups)* was completely different: by a kind of irony of fate, this picture by F. Truffaut attracted the same number of viewers at the box office in France and the USSR: 4.1 million, but this despite the fact that the population of the USSR was at that time five times more than in France... Apparently, the modest black and white autobiographical drama of Francois Truffaut seemed boring to Soviet viewers for the most part...

Among the films of the French film distribution in 1959, which were not included in the top ten leaders of attendance, the psychological dramas *Marie-October* by Julien Duvivier, *General Della Rovere* by Roberto Rossellini and *The Verdict (La Sentence)* by Jean Valère were widely shown in the Soviet Union in 1960-1961.

Both the French and Soviet press wrote a lot about one of the key paintings of the “new wave” – *Hiroshima, my love (Hiroshima mon amour)* by Alain Resnais. However, this complex anti-war drama was not included in the USSR film distribution. Most likely, because of the “slippery” memories of the main character for Soviet censorship about her love affair with the German occupier in the 1940s...

So, in different years, 6 films from the repertoire of French films of 1959 were released on the screens of the USSR.

Top box office leaders in France in 1960 among French films

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1960 attracted from 3.2 million to 5.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

During the 1960s, attendance at French films generally continued to remain at fairly high levels. Thus, in 1960, 42 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark (although this was less than in previous years).

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1960 was diverse, although in general dramas predominated.

Despite the fact that in the French film distribution of 1960 there appeared outstanding and in many respects new films in language and material – *Breathless (À bout de souffle)* by Jean-Luc Godard (this innovative film soon became the banner of the “new wave”): 16th place in film distribution and 2.2 million viewers; *Moderato Cantabile* by Peter Brook: 48th place in box office and 1.0 million viewers; *Shoot the Piano Player (Tirez sur le pianiste)* by Francois Truffaut: 50th place in box office and 1.0 million viewers; *Zazie in the Metro (Zazie dans le métro)* by Louis Malle: 54th place at the box office and 0.9 million viewers; *Cuties (Les Bonnes Femmes)* by Claude Chabrol: 77th place in box office and 0.5 million viewers, French cinemas, as before, were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders of 1960 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: André Hunebelle (two costume adventure films with the participation of Jean Marais), Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jean Dréville, André Cayatte, Gilles Grangier, Jean Delannoy and other famous French directors.

For the first time in many years, the top ten leaders of the French box office did not include a single comedy with the participation of Fernandel, who was undoubtedly the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s...

In 1960, Bourvil took over the championship from Fernandel: three films with his participation – *The Hunchback (Le Bossu)*, *The Captain (Le Capitain)* and *Noël Fortune (Fortunat)* – were included in the top ten box office champions.

The 1960 box office year was very successful for Jean Marais and Jean Gabin: two films each with their participation entered the top ten of the French box office.

Brigitte Bardot was still at the peak of popularity: *The Truth (La Vérité)* by Henri-Georges Clouzot, in which she played the main female role, was in second place among the box office leaders of the year (5.7 million viewers).

Of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1960, four films were eventually released on Soviet screens (albeit some with a large time gap): *The Hunchback* and *The Captain* by André Hunebelle, *Normandie Niemen* by Jean Dréville and *Fortunat* by Alex Joffe.

At the same time, the military drama *Normandie Niemen* was a joint production with the USSR and was released in the Soviet Union with maximum efficiency – from March 9, 1960, attracting 26.9 million viewers in the first year of demonstration. According to the results of film distribution in France, this film took sixth place and attracted 3.5 million viewers (analogous to 17.5 million Soviet viewers).

Fortunat also appeared on USSR cinema screens relatively quickly – on January 1, 1962.

But the adventure films of André Hunebelle and *The Hunchback* and *The Captain*, to put it mildly, were delayed in their release into Soviet film distribution: the mass Soviet audience was able to see them only twenty years later, in 1979.

Due to the fact that for Soviet censors there was essentially nothing seditious in either *The Hunchback* or *The Captain*, one can only assume that the French copyright holders in 1960 forked out large sums for the sale of these films, and therefore, in order to buy them cheaper, the USSR decided to wait two decades...

However, it is worth noting that even with a twenty-year delay, *The Captain* and *The Hunchback* were in the Soviet film distribution in 1979, as they say, “with a bang”: if in France in 1960 these films were watched from 4.9 million to 5.8 million viewers (analogous to 25 million – 29 million Soviet viewers), then in the USSR in the late 1970s these films were watched by from 30 million to 45 million viewers...

Here is what A.V. Karaganov (1915–2007) (who from 1965 to 1986 was the Secretary of the Board of the USSR Union of Cinematographers) said at a meeting at the Union of Cinematographers on July 8, 1976: “Sometimes we don’t buy films in their “youth” due to the high cost. For example, they wanted to buy *West Side Story*, but they asked for 750 thousand dollars. It turned out that for one film we had to spend as much as we would have to spend on buying 10 films” (Karaganov, 1976).

But it's easy to understand why *Crossing the Rhine* (*Le Passage du Rhin*) and *Dialogue of the Carmelites* (*Le Dialogue des Carmélites*) were not included in Soviet film distribution: the first was unacceptable because of the "pro-Western" interpretation of the Second World War, and the second because of its strong religious themes.

Further, everything is within the limits of the previous censorship and purchasing stereotypes: the film *The Frenchwoman and Love* (*La Française et l'Amour*) was considered too frivolous; in the melodrama *Katia* the Russian emperor was portrayed too positively, and in *Austerlitz* – the French emperor; in the famous *Burning Sun* (*Plein soleil*) by René Clément, the main negative character played by Alain Delon was too charming, etc.

As for the films of the "new wave", in the USSR they initially caused a sharply negative reaction from the film authorities due to their violation of traditional cinematic taboos, so this wave happily "made a noise" past (mass) Soviet screens.

Of the films of the French film distribution that were not included in the top ten, four more films appeared on the screens of the USSR (in 1961-1962): the adventure *Balloon Journey* (*Le voyage en ballon*), the drama *Embankment of the Morning Dawn* (*Quai du Point-du-Jour*), the melodrama *A Bachelor's Life / Careerists* (*Les Arrivistes / Trübe Wasser*) and the documentary *Unusual America* (*L'Amérique insolite*).

So, in different years, 8 films from the repertoire of French films of 1960 were released on the screens of the USSR.

Top box office leaders in France in 1961 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1961 attracted from 2.8 million to 4.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

During the 1960s, attendance at French films generally continued to remain at fairly high levels. Thus, in 1961, 41 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark (although this was slightly less than in previous years).

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the "golden ten" of 1961 was diverse, although in general costume adventure films predominated.

Despite the fact that even in 1961, films of the "new wave" continued to be shown in French cinemas: *A Woman is a Woman* (*Une femme est une femme*) by Jean-Luc Godard (64th place at the box office: 0.5 million viewers), *Dappers* (*Les Godelureaux*) by Claude Chabrol (86th place at the box office: 0.2 million viewers), etc., French cinemas, as before, were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres, starring the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders of 1961 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Denys de La Patellière, Bernard Borderie, Claude Autant-Lara, André Hunebelle, Jean Delannoy, Pierre Gaspard-Huit, Christian-Jacques, Roger Vadim and other famous French directors.

The 1961 release can be regarded as a triumph for Jean Marais: three costume films with his participation immediately entered the top ten box office leaders.

As in 1960, the top ten at the French box office did not include a single comedy starring Fernandel, who was undoubtedly the highest-grossing French actor of the 1950s...

But for the first time, a comedy with Louis de Funès (*La Belle Américaine*, 4th place and 4.1 million viewers) was in the top ten highest-grossing films at the French box office. The total triumphs of comedies with de Funès in the cinemas of France were still to come, but this success, of course, was not accidental, because by 1961, French audiences had already appreciated the funny manner of acting of this outstanding comedian.

It should be noted that the top ten in 1961 was dominated by colorful costume films: *The Three Musketeers* (*Les trois mousquetaires*) by Bernard Borderie (second place and 4.5 million viewers on average per episode), *The Count of Monte Cristo* (*Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*) by Claude Autant-Lara (3rd place and 4.5 million viewers), *Miracle of the Wolves* (*Le Miracle des loups*) by André Hunebelle (5th place and 3.8 million viewers), *The Princess of Cleves* (*La Princesse de Clèves*) by Jean Delannoy (7th place and 3.4 million viewers), *Le Capitaine Fracasse* by Pierre Gaspard-Huit (8th place and 3.1 million viewers).

The first place in box office receipts in French film distribution in 1961 was taken by the military adventure film *Taxi to Tobruk* (*Un taxi pour Tobrouk*) by Denys de La Patellière (4.9 million viewers), which turned out to be completely unacceptable for Soviet film distribution due to the fact that, in the course of the plot, the action which took place during the Second World War in North Africa, showed how, due to circumstances, a male friendship arose between French soldiers and a Nazi officer who was captured by them...

According to the established stable tradition, films of the “new wave” also found themselves outside of Soviet film distribution.

In 1961, the entire cinematic world was discussing the innovative film by Alain Robbe-Grillet and Alain Resnais *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'Année dernière à Marienbad*), which received the Lion of St. Mark's Gold at the Venice Film Festival, but the Soviet “purchasing” film censors considered it too elitist and abstruse, so only selected Soviet filmmakers (mostly at so-called “closed” screenings)...

As a result, from the top ten leaders of the French film distribution, three costume adventure films hit the screens of the USSR: *The Three Musketeers* by Bernard Borderie and *Miracle of the Wolves* by André Hunebelle, as well as the comedy *La Belle Américaine* with Louis de Funès in one of the main roles.

But if *The Three Musketeers* and *La Belle Américaine* appeared on the screens of the USSR with a relatively small delay (in 1963 and 1965), then *Miracle of the Wolves* (under the title *Secrets of the Burgundian Court*) – only two decades later: in 1980 year...

At the same time, the 4.5 million viewers collected by *The Three Musketeers* in France corresponded to approximately 22.5 viewers in the USSR, but in reality in the Soviet film distribution in 1963 there were much more of them – almost 37 million per episode.

But *La Belle Américaine*, apparently, did not make much of an impression on Soviet viewers. With 4.1 million viewers in France, one could expect that this film would attract two tens of millions of viewers at the Soviet box office. But in fact, based on the results of film distribution in the USSR in 1965, *La Belle Américaine* attracted only an audience of ten million.

But even the *Miracle of the Wolves*, which was twenty years late (3.8 million viewers in France: analogous to the Soviet 19 million viewers) in the Soviet film distribution in 1980, attracted 26.5 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

At first glance, it seems strange that in the Soviet film distribution of the 1960s there was not another film adaptation of Dumas's novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* (this time in the director's interpretation by Claude Autant-Lara), which in France, according to the results of attendance, was in third place (4.5 million viewers).

But ironically, it was in 1961 that the previous film adaptation of the same novel with Jean Marais in the title role was released into Soviet film distribution with a great delay, and the purchasing commission considered it unnecessary to show two *The Counts of Monte Cristo* in the USSR in a row...

Of the films released in France in 1961 that did not make it into the top ten, ten films (including films co-produced with Italy, Spain and Germany) of different genres were released on USSR screens (from 1962 to 1969): René Clair's comedy *All the Gold in the World* (*Tout l'or du monde*), drama *Rocco and His Brothers* (*Rocco e i suoi fratelli / Rocco et ses frères*) by Luchino Visconti, *It Was Night in Rome* (*Era notte a Roma / Les Évadés de la nuit*) by Roberto Rossellini, *Who are you, Doctor Sorge?* (*Qui êtes-vous M. Sorge?*) by Yves Ciampi, *Such a Long Absence* (*Une aussi longue absence*) by Henri Colpi, the tragicomedy *Everyone Goes Home* (*Tutti a casa / Grande pagaille*) by Luigi Comencini, the melodrama *Nude Maha* (*La Maja desnuda / La Maja nue*) by Henry Coster, the comedy *Leon Garros is Looking for a Friend* (*Vingt mille lieues sur la terre*) by M. Pagliero and *The Reluctant Agent* (*Es Muß nicht immer kaviar sein & Diesmal muß es Kaviar sein*) / *Top secret – C'est pas toujours du caviar*) by Geza von Radvany, the musical *One, two, three or Black tights* (*1-2-3-4 ou Les collants noirs*) by Terence Young.

One of these films (*Leon Garros is looking for a friend*) was a Franco-Soviet production, in the other (*It Was Night in Rome*) Sergei Bondarchuk played one of the main roles.

In France, the comedy *Leon Garros is looking for a friend* (it was shown there under the title *Twenty Thousand Leagues on Earth*), despite the participation of Tatyana Samoilova, who became popular in France after the triumph of the film *The Cranes Are Flying*, the French watched with moderate interest: 0.6 million viewers (analogous to 3 million Soviet viewers). But in the USSR, real success awaited her: in the same 1961, *Leon Garros...* attracted 20.4 million viewers to cinema halls.

And, on the contrary, Sergei Bondarchuk's participation in the war drama *It Was Night in Rome* apparently had almost no effect on the success of this film in Soviet film distribution. The figure of 3.4 million viewers in France would have been very successful, but for the USSR, whose population in 1963 was 223 million people, it was a failure...

Another film that featured a Soviet theme was the drama *Who are you, Doctor Sorge?*, which was based on the true story of the famous Soviet spy. In France, this picture at the 1961 box office

was the 25th most visited (1.7 million viewers), and in the USSR in 1964 it attracted an audience of forty million people in cinemas, and in 1985 it was even re-released.

The melodrama *Nude Maha* was an even greater success (compared to the attendance in France). In the French film distribution, this film was only 63rd (0.6 million viewers, which was analogous to 3 million viewers in the USSR). But, having appeared on Soviet screens seven years late, this picture in 1968 managed to attract almost 33 million viewers (which was comparable to the success of this film in Italy, of course, taking into account the difference in population).

So, 13 films from the repertoire of French films of 1961 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1961 (among French films)

Due to the fact that in the 1960s the number of French films with an audience of 1 million viewers and above began to gradually fall, starting in 1961, a noticeable group of film distribution outsiders began to form, that is, films that failed to attract even 200 thousand viewers. In 1961 there were 7 of them.

Among them were often not only films that were professionally weak, but also films of a high artistic level, including experimental ones.

However, low box office figures in France were not always an obstacle to their purchase for Soviet film distribution.

For example, the film about the ballet *One, Two, Three, or Black Tights* attracted only about 60 thousand spectators in France, which did not prevent the Soviet purchasing commission from purchasing it and releasing it on USSR screens five years later. True, the result of the distribution of this film in 1966 in the USSR was also very modest (by the standards of that time): only 2.2 million viewers...

The reason for the prompt release of Roberto Rossellini's war drama *It Was Night in Rome* into Soviet distribution was obvious: Sergei Bondarchuk played one of the roles in this film. Neither in France nor in the USSR did this drama enjoy noticeable success at the box office...

It should be noted here that if in joint productions with other countries the leading roles were not played by French cinema stars, their box office results in France were often modest (which happened, for example, with the film *It Was Night in Rome*)...

Top box office leaders in France in 1962 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1962 attracted from 2.1 million to 10.0 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1962, 39 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than in the 1950s.

The genre spectrum of the leaders in the "golden ten" box office of 1962 was diverse, although in general adventure films and comedies predominated.

Despite the fact that even in 1962, films of the "new wave" continued to be shown in French cinemas: *Jules and Jim (Jules et Jim)* by François Truffaut (24th place at the box office: 1.6 million viewers), *Cléo from Five to Seven (Cléo de 5 à 7)* by Agnès Varda (61st place at the box office: 0.6 million viewers), Jean-Luc Godard's *Living Your Life (Vivre sa vie)* (69th place at the box office: 0.5 million viewers), Claude Chabrol's *Eye of Evil (L'Œil du malin)* (87 1st place at the box office: 0.1 million viewers), etc. (according to the established stable tradition, films of the "new wave" were again excluded from Soviet film distribution), the cinema halls of France, as before, were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres in which favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders of 1962 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Yves Robert, Jean Dréville, Philippe de Broca, André Hunebelle, Roger Vadim, André Decoin, Henri Verneuil, Jean Renoir, Bernard Borderie and Alex Joffe.

The 1962 release can be regarded as a great success for Jean Marais and Jean-Paul Belmondo: two films with his participation immediately entered the top ten box office leaders.

The top ten also included films with the participation of Jean Gabin, Bourvil and Brigitte Bardot, but comedies with the participation of Fernandel and de Funès were not included in it this time.

It should be noted that among the top ten in 1962, as in 1961, colorful costume films dominated: *La Fayette* (second place and 3.7 million viewers), *Cartouche* (third place and 3.6 million viewers), *Mysteries of Paris (Les Mystères de Paris)* (fourth place and 3.6 million viewers), *The Iron Mask (Le Masque de fer)* (sixth place and 2.4 million viewers) and *Le Chevalier de Pardaillan* (ninth place and 2.1 million viewers).

The first place in box office receipts in the French film distribution in 1962 was taken by Yves Robert's film about the feud between children, *The War of the Buttons* (*La Guerre des boutons*), which was modest in budget and made without top stars, and managed to attract 10 million spectators to cinema halls (which is similar to 50 million spectators in the USSR!).

To some extent, the phenomenal success of this film in France can be attributed to the fact that it was an adaptation of a very popular novel in that country by Prize Goncourt winner Louis Emile Vincent Pergot (1882–1915). In the USSR, the works of this writer were never cult, and the film *War of the Buttons* most likely had no prospects of achieving great box office success on Soviet screens. Plus, in the opinion of Soviet censors, the film could set a bad example for Soviet schoolchildren... So this film did not make it onto Soviet screens...

As for the French costume adventure films of 1962, three of them were released in Soviet cinemas: *Cartouche*, *Mysteries of Paris* and *The Iron Mask*.

Both films with Jean Marais were released in the USSR in 1964, and they were a great success: *Mysteries of Paris* was watched by 37.4 million viewers in the first year of demonstration, and *The Iron Mask* was watched by 30.5 million viewers.

Cartouche with Jean-Paul Belmondo was less fortunate: it was released into mass Soviet film distribution only in 1977. However, for all that, 34.9 million viewers watched it (while in France in 1962 there were 3.6 million viewers, which was analogous to 18 million viewers in the USSR).

Of the French films released in 1962 that were not included in the top ten, six more films appeared on USSR screens (from 1962 to 1985): the comedies *How to Succeed in Love* (*Comment réussir en amour*) and *The Gentleman from Epsom* (*Le Gentleman d'Epsom / Il re delle corse*), the dramas *L'Enclos* and *L'Éclipse*, melodrama *Climats* and a film consisting of short stories of different genres: *The Devil and the Ten Commandments* (*Le Diable et les Dix Commandements*).

Julien Duvivier's film *The Devil and the Ten Commandments* brought together a whole bunch of French stars of the first magnitude (Michel Simon, Lino Ventura, Alain Delon, Charles Aznavour, Louis de Funès, Fernandel, Daniel Darrieu, etc.). In France, this picture was the 16th most visited in 1962 (1.8 million viewers). It would seem that this very professionally made movie should have enjoyed increased success among the Soviet audience, unspoiled by Western products. But this did not happen: in the USSR, this picture by Duvivier (from which, however, the most frivolous short story was cut out) was watched by 12.4 million viewers in the first year of demonstration, which (taking into account the then difference in the population of France and the USSR) can be considered a quite comparable result with French.

But the much lower-quality comedy by Michel Boisrond *How to Succeed in Love* (about two million viewers watched it in France in 1962), released in the USSR ten years late, managed to attract 17.8 million viewers.

It is interesting to note that Michelangelo Antonioni's masterpiece *L'Éclipse*, where Alain Delon played in a duet with Monica Vitti, attracted half a million viewers to cinemas in France in 1962 (analogous to 2.5 million Soviet viewers), but in the Soviet film distribution in 1966 this psychological drama was watched 6.6 million viewers. In my opinion, this happened to some extent due to the fact that in the USSR in the 1960s there was a significant segment of the intelligent audience, which was attracted by films of outstanding screen masters that were complex in content and form.

So, 9 films from the repertoire of French films of 1962 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1962 (among French films)

In 1962, 9 films were included in the list of outsiders of the French film distribution, which attracted less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The outsiders included films of different artistic levels, including such extraordinary films as *The Eye of Evil* by Claude Chabrol and *L'Enclos*, awarded at the Moscow Film Festival, by Armand Gatti.

Of these outsider films, only the anti-Nazi *L'Enclos* was allowed into Soviet film distribution, and with amazing efficiency: mass screenings in the USSR began already in November 1962...

Top box office leaders in France in 1963 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1963 attracted from 2.0 million to 6.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1963, 36 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than in the 1950s.

The genre spectrum of the leaders in the “golden ten” box office of 1963 was diverse, although in general comedies predominated.

In 1963, films from the now slowly fading “new wave” continued to be shown in French film distribution (according to the established stable tradition, films of the “new wave” were outside the Soviet film distribution), but the cinema halls of France, as before, were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres in which favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders of 1963 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Gilles Grangier (two films at once), Henri Verneuil, Georges Lautner, Yves Robert, André Hunebelle, Jean Giraud and other famous French directors.

Unlike 1961-1962, there were no films with Jean Marais and Brigitte Bardot in the top ten, but comedies with Fernandel and Louis de Funès returned to the top.

The 1963 release can be regarded as a great success for Jean Gabin and Bourvil: two films with their participation immediately entered the top ten box office leaders.

The top ten also included films featuring Alain Delon and Lino Ventura.

As we remember, in 1961-1962, the leaders of the French film distribution were many color costume films. But in 1963, costume melodramas and “cloak and sword” films were no longer among the top ten audience success favorites.

The first place in box office receipts in French film distribution in 1963 was taken by Gilles Grangier's comedy *Cooking with Butter (La Cuisine au beurre)* with the duet of Fernandel and Bourvil (6.4 million viewers).

In second place was the crime drama *Melody from the Cellar (Mélodie en sous-sol)* by Henri Verneuil (3.5 million viewers), where the main roles were played by Jean Gabin and Alain Delon.

The bronze medalist at the French box office in 1963 was Georges Lautner's crime comedy *Uncle Gangsters (Les Tontons flingueurs)* (3.3 million viewers) with Lino Ventura and Bernard Blier.

The only film from the first French top ten that ended up in the Soviet box office was the low-budget, devoid of A-list stars, the comedy *Bébert the Traveler (Bébert et l'omnibus)* by Yves Robert, which managed to attract three million French people to cinemas (the equivalent of 15 million Soviet viewers).

However, in USSR cinemas, *Bébert the Traveler* attracted only 4.1 million viewers (analogous to 0.8 million viewers in France). Apparently, Soviet viewers still expected a bright spectacle from French cinema, and not modest comedic twists and turns with the participation of actors practically unknown in the USSR...

The reasons for the non-release of most of the French films leading the box office in 1963 in Soviet cinemas are quite transparent: in *Melody from the Cellar* and in *Uncle Gangsters* the criminals were shown to be too charming; film *Where Are You From, Johnny? (D'où viens-tu, Johnny?)* promoted the cheeky music of Johnny Hallyday, alien to the Soviet people; and *OSS 117 went on a rampage! (OSS 117 se déchaîne!)* by André Hunebelle was too reminiscent of stories about the equally alien agent 007 James Bond...

Of the French films (including co-productions with Italy and other countries) that did not make it into the top ten distribution leaders, 11 films were released on Soviet screens (in 1963–1974): Christian-Jacques' detective story *Strong Evidence (Les Bonnes causes)*, a film adaptation of Emile Zola's novel *Germinal* by Yves Allégret, dramas *The Day and the Hour (Le Jour et l'heure)* by René Clément, *The Recluses of Altona (I Sequestrati di Altona / Les Séquestrés d'Altona)* by Vittorio De Sica, *Gang of Scoundrels (Un branco di vigliacchi / Bande de lâches)* by Fabrizio Taglioni, *Hands over the City (Le Mani sulla città / Main basse sur la ville)* by Francesco Rosi, *Codine* by Henri Colpi and *Almost to the End of the World (Jusqu'au bout du monde)* by François Villiers, tragicomedy *The March on Rome (La Marcia su Roma / La Marche sur Rome)* by Dino Risi, comedy *In the Company of Max Linder (En compagnie de Max Linder)*.

As a rule, all these films were more successful at the box office in the USSR than in France. For example, in France *Gang of Scoundrels* was watched by only about two hundred thousand viewers, and in the USSR – 15.2 million viewers in the first year of demonstration...

The collection of silent comedies *In the Company of Max Linder* attracted about one hundred thousand spectators in France, and 19.4 million in the USSR in 1965.

And although the western film *Treasure of the Silver Lake (Winnetou: Der Schatz im Silbersee / Le trésor du lac d'argent)*, shot jointly with Germany, was released in Soviet cinemas

ten years late, it still managed to attract almost forty million viewers to cinemas in the first year of its demonstration, while in France in 1963 it was watched by only 1.7 million viewers...

But the theatrical distribution of Federico Fellini's famous film *8 ½* (*Otto e mezzo / Huit et demi*) (an Italian-French co-production) was quite paradoxical.

During the 1963 Moscow International Film Festival, the Soviet authorities tried to put pressure on the jury so that the run-of-the-mill production drama *Meet Baluev!* received the main prize. But the chairman of the jury, Grigory Chukhrai, risking a lot, opposed this, and the winner of the festival was ultimately Fellini's masterpiece *8 ½*, which, alas, was never released in the Soviet Union in the 1960s (as well as in the 1970s)...

Since then, Grigory Chukhrai has never been invited to head the jury of the Moscow International Film Festival (he was replaced in this post for many years by the much more flexible Stanislav Rostotsky), and instead of one main prize at the Moscow International Film Festival, they began to award three at once (so that one of the three awards was consistently "reserved" "behind the Soviet movie)...

As a result, *8 ½* was released in Soviet film distribution only during the "perestroika" era – in 1988...

So, 13 films from the repertoire of French films of 1963 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1963 (among French films)

In 1963, 14 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls: the aesthetic mystical parable of Alain Robbe-Grillet *Immortal (L'Immortelle)*, several films of the "new wave" (*Les Carabiniers* by Jean-Luc Godard, *Ophélie* by Claude Chabrol, *Beautiful May (Le Joli Mai)* by Chris Marker and Pierre Lhomme), etc.

French viewers reacted very reservedly to the Italian-French film *The March on Rome (La Marcia su Roma / La Marche sur Rome)* by Dino Risi: while in Italy it attracted 4.1 million viewers to cinemas, in France only about one hundred thousand people watched it.

By the way, this picture became one of three films from the list of outsiders that was released in Soviet film distribution (in 1964).

The second film from this group was a montage version of the silent comedies *In the Company of Max Linder*, which attracted about one hundred thousand spectators in Paris (and a little more throughout France), while in the USSR film distribution in 1965 this picture was watched by almost two tens of millions of viewers ...

The third is Henri Colpi's drama *Codin*, filmed jointly with Romania...

Top box office leaders in France in 1964 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1964 attracted from 2.9 million to 7.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1964, 43 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than in the 1950s.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the "golden ten" of the 1964 box office was diverse, although in general adventure films and comedies predominated.

In 1964, the last films of the outgoing "new wave" continued to be shown in French cinemas: *Tender Skin (La Peau douce)* by François Truffaut (0.6 million viewers), *A Married Woman (Une femme mariée)* (0.4 million viewers) and *Separate from the Gang (Bande à part)* (0.1 million viewers) by Jean-Luc Godard (according to the established stable tradition, films of the "new wave" were excluded from Soviet film distribution).

However, the cinema halls of France, as before, were filled with traditional films of entertainment genres, in which the favorites of the French public starred.

The top ten box office leaders of 1964 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Jean Giraud, Philippe de Broca, André Hunebelle, Henri Verneuil, Christian-Jacques, Bernard Borderie and Gilles Grangier.

Thanks to the start of two commercially successful franchises – about the gendarme from St. Tropez and Fantômas – the leadership among comedy films was captured (and, as it turned out later, for a long time) by Louis de Funès.

Another box office triumph in 1964 was Jean-Paul Belmondo: three films with his participation (*The Man from Rio / L'Homme de Rio*, *Seven Thousand Dollars in the Sun / Cent*

mille dollars au soleil and *Weekend on the South Bank / Week-end à Zuydcoote*) were among the top ten favorites of the French public.

The top ten also included films starring Jean Marais, Jean Gabin, Alain Delon, Bourvil, Fernandel, Lino Ventura, Robert Hossein, Mylène Demongeau and Michel Mercier.

But Brigitte Bardot fell out of this top ten this time...

The first place in box office receipts in French film distribution in 1964 was taken by Jean Giraud's comedy *The Gendarme of Saint-Tropez (Le Gendarme de Saint-Tropez)* (7.8 million viewers) with Louis de Funès in the title role. This movie began the triumphal march across French screens of more and more new adventures of this character. Unlike other films in this franchise, this picture was not released in the Soviet Union due to its inadmissible frivolity.

But five other films from the "golden ten" of the French film distribution of 1964 in the USSR were much more fortunate: sooner or later they came out on Soviet screens.

The latest (only in 1989) to be released in the USSR was the adventure film *The Man from Rio (L'Homme de Rio)* with Belmondo.

Relatively soon – from 1967 to 1970 – the parody *Fantômas*, the war drama *The Train*, the costume entertainment films *Black Tulip (La Tulipe noire)* and *Angélique, marquise des anges*.

The distribution success of *The Train* in the USSR was modest by Soviet standards at the turn of the 1970s: having gathered 3.5 million viewers in France (analogous to the Soviet 17.5 million), in real Soviet film distribution in 1970 it attracted only 10.8 million of spectators.

Fantômas, *Black Tulip* and *Angelique – Marquise of Angels* attracted an audience of three to four and a half million viewers in France (which was approximately equal to 15–22 million viewers in the USSR), but in real Soviet film distribution these films were awaited triumph: between 44 million and 48 million viewers watched them in cinemas. And this despite the fact that many sources indicate that the official data on the attendance of these films in the USSR was underestimated, since "on the ground" part of the audience collected by these French films was "unfastened" in the reporting in favor of the "necessary" Soviet films.

Of the films that were not included in the top ten film distribution leaders in France in 1964, ten films (many of them were Italian-French productions): the comedy *Forward, France! (Allez France!)*, *Seduced and Abandoned (Sedotta e abbandonata / Séduite et abandonnée)*, the melodramatic comedies *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow (Ieri, oggi, domani / Hier, aujourd'hui et demain)* and *Marriage Italian Style (Matrimonio all'italiano / Mariage à l'italienne)*, the melodrama *Married Life (La Vie conjugale)*, the musical *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (Les Parapluies de Cherbourg)*, dramas *Feast of Predators (Le Repas des fauves)*, *Bube's Bride (La Ragazza di Bube / La Ragazza)*, *A Wonderful Life (La Belle vie)*, *Red Desert (Il Deserto rosso / Le Désert rouge)*.

Almost all of these films (with the exception of the complex psychological drama *Red Desert*) enjoyed greater success in Soviet film distribution than in France.

Particular success in the USSR awaited Italian-French films directed by Vittorio De Sica, Pietro Germi and Luigi Comencini.

And here it is important to note that Italian-French films, where only Italian stars played the main roles, enjoyed moderate success in France, while in Italy they tended to break box office records.

Thus, Vittorio De Sica's film *Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* with Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni was watched by 1.2 million viewers in France (the equivalent of 6 million Soviet viewers), and in Italy – 9.3 million viewers (the equivalent of 45 million Soviet spectators). In Soviet film distribution, this picture was watched by much more viewers than in France – 15.3 million viewers, but taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and Italy, this attendance figure was lower than the Italian one...

The situation with the distribution of another film by Vittorio De Sica with the participation of the same duet Loren and Mastroianni – *Marriage Italian Style* – was similar in France: 1.2 million viewers, while in Italy this picture was watched by 10.2 million viewers. And although in the Soviet film distribution of 1965/1966 *Marriage Italian Style* was watched by 41.4 million viewers, taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and Italy, this attendance figure was still lower than the Italian one...

But Pietro Germi's comedy *Seduced and Abandoned*, taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and Italy, was seen at the box office by approximately the same audience...

So, 16 films from the repertoire of French films of 1964 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1964 (among French films)

In 1964, 14 films were included in the list of outsiders of the French film distribution, which attracted less than 200 thousand spectators in cinemas.

The fact that the film by the famous director of the “new wave”: Jean-Luc Godard *Apart from the Gang* became an outsider can be explained by its experimentalism.

But it is much more difficult to explain why an entertaining collection of short stories under the clickbait title *The Most Beautiful Frauds in the World (Les plus belles escroqueries du monde)* managed to attract only about one hundred thousand viewers...

Not a single outsider from the French film distribution of 1964 made it onto Soviet screens...

Top box office leaders in France in 1965 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1965 attracted from 2.3 million to 11.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1965, 34 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than in the 1950s.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1965 was diverse, although in general comedies and adventure films predominated.

The film distribution of 1965 again proved that the “new wave”, about which the press sometimes wrote so enthusiastically, was a great success at film festivals and among a relatively small circle of intellectuals, and the income of French cinemas continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

In the mid-1960s, Claude Chabrol finally said goodbye to the “new wave”. After the resounding failure of his *Ophelia*, producers literally forced him to make commercial films. Thus, two Chabrol parodies of spy films were released: *The Tiger is choked with dynamite (Le Tigre se parfume à la dynamite)* and *Marie-Chantal against Dr. Kha (Marie-Chantal contre le docteur Kha)*, which managed to attract from 1 million to 1.2 million viewers to the screens, which was a very good indicator that returned Chabrol trusts the producers...

By the way, due to the ebb of the “new wave”, there was a fashion for black and white cinema, which French (and not only) directors were fond of after the bright outbreak of Jean-Luc Godard’s film *Breathless* at the box office in 1960. There were more and more color films, and literally within two years color began to completely dominate: both in French and in European cinema in general (although in the USSR the mass release of black and white films was delayed until the 1970s)...

The top ten box office leaders of 1965 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Gerard Oury, Jean Giraud, André Hunebelle (two of his films were included in the “golden ten” hits), Denys de La Patellière, Robert Enrico, Philippe de Broca, Bernard Borderie and Claude Autant-Lara.

This company was unexpectedly joined by the recent “new waver” Louis Malle, who directed the bright entertaining film *Viva Maria!* (6th place at the French box office in 1965 and 3.4 million viewers) with the sparkling duet of Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau.

And again, thanks to the successful continuation of the franchises about the gendarme from St. Tropez and Fantômas, as well as the phenomenal success of Gerard Oury’s comedy *Le Corniaud* (first place at the box office and 11.8 million viewers!) the most commercially successful actor turned out to be Louis de Funès (three films with his participation took the first three places in the box office charts).

The top ten included two films with the participation of Bourvil, two films each with the participation of Mylène Demongeau and Michel Mercier, as well as films starring Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Marais, Jean Gabin, Lino Ventura, Brigitte Bardot, Jeanne Moreau and Marie-Josée Nat.

The first place in box office receipts at the French film box office in 1965 was taken by Gérard Oury’s comedy *Le Corniaud* with the inimitable duet of Louis de Funès and Bourvil. Three years later, it was also released in Soviet cinemas, where it attracted nearly 31 million viewers. A simple calculation shows that the French liked *Le Corniaud* more: its 11.8 million viewers in France corresponded to approximately 60 million viewers in the USSR.

The comedy *The Gendarme in New York (Le Gendarme à New York)* was also received with less enthusiasm in the USSR: in France its audience was 5.5 million viewers (analogous to

27.5 million viewers in the USSR), but in fact this film was watched at the Soviet box office in 1972 – 17.3 million viewers.

But the undisputed favorite of the Soviet public was the film *Fantômas Raged* (*Fantômas se déchaine*): in France it was watched by 4.2 million viewers (analogous to 21 million viewers in the USSR), but in reality in the Soviet box office in 1968 this film was watched by (at least) 44.7 million spectators.

Yes, and *Charming Angelique* (*Merveilleuse Angélique*), which attracted 2.4 million viewers in France (analogous to 12 million viewers in the USSR), although it appeared on Soviet screens very late (in 1985 under the title *Angelique in Anger*), still managed to attract almost 23 million viewers to the screens.

But the melodrama *Heavenly Thunder* (*Le Tonnerre de Dieu*) appeared on the screens of the USSR already in December 1966 and – in terms of the difference in the population of France and the USSR – attracted approximately the same audience: 4.1 million viewers in France and 22.9 million viewers in the USSR.

Thus, out of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1965, five films were released on USSR screens (from 1966 to 1985), which, taking into account Soviet ideological requirements, was a very high indicator of the work of the purchasing commission...

Of the films released in France in 1965, which were not included in the “golden” commercial top ten, 9 films were released on Soviet screens in different years, mostly joint productions with Germany and Italy.

Three westerns (*La révolte des indiens apaches / Winnetou I / Old Shatterhand; Last of the Renegades / Winnetou – 2. Teil / Le Trésor des montagnes bleues* and *Frontier Hellcat / Unter Geiern / Là dove scende il sole*) were watched in France by between six hundred thousand and a million viewers, which was several times less than the audience that these same films had in Germany (from 5.7 million to 10.5 million viewers). The attendance figures for these westerns in the USSR cinemas (from 27.6 million to 55.7 million viewers) were much higher than the French ones, and much closer (taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and Germany) to the attendance figures in West Germany...

The films *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (*Onkel Toms Hütte / La Capanna dello zio Tom / La Case de l'oncle Tom*), *The Sky Above* (*Le Ciel sur la tête / Il Cielo sulla testa*), *Feasts of Love* (*Les Fêtes galantes*), *The Unworthy Old Lady* (*La Vieille Dame indigne*) and *They Followed the Soldiers* (*Le soldatesse / Des filles pour l'armée*) were much more successful than in France.

As for the melodrama *The Third Youth* (*La Nuit des adieux*) (USSR-France), its box office success in the USSR was, of course, not comparable to the triumph of *Fantômas* and *Angelique*, but 17.2 million viewers in the first year of demonstration allowed it to enter the one thousand highest-grossing Soviet films...

Thus, in general, it can be noted that the work of the Soviet procurement commission in the mid-1960s was quite liberal, which (especially after the start of the “Prague Spring” of 1968) could not escape the conservative wing of the “ideological front.”

Thus, in June 1968, the magazine *Ogonyok* published an article by N. Tolchenova under the eloquent title “Keyhole Films and Film Criticism” (Tolchenova, 1968: 22-24), which stated that “in recent times very often on the Soviet screen there are films that are very far from the spiritual, moral, moral interests of our society. Pictures about robbers, rapists, prostitutes. Pictures that are devoid of a social basis or are covered with the appearance of sociality, which is what bourgeois, bourgeois cinema generally knows how to do and loves to do” (Tolchenova, 1968: 22).

Next, N. Tolchenova moved on to a negative assessment of the musical *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* by Jacques Demy, reproaching him for the fact that the main character “is not a working person, but a little bourgeoisie, a petty bourgeois... The question is, what’s in this banal, far-fetched, extremely sweetened history could attract the sympathy of our film critics? However, the militantly bourgeois, petty-bourgeois... essence of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* was completely left aside when the critic N. Zorkaya analyzed this film, whose article was published in the pages of the *Cinema Art* journal.

Then N. Tolchenova spoke no less harshly not only about the films about *Fantômas* and *Angelique*, but also about the magazine *Soviet Screen*, which “advertised them on its pages”: “films like *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Fantômas*, *Angelique*, and most importantly, with such irresponsible praise, such support from film criticism, it was possible to... convince viewers of the

legitimacy of the appearance on the screen of sentimental, far-fetched, “heartbreaking” “dramas” (Tolchenova, 1968).

But, according to N. Tolchenova, “while looking for progressive creative foundations in a work of art, the critic is obliged to support in it everything that contributes to a healthy viewer’s perception of life, affirms true humanity and humanity, high morality” (Tolchenova, 1968).

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, in N. Tolchenova’s article both films with the participation of Sophia Loren and the tragicomedy with the participation of Stefania Sandrelli – *I Knew Her Well (Io la conoscevo bene / Ich habe sie gut gekannt / Je la connaissais bien...)*, also “due to an oversight” of the purchasing commission that ended up in Soviet film distribution... (Tolchenova: 22-24).

Since 1968, there have been more and more similar articles directed against the appearance of Western entertainment films in Soviet film distribution. And behind them, of course, there were the corresponding resolutions and memos of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, therefore – especially after August 1968 – the situation with the purchase of “bourgeois film products” began to change sharply towards its minimization and more careful ideological selection...

So, 14 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1965 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1965 (among French films)

In 1965, 10 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

And the most famous outsider of 1965 was the film *Paris Through the Eyes of... (Paris vu par)*, consisting of short stories, directed by Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, Jean Rouch and other talented masters. This picture managed to attract only about thirty thousand spectators to cinema screens in France...

From the list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1965, not a single film made it to the screens of the USSR this time.

Top box office leaders in France in 1966 (among French films)

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences of the 1966 film distribution attracted from 1.9 million to 17.3 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1966, 24 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1966 was diverse.

The 1966 box office season again showed that films by the older generation of French directors (whose films were popular in the 1940s and 1950s) were increasingly becoming top ten box office hits.

For example, third place in the French box office unexpectedly went to the melodrama of recent debutant Claude Lelouch *A Man and a Woman (Un homme et une femme)*. (4.3 million viewers).

And in first place with a stunning figure for France – 17.3 million viewers was the comedy by Gerard Oury *The Big Walk (La Grande Vadrouille)*, whose first directorial work was released at the turn of the 1960s... And this happened the next year after the box office triumph of the previous one Comedy by Gerard Oury – *Le Corniaud* (first place at the box office in 1965 and 11.8 million viewers). The rental record for *The Great Walk* managed to hold out not only until the end of the 20th century, but also until 2008. And even now *The Great Walk* is in honorable third place among French films in the entire history of cinema.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

The top ten box office leaders of 1966 included films by prominent representatives of genre cinema: Gerard Oury, Jean Giraud, Rene Clément, Roger Vadim, Bernard Borderie, Denys de La Patellière, Jean-Pierre Melville and other famous directors.

And again, thanks to the phenomenal success of Gerard Oury's comedy *The Big Walk* and Jean Giraud's comedy *The Grand Restaurant* (fourth place at the box office and 3.9 million viewers), the most commercially successful actor was Louis de Funès.

So, the first place in box office receipts at the French film box office in 1966 was again taken by Gerard Oury’s comedy with the inimitable duet of Louis de Funès and Bourvil: *The Great Walk*.

In 1971, it was also released in Soviet cinemas, where it attracted almost 38 million viewers. A simple calculation shows that the French liked *The Great Walk* more: its 17.3 million viewers in France corresponded to approximately 86 million viewers in the USSR.

The comedy *The Grand Restaurant* was received with great enthusiasm in the USSR: in France its audience was 3.9 million viewers (analogous to 19.5 million viewers in the USSR), but in fact this film was released in the Soviet Union in 1974 (under the title *Restaurant of Mr. Septim*) was watched by 26.3 million viewers.

A similar result was shown by the distribution of Claude Lelouch's melodrama *A Man and a Woman* (it appeared on USSR screens in January 1968): 4.3 million viewers in France (analogous to 21.5 million viewers in the USSR) and 27.9 million of real Soviet spectators.

But the undisputed favorite of the Soviet public was the film *Angelique and the King* (*Angélique et le Roy*): in France it was watched by 2.2 million viewers (analogous to 11 million viewers in the USSR), but in reality this film was watched at the Soviet box office in 1968 by (at least) 44.7 million viewers.

Thus, out of the top ten leaders in French film distribution, four films were released on USSR screens, which, taking into account Soviet ideological requirements, was a high indicator of the work of the purchasing commission...

As we noted earlier, some foreign films did not make it to Soviet screens not for ideological, but for financial reasons. Perhaps it is because of this that René Clément's famous film *Is Paris Burning?* (*Paris brûle-t-il?*) (second place in the French film box office in 1966 and 4.9 million viewers), in which many French stars of the first magnitude played, was shown in the USSR only at a few special screenings in Moscow, but never made it into mass distribution.

Among the films that were not included in the top ten of the French film box office in 1966, seven more films were released on USSR screens (in 1967–1977) (three of which were Italian-French productions).

All of them had greater success in the USSR than in France. This was especially true for the films *Ladies and Gentlemen* (*Signore e signori / Ces messieurs dames*) by Pietro Germi, *A Question of Honor* (*Question d'honneur / Una Questione d'onore*) by Luigi Zampa and *I Knew Her Well* (*Io la conosco bene / Ich habe sie gut gekannt / Je la connaissais bien...*) by Antonio Pietrangeli. In France, these Italian-French films were watched by ten to two hundred thousand spectators, and in the USSR – from ten to fifteen million spectators (which, by the way, taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and Italy, was quite close to the Italian attendance figures for these films).

As for Christian-Jacques' crime drama *The Second Truth* (*La Seconde Vérité*), Denys de La Patellière's drama *Father's Voyage* (*Le Voyage du père*), Jean Giraud's comedy *Adventures in a Country House* (*Monsieur le président-directeur général*) and Serge Korber's melodrama *17th Heaven* (*Un garçon, une fille. Le Dix-septième ciel*), their audience in France did not exceed 1.2 million viewers, while in the USSR film distribution the attendance of these films ranged from 8.7 million to 27.4 million viewers...

So, 11 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1966 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1966 (among French films)

In 1966, 15 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

From these outsiders, Serge Korber's melodrama *17th Heaven* and two Italian-French productions (Antonio Pietrangeli's masterpiece *I Knew Her Well* and Luigi Zampa's tragicomedy *A Question of Honor*) appeared on USSR screens.

It should be noted that Italian-French films were the only outsiders in the French box office. In Italy, the film *I Knew Her Well* was watched by 2.2 million viewers, and *A Question of Honor* by 3.9 million viewers.

As for *17th Heaven*, this melodrama was also watched by many more viewers in the USSR than in France. If in French film distribution Korber's film was able to gather only about one hundred thousand viewers (analogous to 0.5 million viewers in the USSR), but in real Soviet film distribution in 1970, *17th Heaven* attracted 8.7 million viewers to cinema screens...

Top box office leaders in France in 1967 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1967 attracted from 2.4 million to 7.0 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1967, 21 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” box office of 1967 was diverse.

The top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1967 included not only films by directors of the older generation (André Cayatte, André Hunebelle, etc.), but films by relatively young directors (aged 30 to 36 years): Claude Lelouch, Robert Enrico, Claude Berri and Jean-Gabriel Albicocco.

At the same time, films by recent leaders of the “new wave”: Jean-Luc Godard and Claude Chabrol were in the attendance range from 0.2 million to 0.4 million viewers. Films by Robert Bresson, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Eric Rohmer had approximately the same results at the French box office in 1967.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres starring the favorites of the French public.

In the first three places in the French film box office in 1967 were three films with the participation of Louis de Funès (Great Holiday / *Les Grandes Vacances*; Oscar and *Fantômas against Scotland Yard / Fantômas contre Scotland Yard*). Thus, once again, for the fourth year in a row, the most commercially successful actor in France was Louis de Funès.

So, the first place in box office receipts in French film distribution in 1967 was again taken by the comedy with Louis de Funès: *Great Holiday* was watched by 7 million viewers. For some reason it was not included in Soviet film distribution.

But almost the same as in France, another comedy with Louis de Funès, *Oscar*, was accepted in the USSR: in France its audience was 6.1 million viewers (analogous to 30.5 million viewers in the USSR), but actually in the Soviet box office in 1968, this movie was watched by 27.2 million viewers.

And *Fantômas against Scotland Yard* was loved more in the USSR: at the 1968 box office this film was watched by 34.3 million viewers (analogous to 6.8 million spectators in France), while at the French box office this picture was watched by 3.6 million spectators.

Soviet viewers also liked Robert Enrico's film *The Adventurers (Les Aventuriers)* more than the French: in France this picture was watched by 3.1 million spectators (analogous to 15.5 million spectators in the USSR), but in the real Soviet film distribution of 1968 they came to cinema halls 22.7 million viewers.

In the autumn of the same 1968, Claude Lelouch's film *Live to Live (Vivre pour vivre)* was also supposed to be released (6th place in the French box office in 1967 and 2.9 million viewers, which was analogous to 14.5 million viewers in the USSR). However, the leading male actor, Yves Montand, spoke out against the entry of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and the already purchased Lelouch film was sent to “the shelf”, where it lay until the fall of 1975, when it was finally released, collecting 12.7 million viewers...

Another French film – André Cayatte's drama *Professional Risks (Les Risques du métier)* (fourth place in the French box office and 3.5 million viewers – analogous to 17.5 million viewers in the USSR) was released on Soviet screens five years late and attracted an audience of 12.7 million spectators.

We also note that the next series about the adventures of the beautiful Angelica (*Indomptable Angélique*) in France in 1967 failed to get into the top ten box office leaders: 15th place and 1.9 million viewers (analogous to 9.5 million viewers in the USSR). However, when in 1985 in the USSR the films *Indomptable Angélique* and *Angélique et le Sultan* were released in a partially shortened version and combined into two episodes under the general title *The Indomitable Marquise*, this picture attracted 17.7 million viewers.

Thus, out of the top ten leaders in the French film distribution of 1967, six films were released on USSR screens, which took into account Soviet ideological requirements (for example, because of the religious theme, the drama *Suzanne Simonin, the nun of Denis Diderot (Suzanne Simonin, la Religieuse de Denis Diderot)*).

As has often happened with Italian-French films without the participation of French stars, Dino Risi's comedy *Operation Saint Januarius (Operazione San Gennaro)* was not very lucky in the French box office. There was no decoy in the form of a French star of the first magnitude in this witty film, and it managed to attract only about 200 thousand spectators in cinemas in France, while in Italy it was watched by 5.9 million spectators (analogous to 26 million spectators in the USSR). In fact, in Soviet film distribution in 1968, this comedy attracted 32.1 million viewers.

A small sensation of the Soviet film distribution was the screening (in 1973 under the title *You didn't say everything, Ferrand*) of Jean Delannoy's crime drama *The Sun of Bandits (Le Soleil des voyous)* (13th place in the French film box office in 1967 and 2.1 million viewers) starring Jean Gabin. Almost for the first time, Soviet censorship allowed a non-comedy Western film into mass release, where the main characters were robbers, shown with a fair amount of sympathy. At the Soviet box office, this film was a success, in per capita terms approximately twice the attendance figures in France.

True, other films about gangsters, bandits, robbers and spies (and there were many of them, especially all sorts of "coplans", "agents", "viscounts", etc. parasitic on the "Bondian" film), which were shown in France in 1967, traditionally passed the Soviet film distribution...

Due to the pronounced erotic theme, Luis Buñuel's famous *Beauty of the Day (Belle de jour)* (which took 11th place in the French box office) was not included in the mass Soviet film distribution of the 1960s and 1970s. However, then, with a great delay, in the last year of the existence of the USSR, this picture was finally released on Soviet screens: in 1991, censorship requirements were already much softer than before...

In total, in addition to the six films from the top ten of the French box office of 1967, nine more films were released on USSR screens in different years (including co-produced films).

Of the films that were not mentioned above, these were the musical comedy by Jacques Demy *The Girls of Rochefort (Les Demoiselles de Rochefort)*, the comedy by Jacques Tati *Playtime*, the drama by Costa-Gavras *One Extra Man (Un homme de trop)*, the drama by Luciano Salce *El Greco* and the peplum of Sergiu Nicolaescu *Dacii / Les Guerriers*.

All of them (except for the comedy by Jacques Tati) were more successful with audiences in the USSR than in France.

This was especially true for the Romanian-French peplum *Les Guerriers*. In the first year of demonstration in the USSR alone, this costume film was watched by 23.5 million viewers. This was, of course (taking into account the difference in population), less than in Romania (where, with 20 million inhabitants at the time, 13.1 viewers watched this picture), but still quite a lot...

So, 14 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1967 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1967 (among French films)

In 1967, 10 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

This time, not a single film from the list of outsiders made it to the screens of the USSR. Some films were too elitist, while others had too much frivolity or violence.

Theoretically, Henri Colpi's film *Mona, the Nameless Star (Mona, l'étoile sans nom)* with Marina Vladi in the leading female role could have been released in Soviet film distribution. But for unknown reasons (the film was a complete fiasco at the French box office, so its purchase price could not be high) did not happen either...

Top box office leaders in France in 1968 (among French films)

In general, French films from the top ten audience preferences for film distribution in 1968 attracted from 2.1 million to 6.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1968, only 27 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

Comedies dominated the genre spectrum of the leaders in the "golden ten" box office of 1968.

The top ten leaders in the French film box office of 1968 were mainly comedies directed by Jean Giraud, Robert Déry, Denys de La Patellière, Alex Joffe, Michel Deville, John Berry, Yves Robert and Jean-Pierre Mocky. Plus the melodrama *Mayerling* with Catherine Deneuve and Omar Sharif and the action movie *Farewell, Friend (Adieu l'ami)* with Alain Delon and Charles Bronson.

At the same time, films by recent leaders of the "new wave" Claude Chabrol and Francois Truffaut found themselves in the attendance range from 0.6 million to 1.3 million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Bourvil, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Marais, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Michel Mercier, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve, Mireille Darc and other famous actors.

In the first three places in the French film box office in 1968 were three films with the participation of Louis de Funès (*The Gendarme Gets Married / Le Gendarme se marie, Little*

Bather / Le Petit Baigneur and *The Tattooed / Le Tatoué*). Thus, once again (for the fifth year in a row) Louis de Funès became the most commercially successful actor in France.

So, the first place in box office receipts in French film distribution in 1968 was taken by the comedy *The Gendarme Gets Married* with Louis de Funès; it was watched by 6.8 million viewers (analogous to 34 million viewers in the USSR). This comedy was released in Soviet film distribution only ten years later, but still managed to attract 41.8 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Another comedy starring Louis de Funès, *Little Bather*, was well received in the USSR: in France it became second at the box office with an audience of 5.5 million viewers. At the Soviet box office in 1971, this film was watched by 21.7 million viewers.

The third comedy with Louis de Funès, where he played together with Jean Gabin – *Tattooed* – did not make it to the screens of the USSR, although it attracted 3.2 million viewers in France.

Of the dozen leaders in French film distribution, two more films were shown in cinemas in the Soviet Union: the costume melodrama *Mayerling* with Catherine Deneuve and the comedy *The Big Laundry / La Grande lessive!* with Bourvil.

In France, *Mayerling* was watched by 2.5 million viewers (analogous to approximately 12 million viewers in the USSR), and in actual Soviet film distribution in 1971 – 20.6 million viewers.

But *The Big Laundry* in France was released at the box office in approximately the same way as in the USSR: the results of the French film distribution were 2.1 million viewers (analogous to 10 million Soviet viewers). In real Soviet box office in 1971, this comedy was watched by 9.3 million viewers.

Thus, out of the top ten leaders in the French film distribution of 1968, four films were released on USSR screens, which, taking into account Soviet ideological requirements (for example, because of the erotic theme, Michel Deville's exquisite film *Benjamen, or Memoirs of a Virgin (Benjamin ou les mémoires d'un puceau)*, which took the top spot in the French film distribution, was rejected 1968 6th place) was a high indicator of the work of the procurement commission...

Having parted with the comedy-parody *Fantômas*, which attracted from 3.6 million to 4.5 million viewers in France, André Hunebelle returned to his favorite adventures in the film *Under the Sign of Monte Cristo (Sous le signe de Monte-Cristo)*, but this time with a very average by the standards of the 1960s, the result was 0.6 million viewers and 41st place in the French box office in 1968...

We also note that the final episode about the adventures of the beautiful Angelica (*Angelique and the Sultan*) in France in 1968 failed to get into the top ten box office leaders: 15th place and 1.8 million viewers (analogous to 9 million viewers in the USSR). However, when in 1985 in the USSR the films *The Indomitable Angelica* and *Angelica and the Sultan* were released in a partially shortened version and combined into two episodes under the general title *The Indomitable Marquise*, this picture attracted 17.7 million viewers.

Judging by the massive advertising, Roger Vadim's fantasy action film *Barbarella* with the sexy Jane Fonda in the title role was also supposed to break into the top ten leaders of the French film box office. But for unknown reasons this did not happen: according to the results of distribution in France, this picture ended up only in 30th place (0.9 million viewers).

But the famous writer Romain Gary managed, relying (unlike *Barbarella*) on a rather modest budget, to film the very daring erotic melodrama *Birds Die in Peru (Les oiseaux vont mourir au Pérou)* at that time, so that it managed to attract the same number of viewers to the screens as the film Roger Vadim. Apparently, Romain Gary's film, against the backdrop of the traditional genre spectrum of French films released in 1968, became one of the first signs of an increased degree of sexual frankness in French cinema, which by the mid-1970s would become almost mainstream in France...

From the films of the French film distribution in 1968, in addition to four films from the "golden ten" and the final series about Angelica, 7 more films were released in the USSR (in 1969–1972): the comedy *Oh, already this grandfather! (Ce sacré grand-père)* by Jean Poitrenaud and several co-production films: *The Comedians*, *The Owl Appears in the Daytime (Il Giorno della civetta / La Mafia fait la loi)*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Money Order (Le Mandat)* and *Phèdre*. Almost all of them were held in Soviet cinemas with much greater success than in France...

So, 11 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1968 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1968 (among French films)

In 1968, 18 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

For example, the list of outsiders logically includes the elitist works of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Orson Welles, and others, which are complex in film language. Neither the author's skill nor participation of stars of the first magnitude...

The mass French audience was also not interested in Jean Rollin's horror film *Violence of the Vampire (Le Viol du vampire)*, rich in eroticism and bloody scenes. However, over time, the films of J. Rollin, which many accused of bad taste and unprofessionalism, became a kind of "cult" for a certain category of viewers...

Traditionally, audiences were not interested in an Italian-French film without the participation of French A-list stars. This time, the outsider was Damiano Damiani's detective story *The Owl Appears in the Daytime (Il Giorno della civetta / La Mafia fait la loi)*, which attracted only about one hundred thousand viewers in France, while in Italy it became one of the box office champions (4.3 million viewers, that is, an analogue of 18 million viewers in the USSR).

The Owl Appears in the Daytime became one of four films from the list of outsiders of the French film distribution acquired for showing in the USSR. In 1969/1970, *The Owl...* was watched by 20.8 million viewers.

Top box office leaders in France in 1969 among French films

In 1969, only 19 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 1.6 million to 5.5 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten French film box office films in 1969 was quite diverse. Of course, there was comedy again. This time – *The Brain (Le Cerveau)* by Gerard Oury, *Frozen (Hibernatus)* and *My Uncle Benjamin (Mon oncle Benjamin)* by Edouard Molinaro, *Erotissimo* by Gérard Pirès and *The Devil by the tail (Le Diable par la queue)* by Philippe de Broca. Along with this, the top ten included the crime dramas *The Sicilian Clan (Le Clan des Siciliens)* by Henri Verneuil, *The Swimming Pool (La Piscine)* by Jacques Deray and *Roads to Kathmandu (Les Chemins de Katmandou)* by André Cayatte.

Moreover, in 1969, on the wave of growing interest in political cinema in European cinema, Costa-Gavras' far from entertaining political drama *Z* took third place in the French box office (it was watched by 3.9 million viewers, which is the same as 19 million viewers in USSR).

At the same time, films by recent leaders of the "new wave" Claude Chabrol and Francois Truffaut found themselves in the attendance range from 0.7 million to 1.2 million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Bourvil, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Michel Mercier and other famous actors.

At the same time, for the first time, two films with the participation of Alain Delon (*The Sicilian Clan* and *The Swimming Pool*) and Yves Montand (*Z* and *The Devil by the tail*) entered the top ten box office leaders at once.

In contrast to the previous five years, the commercial success of Louis de Funès has decreased somewhat. A funny and inventive comedy with his participation called *Frozen* was only in fourth place (3.4 million viewers: analogous to 17 million viewers in the USSR).

This comedy was released in the Soviet Union in 1971, attracted 27.6 million viewers, and... turned out to be one of two films from the "golden" ten of French film distribution in 1969, purchased in the USSR. And this is against the backdrop of the fact that from the first ten of the French film distribution of previous years, 4-5 films ended up in Soviet distribution (albeit with delays)...

The second French film from among the box office champions of France in 1969 that hit Soviet screens was *The Swimming Pool* by Jacques Deray with Alain Delon, Romy Schneider and Maurice Ronet (6th place and 2.3 million viewers). But the release of this crime drama on Soviet screens was delayed until... September 1991. In the 1970s, *The Swimming Pool* was unable to get onto the screens of the USSR due to the too much charm of the criminal character played by Alain Delon...

The reasons why the remaining films from the top ten French box office were rejected are quite transparent:

- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played the main roles in the films *Z* and *The Devil by the tail*);
- Taboo on erotic themes (this concerned the films *Erotissimo* and *My Uncle Benjamin*);
- The undesirability of the appearance of images of charming criminals on Soviet screens (*The Sicilian Clan* and *The Brain*).

In first place in the French film box office in 1969 was Gerard Ury's comedy *The Brain* with Bourvil and Belmondo, although it attracted 5.5 million viewers, but failed to break the box office records of Ury's previous comedies – *Le Corniaud* and *The Big Walk*.

The films of Claude Lelouch did not make it into the top ten this time: *The Man I Like* (*Un homme qui me plaît*) was in 13th place (1.4 million viewers), and *Life, Love, Death* (*La Vie, l'amour, la mort*) was in 15th (1.3 million viewers), but still found themselves in the top viewing preferences of the French.

Jean-Pierre Melville's drama *Army of Shadows* (*L'Armée des ombres*) (1.4 million viewers) came even closer to the top ten.

In addition to two films from the top ten of the French film distribution in 1969, five more films hit the screens of the USSR in different years (but mainly in 1970-1972): the comedy *Big Love* (*Le Grand Amour*) by Pierre Etex, the melodrama *Lady Hamilton's Love* (*Les Amours de Lady Hamilton / Le Calde notti di Lady Hamilton*) by Christian-Jacques and *Royal Hunting* (*La Chasse royale*) by Francois Letierrier, the drama *A Time to Live* (*Le Temps de vivre*) by Bernard Paul and the Italian-French comedy *Serafino* by Pietro Germi. Almost all of them were held in the USSR with greater success than in France.

So, in different years, 7 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1969 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1969 (among French films)

On the outsiders of the French film distribution, which attracted less than 200 thousand spectators in cinemas in 1969, I, unfortunately, was not able to find complete data.

From the list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1969, three films made it to Soviet screens: *Royal Hunting*, *A Time to Live* (both of these films did well in the Soviet film distribution at the turn of the 1970s, but in the end, during the year the demonstrations failed to overcome the barrier of 10 million of spectators) and *Serafino*.

At the same time, with the Italian-French comedy *Serafino* by Pietro Germi, the typical story for joint productions that did not star French stars of the first magnitude happened in the French film distribution: in France, the film went generally unnoticed. But in Italy, where the pop singer Adriano Celentano, who played the main role, was already at the peak of popularity, *Serafino* was a triumph: 10.5 million viewers, which approximately corresponded to 47 million viewers in the USSR...

Top box office leaders in France in 1970 among French films

In 1970, only 23 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 2.1 million to 4.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1970 was quite diverse: comedies, crime dramas, thrillers, detective stories, fairy tales, melodrama.

The directors of the top ten French box office films of 1970 were professionals of genre cinema: Jean Giraud, Rene Clément, Jacques Deray, Jean-Pierre Melville, José Giovanni, Michel Audiard and others.

At the same time, original films by Claude Chabrol, François Truffaut and Eric Rohmer were in the attendance range from 0.6 million to 1.6 million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Bourvil, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Marlene Jobert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

At the same time, for the second year in a row, two films with the participation of Alain Delon (*Borsalino* and *The Red Circle / Le Cercle rouge*) entered the top ten leaders of the French film box office.

In 1970, the last films were released on French screens, where the main roles were played by the famous comedians Fernandel (1903-1971) and Bourvil (1917-1970).

One of the last comedies with Fernandel failed to enter even the top twenty box office leaders in 1970, while two films with Bourvil's participation (*The Atlantic Wall* and *The Red Circle*) took second and fourth places at the box office, collecting from 4.3 million to 4.8 million viewers. Bourvil died from a serious illness in the fall of 1970. Fernandel survived him by only a few months: he passed away in February 1971...

Due to the death of these two talented actors, the only super popular comedian in France in the 1970s was Louis de Funès...

First place in the French film box office in 1970 was taken by the comedy *Gendarme on a Walk (Le Gendarme en balade)* with Louis de Funès (4.9 million viewers). For some reason it didn't make it into Soviet distribution. Perhaps for financial reasons...

Close to the top ten was another comedy with the participation of Louis de Funès: *One Man Band (L'Homme orchestre)*. At the French box office it was eleventh (2.1 million viewers, analogous to 10 million spectators in the USSR), but in the Soviet film box office in 1973 it was much more successful: 32.7 million viewers in the first year of demonstration...

Claude Lelouch returned to the top ten: *The Rogue (Le Voyou)* with Jean-Louis Trintignant was in 8th place (2.4 million viewers).

In the French film distribution of 1970, the expansion of "films for very adults" continued, which did not yet make it into the top twenty leaders, but were already confidently occupying places from 27th to 52nd with attendance from 0.3 million to 0.9 million viewers...

In the second half of the 1960s, out of the top ten leaders in French film distribution, 4-5 films were often purchased in the USSR. But with the leaders of the French film distribution in 1970, it happened differently: not a single one of the ten highest-grossing French films reached Soviet cinemas (although, of course, some of them were shown in Moscow as part of the film festival and weeks of French cinema).

The reasons why this French "champion ten" of 1970 was completely rejected by Soviet censorship were most likely the following:

- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played the main role in the film *The Red Circle*. And moreover, he played the main role in the drama Costa with amazing psychological depth Gavras's *Confession / L'Aveu*, which sharply indicts the era of Stalinism. *Confession* took 12th place in the French film box office in 1970, this picture was watched by 2.1 million viewers);

- The undesirability of the appearance of images of charming criminals on Soviet screens (*Borsalino*, *The Red Circle*, *The Rogue*);

- Too high prices offered by French copyright holders (perhaps this applied to *Gendarme on a Walk*, *Passenger of the Rain / Le Passager de la pluie*, *Donkey Skin / Peau d'âne* and some other films from the "golden ten").

Of course, we must add to this the tightening of Soviet policy in the field of purchasing Western film products, which occurred after August 1968...

And yet, from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1970, four films managed to reach Soviet screens (though one of them was Italian-French, and also produced jointly with the USSR).

The colorful musical comedy with Louis de Funès *One Man Band (L'Homme orchestre)* (11th place in the French box office and 2.1 million viewers) was shown in Soviet cinemas (in 1973) with enormous success: 32.7 million viewers in the first year demonstrations.

The crime drama with Jean Gabin *La Horse* (13th place in the French box office and 2.1 million viewers) was released in the USSR (in 1972) much faster (18.8 million viewers in the first year of demonstration), but also significantly better than in France.

Unfortunately, there is no exact data on the distribution in the USSR (in 1977) of Michel Drache's drama *Eliza, or Real Life (Élise ou la Vraie Vie)*.

But with the melodrama *Sunflowers (I girasoli)* a story quite typical for France happened. Neither the star names of Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren, nor the authority of the

recognized classic of Italian cinema Vittorio De Sica attracted the French public to cinemas. The film *Sunflowers* was watched by only about one hundred thousand viewers in France.

But in the USSR in 1971, this picture was seen by approximately the same number of viewers as shortly before *Angelica and the King*: 41.6 million viewers. And this was (taking into account the difference in population) quite comparable to the success of *Sunflowers* in Italy (7.3 million viewers).

So, in different years, 4 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1970 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1970 (among French films)

In 1970, 28 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

Surprisingly, the melodrama *Sunflowers*, shot very professionally by the classic of neorealism Vittorio de Sica, triumphantly screened in Italian (7.3 million viewers: the equivalent of approximately thirty-five million viewers in the USSR) and Soviet (41.6 million in the first year of demonstration) screens, in France managed to gather only about one hundred thousand viewers. And this despite the fact that the main roles in this film were played by famous actors Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni.

Other outsiders of the French film distribution in 1970 were Alain Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic fantasy *Paradise and After (L'Eden et après)*, Jean-Luc Godard's politicized and chaotically inarticulate *The Wind from the East (Le Vent d'est)* and two films, apparently hopelessly behind the times, by directors of the older generation Yves Allégret (*Invasion*) and Denis de La Patellera (*Sabra*) and others.

This company includes three more "films for adults", apparently intended for an audience too marginal for the turn of the 1970s...

Top box office leaders in France in 1971 (among French films)

In 1971, only 24 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 2.5 million to 7.5 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre range of the top ten French film box office leaders in 1971 was quite diverse: comedies, dramas, adventure films...

The top ten grossing directors were genre film professionals: Gerard Oury, Henri Verneuil, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Jean Giraud and others.

At the same time, two generally completely unentertaining psychological dramas managed to enter the list of leaders of the French film box office in 1971: *Dying of Love (Mourir d'aimer)* by André Cayatte (second place in attendance and 5.9 million viewers) and *Breathing in the Heart (Le Souffle au cœur)* by Louis Malle (tenth place and 2.6 million viewers).

The recent cinematographer Claude Zidi suddenly burst into the company of box-office directors with the comedy *The Recruits Go Crazy (Les Bidasses en folie)* (first place at the box office of the year and 7.5 million viewers) with the participation of the popular group *Charlot*. This movie began the triumphant, decade-long success of a series of films featuring this group...

At the same time, the original films of Claude Chabrol and François Truffaut were in the attendance range from 0.3 million to 0.7 million viewers.

The French film distribution in 1971 was for the first time without films with the participation of Fernandel (1903–1971) and Bourvil (1917–1970)...

With the departure of these two outstanding actors, Louis de Funès became in the 1970s, in fact, the only super popular comedian in France...

In the French film box office in 1971, the top ten included two comedies with Louis de Funès: *Delusions of Grandeur (La Folie des grandeurs)* (third place and 5.6 million viewers) and *Jo* (tenth place and 2.5 million viewers).

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres starring the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

The top ten leaders of the French film box office included not only two films with the participation of Louis de Funès, but also two spectacular films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo (*The Burglars / Le Casse* and *Spouses of the Second Year / Les Mariés de l'An Deux*).

The film by the “old guard” director Christian-Jacques was also close to the top ten: the success of *Oil Producers (Les Pétroleuses)* was largely brought about by the duet of Brigitte Bardot and Claudia Cardinale...

A curious story happened with the famous French-Italian film *The Conformist* by Bernardo Bertolucci. In Italy, this outstanding psychological drama was a super success: 8.6 million viewers (analogous to approximately 40 million viewers in the USSR). However, in France this picture was watched by 0.6 million viewers, and in the USSR (where the film was released in 1976 in a heavily shortened form and devoid of color) – the same number as in Italy: 8.6 million viewers.

In the French film distribution in 1971, the expansion of “films for adults” continued, which did not yet make it into the top twenty leaders, since they received no more 0.7 million viewers.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1971, only one film made it into Soviet cinema distribution – *Spouses of the Second Year / Les Mariés de l'An Deux* (seventh place in terms of attendance and 2.8 million viewers, which was analogous to approximately 14 million viewers in the USSR). In Soviet film distribution in 1975, this film was called *Remarriage* and attracted 21.3 million viewers.

The reasons why most of the films of this “champion ten” were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played the main role in the film *Delusions of Grandeur*).

- The undesirability of the appearance of images of charming criminals on Soviet screens (*Burglars, Red Sun*);

- Fear that Soviet viewers might somehow misunderstand the “slippery” plots of the dramas *Dying of Love (Mourir d'aimer)* and *Breathing in the Heart (Le Souffle au cœur)* from the point of view of official Soviet morality...

- Too high prices offered by French studios (perhaps this applied to the comedy *The Recruits Go Crazy* and some other films from the “golden ten”).

Of the films released in France in 1971, which were not included in the “golden ten”, four films were released on USSR screens in different years in 1973-1976: *Killers in the Name of Order (Les Assassins de l'ordre)* by Marcel Carné, *The House under the Trees (La Maison sous les arbres)* by René Clément, *The Conformist* by Bernardo Bertolucci and *Sacco and Vanzetti* by Giuliano Montaldo.

It should be noted that in 1971, political cinema in Italy and France, as in the previous two years, was at the peak of its popularity. That is why the Italian-French political drama *Sacco and Vanzetti*, devoid of any hint of entertainment, attracted 1.2 million viewers in France and 5.0 million viewers in Italy.

It is clear that such a striking example, as it was then customary to write, of progressive, anti-bourgeois cinema, like *Sacco and Vanzetti*, was bought by the Soviet purchasing commission precisely for ideological reasons. But this film was a failure at the USSR film distribution: taking into account the difference in the population of the Soviet Union, Italy and France, the drama *Sacco and Vanzetti* was watched by a much smaller number of Soviet viewers (only 3.1 million). After all, audiences in the USSR primarily expected bright and colorful entertainment from French and Italian cinema...

As for the films *Killers in the Name of Order*, *The House under the Trees* and *The Conformist*, they were watched by a much larger number of viewers in the USSR than in France.

So, in different years, 5 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1971 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1971 (among French films)

In 1971, 26 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

This time the list of outsiders consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema”, erotic films and entertainment producers who did not live up to the expectations...

It is curious that the director of the film *The Man Who Came at Night (L'homme qui vient de la nuit)*, Jean-Claude Dagues, was so upset by the resounding failure of his film at the French box office in 1971 (it attracted only about 30 thousand spectators) that he decided to become a bank robber, but together with his accomplices was caught by the police. As a result, he was given eight years in prison.

Thus, Jean-Claude Dague became the world's first film director – a bank robber.

Jean-Claude Dague (born in 1937) made his film debut as an actor, then as a director he made four films that were not commercially successful...

But it should be noted that in prison Jean-Claude Dague did not sit idle, but wrote a sensational autobiographical book *The Named One (Le Dénommé)*, which he personally filmed in 1990...

Returning to the list of outsider films in Soviet film distribution in 1971, we note that this time not one of them made it into mass Soviet film distribution...

Top box office leaders in France in 1972 (among French films)

In 1972, only 25 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 2.0 million to 5.7 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten French film box office leaders in 1972 consisted primarily of comedies...

The directors of the “golden ten” of 1972 were professionals of genre cinema: Claude Zidi, Jean Giraud, Claude Lelouch, Yves Robert, Georges Lautner and others.

At the same time, two absolutely unentertaining psychological dramas managed to enter the list of leaders of the French film box office in 1972: *Last Tango in Paris (Le Dernier Tango à Paris / Ultimo Tango a Parigi)* by Bernardo Bertolucci (second place in attendance and 5.2 million viewers) and *Cesar and Rosalie* by Claude Sautet (seventh place and 2.6 million viewers).

The French film distribution in 1972 showed that the box office triumph of films with the participation of the popular group *Charlot* continued: the comedy *Crazy in the Stadium (Les Fous du stade)* by Claude Zidi confidently came out on top in terms of attendance with a result of 5.7 million viewers, and the comedy *Charlot in Spain (Les Charlots font l'Espagne)* by Jeanne Giraud was the “bronze medalist” with a result of 4.2 million viewers.

The films of Claude Lelouch (*Adventure is an Adventure / L'aventure c'est l'aventure*), Yves Robert (*The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe / Le Grand Blond avec une chaussure noire*) and Claude Chabrol (*Docteur Popaul*) returned to the top ten box office leaders in 1972.

At the same time, original films by Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut and Eric Rohmer were in the attendance range from 0.2 million to 0.9 million viewers.

For the first time since 1963, the list of leaders in French film distribution in 1972 did not include a single film featuring the “king of laughter” Louis de Funès. Perhaps due to the fact that Jean Giraud chose to temporarily interrupt his “gendarme” film series and could not resist the temptation to make a comedy with de Funès’s main rivals in the comedy department – the *Charlot* group...

In addition to the comedians *Charlot*, the comedic star of Pierre Richard shone brightly on the French cinema horizon in 1972, playing the main role in Yves Robert’s witty parody *The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe*.

The top ten leaders of the French film box office included two films with the participation of Mireille Darc (*The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe* and *Once Upon a Time There Was a Policeman*).

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres starring the favorites of the French public: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

The most scandalous premiere of the French film distribution in 1972 was, undoubtedly, the film by Bernardo Bertolucci *Last Tango in Paris*.

This was a rather rare case when a Franco-Italian film by an Italian director, also of a dramatic genre, had such an impressive audience success in France.

In Italy, this outstanding psychological drama was watched by a fantastic number of viewers for this country: 15.6 million (analogous to 70 million viewers in the USSR). But in France, this picture (which took second place at the 1972 box office) was watched by 5.2 million viewers (analogous to 26 million viewers in the USSR).

There were many reasons for this success: the skill of direction by Bertolucci and Hollywood star Marlon Brando, the shockingness of a number of scenes, a media advertising campaign that emphasized the scandalous details of filming and the plot...

It is clear that this film could not be released in the USSR, but the Soviet press wrote a lot about it, vigorously discussing its artistic merits and the frankness of key scenes...

Perhaps it was *Last Tango in Paris* that became the first film intended only for adult audiences to rise so high in the attendance rating at the French box office...

As in 1971, at the French box office in 1972 the expansion of erotic films continued, the professional level of which was, to put it mildly, low, or completely absent. These films did not even make it into the top twenty leaders and received no more than 1.3 million viewers.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1972, five films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

True, if the films *The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe* and *Once Upon a Time There Was a Policeman* appeared in Soviet film distribution quite quickly – in 1974, then two comedies with the participation of the group *Charlot* had to wait until the summer of 1989 for release in Soviet cinemas, and melodrama *Cesar and Rosalie* (with Montand, “undesirable” in the USSR in the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s) – until February 1991...

Moreover, if in France the comedy *The Tall Blonde in a Black Shoe* was watched by 3.5 million viewers (analogous to 17 million viewers in the USSR), then the results of the Soviet film distribution of this film were more impressive: 25.2 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Georges Lautner's film *Once Upon a Time There Was a Policeman (Il était une fois un flic...)* was watched by 2 million viewers in France (analogous to approximately 10 million viewers in the USSR), and in the USSR this film was watched by 26.1 million viewers during the first year of its demonstration.

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1972 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Too high prices offered by French copyright holders;
- The undesirability of images of charming criminals appearing on Soviet screens;
- Fear that Soviet viewers might somehow misunderstand stories that are “slippery” from the point of view of official Soviet morality...

Of the films released in France in 1972 that were not included in the top ten, six films were released on USSR screens: the comedy *The Old Maid (La Vieille fille)*, the melodrama *Dear Louise (Chère Louise)*, the adventure co-production *Call of the Wild (L'Appel de la forêt / Ruf der Wildnis / Il Richiamo della foresta)*, two “progressive political films”: *Assassination (L'Attentat)* and *Beau Masque*, and also, very belatedly (in 1987), Luis Buñuel's satirical parable *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie (Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie)*.

Of these, the adventure film *Call of the Wild* had the greatest success in the USSR. In France, its audience amounted to about one hundred thousand spectators. In the USSR (1974/1975 season) – 22.1 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

The political drama about the life of the working class *Beau Masque* in France was attended by about forty thousand spectators. In the USSR, thanks to the magic words on cinema posters “New French film *Beau Masque*”, its audience amounted to 6.3 million viewers...

So, 11 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1972 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1972 (among French films)

In 1972, 22 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders of 1972 mainly consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema”, several erotic films...

Two films from this list were included in Soviet film distribution.

The adventure film *Call of the Wild* attracted about one hundred thousand viewers in France, and in the USSR in 1974 – 22.1 million viewers.

A drama on a very important working topic for the USSR called *Beautiful Mask (Beau Masque)* directed by Bernard Paul in France managed to attract only 40 thousand spectators to cinema screens, but the Soviet public, not spoiled by French films, reacted to this film much warmer (although according to Soviet distribution by the standards of the 1970s, its attendance was rather weak): in 1974, *Beau Masque* attracted 6.3 million spectators in the USSR.

Top box office leaders in France in 1973 (among French films)

In 1973, only 26 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 2.0 million to 7.3 million viewers to cinemas in France. Her genre spectrum consisted mainly of comedies...

The top ten grossing directors were genre film professionals: Gerard Oury, Claude Zidi, Edouard Molinaro, Philippe de Broca, Georges Lautner, Philippe Labro and others.

At the same time, the films of François Truffaut and Claude Chabrol were in the attendance range of 0.8 million viewers.

At the same time, the leaders of the French film distribution in 1973 managed to include the completely unentertaining psychological drama by José Giovanni *Two men in the City (Deux hommes dans la ville)* (eighth place in terms of attendance and 2.5 million viewers) and Marco Ferreri's shocking satire *The Big Grub (La Grande Bouffe / La grande abbuffata)* (sixth place and 2.8 million viewers).

In 1973, director Gerard Oury and the king of laughter Louis de Funès made a very successful (after a one-year break) return to the top ten audience favorites: their comedy *The Adventures of Rabbi Jacob* topped the French box office with an impressive result: 7.3 million viewers.

Moreover, *The Adventures of Rabbi Jacob* managed to push aside another comedy with the participation of the group *Charlot (Big Bazaar / Le Grand Bazar)* by Claude Zidi took third place at the box office, collecting 3.9 million viewers).

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres starring the favorites of the French public: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

The top ten leaders of the French film box office (for the umpteenth time!) included two films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo (*The Magnificent / Le Magnifique* and *The Heir / L'Héritier*).

And the superstar of the second half of the 1950s – 1960s, Brigitte Bardot, who did not want to grow old on the screen, played her last film role in 1973... By the way, one of the last films with her participation was *Don Juan 73* by Roger Vadim – was only the thirtieth most visited at the French box office...

The most scandalous premiere of the French film distribution in 1973 was, undoubtedly, Marco Ferreri's film *The Big Grub (La Grande Bouffe / La grande abbuffata)*.

This (like *Last Tango in Paris*) was a rather rare case when a French-Italian film by an Italian director, moreover, not the highest-grossing genre of social satire, had such an impressive audience success.

In France, this shocking picture (which took sixth place at the 1973 box office) was watched by 2.8 million viewers (analogous to 14 million viewers in the USSR).

As in Italy, political cinema was very popular in France in the first half of the 1970s.

Since *The Serpent* and *Silent* were recognized as anti-Soviet in the USSR, and the director of *State of Siege (État de siège)* Costa-Gavras was on the "black list" after the slanderous *Confessions*, among the films with political themes, *No Smoke Without Fire (Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu)* by André Cayatte and *Nothing Happened (R.A.S.)* by Yves Boisset came to the Soviet screen.

At the French box office, these films attracted 2 million and 1.3 million viewers. In Soviet film distribution, A. Cayatte's film, released under the title *Blackmail*, suffered significant cuts, but still attracted a good audience of 14.2 million viewers. But the film by I. Boisset in the USSR did not really interest the mass audience: 3.5 million viewers watched it in the first year of its demonstration.

Of course, in the French box office in 1973, the expansion of erotic films continued, the professional level of which was rather low or completely absent. These films did not even make it into the top twenty leaders and gained no more than 1.1 million viewers.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1973, three films made it into Soviet cinema distribution, and very promptly – in 1975.

The comedy *The Bore (L'Emmerdeur)* by Edouard Molinaro was watched in France by 3.3 million viewers (fourth place according to the 1973 box office results). Approximately the same number (in per capita terms) watched this film in the USSR: 17.5 million viewers.

The parody film with Jean-Paul Belmondo *The Magnificent* was more successful in the USSR. In France, it was fifth with an attendance of 2.9 million viewers (analogous to 14 million viewers in the USSR), but in reality this film was watched by 24.6 million viewers in Soviet cinemas during the first year of demonstration.

Approximately the same number of viewers in the USSR watched José Giovanni's psychological drama *Two men in the City*, which protested against the death penalty. This film with the excellent duet of Jean Gabin and Alain Delon was watched by 2.5 million viewers in France (eighth place in the top ten).

The reasons why the remaining films of the French "champion ten" of film distribution in 1973 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Too high prices offered by French studios (perhaps this concerned the comedy *Big Bazaar* and the crime drama *The Heir*);
- Accentuated Jewish theme (*The Adventures of Rabbi Jakob*);
- traditional exclusion from candidates for the purchase of films with shocking plots (*Big Grub*).

Of the remaining films of the French film distribution in 1973, five were released on Soviet screens (in 1974–1977): politically charged dramas *No Smoke Without Fire* by André Cayatte, *Nothing Happened* by Yves Boisset, *About Murder on the Front Page* (*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina / Viol en première page*) by Marco Bellocchio, the comedy *Pretty Business* (*La belle affaire*) by Jacques Besnard and *Hello, Artist* (*Salut l'artiste*) by Yves Robert.

Almost all of them (especially *Pretty Business*) had much greater attendance in the USSR than in France.

So, in different years, 8 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1973 were shown on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1973 (among French films)

In 1973, 36 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders mainly consisted of elite works of "auteur cinema" and several erotic films...

Only one film from this list was included in Soviet film distribution – the political drama *About Murder on the Front Page* (*Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina / Viol en première page*), which was released in USSR cinemas in 1977 and attracted 7.5 million viewers. In France, when released in 1973, this picture attracted only a hundred thousand audience to cinemas...

Top box office leaders in France in 1974 (among French films)

In 1974, only 22 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.2 million to 8.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1974 consisted mainly of comedies, but the sensation was that for the first time in the history of French film box office, an entertaining erotic film not only entered the top ten box office leaders of the year, but also came out on top with an impressive result: 8.9 million of spectators. It was reminiscent in style of the color covers of the then French entertainment glossy magazines *Emmanuelle* by Juste Jacquin...

At the same time, Bertrand Blier's film *Waltzers* (*Les Valseuses*) (second place and 5.7 million viewers) managed to take second place among the box office hits of the French film distribution in 1974, most likely, primarily due to its shockingness.

At the same time, the films *Emmanuelle* and *Waltzers* managed to push into third place another comedy with the participation of the group *Charlot* (the film *Recruits Go to War / Les Bidasses s'en vont en guerre*) by Claude Zidi attracted 4.1 million viewers).

Another erotic film was included in the top twenty box office leaders of the year: the *Immoral Tales* (*Contes immoraux*) by Walerian Borowczyk (20th place and 1.1 million viewers).

Once again, a very shocking "picture for adults" came to 37th place in the French box office: *Sweet Movie* by Dusan Makaveev, which managed to attract about 600 thousand French people to cinema halls.

In 49th place at the box office is another, no less frivolous erotic film: Alain Robbe-Grillet's bizarre fantasy *Gradual Sliding to Pleasure* (*Glissements progressifs du plaisir*) (about three hundred thousand viewers came to see it).

Of course, against the backdrop of the flagship of frivolity that *Emmanuelle* became and its shocking “retinue” (*Immoral Tales*, *Sweet Movie* and *Gradual Sliding to Pleasure*) at the French box office in 1974, the expansion of much more primitive erotic and even pornographic films, but they turned out to be outsiders, unable to attract more than one hundred thousand viewers.

In tenth place in the French film box office in 1974, Louis Malle’s unentertaining psychological drama *Lacombe Lucien* (the film told about the events of the Nazi occupation of France) unexpectedly ended up, which attracted 1.7 million viewers to cinemas.

The rest of the films in the top ten grossing films were directed by genre film professionals: Claude Zidi (two of his comedies: *Recruits Go to War* and *The Mustard Gets on My Nose / La moutarde me monte au nez* were in the top ten), Claude Pinoteau, Jean Giraud, Yves Robert, André Hunebelle and etc.

At the same time, original films by Robert Bresson, Federico Fellini and Luis Bunuel were in the attendance range from 0.2 million to 1.1 million viewers.

In general, the massive French box office of 1974 continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Yves Montand, Romy Schneider, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

This time there were no comedies with Louis de Funès in the top ten box office champions, but there were two comedies at once, where the main roles were played by a young comedian at that time, Pierre Richard.

The top ten leaders of the French film box office included two films not only with the participation of Pierre Richard (*The Mustard Gets on My Nose* and *The Return of the Tall Blonde*), but also two films with the participation of Gerard Depardieu (*Waltzing and Vincent, Francois, Paul and other...*).

Along with this, the line of political cinema continued in the French film distribution in 1974 (*The Chinese in Paris* by Jean Yanne, *Nada* by Claude Chabrol, etc.).

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1974, four films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

The comedy *Recruits Goes to War* by Claude Zidi was watched by 4.1 million viewers in France (third place according to the 1974 distribution results), but in the mass Soviet film distribution of 1978 the success was many times greater: 50.1 million viewers in the first year demonstrations.

Another comedy by the same Claude Zidi, *The Mustard Gets on My Nose*, was fourth in the French box office and attracted 3.7 million viewers (analogous to approximately 18 million viewers in the USSR). In Soviet film distribution, this picture (under the title *He’s Starting to Get Angry*) was watched by 26.8 million viewers in 1983.

The parody film with Pierre Richard, *The Return of the Tall Blonde (Le Retour du grand blond)*, was a significant success in the USSR. In France, it was eighth with an attendance of 2.2 million viewers (analogous to 15 million viewers in the USSR), but in reality this film was watched by 21.5 million viewers in Soviet cinemas during the first year of demonstration.

But a completely unexpected story happened with the release in the USSR of André Hunebelle’s parody costume comedy *Charlot’s Four Musketeers (Les Quatre Charlots mousquetaires)*. In France, this film attracted 2.2 million viewers (analogous to approximately 10 million viewers in the USSR), but in real Soviet film distribution this film (called *The Four Musketeers*) was watched by 56.6 million viewers in 1978. Thus, this picture was ahead in the USSR not only of comedies with Pierre Richard, but also of *Recruits...* with the same group *Charlot* in the leading roles.

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1974 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

– Traditional exclusion from candidates for the purchase of any erotic films and films with shocking plots (*Emmanuelle*, *Waltzers*).

– Accentuated Jewish themes and “belittling the role of the French resistance movement” (*Lacombe Lucien*);

– The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played one of the main roles in the film *Vincent, Francois, Paul and Others...*).

Of the films that were not included in the “golden ten” of the French film distribution of 1974, six films were released on the screens of the USSR (in 1976-1982): the continuation of *The Four Musketeers* – the comedy *Four Against the Cardinal* (*À nous quatre Cardinal!*) by André Hunebelle, the crime drama *Only the Wind Knows the Answer* (*Seul le vent connaît la réponse / Die Antwort kennt nur der Wind*) by Alfred Vohrer, dramas by Vittorio De Sica *Voyage* (*Il Viaggio / Le Voyage*) and *Piaf* by Guy Casaril, *Parade* by Jacques Tati and the legendary *Amarcord* by Federico Fellini. As expected, the spectacular films *Four Against the Cardinal* and *Only the Wind Knows the Answer* enjoyed the greatest success in Soviet film distribution.

So, in different years, 10 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1974 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1974 (among French films)

In 1974, 30 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders partly consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema”, but the overwhelming majority were dominated by erotic films of the “B” and “C” categories...

Three films from this list were included in Soviet film distribution.

Vittorio de Sica's melodrama *Voyage* was released in USSR cinemas in 1977 and attracted 14 million viewers. In France, this picture attracted only about one hundred thousand viewers, while in Italy – 1.8 million viewers.

The biopic *Piaf* was a complete fiasco at the French box office in 1974: the film managed to lure about 20 thousand spectators into cinemas.

Data on the distribution of Jacques Tati's film *Parade* in France, alas, are not available, but in USSR cinemas in 1977 it was seen by a very modest number of viewers for those times: 2.8 million.

Top box office leaders in France in 1975 (among French films)

In 1975, only 24 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.0 million to 3.9 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten French film distribution leaders in 1975 was quite diverse: five comedies, two detective/thrillers, two erotic films (among them another film by Just Jacquin, shot immediately after *Emmanuelle*), and drama.

It was a sensation of sorts that for the first time in the history of French film distribution, the top ten highest-grossing films included two entertaining erotic films (*The Story of O / Histoire d'O* and *Playing Games / Les Jouisseuses*), which took, respectively, third and ninth places in terms of attendance.

Another “very adult” film – *Exhibitionism* – is not so far from them: in 13th place (1.8 million viewers).

Of course, against the backdrop of *The Story of O* and *Playing Games*, the expansion of much more primitive erotic and pornographic films continued at the French box office in 1975. However, all of them ended up outside the top four dozen leaders at the French box office and failed to gain more than 0.5 million viewers.

In first place at the French box office in 1975 was Henri Verneuil's thriller/detective *Fear of the City* (*Peur sur la ville*) (3.9 million viewers) with Jean-Paul Belmondo in the title role.

Another film with Belmondo, *The Untamed* (*L'Incorrigible*) by Philippe de Broca, took seventh place in attendance (2.6 million viewers).

The 1975 release showed that the popularity of the *Charlot* group, if it fell, did not fall much: the comedy with their participation, *Hong Kong Kisses* (*Bons baisers de Hong-Kong*), was in sixth place (2.9 million viewers).

One step higher (fifth place) was another comedy with Pierre Richard and Jane Birkin – *La Course à l'échalote* by Claude Zidi. In France, it attracted 3 million viewers (analogous to 15 million viewers in the USSR), and in Soviet film distribution in 1979 its audience amounted to almost twenty-nine million viewers.

Robert Enrico's drama *The Old Gun* (*Le Vieux Fusil*) was a great success at the Soviet box office: in 1977 it was watched by 30.4 million viewers. In the French film box office in 1975, this outstanding work by R. Enrico, collecting 3.4 million viewers, was in fourth place in attendance...

The directors of the remaining films of the top ten grossers were genre cinema professionals Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Jacques Deray and others.

At the same time, films by Jean-Luc Godard, Orson Welles, Marguerite Duras, Michelangelo Antonioni, Alain Robbe-Grillet, François Truffaut and Luchino Visconti were in the 1975 French box office in the attendance range from 0.1 million to 0.9 million of spectators.

In general, the French mass market continues to rely on hits of entertainment genres starring the favorites of the French public: Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

To some extent, in France in 1975 the line of political cinema continued, but these films did not have any noticeable success among viewers.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1975, only three films made it into Soviet cinema distribution: *The Old Gun* and *La Course à l'échalote*, plus, much belatedly, in 1991, the adventure comedy *Savage (Le Sauvage)*.

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1975 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

– Traditional exclusion from candidates for the purchase of any erotic films and pictures with shocking plots (*The Story of O* and *Playing Games*);

– Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (perhaps, for example, *Fear over the City* with Belmondo fell into this category);

– The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played one of the main roles in the film *Savage*, which reached Soviet cinemas only when the Soviet government “forgave” the actor – in 1991).

True, ten more films from the French film distribution repertoire of 1975, which were not included in the top ten, were included in Soviet film distribution.

For example, the film *Goodbye, Policeman (Adieu poulet)* was watched by 16.3 million viewers in Soviet cinemas (in 1977); *No Problem (Pas de problème!)* (in 1976): 22.6 million viewers; *Dupont Lajoie* (in the USSR – from September 12, 1977 under the name *It Happened on a Holiday*): 12.5 million viewers; *Seven Deaths by Order (Sept Morts sur ordonnance)* (in the USSR under the title *In the Networks of the Mafia* – from May 23, 1977): 13.3 million viewers; *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (in the USSR – from April 1976): 3.1 million viewers.

Luchino Visconti’s outstanding film *Family Portrait in an Interior (Gruppo di famiglia in un interno / Violence et passion)* was watched by 0.9 million viewers in France. In the Soviet box office (in per capita terms) it was seen in 1978 by twice as many viewers: 10.7 million. But in Italy it was even more popular: it attracted 3.8 million viewers to cinema screens (i.e. in per capita terms, twice as much as in the USSR and four times more than in France).

Much better than in France, Soviet audiences watched (in 1976) another cinematic masterpiece – Michelangelo Antonioni’s drama *Profession: Reporter*. This film was seen by about three hundred thousand French and 6.7 million Soviet viewers.

But with the adventure film *Zorro*, which was a huge success in the USSR (55.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration), a rather strange situation occurred in the French film distribution.

It would seem that a bright, colorful, dynamic film, starring Alain Delon, should have primarily conquered the French. But in the French box office this film took a relatively modest 18th place, and its attendance amounted to 1.2 million viewers (in principle, quite good, but it could have been five times more). But in Italy, *Zorro* went, as they say, with a bang: 4.9 million viewers.

In the USSR (in the 1976/1977 season), *Zorro* was simply triumphant: 55.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Readers of the older generation probably remember what a notable success the film *Only the Wind Knows the Answer (Die Antwort kennt nur der Wind / Seul le vent connaît la réponse)* enjoyed in Soviet film distribution with the participation of another popular French actor, Maurice Ronet (only during its first release in the USSR, this film was watched by 20.7 million viewers). But in France, the audience greeted this picture very coolly: its audience was only about two hundred thousand spectators...

But the political dramas *It’s Raining in Santiago (Il pleut sur Santiago)* and *Where it’s thin, it breaks (Il pleut toujours où c’est mouillé)* were not a box office success either in France or in the USSR...

So, 14 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1975 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1975 (among French films)

In 1975, 36 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders partly consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema”, but the overwhelming majority were dominated by erotic and porn films of categories “B” and “C”...

The following films were included in Soviet film distribution from this list: *It's Raining in Santiago* and *Where it's thin, it breaks*.

The first was for political reasons, as he protested against the rebellion of General Pinochet in Chile. The second is due to the pronounced theme of oppression of ordinary workers by capitalists...

Both of these films were not successful in the Soviet film distribution, as they were devoid of entertainment, and they did not star French stars...

Top box office leaders in France in 1976 (among French films)

In 1976, only 19 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s, but also the first half of the 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.7 million to 5.8 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in the French film box office in 1976 was quite diverse: six comedies, two detective/thrillers, and a drama.

Unlike 1974 and 1975, in 1976 not a single erotic film managed to enter the top ten.

Moreover, “films for adults” (with an audience of 0.7 to 0.9 million viewers) failed to even enter the top ten leaders at the French box office. And this, despite the fact that in *The Last Woman (La Dernière Femme)* by Marco Ferreri, Gerard Depardieu and Ornella Muti starred in the main and very shocking roles, and in the melodrama *La marge* – Sylvie Kristel (who previously played in the frivolous *Emmanuelle*, which in France was daringly ranked first in attendance in 1974).

In first place at the French box office in 1976 was Claude Zidi's comedy *A Wing or a Leg (L'Aile ou la Cuisse)*, which, after a short break, once again brought the king of laughter, Louis de Funès, to the top of the box office...

But for the first time in several years, there was not a single comedy with the participation of the group *Charlot* in the top ten box office triumphs. Comedies with Pierre Richard were also not included in the top ten, although they came quite close to it...

1976 was the last year of the life of the famous French actor Jean Gabin (1904–1976). The comedy with his participation called *Holy Year (L'Année sainte)* took 18th place at the box office (1.1 million viewers).

Second and third places in the French film box office in 1976 were taken by frivolous comedies: *Come to us, little Englishwomen!(À nous les petites Anglaises!)* by Michel Lang, *Even Elephants Can Be Unfaithful (Un éléphant, ça trompe énormément)* by Yves Robert.

As in 1975, the top ten in 1976 included two films starring Jean-Paul Belmondo: the thrillers/detectives *The Corpse of My Enemy (Le Corps de mon ennemi)* by Henri Verneuil and *The Gunner (L'Alpagueur)* by Philippe Labro.

The 1976 release was also successful for Annie Girardot, whose top ten also included two films: the drama *Docteur Françoise Gailland* and the comedy *Run So I Catch You (Cours après moi que je t'attrape)*.

After a long break, a film by François Truffaut also found itself in the top ten: his comedy *Pocket Money (L'Argent de poche)* attracted 1.8 million viewers and was in eighth place according to the results of the French box office in 1976.

At the same time, the author's films *Monsieur Klein* by Joséph Losey (in which Alain Delon perhaps played his best role in his career) and *The Tenant (Le Locataire)* by Roman Polanski managed to collect from 0.5 million to 0.7 million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean Gabin, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

The line of political cinema in the French film distribution in 1976 significantly lost its position.

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1976, four films were released in Soviet cinemas, of which two with the participation of Annie Girardot and one with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo and Bruno Kremer.

In the French film box office, Francois Truffaut's film *Pocket Money* took eighth place and attracted a rather rare number of viewers for the work of this director – 1.8 million (analogous to approximately 9 million viewers in the USSR). However, in the USSR this picture was shown with much less impressive results: in the first year of its demonstration, only 5.7 million viewers watched it. Apparently, the adult audience in the USSR considered this film too childish, and Soviet children were not interested in it...

The drama *Docteur Françoise Gaillard* (fourth place in the French box office and 2.6 million viewers) was seen in the USSR by a similar number of viewers (taking into account the difference in the populations of the countries): 14.9 million.

The comedy *Run So I Catch You* (ninth place in the French box office and 1.7 million viewers) was watched much more willingly in the USSR: in 1978, in Soviet film distribution it (under the title *Dating through a marriage advertisement*) collected 24.9 million viewers.

But *The Gunner*, which was tenth in the list of leaders in France (with a result of 1.7 million viewers), in 1978 became a truly triumphant Soviet film distribution: 33.5 million viewers in the first year of demonstration (this film was shown in the USSR called *Private Detective*).

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1976 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Traditional exclusion from candidates for the purchase of films that are too frivolous in plot (*Come to us, little English girls!, Even elephants can be unfaithful*);
- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (perhaps, for example, the comedy *A Wing or a Leg* fell into this category);

True, the Soviet film distribution included eight more films from the French film distribution repertoire of 1976, which were not included in the top ten.

For example, the famous large-scale epic *The Twentieth Century (Novecento/1900)* by Bernardo Bertolucci, despite all its “progressiveness and democracy,” greatly frightened Soviet censors in the 1970s with its bold scenes, and as a result was released into Soviet film distribution with a great delay – from May 21, 1990. In Italian film distribution it was one of the highest-grossing films in history: 10.4 million viewers (analogous to approximately 47 million viewers in the USSR). And in France, its attendance was high (11th place in box office and 1.7 million viewers). However, in the perestroika Soviet Union, due to the then video boom, this picture was more than modest...

The drama *Monsieur Klein* also appeared on Soviet screens very late – on December 9, 1991. In France, this significant film managed to gather 0.7 million viewers. In the USSR, which found itself on the verge of collapse in December 1991, it turned out to be practically unnoticed...

The remaining four films were released into Soviet film distribution quite quickly – in 1978–1979.

The greatest success of them was the comedy *Toy (Le Jouet)* with Pierre Richard (15th place at the French box office and 1.2 million viewers): in the USSR, in the first year of its demonstration, 25.3 million viewers watched it. Years later, two remakes of this film were shot in the USA and France, but they were regarded (by both the public and the film press) as pale shadows of Francis Weber’s original...

The political drama *Brilliant Corpses (Cadaveri eccellenti / Cadavres exquis)* (21st place in the French box office and 1 million viewers) was also watched in the USSR with more enthusiasm than in France: in the first year of its demonstration it was watched by 12.4 million viewers.

Accurate data on the number of viewers in Soviet film distribution for the films *F... like Fairbanks (F... comme Fairbanks) (He Wanted to Live)*, *Vendetta in Corsican Style (Les grands moyens)* and *The Innocent (L'Innocent)*, unfortunately, are (yet?) unavailable, although they, of course, are not were box office champions in the USSR...

The greatest success in the USSR fell to the adventure film co-produced by Italy, France and Spain *White Fang (Zanna Bianca / Colmillo Blanco / Croc-blanc)*, which, despite very low attendance in France (about one hundred thousand spectators) and 4.8 million spectators in Italy, managed to attract 30,000 spectators in Soviet cinemas. 1 million viewers. The popularity of this

film in the USSR was most likely brought about by children and teenagers who adored films about animals and adventures.

So, 12 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1976 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1976 (among French films)

In 1976, 35 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders partly consisted of elite works of "auteur cinema", but the overwhelming majority were dominated by films of categories "B" and "C"...

Two films from this list were included in Soviet film distribution.

Thanks to the popularity of Franco Nero, the film adaptation of Jack London's story *White Fang* in Italy attracted an impressive audience of 4.8 million viewers. However, in France it attracted only about one hundred thousand spectators. But in the USSR, where children and teenagers were seriously captivated by on-screen adventures, *White Fang* attracted 30.1 million viewers to cinema screens.

The crime comedy *Strong Drugs (Les grands moyens)* (in France it was a box office failure, only about one hundred thousand viewers watched it) was released in Soviet cinemas under the title *Vendetta in Corsican Style* and aroused much greater interest.

Top box office leaders in France in 1977 (among French films)

In 1977, only 15 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s and 1960s, but also the first half of the 1970s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.4 million to 3.2 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten French film distribution leaders in 1977 was quite diverse: comedies, detective stories, dramas.

As in 1974 and 1975, in 1977 an erotic film (*Bilitis* by David Hamilton: 10th place and 1.4 million viewers) again managed to enter the top ten.

Claude Zidi's comedy *The Beast (L'Animal)* with Jean-Paul Belmondo came out on top in the French box office in 1977.

The film with Alain Delon *Death of a Rotten (Mort d'un pourri)* was also in the top ten (sixth place and 1.8 million viewers).

But this time there were no films with Louis de Funès, the group *Charlot* and Pierre Richard in the top ten of the French film box office...

Second and third places in the French film box office in 1977 were taken by rather frivolous comedies: *The Menthol Devil (Diabolo menthe)* and *We Will All Go to Heaven (Nous irons tous au paradis)*.

The 1977 box office year turned out to be successful for director Yves Boisset, whose two dramas *Investigator Fayard*, nicknamed "The Sheriff" (*Le Juge Fayard dit "Le Sheriff"*) and *Purple Taxi (Un taxi mauve)* shared 8th and 9th places among box office hits, collecting from 1.5 million to 1.8 million spectators.

The top ten also included films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Claude Zidi, Yves Robert, Georges Lautner, etc.

Author's films by Francois Truffaut, Luis Buñuel, Alain Resnais, Valerio Dzurini, Agnès Varda managed to attract from three hundred thousand to a million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1977, three films made it into Soviet film distribution (in 1979 and 1980).

The comedy *The Beast (L'Animal)* was a huge success in the USSR: 41.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

Detective/crime dramas *Death of a Rotten (Mort d'un pourri)* and *Investigator Fayard*, nicknamed "The Sheriff" were also received with enthusiasm in the USSR, although less: 25.4 million and 22.1 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1977 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Traditional exclusion from candidates for purchase of films that are too frivolous in plot (*Bilitis*, *We Will All Go to Heaven*);
- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high;
- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Simone Signoret, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Signoret played the main role in the film *The Whole Life Ahead / La Vie devant soi*).

True, the Soviet film distribution (in the second half of the 1970s – the first half of the 1980s) included five more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1977 (in France they collected from 30 thousand to 1.1 million viewers), which were not included in top ten: *The Lacemaker (La Dentellière)*, *The Last Kiss (Le dernier baiser)*, *Tatar Desert (Le Désert des Tartares / Il deserto dei tartari)*, *Gloria* and *Return of the White Fang (Il Ritorno di Zanna Bianca / Le Retour de Croc blanc)*.

It is clear that of these, the adventure film *The Return of the White Fang* had the greatest success in the USSR: 23.9 million viewers in the first year of showing in cinemas.

So, in different years, 8 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1977 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1977 (among French films)

In 1977, 22 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders partly consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema” and others movies.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many of Christian-Jacques' films topped the French box office, attracting millions of viewers. In 1977, Christian-Jacques' musical comedy *Parisian Life (La vie parisienne)* unexpectedly became one of the outsiders: it attracted only about forty thousand spectators to cinemas. Most likely, viewers of the second half of the 1970s found this film too old-fashioned...

Of the entire list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1977, only the adventure film *The Return of the White Fang* and the melodrama *Gloria*, directed by Claude Autant-Lara, were included in the Soviet film distribution (in the French film distribution in 1977, it managed to gather only about 50 thousand viewers).

Top box office leaders in France in 1978 (among French films)

In 1978, only 18 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s and 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.9 million to 5.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In the genre spectrum of dozens of leaders in the French film box office in 1978, comedies were in the lead with a huge gap from dramas and melodramas.

Like 1974, 1975 and 1977, in 1978 the top ten French film distribution leaders included rather frivolous films for “adults”, very dubious from the point of view of official Soviet morality.

Suffice it to say that the first place in the French film box office in 1978 was the comedy *Cage for Madmen (La Cage aux folles)* by Edouard Molinaro, where the LGBT theme was famously played out. By the way, this was the first film of this type to reach the top of the box office in the French box office.

The plots of the comedies *Hotel on the Beach (L'Hôtel de la plage)* by Michel Lang (fourth place at the French box office, 2.8 million viewers) and *Tanned (Les Bronzés)* by Patrice Leconte (sixth place at the French box office, 2.3 million viewers) were quite frivolous.

After a short break, comedies with Louis de Funès (*Squabbles / La Zizanie*) by Claude Zidi, third place at the box office and 2.8 million viewers) and Pierre Richard (*Escape / La Carapate*) by Gerard Oury, second place and 2.9 million viewers) returned to the top ten leaders of the French film box office. million viewers; *I'm shy, but I'm healing (Je suis timide, mais je me soigne)*, directed by the actor himself: fifth place and 2.8 million viewers).

Like Pierre Richard, Annie Girardot also had two films in the “golden ten”: *Squabbles (La Zizanie)* and *The Key in the Door (La Clé sur la porte)*.

But the films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon and the group *Charlot* in the “golden ten” were not commercial success this time...

As a result, the top ten leaders of the French film distribution in 1978 included films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Edouard Molinaro, Gerard Oury, Claude Zidi, Michel Lang, Claude Sautet, Yves Boisset and others.

Political cinema occupied a modest place in the French film distribution in 1978, but was represented by films of a high artistic level: *Butterfly on the Shoulder (Un papillon sur l'épaule)* by Jacques Deray, *In the Interests of the State (La Raison d'État)* by André Cayatte, *Dossier No. 51* by Michel Deville, etc.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Gerard Depardieu, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1978, only two films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

The melodrama by Claude Sautet *A Simple Story (Une histoire simple)* (seventh place in the French box office and 2.3 million viewers) appeared on the screens of Soviet cinemas relatively quickly – in 1981. But the comedy *Escape* by Gerard Oury (second place in the French box office and 2.9 million viewers), although it was delayed in release in the USSR (most likely for financial reasons) for a whole decade, still managed to attract over twenty million viewers.

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1978 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Traditional exclusion from candidates for procurement of films that are too frivolous (by Soviet standards) (*Cage for Madmen, Hotel on the Beach, Tanned*);
- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (most likely, this applied, for example, to the comedy *Squabble*).

True, from the films outside the French “golden ten” of film distribution in 1978, seven more films were included in Soviet film distribution (in the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s) (in France they collected from forty thousand to 0.9 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Autumn Sonata (Höstsonaten / Herbstsonate / Sonate d'automne)*, *Love in Question (L'Amour en question)*, *In the Interests of the State (La Raison d'État)*, *Share of Fire (La Part du feu)*, *Fedora*, *Order and Security in the World (L'Ordre et la sécurité du monde)* and *A People's Romance (Romanzo popolare / Romances et confidences)*.

At the same time, with the film by Mario Monicelli *A People's Romance*, which attracted about six million spectators in Italy, a story typical of many Italian-French films made without the participation of French film stars happened in French cinemas: only forty thousand French people saw it in cinemas. But in the USSR, this film with Ornella Muti and Ugo Tognazzi was a huge success: 37.6 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

So, in different years, 9 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1978 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1978 (among French films)

In 1978, 17 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders partly consisted of elite works of “auteur cinema”.

But on the other hand, the same list includes the film of the recent triumph of the French film distribution by Juste Jacquin (his *Emmanuelle* in 1974 took first place in the French film distribution in terms of attendance) *The Last Romantic Lover (Le Dernier Amant romantique)*, which managed to attract only about one hundred thousand viewers.

Another box office luminary, Jean Giraud (he has a super-successful comedy film series about the adventures of a gendarme played by Louis de Funès), suffered an unexpected failure with the comedy *Horoscope*, which also attracted only about a hundred thousand French people.

The erotic melodrama *Inside the Monastery (Intérieur d'un couvent / Interno di un convento)* also unexpectedly received a similar result at the French box office in 1978. After all, it would seem that in past years, Walerian Borowczyk's films with shocking plots and abundant “nudes” were popular with the public. But not at this time...

From the entire list of outsiders, only two films made it into Soviet film distribution this time.

A strong mixture of psychological drama and thriller called *Order and Security in the World* (in France, for some reason, only about 50 thousand viewers watched it) was released on USSR screens in 1980 under the title *The Death of Madame Leman*.

But with Mario Monicelli's *A People's Romance*, a story happened in the French box office that was typical of many Italian-French films that did not star Francophone stars: its attendance was only about forty thousand spectators.

In Italy and the USSR, this film was a real box office success. *A People's Romance* was watched by 5.9 million Italians (which was approximately equal to 26 million viewers in the USSR). And in Soviet film distribution, *A People's Romance* attracted even more viewers to cinemas: 37.6 million viewers in the first year of its demonstration.

Top box office leaders in France in 1979 (among French films)

In 1979, only 16 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s and 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.6 million to 6.3 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in the French film box office in 1979 was extremely diverse; contrary to the traditions of previous years, it was dominated by dramas rather than comedies.

As in 1974–1975 and 1977–1978, in 1979 a picture for “adults” entered the top ten. This time it was the film *What about tenderness? Bordel! (Et la tendresse? Bordel!)* by Patrick Shulman (third place and 3.4 million viewers). The rest of the “daring films” remained outside the top thirty box office leaders...

In first place in the French film box office in 1979 was the comedy by Jean Giraud *The Gendarme and the Aliens (Le Gendarme et les extra-terrestres)* (6.3 million viewers) with Louis de Funès in the title role. Having suffered a crushing box office failure in 1978 with the comedy *Horoscope* devoid of top stars, Jean Giraud did not take any more risks and successfully returned to his “good old” film series about the cheerful adventures of a gendarme...

After a short break, films starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Alain Delon returned to the top ten of the French box office.

Belmondo played the main role in the action-packed film *Cop or Bandit (Flic ou Voyou)* (second place at the French box office and 4 million viewers). And Delon is in the drama *Military Doctor (Le Toubib)* (ninth place at the box office and 1.7 million viewers).

1979 was a very successful year for Yves Montand: two films (though far from entertaining) with his participation entered the top ten viewing preferences of the French (I... like *Icarus / I... comme Icare*). and *The Light of a Woman / Clair de femme*).

But this time there were no films with the participation of Pierre Richard and the group *Charlot* in the top ten distribution leaders...

As a result, the top ten leaders in French film distribution included films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Jean Giraud, Georges Lautner, Henri Verneuil, Patrice Leconte, etc.

We also note that Roman Polanski's masterfully directed film *Tess* with Nastassja Kinski in the title role was also in the top ten (fifth place at the box office and 1.9 million viewers).

And although political cinema occupied a modest place in the French film box office in 1979, it was represented, for example, by the powerful film I... like *Icarus* by Henri Verneuil.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Gerard Depardieu, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Philippe Noiret, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1979, five films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

Three of them appeared on USSR cinema screens quite quickly – in 1981-1982.

The comedy *The Gendarme and the Aliens* (first place in the French box office and 6.3 million viewers – analogous to 31 million viewers in the USSR) attracted 35.3 million viewers in the Soviet film box office.

The film *Cop or Bandit* (second place in the French box office and 4 million viewers – analogous to 20 million viewers in the USSR) attracted an even larger audience in Soviet cinemas – 38.9 million.

Data on the attendance of the melodrama *Tess* in Soviet film distribution is (yet?) unavailable, as well as distribution data for the crime drama *War of the Police (La Guerre des polices)* and the comedy *Tanned on Skis (Les Bronzés font du ski)*, which appeared on Soviet screens only in 1991...

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1979 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Traditional exclusion from candidates for procurement of films that are too frivolous (by Soviet standards) (*What about tenderness? Bordel!*);
- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high;
- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of Yves Montand, who dared to sharply criticize the USSR over the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Montand played the main roles in the films *I... like Icarus* and *The Light of a Woman*). By the way, this trend continued until the era of “perestroika”...

True, the Soviet film distribution (in the early 1980s) included seven films (in France they attracted from ten thousand to 0.9 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten leaders of the French film distribution in 1979: *Headbutt (Coup de tête)*, *Speak... I'm interested! (Cause toujours... tu m'intéresses!)*, *Little Beautiful Village (Un si joli village...)*, *Dogs (Les Chiens)*, *I Will Teach You to Love Life (Je vous ferai aimer la vie)*, *Melancoly Baby* and *Charles and Lucy*. In the USSR, these films also did not become box office champions...

So, 13 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1979 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1979 (among French films)

In 1979, 36 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema,” but mainly of films of various genres, including erotic films. For example, the second work in a row by Walerian Borowczyk was an outsider. This time – *Heroines of Evil (Les Héroïnes du mal)*...

From the entire list of box office failures, three films were included in the Soviet film distribution this time (in the first half of the 1980s): “I will teach you to love life” (*I Will Teach You to Love Life*), *Melancoly Baby*, *Charles and Lucy*. As in France and the USSR, these paintings, by and large, average in artistic quality, did not enjoy noticeable success...

Top box office leaders in France in 1980 (among French films)

In 1980, only 18 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s and 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.3 million to 4.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1980, in contrast to 1979, again returned to the total dominance of comedies.

As in 1974–1975 and 1977–1979, in 1980 a film for “adults” entered the top ten. This time it was a comedy with an LGBT theme, *Cage for Madmen 2 (La Cage aux folles II)* by Edouard Molinaro (fifth place and three million viewers). The rest of the “daring films” were left behind the forty box office leaders...

Claude Pinoteau's comedy *Boom (La Boum)* (4.4 million viewers) with Sophie Marceau in the main “teenage” role took first place in the French film box office in 1980. Back then, probably, no one could have imagined that this pretty girl would have a brilliant career as one of the leading French film stars of the 1980–1990s.

The film by Claude Pinoteau, actively supported by children and teenagers, managed to push into second and third place two comedies of the box office luminary Claude Zidi, *Idiots (Les Sous-doués)* (4 million viewers) and *Inspector the Blunder (Inspecteur la Bavure)* (3.7 million viewers).

After a rather long absence, Francois Truffaut returned to the “golden ten” of audience preferences. This time with one of his best films – the drama *The Last Metro (Le Dernier Métro)* (fourth place in terms of box office results and 3.4 million viewers).

The top ten film hits at the French box office in 1980 also included the comedies *Puppet (Le Guignolo)* with Jean-Paul Belmondo (sixth place and 2.9 million viewers), *Umbrella Prick (Le Coup du parapluie)* with Pierre Richard (seventh place and 2.4 million viewers) and *The Miser (L'Avare)* with Louis de Funès (eighth place and 2.4 million viewers).

As a result, the top ten leaders in French film distribution included films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Claude Zidi, Edouard Molinaro, Georges Lautner, Gerard Oury, Jean Giraud and others.

Based on the 1980 distribution results, original films by Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard, Michel Deville and some other masters were in the attendance range from 0.6 million to 1.4 million viewers.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Gerard Depardieu, Coluche, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

In 1980, the decline in popularity of the *Charlot* group was quite sharply marked: if in the 1970s, comedies with their participation quite often found themselves in the top ten leaders, then in 1980 the comedy *Charlot vs. Dracula* ended up only in 33rd place (having gathered an audience half a million viewers).

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1980, five films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

Four of them appeared on USSR cinema screens quite quickly – in 1981-1982.

The comedy *Inspector the Blunder* attracted an audience of 3.7 million viewers in France. In the USSR (of course, taking into account the difference in the population of the two countries), it was more popular: 25.6 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

The comedy *Puppet* had even greater success in the USSR. In France, its audience amounted to 2.9 million viewers, and in Soviet film distribution (under the title *Game of Four Hands*): 31.5 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

It was a similar story with the comedy *Umbrella Prick*: 2.4 million viewers in France and 28.4 million viewers in the USSR.

Data on attendance in the USSR for the comedy with Louis de Funès *The Miser* and the comedy *Boom* (it was released on the screens of Soviet cinemas very late – in 1991), alas, are (yet?) unavailable...

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1980 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Traditional exclusion from candidates for procurement of films that are too frivolous (by Soviet standards) (*Cage for Madmen-2*);

- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (most likely, it was for these reasons that the comedy *Boom* was bought in the USSR only in the early 1990s. However, in addition to the high cost, the purchase of *The Last Metro* could also have been hampered by the Jewish theme, which right up to the perestroika times at the USSR State Committee for Cinematography, to put it mildly, was not welcomed).

True, the Soviet film distribution (mainly in the early 1980s) included 11 more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1980 (in France they collected from 0.1 to 2.2 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Three Must Be Killed* (*Trois hommes à abattre*), *Stole Jupiter's Thigh* (*On a volé la cuisse de Jupiter*), *My American Uncle* (*Mon oncle d'Amérique*), *Heads or Tails* (*Pile ou face*), *Death Live* (*La Mort en direct*), *Vacation Week* (*Une semaine de vacances*), *Atlantic City*, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* / *Le Christ s'est arrêté à Eboli*), *Inheritance* (*Les Héritières* / *Örökség*), *All Stars* (*Tous Vedettes*) and *Seven Days in January* (*Siete días de enero* / *Les Sept jours en janvier*).

Of course, the highest grossing of them (both in France, where it took 11th place and attracted 2.2 million viewers, and in the USSR, where this picture attracted 25.2 million viewers to cinema screens in the first year of demonstration) was detective story by Jacques Deray “Three Must Be Killed” with Alain Delon in the title role.

So, 16 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1980 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1980 (among French films)

In 1980, 36 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema,” but mainly of films of various genres, including erotic films.

From the entire list of outsiders, this time two films made it into Soviet film distribution (in the first half of the 1980s): the musical comedy *All Stars* and the political drama *Seven Days in January*.

Top box office leaders in France in 1981 (among French films)

In 1981, only 22 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s and 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.2 million to 7.1 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1981 was quite diverse: comedies, dramas, adventures...

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1981 not a single erotic film was included in the top ten (although in general there were still many films of this kind in the French film distribution).

The first place in the French film box office in 1981 was taken by Francis Weber's comedy *The Goat (La Chèvre)* (7.1 million viewers) with the duet of Pierre Richard and Gerard Depardieu.

This comedy managed to push into second place the film of one of the box office luminaries, Georges Lautner, *The Professional (Le Professionnel)* with Jean-Paul Belmondo (5.2 million viewers).

Jean-Jacques Annaud's adventure film *The War of Fire (La Guerre du feu)* took third place in terms of attendance (4.9 million viewers).

After a rather long absence, Claude Lelouch returned to the “golden ten” of audience preferences. This time with one of his best films – the large-scale big-budget drama *Bolero (Les Uns et les Autres)* (fourth place in box office results and 3.2 million viewers).

In the top ten again was the film with Alain Delon (this time he was also the director of the film) *For the Skin of a Policeman (Pour la peau d'un flic)* (eighth place at the box office and 2.4 million viewers).

The top ten film hits at the French box office in 1981 also included the comedies *The School Teacher (Le Maître d'école)* with Coluche (fifth place and 3.1 million viewers), *Cabbage Soup (La Soupe aux choux)* with Louis de Funès (sixth place and 3.1 million viewers) and *Come to me, I'm staying with a friend (Viens chez moi, j'habite chez une copine)* (seventh place and 2.8 million viewers).

As a result, the top ten leaders in French film distribution included mainly films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Georges Lautner, Claude Lelouch, Jean Giraud, Patrice Leconte, etc.

In general, the mass French box office in 1981 continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Pierre Richard, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Gerard Depardieu, Coluche, Romy Schneider, Yves Montand, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1981, only three films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

The comedy *The Goat (La Chèvre)* was released in the USSR under the title *Unlucky* in December 1983 and during the year of demonstration it managed to attract 31.4 million viewers (its attendance in France, taking into account the difference in the population of the two countries, was similar).

In the same 1983, *Diva* was also released in Soviet film distribution (ninth place in the French box office and 2.3 million viewers).

But *The Professional* appeared on Soviet screens almost ten years late – in December 1990... Unfortunately, data on its attendance at Soviet film distribution is not available...

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1981 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (most likely, this applied to the films *Wars for Fire*, *Cabbage Soup*, *Behind the Skin of a Policeman*, etc.).

- traditional exclusion from candidates for the purchase of films with an interpretation of Russian and Soviet themes and, accordingly, Russian and Soviet characters unacceptable for Soviet ideology (*Bolero*).

True, the Soviet film distribution included 15 more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1981 (in France they attracted from ten thousand to 2.1 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *The Tricks of Scapin (Les Fourberies de Scapin)*, *Choice of*

Weapons (Le Choix des armes), The Neighbor (La Femme d'à côté), We Must Kill Birgit Haas (Il faut tuer Birgit Haas), Naked Love (L'Amour nu), Dirty Business (Une sale affaire), Three Brothers (Tre fratelli / Trois frères), Black Robe for the Killer (Une robe noire pour un tueur), A Man's Affair (Une affaire d'hommes), The True Story of the Lady with the Camellias (La storia vera della signora dalle camelie/ La dame aux camélias), Provincial Girl (La Provinciale), Life goes on (La vie continue), Asphalt, Hornets' Nest (Le Guépiot), and Our Daughter (Notre fille).

The greatest resonance of them was caused in the USSR by Francois Truffaut's melodrama *The Neighbor*. It was released on cinema screens in 1986 and attracted 13.1 million viewers in the first year of demonstration (in France its box office success was much more modest – 1.1 million viewers).

So, 18 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1981 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1981 (among French films)

In 1981, 17 films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, which attracted less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema,” but mainly of films of various genres, including erotic films.

From the entire list of outsiders, four films were included in the Soviet film distribution this time: *Life Goes On, Asphalt, Hornets' Nest* and *Our Daughter*. These films also did not have any noticeable success in the USSR...

Top box office leaders in France in 1982 (among French films)

In 1982, only 26 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers; this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s, but generally comparable to the 1960s...

The leading genre of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1982 was comedy.

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.2 million to 5.4 million viewers to cinemas in France.

In 1982, two stars of French cinema tragically passed away: Romy Schneider (23.09.1938 – 29.05.1982) and Patrick Dever (29.01.1947 – 16.07.1982).

At the same time, the 1982 film release became the last box office triumph of the king of laughter – Louis de Funès (1914–1983), who died on January 27, 1983...

The comedy with Louis de Funès *The Gendarme and the Gendarmes* by Jean Giraud in the French film distribution in 1982 was in third place in box office receipts: 4.2 million viewers.

After the death of Louis de Funès, Pierre Richard and Coluche (1944-1986) became the main comedians of French cinema. True, Coluche's subsequent life was short: on June 19, 1986, he crashed his motorcycle into a truck and died...

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1982 not a single film for “adults” was included in the top ten (although in general there were still a lot of films of this kind in the French film distribution).

The first place in the French film box office in 1982 was taken by Gerard Oury's comedy *Ace of Aces (L'As des as)* with Jean-Paul Belmondo in the title role (5.4 million viewers).

In second place was the comedy by Jean Yanne, parodying the “peplums”: *A quarter to two before the Nativity of Christ (Deux heures moins le quart avant Jésus-Christ)* (4.6 million viewers).

Very good box-office received and new adventures of Claude Zidi's comedic characters in the film *Idiots on Vacation (Les Sous-doués en vacances)*: seventh place at the box office and 3.6 million viewers.

The sequel to the super-popular *Boom* with Sophie Marceau also showed high attendance results. *Boom 2* by Claude Pinoteau was fifth in box office results in France (it was watched by 4.1 million viewers).

The top ten box office leaders also included Bob Swaim's crime drama *The Informer (La Balance)* and another film adaptation of the novel *Les Misérables*, this time directed by Robert Hossein and starring Lino Ventura...

The “golden ten” leaders of the French film distribution of 1982 included mainly films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Gerard Oury, Jean Giraud, Claude Pinoteau, Claude Zidi, etc.

Author's films by Claude Chabrol, Joséph Losey, Jean-Luc Godard and Eric Rohmer managed to collect from 0.2 million to 0.4 million viewers...

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Louis de Funès, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Yves Montand, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Gerard Depardieu, Coluche, Annie Girardot, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1982, only two films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

Boom-2 was released in the USSR very late (in 1991), and *Les Misérables* was released quite quickly – in December 1984...

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1982 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

– Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (most likely, this concerned the films *Ace of Aces*, *The Gendarme and the Gendarmes*, etc.).

– A ban on the purchase of new films with the participation of the “ideologically alien” Yves Montand (he played the main role in the film *Everything is Flaming, Everything is Burning / Tout feu tout flamme*), which was in force until the peak of “perestroika”.

True, eight more films from the French film distribution repertoire of 1982 were included in the Soviet film distribution (in France they collected from 0.2 to 1.5 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten.

A Thousand Billion Dollars (Mille milliards de dollars), *The Return of Martin Guerre (Le Retour de Martin Guerre)*, *A Tradesman in the Nobility (Le Bourgeois gentilhomme)* and *A Season of Peace in Paris (Une saison de paix à Paris)* appeared on USSR cinema screens in 1983-1984. But *Shock (Le Choc)*, *Night of Varenna (La Nuit de Varennes)*, *Room in the City (Une chambre en ville)* and *Gift (Le Cadeau)* were released in Soviet theaters only in 1990-1991.

At the same time, the rather frivolous *Gift* by Michel Lang, most likely, if the late perestroika, which actually abolished censorship, had not happened, would never have appeared on the screens of the USSR...

So, Soviet film distribution in different years released 10 films from the French repertoire of 1982.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1982 (among French films)

In 1982, 27 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema”, but mainly of films of various genres.

From the entire list of outsiders, only one film was included in the Soviet film distribution this time: the Franco-Yugoslav film *A Season of Peace in Paris*, which clearly (including the participation of actress Maria Schneider) referred viewers to the famous film by Bernardo Bertolucci *Last Tango in Paris* (which, as is well known, was not shown in Soviet film distribution)...

Top box office leaders in France in 1983 (among French films)

In 1983, only 25 French films managed to cross the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably lower than the figures of the 1950s, although better than many previous distribution seasons...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.8 million to 5.1 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in the French film box office in 1983 was diverse: comedies, crime dramas, melodrama, action, adventure.

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1983 not a single erotic film made it into the top ten (although there were still many films of this kind in the French box office).

As we have already noted, after the death of the famous French comedian Louis de Funès (1914–1983), leadership in the comedy genre passed to Coluche and Pierre Richard.

In 1983, the top ten included two comedies with the participation of Coluche: *Banzaï* by Claude Zidi and *Ciao, Clown (Tchao Pantin)* by Claude Berry (these films shared fifth-sixth place at the box office with a result of 3.8 million viewers).

Pierre Richard (in a duet with Gerard Depardieu) had only one comedy in the top ten – *Papas (Les Compères)* by Francis Weber, but it turned out to be the third most visited with a result of 4.8 million viewers.

Even higher – in second place at the box office (5 million viewers) – was Jacques Deray's action movie *Marginal* with Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Alain Delon also returned to the top ten: his *Indomitable (Le Battant)* attracted nearly two million viewers to cinemas and ended up in ninth place.

The adventure film by José Giovanni *The Rich Man (Le Ruffian)*, where Lino Ventura performed as a soloist, also made it into the top ten (seventh place and 3.4 million viewers).

But in first place in 1983 (5.1 million viewers) unexpectedly came a kind of surprise film: the crime drama by Jean Becker *A Killing Summer (L'Été meurtrier)* with Isabelle Adjani in the leading female role. Neither before nor after Jean Becker has achieved such impressive audience success.

The top ten box office French films included mainly films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Jacques Deray, Francis Weber, Claude Zidi, José Giovanni, Philippe Labro and others.

Films by Robert Bresson, Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer, Ettore Scola and Francois Truffaut managed to gather from 0.2 million to 1.2 million viewers...

Unfortunately, the elegant parody stylization of noir detectives *Merry Sunday (Vivement dimanche!)* became the last work of the outstanding director Francois Truffaut (1932–1984): on October 21, 1984, he died after a serious illness...

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Pierre Richard, Coluche, Gerard Depardieu, Yves Montand, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Isabelle Adjani, Annie Girardot, Mireille Darc, Marlene Jaubert, Catherine Deneuve and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1983, five films made it into Soviet cinema distribution.

True, if the comedies *Papas, Banzai* and the melodrama *I Married a Shadow (J'ai épousé une ombre)* appeared on USSR screens in 1984-1987, then *Marginal* and *La Crime* stayed until 1990–1987. 1991...

At the same time, the audience success of the comedies *Papas* and *Banzai* turned out to be approximately the same in France and the USSR (taking into account the difference in the populations of the countries...

The reasons why the remaining films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1983 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing censorship were most likely the following:

- Financial reasons, i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high (most likely, this applied to the films *The Killing Summer, The Rich Man, Indomitable*).

- It is incorrect, from the point of view of Soviet censorship, that ideological themes are placed on military topics (*Grandpa is participating in the resistance movement / Papy fait de la résistance*).

True, the Soviet film distribution (in 1984-1989) included eight more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1983 (in France they collected from 0.2 to 1.8 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *The African (L'Africain)*, *The Price of Risk (Le Prix du danger)*, *Merry Sunday (Vivement dimanche!)*, *Edith and Marcel*, *Le Bal*, *Fanny and Alexander*, *The Little Gang (La petite bande)* and *Benvenuto*.

It is interesting to note that the films *Le Bal* by Ettore Scola, *Edith and Marcel* by Claude Lelouch and *Benvenuto* by André Delvaux (taking into account the difference in the population of the USSR and France) attracted more viewers in the French box office than in the Soviet one. Apparently, for the audience of the USSR in 1986-1987, these films seemed too complex...

Unfortunately, data on attendance at Soviet film distribution in 1984-1989 for the films *The African* by Philippe de Broca, *The Price of Risk* by Claude Boisset, *Merry Sunday* by Francois Truffaut, *The Little Gang* by Michel Deville and *Fanny and Alexander* by Ingmar Bergman are not available...

So, 13 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1983 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1983 (among French films)

In 1983, 37 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of these outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema” (films by Carlos Saura, André Delvaux, Alain Robbe-Grillet, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

Of these, only André Delvaux's drama *Benvenuta* was released into Soviet film distribution, which in the USSR attracted much more viewers than in France (3.1 million), although, of course, it was not among the box office leaders...

Top box office leaders in France in 1984 (among French films)

In 1984, only 27 French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was noticeably less than the indicators of the 1950s, but quite comparable to the indicators of the 1970s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 2.0 million to 6.2 million viewers to cinemas in France.

Comedies clearly dominated the genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1984.

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1984 not a single erotic film made it into the top ten (although there were still quite a few films of this kind in the French box office). For example, *Emmanuelle 4* was only in 21st place with an attendance of 1.3 million viewers...

As for the film by Juste Jacquin, the director of the first *Emmanuelle*, which triumphantly screened in France in the mid-1970s, his *Gwendoline* was able to take only 30th place at the French box office in 1984 (0.9 million viewers).

A kind of sensation of the French film distribution in 1984 was the first place in box office receipts (6.2 million viewers) of Michel Blanc's directorial debut – the comedy *March in the Shadows* (*Marche à l'ombre*), which managed (for reasons that remain for me personally riddle) to get ahead of such entertaining films of box office luminaries as *Les Ripoux* by Claude Zidi with the duet of Philippe Noiret and Thierry Lhermitte (second place at the box office and 5.9 million viewers) and *The Adventurers* (*Les Morfalous*) by Henri Verneuil with Jean-Paul Belmondo in the title role (third place and 3.6 million viewers).

Another surprise at the 1984 box office was the 11th place at the box office for Wim Wenders's arthouse and generally completely unentertaining film *Paris, Texas*, which managed to attract two million viewers to cinema screens.

In 1984, the top ten highest-grossing French films included two films with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo. In addition to *The Adventurers*, the winners included Georges Lautner's funny comedy *Happy Easter* (*Joyeuses Pâques*), in which Belmondo played alongside rising star Sophie Marceau and famous singer/actress Marie Laforet.

Philippe Noiret also had two films in the top ten: in addition to the film *Les Ripoux* this was also the drama *Fort Saganne* (eighth place and 2.2 million viewers) by Alain Corneau, where the actor's partners were Gerard Depardieu, Catherine Deneuve and Sophie Marceau.

One of the main comedians in France, Coluche, played the main role in Gerard Oury's comedy *Revenge of the Feathered Serpent* (*La Vengeance du serpent à plumes*) (fifth place at the box office and 2.7 million viewers).

The second famous comedian, Pierre Richard, this time lost to Coluche. Yves Robert's funny comedy *Twin* (*Le Jumeau*) with his participation took 12th place at the box office (1.7 million viewers).

But the beneficiaries of the 1970s – the *Charlot* group – this time had to be content with only 45th place at the French box office. Claude Zidi lost interest in them long ago, and Jean Couturier's film *Charlots Connection* was able to attract only 0.6 million viewers...

As a result, the top ten box office French films included mainly films by recognized masters of genre cinema: Claude Zidi, Henri Verneuil, Georges Lautner, Gerard Oury, Alain Corneau and others.

Films by Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard, Federico Fellini, Eric Rohmer, Bertrand Blier, Bertrand Tavernier and Andrzej Zulawski managed to gather from 0.4 million to 1.3 million viewers...

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Coluche, Pierre Richard, Gerard Depardieu, Philippe Noiret, Sophie Marceau, Yves Montand, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Adjani, Marlene Jaubert and other famous actors.

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1984, only two films made it into Soviet film distribution in 1986–1987: *Les Ripoux* (it attracted approximately the same number of viewers in the USSR and in France, in terms of the difference in the populations of the countries) and *Carmen*.

The reason why the rest of the films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1984 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing commission was most likely of a financial nature (i.e., the selling price of certain films was too high). This may have been true for the films *March in the Shadows*, *The Adventurers*, *A Happy Easter*, *Revenge of the Feathered Serpent*, and *Fort Saganne* “Fort Sagan.”

True, the Soviet film distribution of 1986-1991 included 12 more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1984 (in France they attracted from 0.1 to 2 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Paris, Texas*, *Words and music (Paroles et Musique)*, *Right Bank*, *Left Bank (Rive droite, rive gauche)*, *The Seventh Target (La 7ème cible)*, *Sunday in the Country (Un dimanche à la campagne)*, *Louisiane*, *Leopard*, *One Hundred Days in Palermo (Cento giorni a Palermo / Cent jours à Palerme)*, *And the Ship Sails On (E la nave va / Et vogue le navire...)*, *The Blood of Others (Le Sang des autres)*, *Judge and Night Thieves (Les Voleurs de la nuit)*.

Not a single one of these films was able to surpass the 15 million viewership mark in the USSR. At the same time, the films *Sunday in the Country* and *And the Ship Sails On* had much greater box office success in France than in the USSR, where their audience in 1986-1987 ranged from 0.2 million to 1.5 million viewers. Apparently, for the mass Soviet audience these pictures seemed too difficult to perceive...

So, 14 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1984 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1984 (among French films)

In 1984, 26 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema” (films by Leo Carax, Jacques Rivette, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

Of these, three films were released into Soviet film distribution (in 1986).

In particular, for the first time in a quarter of a century, a film by Claude Chabrol, whose works had previously been ignored by censors due to their “dubious morality,” entered Soviet film distribution. But for the drama telling about France during the Nazi occupation – *The Blood of Others* – an exception was made. True, although this picture was released at the Soviet box office under the more box-office title *It Was in Paris*, it did not have noticeable audience success (as in France)...

Two other films also did not receive significant attention from the Soviet audience: *Judge* (in Soviet film distribution this detective was called *The Investigator*) and *Night Thieves*.

Top box office leaders in France in 1985 (among French films)

In 1985, only 16 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than the figures of the 1950s and 1960s...

In general, films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.7 million to 10.2 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1985 was again dominated by comedies.

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1985 not a single erotic film made it into the top ten (although there were still many films of this kind in the French box office).

The sensation of the French film box office in 1985 was the comedy *Three Men and a Baby in a Cradle (Trois hommes et un couffin)* by Coline Serreau, which had never shown itself before, which managed not only to come out on top, but also to gather 10.2 million viewers. But after the box office triumph of Gerard Oury’s comedy *The Big Walk* (17.3 million viewers) in 1966, not a single French film managed to overcome the ten million mark for almost twenty years!

But here, too, it is worth noting that the duo of the most popular French comedians of the 1960s, Louis de Funès and Bourvil, starred in *The Big Walk*, while Coline Serreau’s comedy did not feature a single superstar...

It was also a certain surprise that the eccentric film of the then little-known director Luc Besson *Subway* (third place and 2.9 million viewers) with Isabelle Adjani and Christophe Lambert and the far from the most spectacular film by Claude Miller managed to enter the top ten leaders of the French film distribution *Daring (L’Effrontée)* (fourth place and 2.9 million viewers).

I also note that at the box office in 1985, for the first time in many years, a film with Alain Delon (in this case it was the detective story *The Word of a Policeman / Parole de flic*) managed to

surpass in attendance the film with the participation of Jean-Paul Belmondo (it was the crime comedy *Hold-up*).

In the top ten highest-grossing French films at the box office in 1985, for the first time in many years, there were practically no films by the most recognized masters of genre cinema: Claude Zidi, Georges Lautner, Jacques Deray, Gerard Oury, Henri Verneuil, etc.

Georges Lautner's comedy *Cage for Madmen 3* (*La Cage aux folles 3*) became 11th according to the results of attendance. Comedy by Claude Zidi *Kings of Gag* (*Les Rois du gag*) – 13th. Thriller by Jacques Deray *You Only Die Twice* (*On ne meurt que deux fois*) – 20th.

Films by Jean-Luc Godard, Andrzej Zulawski, Agnès Varda managed to gather from 0.3 million to 1.1 million viewers...

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Alain Delon, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Coluche, Pierre Richard, Gerard Depardieu, Philippe Noiret, Sophie Marceau, Yves Montand, Lino Ventura, Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Adjani and other famous actors.

As a result, out of the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1985, only one film made it into Soviet film distribution (and this was, in general, a unique case for many years; it was not so rare before that sooner or later up to half of the films from “golden” French ten) – *Three Men and a Baby in a Cradle*. In France, it attracted 10.2 million viewers (which is similar to 50 million viewers in the USSR), but in actual Soviet film distribution it was more modest, gathering about 23 million viewers in cinemas (1987).

The reason why the rest of the films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1985 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing commission was most likely of a financial nature (i.e., the selling price of certain films was too high). Perhaps this applied to the films *Specialists*, *Subway*, *The Word of a Policeman*, *Hold-up*, *Police*.

True, the Soviet film distribution of 1986–1990 included several films from the repertoire of the French film distribution of 1985 (in France they attracted from 50 thousand to 1.5 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Kings of Gag*, *Wedding of the Century* (*Le Mariage du siècle*), *Hell Train* (*Train d'enfer*), *The Fourth Estate* (*Le Quatrième Pouvoir*), *Blanche and Marie*, *Tango, the Expulsion of Gardel* (*Tangos, l'exil de Gardel*), *The Defiant Louise* (*Louise... l'insoumise*) and *Favorites of the Moon* (*Les Favoris de la lune*).

Of these, Claude Zidi's comedy *Kings of Gag* was expected to enjoy the greatest success: in France it was watched by 1.5 million viewers (analogous to approximately 7 million viewers in the USSR), and in Soviet film distribution – 13.2 million viewers in the first year of demonstration.

So, in different years, 9 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1985 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1985 (among French films)

In 1985, 27 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema” (films by Margaret Duras, Otar Ioseliani, Allen Tanner, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

Of these, three films made it into Soviet film distribution: *Tango, the Expulsion of Gardel*, *The Defiant Louise* and *Favorites of the Moon*.

The director of *Favorites of the Moon* was Otar Ioseliani, who emigrated from the USSR, but in the Soviet box office of the perestroika year of 1987 this no longer mattered, especially since there were no hints of politics in this film.

In France, *Favorites of the Moon* failed at the box office: only about 50 thousand viewers watched it (which was analogous to 250 thousand viewers in the USSR). But in the USSR there was much more interest in this parable: 5.3 million viewers in the first year of demonstration, which was a considerable success for an arthouse film...

Top box office leaders in France in 1986 (among French films)

In 1986, only 16 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark, and this was noticeably less than not only the figures of the 1950s and 1960s, but also the previous decade...

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted from 1.7 million to 7.2 million viewers to cinemas in France.

After a short break, diversity again returned to the genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1986: drama, comedy, melodrama, adventure...

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1986 not a single erotic film made it into the top ten (although there were still many films of this kind in the French box office).

In the top ten highest-grossing French films at the box office in 1986, as well as in 1985, there were no films by such recognized masters of genre cinema as Claude Zidi, Georges Lautner, Jacques Deray, Gerard Oury, Henri Verneuil and others.

At the same time, the top ten included films by such significant directors as Claude Berri (his duology *Jean de Floret* and *Manon des sources* shared first and second places in the French box office: 7.2 million and 6.6 million viewers), Jean-Jacques Annaud (his film adaptation of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (*Le Nom de la rose/ Il Nome della rosa*) was in third place with 5 million viewers), Jean-Jacques Beineix (*37°2 in the morning / 37°2 le matin*: fifth place at the box office and 3.6 million viewers), Bertrand Blier (his shocking *Evening Suit / Tenue de soirée* was in sixth place with an attendance of 3.1 million viewers) and Roman Polanski (his very expensive adventure film *Pirates* was ninth at the box office with a result of 1.9 million viewers).

Author's films by Andrei Tarkovsky, Nagisa Oshima, Federico Fellini, Eric Rohmer, Leo Carax and Alain Resnais managed to gather from 0.2 million to 0.5 million viewers...

On June 19, 1986, the famous French comedian Coluche (1944-1986) died in a car accident. The last comedy with his participation, where he played the main role, *Madman at War*, was released in French cinemas in 1985...

Taking into account the fact that Louis de Funès passed away back in 1983, and the comic group *Charlot* had already lost its former popularity by the beginning of the 1980s, from 1986 to the beginning of the 1990s Pierre Richard became the main cinematic comedian in France.

In 1986, the comedy with the participation of Pierre Richard (*The Runaways / Les Fugitifs* by Francis Weber) came out in fourth place in France in terms of attendance with an impressive result of 4.5 million viewers.

It should be noted here that 1986 was truly a stellar year for Pierre Richard's partner in *The Runaways*, Gerard Depardieu: he also played leading roles in the films *Jean de Florette* and *Evening Suit*.

In 1986 (a rare case!), not a single new film starring Jean-Paul Belmondo was released in France, but *Passage* with Alain Delon attracted two million viewers and became the eighth most visited.

In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public: Pierre Richard, Gerard Depardieu, Philippe Noiret, Sophie Marceau, Yves Montand, Alain Delon, Lino Ventura, Catherine Deneuve, Isabelle Adjani and other famous actors.

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1986, only two films made it into Soviet film distribution in 1988-1990: *The Name of the Rose* and *The Runaways*.

At the same time, the comedy *Twins* was watched by 4.5 million viewers in France. This was the equivalent of 22 million viewers in the USSR. This film collected approximately this amount in real Soviet film distribution in 1988...

The reason why the remaining films of the French "champion ten" of film distribution in 1986 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing commission were most likely:

- financial properties (i.e. the selling price of certain films is too high). Perhaps this concerned the diology of Claude Berry, as well as *Pirates* and *Passage*).

- the unacceptability of showing "free Western morals" in Soviet cinemas in the films *37°2 in the Morning* and *Evening Suit*.

True, the Soviet film distribution of 1987-1989 included six more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution of 1986 (in France they collected from 0.2 to 0.7 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Ginger and Fred* by Federico Fellini, *The Green Ray* (*Le Rayon vert*) by Eric Rohmer, *A Man and a Woman: 20 Years Later* (*Un homme et une femme: vingt ans déjà*) by Claude Lelouch, *Melodrama* (*Mélo*) by Alain Resnais, *The Red Zone* (*Zone Rouge*) by Robert Enrico and *Sacrifice* by Andrei Tarkovsky.

This was due to the fact that with the advent of perestroika, the work of the purchasing commission of the USSR State Cinema Committee became more liberal and in many ways began to focus on the purchase of highly artistic foreign films.

Plus, in 1990–1991, less artistically significant films were released on USSR screens: *Let's hope it's a girl* (*Speriamo che sia femmina / Pourvu que ce soit une fille*) and *Love for a hundred francs* (*Cent francs l'amour*).

So, in different years, 10 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1986 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1986 (among French films)

In 1986, 28 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders consisted of films from a variety of genres.

Of these, two films were released in Soviet film distribution (in 1990-1991): *Let's hope it's a girl* and *Love for a hundred francs*.

They were not widely popular among the public in the USSR (as well as in France)...

Top box office leaders in France in 1987 (among French films)

In 1987, a unique event occurred in the French film distribution: only 6 (!!!) French films managed to overcome the level of 1 million viewers, and this was much less than not only the rental figures of the 1950s – 1970s, but also 1980 – 1985.

The reason for this, in my opinion, was not only competition from Hollywood products, but mainly the mass distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

Films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 0.8 million to 4.7 million viewers to cinemas in France. In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public...

In the genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1987, there were many comedies, but the second place unexpectedly came out to the drama *Goodbye Children* (*Au revoir les enfants*) devoid of entertainment and star actors, by Louis Malle, awarded the Golden Lion of St. Mark at the Venice Film Festival.

A smaller, but also impressive audience success fell in 1987 to another strong psychological drama: *Under the Sun of Satan* (*Sous le soleil de Satan*) by Maurice Pialat (ninth place based on box office results and 0.8 million viewers), a triumph at the Cannes Film Festival...

Unlike 1974-1975 and 1977-1980, in 1987 not a single erotic film made it into the top ten (although there were still many films of this kind in the French box office). For example, *Emmanuelle-5* by Walerian Borowczyk was 29th in terms of attendance with a result of 0.4 million viewers.

In 1987, after a short break, the comedy of one of the highest-grossing directors in France, Gerard Oury, again entered the top ten box office leaders. This time it was the comedy *Lévy et Goliath* (fourth place at the box office and 2.2 million viewers).

In fifth place was the comedy of another favorite of the French public, Claude Zidi, although his *Association of Malefactors* (*Association de malfaiteurs*) attracted noticeably fewer viewers – 1.2 million.

The melodrama of another box office favorite, Jacques Deray, *Love Disease* (*Maladie d'amour*) was in tenth place.

By the way, it was Jacques Deray who managed to make a double in the “golden ten” in 1987: his detective story *Loner* (*Le Solitaire*) with Jean-Paul Belmondo came in seventh place. True, at the same time, this film attracted an audience somewhat unusual for Belmondo's past triumphs of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s: “only” 0.9 million viewers.

Bernardo Bertolucci's massive coproduction *The Last Emperor* took the top spot at the box office and did well on screens not only in Europe but also in the U.S.

Author's films by André Techinet, Eric Rohmer, Bertrand Tavernier attracted from 0.2 million to 0.5 million viewers to cinema halls...

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films of 1987, five films made it into Soviet film distribution in 1988-1990: *Goodbye, Children*, *Association of Malefactors*, *Loner*, *Love Disease* and *A Man in Love*.

At the same time, the film *Goodbye, Children* was apparently considered “too heavy” by the mass Soviet public, and all sympathy was given to *Le Solitaire* with Belmondo.

In France, this picture was watched by about a million viewers (which approximately corresponded to 5 million viewers in the USSR), but in the Soviet film distribution in 1989, the action movie *Le Solitaire* attracted almost 28 million loyal fans of Belmondo...

The reason why the rest of the films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1987 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing commission was most likely of a financial nature (i.e., the selling price of certain films was too high), since in the era of late perestroika they had already stopped the same strict ideological and moral prohibitions apply...

True, the Soviet film distribution in 1989–1991 included nine more films from the repertoire of the French film distribution in 1987 (in France they collected from 0.1 to 0.7 million viewers), which were not included in the top ten: *Masques* by Claude Chabrol, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (*Cronaca di una morte annunciata/ Chronique d'une mort annoncée*) by Francesco Rosi, *Tandem* by Patrice Leconte, *Rumba* by Roger Hanen, *My Friend's Friend* (*L'Ami de mon amie*) and *The Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle* (*4 aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle*) by Eric Rohmer, *Family* (*La Famiglia / La Famille*) by Ettore Scola, *Gold-Rimmed Glasses* (*Gli Occhiali d'oro / Les Lunettes d'or*) by Giuliano Montaldo, *Field of Honor* (*Champ d'honneur*) by Jean-Pierre Denis. Of course, they did not become champions of Soviet film distribution, since they were mainly works of auteur cinema...

So, 14 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1987 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1987 (among French films)

In 1987, 33 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema” (films by Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, Alain Tanner, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

Of these, only one film was released into Soviet film distribution (in 1990): *The Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle* by Eric Rohmer.

Top box office leaders in France in 1988 (among French films)

In 1988, only 10 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark at the French box office. This was slightly more than in 1987, but still significantly less than the rental figures of the 1950s – 1970s.

The reason for this, in my opinion, was still the same – not only strong competition from Hollywood products, but mainly – the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

Films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.3 million to 9.2 million viewers to cinemas in France. In general, the French mass market continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public...

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in the French film box office in 1988 was quite diverse: in addition to the adventure films *The Abyss Blue* (*Le Grand Bleu*) by Luc Besson and *The Bear* (*L'Ours*) by Jean-Jacques Annaud, which shared first and second places at the box office with very high attendance figures: 9.1 – 9.2 million viewers, there were comedies, dramas, detective stories and melodramas.

What was unexpected was the sudden return (after a very long break) to the top ten leaders of French film distribution of one of the patriarchs of directing, the then octogenarian Jean Delannoy (1908-2008). His drama *Bernadette* was in ninth place at the box office (1.6 million viewers).

Roman Polanski's *Frantic*, stylized as classic Hollywood detective stories and thrillers, took tenth place at the box office...

Claude Lelouch also returned to the top ten after a break. Perhaps because this time in his film *Itinerary of a spoiled child* (*Itinéraire d'un enfant gâté*) (fourth place and 3.2 million viewers) he played Jean-Paul Belmondo, who still retained the title of one of the highest-grossing actors in France in the 1980s.

Viewers also liked the duet of Isabelle Adjani and Gerard Depardieu in the drama *Camille Claudel* (fifth place at the box office and 2.7 million viewers).

Films starring young French actresses at that time, Charlotte Gainsbourg (*The Little Thief / La Petite Voleuse* by Claude Miller) and Sophie Marceau (*The Student / L'Étudiante* by Claude Pinoteau), were also successful in the French film distribution in 1988.

Sophie Marceau also played in another film from the “golden ten”: *Chouans!* by Philippe de Broca.

One of the best films by Claude Chabrol, the drama *A Woman's Affair* (*Une affaire de femmes*) with Isabelle Huppert in the title role (11th place and a million viewers), was also among the “golden ten” leaders.

Author's films by André Téchiné, Eric Rohmer, Bertrand Tavernier managed to gather from 0.2 million to 0.5 million viewers in 1988...

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1988 not a single erotic picture was included in the top ten. And in general, the flow of films of this kind has noticeably decreased. The main reason for this was, again, the video boom: the French began to prefer to watch frivolous films at home, rather than in cinemas... And the market quickly began to adapt to the changed situation: “films for adults” began to be initially filmed on video and distributed on video cassettes for rental and sales to strawberry lovers...

The reason why many films of the French “champion ten” of film distribution in 1988 were rejected by the Soviet purchasing commission were, most likely, of a financial nature (i.e., the selling price of certain films was too high), since in the era of late perestroika they had already stopped the same strict ideological and moral prohibitions apply...

As a result, four films from the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1988 (in 1990–1991) hit Soviet screens: *The Abyss Blue* by Luc Besson, *Itinerary of a spoiled child* by Claude Lelouch, *The Little Thief* by Claude Miller and *The Student* by Claude Pinoteau.

Of the films outside the “golden ten” of the French film distribution of 1988, three more films were shown on USSR screens in 1990/1991: the witty comedy *To the Left of the Lift* (*À gauche en sortant de l'ascenseur*) by Edouard Molinaro, where Pierre Richard again amused the audience (in the French film distribution of 1988 this picture was on 19th place with 0.6 million viewers), plus the dramas *My Friend the Traitor* (*Mon ami le traître*) by José Giovanni and *Constraint by body* (*Contrainte par corps*) by Serge Leroy.

So, in different years, 7 films from the repertoire of French film distribution in 1988 were released on the screens of the USSR in different years.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1988 (among French films)

In 1988, 30 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema,” but mostly of films of various genres.

Of these, two films were released in Soviet film distribution (in 1990): the drama *My Friend is a Traitor* by José Giovanni and *Constraint by body* by Serge Leroy. Both films, as in France, did not enjoy any noticeable audience success...

Top box office leaders in France in 1989 (among French films)

In 1989, only 8 French films managed to overcome the barrier of 1 million viewers in French film distribution. This was significantly less than the rental figures of the 1950s and early 1980s.

The reason for this, in my opinion, was still the same – not only strong competition from Hollywood products, but mainly – the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

In general, films from the top ten audience preferences attracted between one and two million viewers to cinemas in France. Mass French box office continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public...

The genre range of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1989 was quite diverse, although the most notable were comedies.

But here it should be noted that in previous decades, films that attracted 2 million spectators in French cinemas, as a rule, could not count on first place in the box office, and films whose attendance was about a million spectators even more often remained far behind the “golden ten”...

Paradoxically, for the first time in many years, the top ten did not contain films by the highest-grossing directors of the previous two decades: Gerard Oury, Claude Zidi, Georges Lautner, Henri Verneuil, Jacques Deray, Patrice Leconte, Philippe de Broca...

The comedy *Vanilla and Strawberry Ice Cream* (*Vanille Fraise*) by Gerard Oury was 13th (0.8 million viewers). Patrice Leconte's crime drama *Monsieur Hire* is 17th (0.6 million viewers). Comedy melodrama *Two* (*Deux*) by Claude Zidi – 24th (0.3 million viewers). The comedy *An Unexpected Guest* (*L'Invité surprise*) by Gerge Lautner is 28th (0.2 million viewers). The drama *Black Trees* (*Les Bois noirs*) by Jacques Deray is 30th (0.2 million viewers).

And if Claude Zidi, Gerard Oury and Patrice Leconte later for some time regained their status as the highest-grossing directors in France, then for many other directors it was the film release of 1989 that became a characteristic harbinger of the end of their careers as public favorites and a symptom of the loss of connection with the interests of the masses audience...

First place in the French film box office in 1989 was taken by the comedy melodrama *Too Beautiful for You* (*Trop belle pour toi*) (two million viewers) after a long break, director Bertrand Blier returned to the box office chart.

In second place (2 million viewers) came (a rare case for a joint Italian-French production) *Cinema Paradiso* by Giuseppe Tornatore with Philippe Noiret in the title role.

In fifth place (1.5 million viewers) was another film starring Philippe Noiret: the drama *Life and Nothing More* (*La Vie et rien d'autre*) by Bertrand Tavernier.

In third place (1.8 million viewers) was the very shocking melodrama *White Wedding* (*Noce blanche*) by Jean-Claude Brisson with the duet of Vanessa Paradis and Bruno Cremer.

Author's films *My nights are more beautiful than your days* (*Mes nuits sont plus belles que vos jours*) by Andrzej Zulawski, *Jesus from Montreal* by Denis Arcand and others were in the attendance range of 0.2 million viewers.

Unlike 1974-1975 and 1977-1980, in 1989 no erotic films were again included in the top ten, since the audience for this kind of production, starting from the second half of the 1980s, switched to home viewing of videomovies with frivolous content...

As a result, from the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1989, only one film made it into Soviet cinema distribution (in 1991): Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso*.

The reason why the rest of the films of the French "champion ten" of film distribution in 1989 did not reach the Soviet film distribution was, most likely, that while some decisions on purchases were being made (and they were never very prompt), the Soviet Union collapsed, and then (since 1992) French films were released in Russian film distribution...

Of the films outside the "golden ten" of the French film distribution of 1989, only Gerard Oury's comedy *Vanilla-Strawberry Ice Cream* and Yves Boisset's drama *Radio Crow* (*Radio corbeau*) reached Soviet screens (in 1991).

So, in different years, 3 films from the French film distribution repertoire of 1988 were released on USSR screens.

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1989 (among French films)

In 1989, 30 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of "auteur cinema" (films by Alain Resnais, Jacques Rivette, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

Not a single film from the list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1989 was released in Soviet film distribution...

Top box office leaders in France in 1990 (among French films)

In 1990, only 11 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark at the French box office. This was significantly less than the rental figures of the 1950s and early 1980s.

The reason for this, in my opinion, was still the same – not only strong competition from Hollywood products, but mainly – the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

Films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.3 million to 6.3 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The genre spectrum of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1990 was quite diverse. But in general, the massive French box office of 1990 continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public...

The top ten box office leaders of 1990 again did not include films by the highest-grossing directors of the previous two decades: Gerard Oury, Georges Lautner, Henri Verneuil, Jacques Deray, Patrice Leconte, Philippe de Broca...

But Yves Robert, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Luc Besson, Claude Zidi, Claude Berry and Claude Lelouch returned there (and with very impressive attendance results).

At the same time, Yves Robert's duology *The Glory of My Father* (*La Gloire de mon père*) (first place at the box office and 6.3 million viewers) and *My Mother's Castle* (*Le Château de ma mère*) (third place and 4.3 million viewers) showed such impressive attendance results that have

not been seen for a long time the French movies had it. To a large extent, this success was due to the popularity in France of the novels of Marcel Pagnol, which were adapted into films by Robert.

In third place was also a film adaptation – this time of Edmond Rostand's play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The director of this film, Jean-Paul Rappeneau, relied on Gerard Depardieu and was right: the film attracted 4.7 million viewers in French cinemas.

Fourth place in the French film box office in 1990 went to Luc Besson's action film *Nikita* (3.8 million viewers), which soon became one of the cult films, causing a lot of imitations and at least two overseas remakes...

After a short break, Claude Zidi also returned to the “golden ten” of French film distribution. He did not tempt fate and made a sequel to his successful film *Corrupt (Ripoux)*: his *Corrupt vs. Corrupt (Ripoux contre ripoux)* took fifth place in the 1990 box office hit parade (2.9 million viewers).

Film by Claude Berri (the 1986 box office triumph, whose film adaptations of Marcel Pagnol's novels *Jean de Floret* and *Manon from the Source*, sharing first and second places, managed to gather an audience of 6.6 to 7.2 million viewers) *Uranus* was sixth in 1990 (2.5 million viewers).

Claude Lelouch's film *There are days... and moons (Il y a des jours... et des lunes)* became the eighth (1.5 million viewers).

Unlike 1974-1975 and 1977-1980, in 1990 not a single erotic picture entered the top ten again, since the audience for this kind of production, starting from the second half of the 1980s, switched to home viewing of videomovies with frivolous content...

As a result, not a single film from the top ten highest-grossing French films released in 1990 made it into Soviet cinema distribution. Moreover, not a single French film this year reached Soviet cinemas.

But this did not happen for censorship reasons. The reason why not a single French film of 1990 was shown in Soviet cinemas was the collapse of the USSR in 1991...

And then (since 1992) French films were released into Russian film distribution. And, looking ahead a little, I'll note that due to the collapse of Russian film distribution in the 1990s and the onslaught of pirated video, French films did not achieve any significant success in post-Soviet Russia until the end of the 20th century...

Outsiders of the French film distribution in 1990 (among French films)

In 1990, 42 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of “auteur cinema” (films by Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, Otar Ioseliani, Alexander Adabashyan, etc.), but mainly of films of various genres.

It is curious that this list also included the film of a recent favorite of the French public, Georges Lautner's *Supposedly Dangerous (Présumé dangereux)*, which managed to attract only about 60 thousand viewers to the screens of French cinemas. And this is after Lautner's films previously easily attracted audiences of millions and were often among the top ten box office leaders of a given year...

Not a single film was included in the Soviet film distribution from the list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1990. The reason was simple: in 1991, the USSR collapsed, and then French films (mostly on video) reached Russian viewers, who, by the way, were more passionate about Hollywood products in the 1990s, so in post-Soviet times (at least at least until the onset of the 21st century), alas, there was no longer any need to talk about the real mass distribution success of French films in Russia...

Top box office leaders in France in 1991 (among French films)

In 1991, only 11 French films managed to overcome the 1 million audience mark at the French box office. This was significantly less than the rental figures of the 1950s, 1970s and early 1980s.

The reason for this, in my opinion, was still the same – not only strong competition from Hollywood products, but mainly – the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

Films from the top ten of audience preferences attracted from 1.1 million to 2.2 million viewers to cinemas in France.

The dominant feature of comedy has again returned to the genre spectrum of the top ten leaders of the French film box office in 1991. In general, the massive French box office of 1991 continued to rely on hits of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public...

As in 1989–1990, the top ten did not include films by the highest-grossing directors of the previous two decades: Gerard Oury, Georges Lautner, Henri Verneuil, Jacques Deray, Patrice Leconte, Philippe de Broca...

But Alain Corneau, Claude Zidi, Claude Chabrol and Bertrand Blier returned there (and with very impressive attendance results for those times). Slightly behind them (11th place at the box office) was Luc Besson.

Once again, refuting the rule that the top ten audience favorites should only include entertainment films, Alain Corneau's drama *All the Mornings of the World* (*Tous les matins du monde*) took first place in terms of attendance at the French box office in 1991 (2.2 million viewers).

Another drama, this time *Van Gogh* by Maurice Pialat became the seventh most visited (1.3 million viewers).

But the third place of the comedy *Total!* (1.6 million viewers) Claude Zidi confirmed this rule, as did the comedies *A Wonderful Era* (*Une époque formidable...*), *Operation Stew* (*L'Opération Corned Beef*), *Delicatessen*, *My Father is a Hero* (*Mon père, ce héros*), etc. that made it into the top ten.

Gerard Depardieu once again proved that he is one of the most sought-after French actors. This time in the drama *All the Mornings of the World* (first place at the box office and 2.2 million viewers) and the comedy *My Father is a Hero* (sixth place at the box office and 1.4 million viewers).

And the film adaptation of Gustave Flaubert's famous novel *Madame Bovary* not only returned Claude Chabrol to the top ten box office leaders, but also once again revealed the extraordinary acting capabilities of Isabelle Huppert. As a result, the film *Madame Bovary* ended up in eighth place (1.3 million viewers).

In tenth place at the French box office in 1991, Bertrand Blier's provocative film *Thank You, Life* (*Merci la vie*) (1.1 million viewers) with the cheeky duet of young Charlotte Gainsbourg and Anouk Grinbert came out.

Unexpected success at the 1991 box office came from the shocking film *Delicatessen*, filled to the brim with black humor, by debutants Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet (fifth place and 1.4 million viewers).

Attendance at the original films of Leo Carax, Nikita Mikhalkov, Krzysztof Kieślowski and some other masters fluctuated mainly in the range from 0.6 million to 0.9 million viewers.

Urga by Nikita Mikhalkov was the 17th most visited film at the French box office in 1991 (600 thousand spectators), which was an impressive achievement for a film shot in Russian and without any actors known to the European public... In Russia, *Urga* was released on screens already in post-Soviet times, and its audience was exactly three times less than in France: 200 thousand...

Unlike 1974–1975 and 1977–1980, in 1991 not a single erotic picture entered the top ten again, since the audience for this kind of production, starting from the second half of the 1980s, switched to home viewing of videomovies with frivolous content...

As a result, none of the French films released in 1991 were included in Soviet film distribution.

But this did not happen for censorship reasons. The reason was the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

And then (since 1992) French films were already released in Russian cinemas (like, for example, *Urga* by Nikita Mikhalkov)...

Outsiders of the French film distribution of 1991 (among French films)

In 1991, 39 French films were included in the list of film distribution outsiders, who gathered less than 200 thousand spectators in cinema halls.

The list of outsiders traditionally consisted partly of elite works of "auteur cinema", but mainly of films of various genres.

It is curious that for the second year in a row, a film by a recent favorite of the French public, Georges Lautner, also appeared on this list. This time *Triplex*, which managed to attract only about one hundred thousand spectators to the screens of French cinemas. And this is after Lautner's

films previously easily attracted audiences of millions and were often among the top ten French box office leaders of a given year...

Not a single film was included in the Soviet film distribution from the list of outsiders of the French film distribution in 1991. The reason was simple: in 1991, the USSR collapsed, and then French films (mostly on video) reached Russian viewers, who, by the way, were more passionate about Hollywood products in the 1990s, so in post-Soviet times it's realistic to talk about Unfortunately, the massive theatrical success of French films in Russia was no longer possible...

4. Conclusion

During the second half of the 1940s and into the 1950s, attendance at French films at the French box office was at its peak. For example, in 1953, 52 French films managed to overcome the bar of 1 million viewers.

The genre spectrum of the leaders of the “golden ten” of the French film distribution was diverse, but in general it was based on films of entertainment genres, which starred the favorites of the French public.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, attendance at French films began to gradually decline (largely due to competition from television and Hollywood productions).

An even greater decline in cinema attendance in France began to be felt in the 1980s. This was affected not only by strong competition from Hollywood products and television, but mainly by the massive distribution of household video equipment, which riveted millions of French people to their home screens, who previously preferred to watch films in cinemas.

In the second half of the 1940s, there were very few French films in Soviet film distribution. This was largely due to the fact that it was during this period that so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) were shown on USSR screens.

Due to the fact that by the mid-1950s the screening of so-called trophy films (mainly American and German) in the USSR was completed, in the second half of the 1950s more new European films, including French ones, began to be released in Soviet cinemas. The “thaw” that came to the USSR brought significant changes to procurement policy. For example, of the top ten leaders in French film distribution in 1958, exactly half were shown on USSR cinema screens.

The work of the Soviet film purchasing commission in the 1960s was quite liberal, which (especially after the start of the “Prague Spring” of 1968) could not escape the conservative wing of the “ideological front”.

Thus, in June 1968, the magazine *Ogonyok* published an article in which, from a communist position, the Soviet film distribution policy regarding Western, including French, cinema was sharply criticized (Tolchenova, 1968: 22). Since 1968, there have been more and more similar articles directed against the appearance of Western entertainment films in Soviet film distribution. And behind them, of course, there were the corresponding resolutions and memos of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, therefore – especially after August 1968 – the situation with the purchase of “bourgeois film products” began to change sharply towards its minimization and more careful ideological selection...

Among the reasons why French films were not included in Soviet film distribution are the following:

- Taboos on erotica, accentuated religious and Jewish themes;
- The fear that Soviet viewers might somehow misunderstand shocking plot twists from the point of view of official Soviet morality, which were often found even in artistically significant films;
- Exclusion from candidates for the purchase of films with an interpretation of Russian and Soviet themes that is unacceptable for Soviet ideology and, accordingly, Russian and Soviet characters;
- The struggle of Soviet censorship with incorrectly (from its point of view) ideological accents on military topics;
- Undesirability for Soviet censorship of films “promoting the bourgeois way of life”;
- The undesirability of images of charming criminals appearing on Soviet screens;
- The unacceptability of purchasing new films with the participation of famous actors who publicly criticized the policies of the USSR;
- Too high prices offered by French copyright holders.

True, in the Soviet film distribution in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, French films began to increasingly appear, one way or another violating former censorship taboos. This was due to the fact that with the advent of perestroika, the work of the purchasing commission of the USSR State Cinema Committee became more liberal and in many ways began to focus on the purchase of highly artistic foreign films, and the former strict ideological and moral prohibitions ceased to apply...

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