

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: Celluloid Buddies or Baddies?	1
Chapter 1: Buddies: The Sunny Phase of Russo-American Relations (1990-1992) <i>Taxi-Blues, American Spy, Diuba-Diuba, American Boy/ Combat, Hunt for Red October, The Russia House, Company Business</i>	19
Chapter 2: Brother from Another Planet: Cloudy Skies (1993-1996) <i>You Are My One and Only, Everything Will Be Fine, Wild Love, American Daughter, Crimson Tide</i>	89
Chapter 3: The Big Chill: Stormy Weather (1997-1999) <i>Air Force One, The Peacemaker, The Jackal, The Saint, Deep Impact, Armageddon, Virus, The Barber of Siberia</i>	125
Chapter 4: The Long Goodbye: Winter of Shared Discontent (2000-2005) <i>Brother-2, Tycoon, Cast Away, Space Cowboys, 15 Minutes, The Sum of All Fears, K-19: The Widowmaker, Spinning Boris, The Bourne Supremacy</i>	209
Afterword: From Romance to Rejection	285
Bibliography	291
Filmography	321
Notes	323
Index	395

Introduction

Celluloid Buddies or Baddies?

Avuncular America's One-upmanship:

In the mid-eighties, perestroika and glasnost challenged American cinema and other media with a new cultural imperative. After almost four decades of anti-Soviet propaganda, the 1985 Geneva Summit outmoded Hollywood's simplistic Cold War representation of Russians almost overnight.¹

Thus the same decade that had inspired Ronald Reagan's cinematic characterization of the Soviet Union as the evil empire also brought about a transformation of the long-term enemy into a potential ally, onscreen and off. Paradoxically, the mid-decade marked the crest of anti-Soviet paranoia even as it simultaneously ushered in the more tolerant representation necessitated after the Geneva Summit. This duality actually reflected Reagan's own reluctance to persist in the name-calling that had captured the popular imagination. Only nine months after he had dubbed the USSR "an evil empire" and "the focus of evil in the modern world,"² he told *Time* that he no longer found the label apt; at the Moscow summit of 1988, his further qualification, "I was talking about another time, another era," indicated how rapidly the 1980s *Zeitgeist* had changed.

The hostile portrayals of Soviets on screen followed a tradition of cinematic stereotyping going back as far as the end of World War II. According to Thomas Doherty, the period between 1948 and 1954 saw the production of forty or so anti-Communist, or what he calls "Hollywood agit-prop," films, by an industry eager to stay on the good side of HUAC—the House Un-American Activities Committee.³ Two genres that particularly lent themselves to McCarthyite alarmist narratives about the Soviet threat to whole-

some American life were the espionage and the science fiction film. While the former type deployed its one-dimensional Reds straightforwardly as spies and assassins, the latter displaced them onto invading creatures from outer space. The propagandistic espionage film, termed the “anti-Red action thriller” by David A. Cook in *A History of Narrative Film*, evolved in the 1950s as a “sub-set” of the gangster film, substituting the Communist spy for the criminal, and a world-wide Communist conspiracy for the “syndicate.”⁴ Representative anti-Red thrillers included *The Red Menace* (1949), *I Married a Communist* (1949), *I Was a Communist for the F.B.I.* (1951), *Pickup on South Street* (1953) and, at the end of the decade, *The F.B.I. Story* (1959).⁵ The action/thriller orientation of such early Commie-bashing, Cook observes, carried over into the 1960s James Bond espionage series (435)—and, too, it may explain Hollywood’s continuing tendency to circumscribe Russo-American conflicts within the action genre. In science fiction, the “us-versus-them” paradigm for encountering aliens likewise suited Hollywood’s primitive anti-Soviet agenda. So films like *The Thing From Another World* (1951) and *Invaders from Mars* (1953) offered, in Eric Smoodin’s words, “a Martian instead of a Marxist, but it becomes clear that one is interchangeable with the other” (35).⁶ *The Thing* also expressed “a cowboy ethic”⁷ that Hollywood thenceforth would evoke tirelessly in its confrontations between Americans and Russians, no matter what the decade.

The 1980s action film that seemed to pick right up where the science fiction scenarios had left off thirty years earlier was *Red Dawn* (1984), directed by John Milius. Figuring at the top of William Palmer’s list of the period’s “rightist militarist fantasies” (210)—followed by *Firefox* (1982), *Invasion USA* (1985), *Top Gun* (1986), *Iron Eagle* (1986), and *Rambo III* (1988)—*Red Dawn* unites the familiar cowboy ethic with a warrior-code to celebrate high-schoolers’ guerrilla resistance to Soviets invading their small Colorado town. Yet it was not to any of these films that *Izvestiia* strongly objected in 1985.⁸ Rather, the Soviet newspaper rebuked the shrill propagandizing of the buddy film *White Nights*, starring defector Mikhail Baryshnikov, and the Stallone sequel *Rocky IV*—both of which embodied the ideological differences between the USSR and the United States in paired antagonists, with flag-waving rhetoric and crude

iconography blatantly fixing the fight for an American triumph. By 1988, when Stallone's other sequel, *Rambo III*, appeared, it was the American public who alerted the actor-director to the fact that his super-heroics against the USSR were passé: the film flopped as "an instant anachronism" (Cameron Stauth, qtd in Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 210).

By contrast, other filmmakers of the period were sensitive enough to political currents to include at least a perfunctory nod in the direction of détente. Another sequel, Sidney J. Furie's *Iron Eagle II* (1988), moved from its original Mig-shooting orientation in 1986 to a plot in which American and Russian flyers unofficially team up to destroy the nuclear site of an Iran-like country.⁹ But first the opening scene in which a Soviet plane downs the young hero of *Iron Eagle I*¹⁰ captures the precarious balance between animosity and rapprochement that persists in so many later films. Tellingly, Palmer's reading of this film's equivocations proves relevant for more than a few of its successors:

The beauty of this [co-operation] scenario is that all of the American rightist militarist hostility toward the Russians can still be expressed even though they have ostensibly become partners in this joint operation: Thus the rightist militarist doubts—Can Americans and Russians work together? Can Americans trust Russians? Should Americans share their secrets and expertise with the Russians?—are expressed under the guise of an adherence to a nervous détente. (Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 218)

The uneasy collaboration in *Iron Eagle II* also follows a dynamic evident in virtually all subsequent narratives of partnership: Americans take the initiative and command the operation—whatever it may be—with the Russians following.

A year later, two films with a common plot introduced another scenario that would prove a favorite with Hollywood in the next decade. In both *Just Another Secret* and *The Package*, an individual American risks all to save President Gorbachev from an assassination attempt on Western soil by hardliners in his own government. Far-fetched though this plot might have seemed then, it actually

tapped into the civil unrest that two years later would precipitate an internal conspiracy against Gorbachev—whom President Bush, in the true spirit of their fledgling alliance, promptly warned.¹¹ Placed in a pro-glasnost context here, such American action against wrong-minded figures—renegades¹² or fanatics—embodying the USSR's former (evil) identity reappeared often in other films as a tactic for keeping Russian malevolence before audiences.¹³ Meanwhile, these assassination narratives also added an exposé of *American* military and intelligence machinations to what previously would have been the exclusive inculcation of Russian authorities.¹⁴

The cultural shift that led to more favorable characterizations of Russians had a corollary influence on casting. Cold War Hollywood had rarely risked established or promising leading men in Soviet roles, instead selecting Britons or West Europeans to represent these, and of course Nazi, enemies. One exception had been Norman Jewison's 1966 comedy, *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*—in which Alan Arkin and John Phillip Law played likeable Soviet submariners. And indeed, Rick Rosenthal's *Russkies* (1987) follows the earlier film's precedent both in using an American actor (Whip Hubley) for its Russian sailor and in presenting his aborted mission and shipwreck on an American shore with amused tolerance. Flanking *Russkies* came four bigger productions with higher-profile actors in the Russian roles: *Gorky Park* (1983), *Moscow on the Hudson* (1984), *No Way Out* (1987), and *Red Heat* (1988). Besides humanizing their alien heroes from the outset through the personas, respectively, of William Hurt, Robin Williams, Kevin Costner, and (naturalized American) Arnold Schwarzenegger, this quartet also reworked formulas in their respective genres. Michael Apted's *Gorky Park*¹⁵ and Walter Hill's *Red Heat* both offered a post-glasnost spin on the cop-buddy formula, with Arkady Renko (Hurt) a competent colleague to his New York City counterpart (Brian Dennehy), and Captain Danko (Schwarzenegger) the almost-equal of his Chicago partner (Jim Belushi). Paul Mazursky's comic *Moscow on the Hudson* recast ideological contrasts from earlier years to stress the *similarities* between America and Russia as imperfect societies (Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 243). And Roger Donaldson's *No Way Out* reversed anti-Red thriller expectations by making Costner's admirable character turn out to be a Russian mole in the Pentagon!



American cinema's favorite establishing shot for Russian locations, with the invariable reversed R as pseudo-Cyrillic to signal authenticity.

Palmer classifies all these films except *No Way Out* as “E.T. texts of Russians in Western Society,” because in endorsing American receptivity to an alien, they follow the lead of the decade’s famed blockbuster, Steven Spielberg’s benign rather than xenophobic *E.T.: The ExtraTerrestrial* (1982) (Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 232).¹⁶

With the 1990s’ official de-sovietization, Hollywood continued to humanize its Russian characters and to de-demonize their government, but it did not progress steadily from hostility through ambivalence to genuine rapprochement. Unsurprisingly, thirty-something years of self-righteousness and suspicion hardly vanished without a trace, and the 80s had established a pseudo-revisionist pattern. Furthermore, according to experts on the Cold War, a paradoxical nostalgia soon arose for an apparently simpler time when issues and hostilities had been clear-cut. As Walter Hixson, author of *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War*, observes, “There was a certain comfort in the Cold War, insofar as having an agreed-upon and, so to speak, reliable and even [sic] enemy in the Soviet Union [went].”¹⁷ Walter Lefebvre, a Cornell history professor

and author of *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1996*, notes that such nostalgia was already evident “in 1990, 1991, 1992—a number of government officials said how nice it was before 1989, when at least you knew who the enemy was.”¹⁸ Not only the power of entrenched iconography, but also this nostalgia and periodic swings in the two superpowers’ rapport over the decade encouraged filmmakers to recycle familiar cultural coding in an unsettled situation.

Ironically, the first film of the post-glasnost decade, John McTiernan’s *The Hunt for Red October* (1990), was based on a 1984 novel and therefore still set in the Cold War. Nevertheless, it showed *some* Russians as people rather than cartoon figures. On the one hand, its story about a Soviet Lithuanian commander whose understanding with a CIA officer allows him, his officers, and his submarine to defect to America turned out to be timely in the year of unprecedented amicability between Gorbachev and Bush. On the other hand, the entire narrative revolves around the threat of nuclear war and the “superior” country’s acquisition of its enemy’s ultimate weapon.¹⁹ The casting swayed the film more in the direction of détente, however, since Sean Connery, an international superstar and the screen’s most revered James Bond—a spy so often pitted against Communist villains—starred as the defecting commander. The following year, the filming of *The Russia House*, the first Western production to be shot on location in post-Soviet Russia, was doubly a milestone: it invited American filmmakers to move from casting American actors as sympathetic Russians to casting Russians in the same roles for authenticity, and it activated the complicity of the former Communist government and film industry in the foreign construction of post-Soviet identity.²⁰

Even as subsequent 1990s films registered or explicitly addressed the new relations between Russia and the United States, they barely altered the earlier American sense of moral, social, technological, and macho superiority toward the Communist enemy. Simply, they redirected it at a Russia now seen as a needy, untrustworthy ally. Moreover, this ally often took on more than a hint of the old ideological threat, as screenplays displaced continuing anxieties about the changing superpower’s government both onto various renegade types and onto those new figures on the scene—ruthless criminals from Russia’s now capitalist and decadent soci-

ety. Thus, at mid-decade, thanks to screenwriters' failure of imagination and growing skepticism about lasting Russo-American alliance, *The Hunt for Red October's* nuclear threat returned in Tony Scott's submarine-set *Crimson Tide* (1995), whose ultra-nationalist renegades in turn prefigured the corrupt, renegade general who steals nuclear warheads in *The Peacemaker* (1997). Renegade or "ultra-nationalists" from a former Soviet satellite also appeared in *Air Force One* (1997)—but only with machine guns, no nuclear weapons. In the face of such cinematic recidivism, an October 1997 article in the Russian magazine *Itogi* denounced the West's renewed vilification, singling out *Goldeneye* (1996), *Air Force One*, and *The Peacemaker* as particularly offensive. According to the author, Yuri Gladilshchikov, celluloid images of Russians had reached a propagandistic peak since the 1980s. Gladilshchikov's complaint was not only warranted but also appropriate for two other 1997 films: *The Jackal* and *The Saint*, which varied Hollywood's repertoire of caricatures only by making their villains Mafiosi rather than renegades.

The new century witnessed a cordiality between recently elected presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush that seemed to renew the promise of the Gorby years, especially after Putin's call of commiseration to the White House about 9/11. But far from reacting with more scenarios of cooperation, Hollywood in the same period did not skip a beat in continuing its retrenchment in skeptical and dismissive characterizations of Russians. No difference was evident between the films in production before the presidents' 2001 meeting and those conceived after it. Instead, to the familiar mix of Russians as renegades, subordinates, or sidekicks in any cooperative ventures with Americans, Mafiosi, and assassins, two action films added terrorists, while the hockey film *Miracle* (2004) retro-patriotically commemorated an American victory over Soviet champions back in 1980—the good old days before Hollywood had ever dreamed of changing its caricaturish ways. Yet another submarine narrative, Kathryn Bigelow's *K-19: The Widowmaker* (2002), was affirmative in dramatizing an episode of Russian heroism and in casting American icon Harrison Ford and Liam Neeson, associated with his Schindler role, as Russian commanders. But its fictionalization of an actual 1960s incident in which the USSR's first atomic ballistic submarine faced meltdown at the bottom of the

North Sea once again recalled Soviet nuclear power. Moreover, the Kursk tragedy of August 2000 made the topic of a submarine accident especially sensitive for Russians, one of whom in an interview with the newspaper *Izvestiia* pointed out, "This film isn't about Russians, but about how Americans want to see Russians." According to the retired submariners from the K-19, the American film belittled them as "a bunch of alcoholics and illiterates."²¹

That positive images of Russia are unlikely to emanate from the United States in the near future may be deduced from such undertakings as director Roger Spottiswoode's *Spinning Boris* (2003). In wholly crediting American political/marketing technologies and consultants for the outcome of the 1996 Russian presidential election, the film hardly bolstered Russia's already shaky sense of its independent progress over the preceding decade. Its supercilious claims recall the spate of American articles published throughout the 1990s posing the presumptuous question, "Who Lost Russia?" — as though a careless but commanding West had inadvertently mislaid the country, politically if not geographically. Given the dominance of American blockbusters at the Russian box office in the 1990s, with Russian-made films constituting a mere seven percent of those screened locally, Russians may well have had a disproportionate exposure to American images of them. Such a consideration, as well as the sheer volume of imported American films, which overshadow the 30-40 annual Russian releases, prompted Karen Shakhnazarov, the head of Mosfilm, to call for quotas restricting the number of Hollywood movies shown in the country. While that proposal was not translated into law and was opposed by Putin,²² it would certainly be desirable to limit the number of films exposing *American* audiences to outdated stereotypes of Russians, particularly in light of the strained relations between the two countries in the new century. Given the improbability of such a development, however, one can only applaud those rare American films — perhaps one in every ten — that offer genuine characterizations rather than slightly modified caricatures all too recognizable from an earlier era.

Dollarized Evil

Soviet anti-American films predated the Cold War, variously echoing state ideology, which trumpeted the moral superiority of wholesome socialist values over the craven materialism of the bourgeois U.S.²³ Lev Kuleshov's *Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* [*Neobyknovennye prikliucheniia mistera Vesta v strane bol'shevikov*, 1924] and Grigorii Aleksandrov's *Circus* [*Tsirk*, 1936] anticipated, and established the template for, Cold War films featuring Americans who, marginalized or Marx-ized in the bastion of corruptive capitalism, either receive a revelatory education or find asylum, purpose, and happiness in the hospitable, enlightened Soviet Union. Kuleshov likewise set a precedent for many post-Soviet directors by relying, paradoxically, on Hollywood techniques and the genres of the western and the detective story to expose American ills.²⁴ Two decades later, Aleksandr Dovzhenko's *Farewell, America!* [*Proshchai, Amerika*, 1949-1950] provided a harsher paradigm of Western nefariousness, demonizing Americans' cynical pragmatism and imperialistic deceit, contrasted to Soviet leaders' impeccable political probity. The question of Americans' lack of ethics, tackled in forgettable films of the 30s,²⁵ also was reprised in Aleksandrov's Stalinist *Meeting on the Elbe* [*Vstrecha na El'be*, 1949]—the most popular film that year, attracting over 24 million Soviet viewers²⁶—and in secondary spy/war melodramas. Mikhail Romm's *The Russian Question* [*Russkii vopros*, 1948], based on a play by Konstantin Simonov, and *Secret Mission* [*Sekretnaia missiia*, 1950], as well as Abram Room's *Silvery Dust* [*Serebristaia pyl'*, 1953], offered equally reductive variations on this moralized binarism. And though Aleksandrov's Thaw-era *Russian Souvenir* [*Russkii souvenir*, 1960] muted the image of suspect Western Others through comedy and clumsily engineered romance, during Stalinism and Stagnation both the US and the USSR solemnly urged vigilance vis-à-vis the enemy in celluloid scenarios that caricatured ideological antagonists into instantly recognizable stereotypes of villainy.

Though the two Cold War superpowers frequently resorted to similar rhetoric and easily decipherable visual codes that enabled viewers to distinguish heroes from villains,²⁷ several key differences between the two countries' film industries affected aesthetics and

thematic treatment. As a cultural institution explicitly targeting a mass audience, state-financed Soviet cinema, unlike its privately financed American counterpart, did not differentiate strictly between art film (*avtorskoe kino*) and mainstream entertainment (*zritel'skoe kino*)—an emphatic Western distinction that many young Russian directors today consider spurious.²⁸ Secondly, whereas until the 1960s, Hollywood rarely addressed the volatile domestic problem of race, a major component of Soviet propaganda entailed the exposure of American racism, at odds with the USSR's own purported racial tolerance. That fanciful claim fuels not only Aleksandrov's widely distributed *Circus*, but also more recondite fare, such as *The Negro from Sheridan* [*Negr iz Sheridana*, 1932] (Klimontovich, "Oni kak shpiony," 1990, 115).

Although anti-American propaganda continued to appear on the Soviet screen through the 1970s and 1980s, its paranoid narratives about devious, decadent Americans lacked momentum, and the majority of such late-Stagnation films have deservedly sunk into oblivion, omitted even from standard Russian film encyclopedias and histories of Soviet cinema (Klimontovich 1990, 119-20). Moreover, in the prevailing atmosphere of euphoria ushered in by perestroika, all but the most retrograde conservatives welcomed triumphant America's "sage counsel" and promises of fiscal aid. And with the Iron Curtain lifted, the prospect of traveling to the capitalist haven acquired the aura of an attainable fantasy—a fantasy regularly enacted in the films of the early 1990s. Inasmuch as throughout the tumultuous 1990s the financially beleaguered, scaled-down Russian film industry was less passionate about revising the celluloid image of its former Cold War adversary than about reassessing its own identity and national past, celluloid America was largely conceived as a remote land of milk and honey, not unlike the distant thirteenth kingdom of fairy tales that enables the hero/ine to achieve happiness.²⁹ Precisely such an image emerged in Pavel Lungin's directorial debut, *Taxi-Blues* (1990), one of the first co-productions with the West during the last phase of Soviet rule: optimistic about the benefits of amicable interaction with the former adversary and influenced by American action and buddy pictures, it is a revealing counterpart to Nicholas Meyer's *Company Business* (1991). *Taxi-Blues* briefly pairs an alcoholic Russian saxo-

phonist with a visiting black American musician, who instantly recognizes the Russian's talent and readily provides him with camaraderie, an American tour, and (indirectly) the obligatory New Russian symbol of success—a Mercedes. In the film's sanguine scenario of "natural rapprochement," mutual professional respect blurs or erases national borders, even as the film emphasizes the contrast between "the land of opportunity," where everything is possible, and the dead-end that is home territory. A mere five years later, Karen Shakhnazarov's *American Daughter*, labeled a lyrical comedy, reconceived those borders as appreciably more divisive.

Indeed, whereas Hollywood's amiable condescension toward its ostensible "partner" has remained relatively constant since perestroika, post-Soviet cinema has functioned as a reliable barometer of the fluctuating political temperature in the two countries' relations, gradually shifting from an uncritical embrace of the US as a citadel of open-armed generosity to a partial recuperation of Cold War prejudices. Thus *American Daughter*, an unlikely tale about tender Russian fatherhood, uses its protagonist's journey to San Francisco in search of his seven-year-old daughter as an occasion to dichotomize Russians and Americans in the hoariest national clichés, showing Americans as ambulatory dollar signs and Russians as souls. Tellingly, the bond between the unjustly incarcerated father and a black fellow inmate (who, coincidentally, has a basic command of Russian!) inverts the racial propaganda of Taylor Hackford's *White Nights*, to extol Russia instead of the United States as the sanctuary of acceptance and unanimity—a formula familiar from Soviet Cold War discourse.

Though such films as *American Daughter* generally mirrored Russians' growing disillusionment with the US, they also partially resulted from directors' resentful frustration over the industry's parlous circumstances. The dramatic upheavals accompanying the announced adoption of a market economy forced Russian directors to confront seismic changes: huge cutbacks in state subsidies, the breakdown of the film-distribution infrastructure, the dismantling of Goskino (All-Union Ministry of Cinematography), a dwindling number of film theaters, and domestic audiences' unprecedented insatiability for action-packed Western (mainly American) entertainment on the big screen and television.³⁰ The deluge of films in

1991-92, backed by crime-implicated money that cinema probably helped to launder, soon diminished to a trickle. Lamenting audiences' addiction to American blockbusters and mediocre movies, other directors supported Shakhnazarov's proposal to establish official quotas that would undercut Hollywood's dominance in Russian theaters—a solution rejected by Putin, during whose presidency the government has invested appreciably greater sums in film production than under Yeltsin.³¹ Yet the measured revival of domestic cinema notwithstanding, available American films still far outnumber Russian releases, for, as Shakhnazarov himself and film producer Sergei Selianov acknowledged, Russia simply lacks the requisite number of qualified professionals to meet audience demand.³²

Not only Hollywood's supremacy, but also its ability to construct strong male characters proved a source of irritated envy for Nikita Mikhalkov, Chairman of the Filmmakers' Union and until fairly recently the sole Russian director with a reputation abroad. Mourning the dearth of "positive heroes" in post-Soviet cinema, Mikhalkov has railed against Hollywood's influence and knack for projecting macho heroism (especially in vehicles for Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger),³³ even while collaborating on such projects as *The Saint* and happily accepting the Oscar for his 1994 film, *Burnt by the Sun* [*Utomlennye solntsem*].³⁴ In an effort to limn such an exemplar and restore national pride, in 1998, amidst unprecedented pomp and ceremony, Mikhalkov premiered *The Barber of Siberia*—his bloated paean to the indomitable Russian spirit as incarnated in the Tsarist army. Despite the outlandish measures Mikhalkov adopted to create an authentic period piece, he not only failed to eliminate historical anachronisms and inaccuracies, but also reverted to the clichés of Soviet anti-Americanism, pitting a cultured, noble Russia against the petty materialism of shady Americans who despoil Siberia's vast forests solely for profit. To miss the analogy between the events on screen and America's activities in post-Soviet Russia would require strenuous effort, and, though the costume melodrama met with mixed reviews by critics, it apparently boosted domestic audiences' morale.

If *American Daughter* and *The Barber of Siberia* reflect a perceptible cooling in Russia's view of its economic "mentor," by the end of

the 1990s the U.S.-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia (1999), the erosion of a dependable infrastructure by the accelerated, bumpy transition to an announced market economy, and the influx of dogmatic, uncomprehending American experts in politics, economics, and religion had utterly soured Russians' faith in American capabilities and intentions in Russia. As the Russian writer Viktor Erofeev put it, "Already by the end of Yeltsin's rule, Russians had become disenchanting with the West, now perceived as unfaithful and suspect." Today Erofeev sees a "new cold war—an image war," and that image in the sense of reputation was created not only at political summits, but also on the screen.

Unsurprisingly, then, the most popular film of 2000 also offered the most eloquent evidence of a nadir in relations between the two former foes. Both the film and its jubilant reception symptomatized Russia's widespread disenchantment with its pseudoally, expressed in strident nationalist pride and a denigration of America reminiscent of Soviet adversarial stereotypes. The very title of Aleksei Balabanov's elementary blockbuster, *Brother-2* (2000), and the derivative nature of its protagonist indicate the director's indebtedness to Hollywood and its promotional strategies, even as the film's content performs an exposé of America's manifold ills. *Brother-2* transfers its Rambo-cloned "righteous killer" protagonist from Petersburg (in *Brother*, 1997) to New York and Chicago, where he searches for his friend's murderers. As the sacred avenger in these purported hotbeds of Mafiosi, pimps, and prostitutes, Balabanov's gun-toting paladin intuitively distinguishes American victimizers from victims, overcomes the former, and nobly rescues the latter. Erofeev's observation that the nostalgia for authoritarian empire "means that Russians will have to abandon universal values and accept a situation in which domestic riff-raff regard it their duty to kill those they don't like" applies remarkably well to *Brother-2*. Americans' relative indifference to any cinema originating outside of Hollywood precludes the likelihood of large-scale American indignation at any Russian movie comparable to that of Russian special-interest groups' complaints about *K-19: The Widowmaker* and *Cast Away*. Western viewers acquainted with *Brother-2*, nonetheless, deemed the film offensively and crudely indicative of a deepening animus against the U.S. that recalled the pre-perestroika years.

Exultant enthusiasm on home territory for this corpse-strewn hymn to Russian moral superiority coincided with a broad-based upsurge of anti-Americanism, evident in such hit songs as Aleksandr Nepomnyashchy's "Kill the Yankee,"³⁵ in publications denouncing America's imperialism (Grishina, "Anti-Americanism," 2000), and in accusations of renewed Cold War tactics leveled against the West during the 2002 Olympics.³⁶ Clearly, the nineties' romance between East and West was over, replaced by combative distrust. That distrust led to neglect: after 2000, celluloid Americans virtually disappeared from Russian cinema. During the 1990s their questionable traits had been showcased in the New Russians—the "surrogates" taking advantage of new business practices—who threatened age-old national traditions that domestic films increasingly validated. Just as 1950s Hollywood films had regularly displaced America's paranoia about the Communist threat onto extraterrestrials ("Things from Outer Space"), so contemporary Russian films projected "Americanism" onto the new quasi-class of Russian entrepreneurs. After all, according to the official Soviet party line, American values were essentially reducible to aggressive "no holds barred" capitalism, a *modus operandi* generally attributed to the Klondike-era Russian "wheeler-dealer" mired in crime.³⁷ These ridiculed and resented pragmatists populated Russian comedies as money-obsessed vulgarities: e.g., Leonid Gaidai's *It's Good Weather on Deribasovskaia, or It'll Rain Again in Brighton Beach* [*Na Deribasovskoi khoroshaia pogoda, ili na Braiton-Bich opiat' budut dozhdi* 1992] and Mikhail Kokshenov's *A Russian Miracle* [*Russkoe chudo* 1994]. Stanislav Govorukhin's melodramatic *Voroshilov Sharpshooter/Marksman* [*Voroshilovskii strelok* 1999] depicted them as despicable, amoral thugs. Less monochromatic treatments of these stands-ins for American cutthroat capitalists, such as Viacheslav Krishtofovich's *Friend of the Deceased* [*Priiatel' pokoinika* 1997], Pavel Lungin's *Wedding* [*Svad'ba* 2000], and Aleksandr Zel'dovich's *Moscow* [*Moskva* 2000], though not as automatically dismissive, nevertheless ensured the eventual demise of the financially successful but spiritually bankrupt financier on screen.

Perhaps the most complex image of the newly rich emerged in Lungin's *Tycoon: A New Russian* [*Oligarkh* 2002]—and it is surely no coincidence that its director had lived abroad for several years.

One of the few Russian films positively received in the West, *Tycoon* draws on the pseudo-fictionalized memoirs by Iulii Dubov, *A Big Slice* [*Bol'shaia paika* 1999], which recount the vertiginous ascent to fame and fortune of Boris Berezovsky.³⁸ The wealthiest and arguably most influential man in Russia under Yeltsin, Berezovsky built a huge empire through questionable dealings, and lent critical support for Yeltsin's 1996 re-election and Putin's 2000 presidential campaign. When Putin opened investigations into his business activities, Berezovsky fled to London (2001), where he enjoyed political asylum under the name of Platon Elenin and regularly denounced Putin's regime. Focusing on the transformation of a gifted, glib academic into a billionaire, *Tycoon* vividly conveys the volatile nature of Russia's lawless 1990s—their sense of seemingly limitless but risky financial possibilities, their corruption, violence, and betrayals—but refrains from diminishing the film's protagonist to a money-grubbing Neanderthal. After all, Berezovsky, the author of more than a dozen books and articles in control theory, was a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the chair of an institute, and a member of the Duma. By opting for complex characterization, Lungin offered a more balanced image of the Russian businessman than had appeared in previous films, in a sense paving the way for the real-life metamorphosis of the universally reviled New Russian into the respectable, if envied, financier of the 2000s. And now that Russia's improved financial status through petro-dollars has helped to create what commentators call a new middle class, ownership and affluence no longer necessarily signal Americanism.³⁹

Macho Action and National Difference:

Whatever the shifts in Russian perceptions of the former enemy throughout the nineties, images of the Other in both Russian and American mainstream cinema have generally populated action films, which by definition are a male genre, relegating women to secondary status. Indeed, the two cinemas share a common language in representing male-centered heroism and national superiority in a traditional, usually sentimental, mode. On both sides, machismo or male nobility frequently entails a sacrifice for family,

nation, and the world. Yet Hollywood's responsiveness to political correctness has disguised, however superficially, the primacy of male agency, whereas Russians regularly have cast women as appendages to men, and neither Mikhalkov nor any other director has bewailed the lack of genuine Russian heroines on the screen.

Despite the commonality of a gendered genre, additional cultural differences emerge with some consistency. Films like *Brother-2* have made no attempt to camouflage the racism that the terrorist acts in Russia, reportedly executed by Chechens, have intensified, while American political correctness—frequently derided by Russian critics—has dictated the inclusion of intelligent, patriotic Afro-Americans in the cast of characters. Whereas American films tend to invoke cowboy, sports, and media motifs to consolidate national identity, the thematic patterns in Russian cinema include flight, borders, and (often Anglophone) thematically-relevant songs. And if Russian filmmakers have appropriated some genre conventions and marketing stratagems from Hollywood, they have often done so in the service of renewed anti-American propaganda. One final difference emerges: Thanks to the widely lamented dominance of Hollywood action films in Russian movie theaters and the ready availability of pirated videos, Russian audiences are overly familiar with America's self-image and its continued diminishment of the former Cold War adversary; recent Russian cinema, on the contrary, demonstrates a dwindling interest in representing Americans onscreen or responding to their celluloid self-portrayals.

The Shape of Things to Come:

Fade from Red is arranged chronologically, with each chapter covering a distinct period in approximately fifteen years of Russo-American relations and the representations that both national cinemas devoted to that period. Chapter 1, "We're Buddies Now: The Sunny Phase of Russo-American Relations (1990-92)," charts the optimism—wary on America's side, enthusiastic on Russia's—about a superpower partnership emerging from the fall of Communism. The heady atmosphere of perestroika persisted into the new decade, with Russian expectations that American expertise would resolve the nation's colossal economic dilemmas at an all-time high,

and media in both countries vigorously highlighting the rapport between George Bush and Yeltsin. Chapter 2, "Brother from Another Planet: Cloudy Skies (1993-96)," explores the down-turn in relations occasioned by Russia's precarious financial state and its growing skepticism not only about America's intentions, but also about the efficacy and consequences of the "shock therapy" it advocated. Though Bill Clinton worked with Yeltsin on limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and improving Russia's economy through the Nunn-Lugar plan and sundry international institutions, Russia plunged into fiscal chaos as industrial production plummeted and capital flight, according to World Bank estimates, totaled \$88 billion between 1993 and 1996. Chapter 3, "The Big Chill: Stormy Weather (1997-99)," traces the decline into renewed hostility, as Russia defaulted on its debts (August 1998), the collapse of many banks caused overnight losses of life savings, and inflation rose by more than 80 percent. So-called American aid seemed inextricably bound with Russia's corruption, systemic disarray, and the rapid enrichment of such moguls as Berezovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky, and Vladimir Potanin, even as countless Russians found themselves below the poverty line. The U.S.-spearheaded NATO air strike in Yugoslavia led to violent protests in Moscow and exacerbated vocal resentment against the U.S., which in its turn criticized Russia's war with Chechnya and patently wished to dissociate itself from Yeltsin's drunken antics and unpredictability. Chapter 4, "The Long Goodbye: Winter of Shared Discontent (2000-5)," examines the radical deterioration that retrospectively has rendered the early 1990s a remote 'golden era' of genuine alliance. Yeltsin's resignation in 2000 and the election of Putin the following year led to fundamental socioeconomic changes and gradual stabilization. Revenues from oil, refined petroleum, and natural gas eased Russia's fiscal recovery sufficiently to increase disposable income by approximately 20 percent. No longer hobbled by reliance on the U.S., Russia increasingly and openly lambasted America's arrogance and imperialism, evidenced above all in the highly controversial war in Iraq.

A perspicacious item written in 2002 by Alexander Anichkin, former deputy editor of the newspaper *Izvestiia*, noted: "[F]or all the talk by world leaders about Russia as a strategic partner of Europe or the U.S., as a serious player on the world stage, deep down we

are still seen as an international joke, a nation of drunks and incompetents. It is [...] a Hollywood view of Russia—but one which persists.” Anichkin went on to point out, “Many in Russia are beginning to blame the West for her post-Soviet difficulties. When it becomes clear that the West still sees Russia as a third-class citizen, it is difficult to convince them that they are being paranoid.”⁴⁰ Indeed. Whereas the early 1990s witnessed Russia’s readiness to embrace “the American way,” a decade later the majority of the populace supported Putin’s rhetoric of pride in national strength and cultural traditions. Today both Russian and American commentators, acknowledging the absence of authentic, steadfast collaboration between the two countries, frequently invoke the specter of a revived Cold War. For instance, in May 2014, Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev announced: “US President Barack Obama should show more political tact in easing the relations crisis with Russia, as the current American policy is nullifying everything achieved over the past few years of the ‘reset’ and is leading to a new ‘cold war.’”⁴¹ While the comparison with the era of the Iron Curtain is manifestly hyperbolic, a recuperation of the amicable bilateral accord that promised so much in the early 1990s seems inconceivable in the immediate future.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 For a comprehensive study of Cold War film from the late 1940s to the disintegration of the USSR see Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood. *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010).
- 2 It was in a March 8, 1983 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals in Florida that Reagan used this dramatic term from Steven Spielberg's *Star Wars*. Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 22-23.
- 3 Quoted in Stephen Prince, *Visions of Empire: Political Imagery in Contemporary American Film* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 52.
- 4 David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1981) 435.
- 5 An unusual spy version was *Jet Pilot* (1957), which followed a *female* pilot's undercover exploits until her marriage to the hero (John Wayne) and her decision to ask for refuge in the United States.
- 6 Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), which instead of Martians has people-replacing pods for its invaders, is distinctive in being open to both an anti-Communist reading (something its director claimed he had *not* intended) and an anti-McCarthyite interpretation.
- 7 Eric Smoodin, "Watching the Skies: Hollywood, the 1950s, and the Soviet Threat," *Journal of American Culture*, No. 11 (1988): 38.
- 8 William J. Palmer, *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 245.
- 9 Shifting the narrative locus of danger from the USSR to the Middle East was a way in which more than one film coped with the loss of Soviets as favorite screen villains.

- 10 Mick Martin and Marsha Porter suggest that “[a] better name for this modern war movie might have been *Rambo*, so shamelessly does it attempt to be a *Rambo* for the teen-age set.” Their take on the sequel is more succinct: “Ridiculous sequel to the preposterous original.” (569). *DVD & Video Guide 2007* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).
- 11 On June 20, 1991, the American ambassador learned from the mayor of Moscow that Prime Minister Pavlov, KGB Chairman Kryuchkov, Defense Minister Yazov, and Minister of Internal Affairs Pugo were plotting a coup against Gorbachev, whom they blamed for exposing the nation to excessive Western contact. See Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, 1998), 452-53.
- 12 Alexander Cockburn suggests that the channeling of bad Russianness into renegade figures started as far back as the 1960s, with the Bond films. “The only bad Russians are those renegades who sow distrust between the great powers. [...] United Artists did not want the Russians to be out-and-out villains [...] for reasons of motion picture distribution, [because] someday Bond might go to Russia” (qtd in Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 209).
- 13 While still making Americans the saviors, this scenario certainly improved on the function of Gorbachev in *Rocky III*, where he appears towards the end to watch the boxing match between Rocky and the Russian champion Drago, to applaud the inevitable American victory and to listen as a Stars-and-Stripes covered Rocky lectures the Soviet audience on the need for change in Cold War attitudes!
- 14 The otherwise unmemorable *Little Nikita* (1988), in which a teenage boy learns from an FBI agent that his parents are deep spies planted in the US, offers a reversal of the usual gratuitous scene in which Soviet spies are seen to be brutal and barbarian, unlike their American counterparts. When the boy is caught in a cross-fire between the FBI and the KGB agent, the latter puts down his gun with the comment, “Russians are not monsters. We do not shoot children.” Palmer comments that “[t]his movie argues, as none of the other spy thrillers or rightist militarist fantasies do, that underneath their cheap spy suits and their bushy eyebrows Russians are also normal people” (*The Films*, 1993, 228).
- 15 Based on Martin Smith Cruz’s extremely popular 1981 novel, which became the first of his Arkady Renko series.
- 16 Positive in their own right, these five films become all the more significant in relation to their 1990s successors, which offer no sympathetic Russian protagonists at all. The first later film to offer such figures is Kathryn Bigelow’s *K-11: The Widowmaker*, which appeared in 2002.

- 17 Quoted in Kevin Canfield, "Americans pine for the Cold War," *Baltimore Sun* (October 6, 2002).
- 18 Other writers commenting on this development include Stephen Whitfield in his *Culture of the Cold War* (1996) and Martin Walker in *The Cold War: A History* (1993). All these experts are cited in Canfield, "Americans," 2002.
- 19 Palmer readily classifies *Hunt* as "a manifest text of cold war hardware," in the same category as *Firefox*, *Top Gun*, and *Iron Eagle II* (Palmer, *The Films*, 1993, 214).
- 20 Of course, the perennial eye on the box office made it unlikely that, no matter how friendly the USSR and America, Hollywood would risk opening up *major* roles to Russian actors, prominent only in their own country, or at most in Europe as well.
- 21 "Russian submariners angered by *K-19* movie portrayal," *AFP* (July 21, 2002).
- 22 Korolev, Anatoli. "Kremlin against foreign movies quotas," *RIA Novosti* (July 17, 2003).
- 23 For a survey of Soviet films focused on America, see N. Klimontovich, "Oni kak shpiony," *Iskusstvo kino* 11 (1990): 113-22. For an insightful analysis of the Soviet Union's self-positioning vis-à-vis the West in historical perspective, see Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially 1-27, 312-24.
- 24 For an analysis of Kuleshov's *Great Consoler* [*Velikii uteshitel'*] and a commentary on Kuleshov's enthusiasm for Hollywood film, see Andrew J. Horton, "Your heart is beating too loudly," *Central Europe Review* (November 8, 1999) (http://www.ce-review.org/99/20/kino-eye20_horton.html).
- 25 Klimontovich lists other films of the 30s devoted to America: *Vozorashchenie Neitana Bekkera* (1932) by V. Shpis and R. Mil'man; Kuleshov's *Gorizont* (1932) and *Velikii uteshitel'* (1933), based on O. Henry's stories and biography; and A. Stolper's *Chetyre vizita Samueia Vul'fa* (1934). See Klimontovich, "Oni kak shpiony," 1990, 115.
- 26 Sergei Zemlianukhin, Miroslava Segida, *Domashniaia sinemateka: Otechestvennoe kino 1918-1996*. Ed. Mihail Utevskaia (Moscow: Dubl'-D, 1996), 81.
- 27 For example, in Soviet cinema cosmetics and cigarettes instantly identified a woman as evil and Western.
- 28 See "Novoe pokolenie rezhisserov: odinochki ili volna?" *Iskusstvo kino* 2 (2006).
- 29 The magical forces dwelling in this distant realm help to realize what seems impossible.

- 30 For a discussion of these conditions and various directors' responses to them, see Helena Goscilo, "Introduction" to Forum: "Resent, Reassess, and Reinvent: The Three R's of Post-Soviet Russian Cinema," *Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2007): 213-28.
- 31 Only certain films receive financial aid, however—especially those presenting Russian history from a "correct" (i.e., jingoistic) perspective. Both film and scholarship in history have become straitjacketed by the Kremlin's imposition of an obligatory national self-promotion, for revealing any Russian or Soviet warts basically constitutes disloyalty.
- 32 "Russian Deputies Protest Against American Films," *pravda.ru* (July 18, 2003)
- 33 For an English version of Mikhalkov's hectoring speech at the 1998 Filmmakers Union, see Birgit Beumers, *Russian on Reels. The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 50-53.
- 34 Like many other Russian directors today, Mikhalkov has adopted the Hollywood convention of sequels; hence his *Burnt by the Sun 2*, consisting of two parts: *Exodus* (2010) and *Citadel* (2011) — the latter sometimes called *Burnt by the Sun 3*. Costing \$55 million, the film flopped spectacularly at the box office and with critics. That reception did not prevent Mikhalkov, as a member of the Oscar Committee (chaired by Vladimir Men'shov), from nominating *Citadel* for the 2012 Oscar for Best Foreign Film and refusing to withdraw it despite opposition from Men'shov and numerous indignant members of the Russian film community.
- 35 Andrew Higgins, "Anti-American Song 'Kill the Yankees' Develops a Strong Following in Russia," *Wall Street Journal* (November 1, 2000) (andrew.higgins@wsj.com); Natalya Grishina, "Anti-Americanism winning over Russia's elite," *The Russian Journal* (December 9-15, 2000). Nepomnyashchy reportedly identified the new enemy as the shallow orthodoxy of American-style capitalism: "You call it the 'American dream.' I call it the values of a big supermarket" (Higgins).
- 36 Igor Poroshin, "'Petty-Minded' Russian Olympic Protests Undo Diplomatic Gains," *Izvestiia* (February 26, 2002).
- 37 For analyses of the perceived image of the New Russians, see the cluster of articles titled *The New Russians*, ed Helena Goscilo, *The Russian Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2003): 3-90.
- 38 Mark Lipovetsky's trenchant analysis of *A Big Quota* and other literary works treating the New Russians offers penetrating insights into the construction of the cultural myth of this social category. See Mark Lipovetsky, "New Russians as a Cultural Myth," *The Russian Review* (January 2003): 54-71.

- 39 Harley Balzer was one of the first Western commentators to detect the New Russians' growing aspirations to 'bourgeois normalization' as the 1990s drew to a close. See Harley Balzer, "Routinization of the New Russians?" *The Russian Review* (January 2003): 15-36. Though the term "Russia's middle class" circulates freely nowadays, Russians with substantial incomes and eager to spend money lack key traits of that class as traditionally defined.
- 40 Alexander Anichkin, "Villains of the piece," *The Times* (July 8, 2002).
- 41 "Putin: Russia, US Relations Not in Good Shape, Ready for Dialogue with US on Equal Terms," *RIA NOVOSTI* (July 1, 2014) (<http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140701/190776130/Putin-Russia-US-Relations-Not-in-Good-Shape-Ready-for-Dialogue.html>)

Chapter 1

- 1 Ascherson, Neal, "1989 stands out as pivotal year in 20th century; Chain reaction ends Cold War," *Washington Times* (26 April 1999), A 17.
- 2 Will, George F. "Europe's Second Reformation," *Newsweek* (20 November 1989), 90. For a detailed timeline of the period 1989-1991, see Benjamin B. Fischer, *At Cold War's End: United States Intelligence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1989-1991* (Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency), 2000.
- 3 Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 154.
- 4 For a close look at the relationship between Bush and Gorbachev, see Oberdorfer, *From the Cold*, 1998.
- 5 Sotheby's started holding Russian art auctions in 1985, and at its first Russian art auction in Moscow (July 1988), six paintings by the "non-conformist" artist Grisha Bruskin sold for \$800,000. Though Western fascination with Russian art dipped during the mid-1990s, at Sotheby's 2005 auction, various Russian paintings from the 19th and 20th centuries fetched spectacular sums.
- 6 In one of his interviews, Lungin waxed euphoric about his working conditions, enabled by this international network. He also pointed out that at Cannes Russian journalists and TV personnel had snubbed his film. See Teimuraz Ponarin, "Raskvitaetsia s epokhoi," *Sovetskii ekran*, No. 3 (1990): 26-27.
- 7 Denis Evstigneev won the Nika Award in the Best Cinematographer category.
- 8 For an original examination not only of *Taxi Blues*, but of Lungin's en-