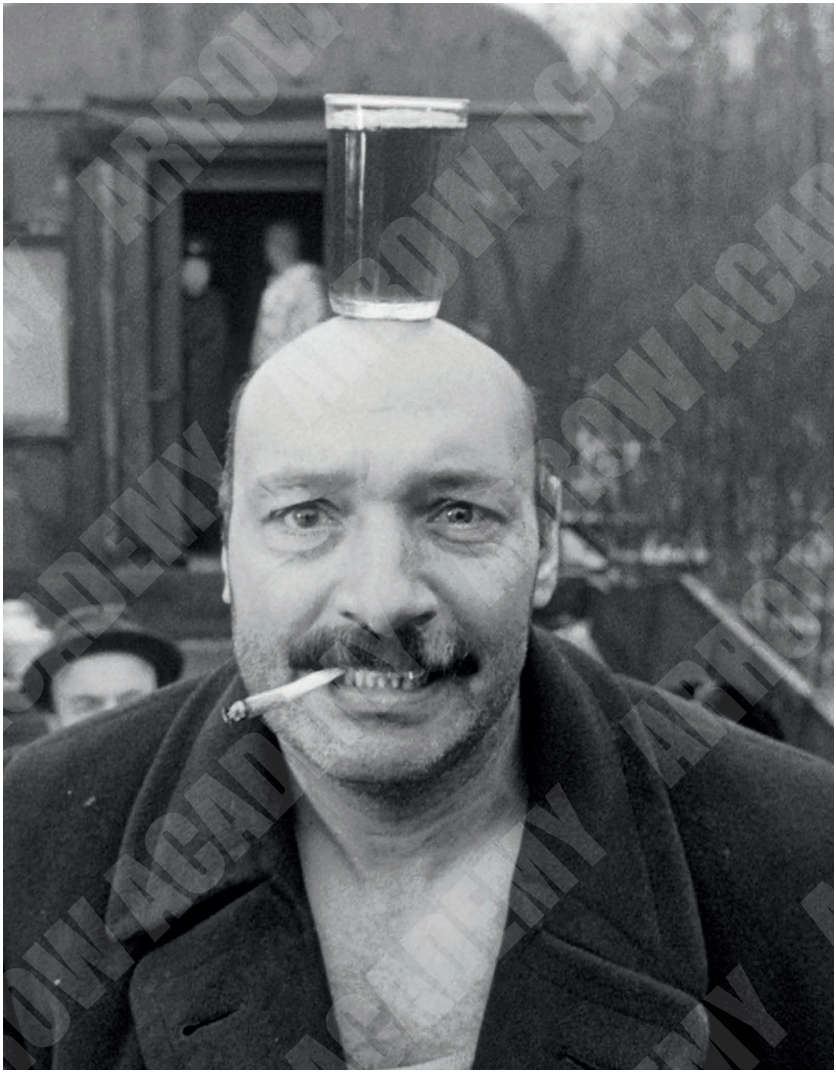

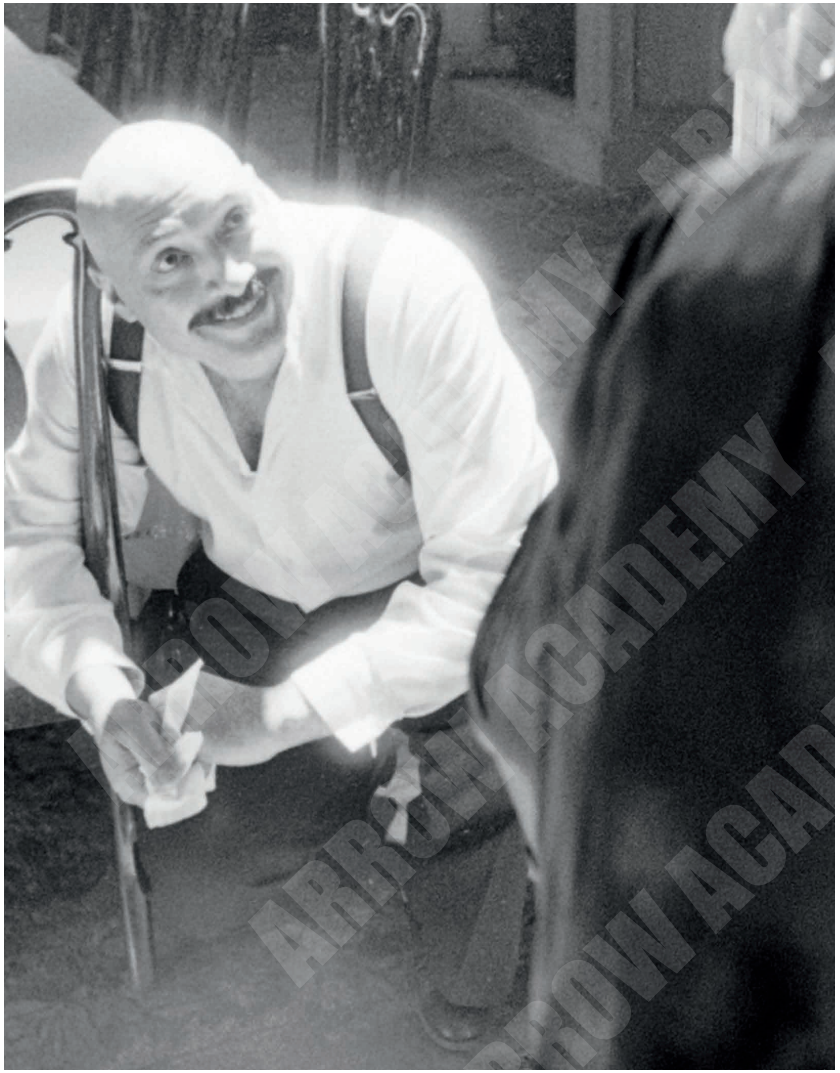

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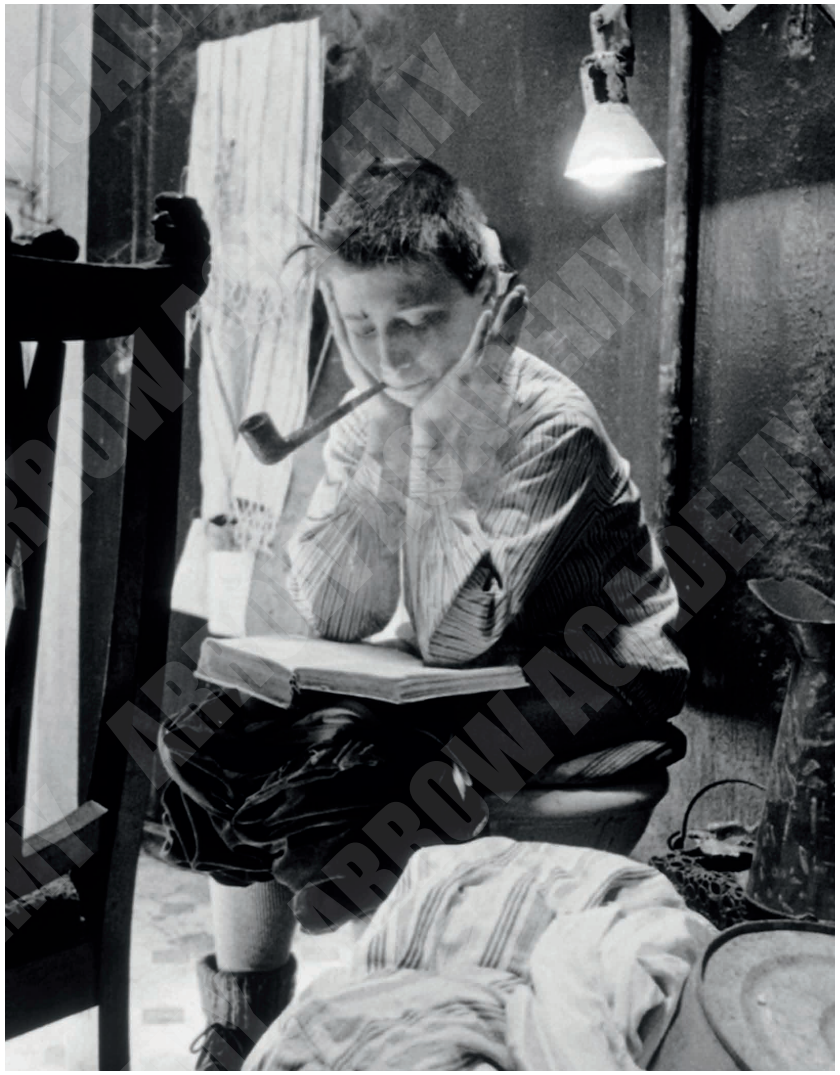
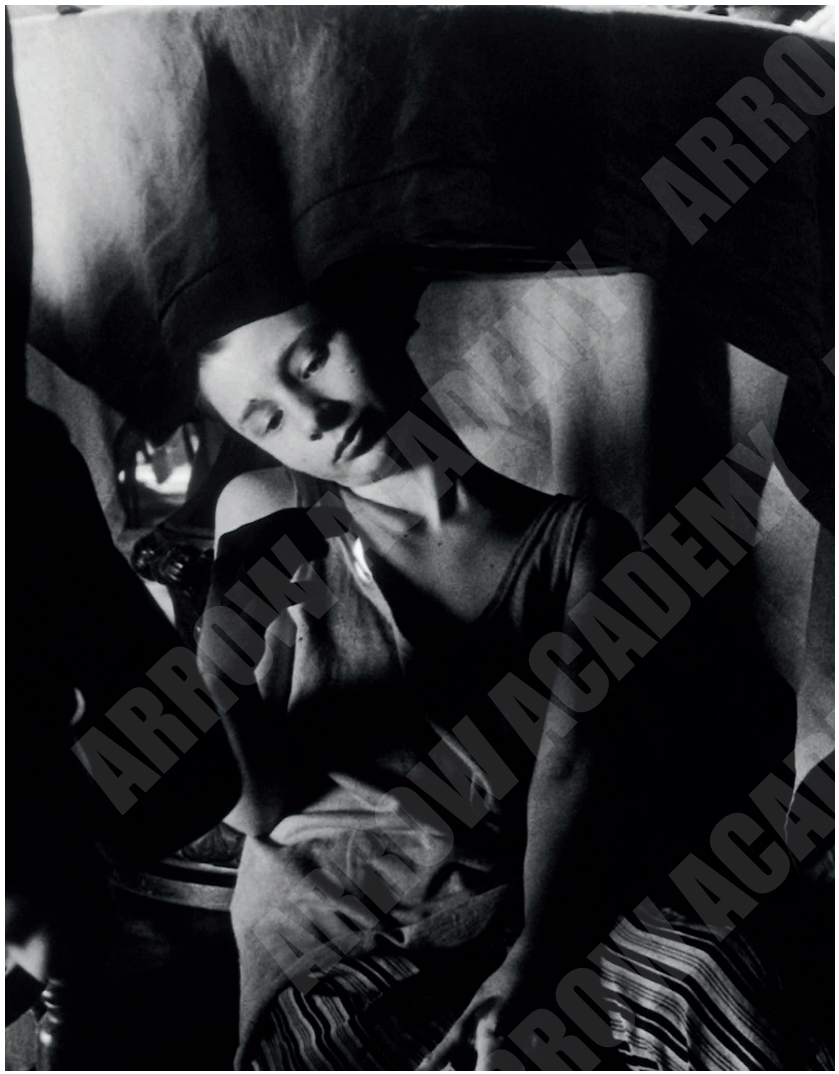




KHRUSTALYOV, MY CAR! ADMISSION TO THE CIRCUS

by Gianna D'Emilio

When the films of Aleksei Yuryevich German (1938–2013) have screened in the west, reviews have fallen into two camps. Critics have either written off the films as chaotic and impenetrable, or they have commended the director's technical ability to create full worlds.

A typically positive review of German's *Hard to Be a God* (*Trudno byt bogom*, 2013) concluded: "The nastiness is so intricate, so monumentally revolting, that it inspires a perverse new reverence, or gratitude, for the real world into which you will soon be able to escape."[1] Unfortunately, this reading reveals a missed opportunity. For German, *Hard to Be a God* was a political metaphor, an expression of concern about the conditions of the real world. He explained, "This film is about us and our not [especially] bright prospects",[2] and that "its theme is the onset of fascism, which is, in my opinion, threatening my country".[3]

This was not a new endeavor. Each of German's solo directorial efforts concerned the corrosive effects of totalitarianism, in the forms of war, propaganda, and nationwide conspiracy.[4]

In *Trial on the Road* (*Proverka na dorogakh*, 1986), set during World War Two, Stalinist law opposes basic human instinct. Explaining why he committed the capital crime of allowing himself to become a prisoner of war, our protagonist says: "I broke down. I wanted to live." Adherence to Stalin's policy robs other soldiers of their humanity, monstrously distorting their faces, and leading them to sacrifice innocents for symbolic revenge.

1 - Gabriel Winslow-Yost, 'The Dark Master of Russian Film' in *The New York Review of Books*. (Web. 31 Jan, 2015).
2 - Mumin Shakirov, 'Alexei German: I Invented This Planet' in *Russkiy Mir Foundation*. (Web. 21 Feb, 2013).
3 - Anton Dolin, 'Interview with Aleksei German' in *Hard to Be a God* booklet. (Arrow Academy Blu-ray. 14 Sep, 2015). 21.
4 - [The author omits reference to *The Seventh Companion* (*Sedmoy sputnik*, 1968), a film German co-directed with Grigori Aronov; because of the compromises he made as a young director, German, by all accounts, never considered the film to be "truly his". (See: Anton Dolin, 'The Strange Case of Russian Maverick Aleksei German in *Film Comment*. Web. Mar, 2012).

In *Twenty Days Without War* (*Dvadtsat dney bez voyny*, 1977), the title is ironic – the effects of war are ever-present, destroying the ability to plan, shattering the composition of families and the workforce, and even undermining the capacity of language. Civilians and soldiers both suffer from the effects of physical separation, but the war has created a gulf of experience so vast that it makes communication and intimacy almost impossible, even when the soldiers return on leave. German claimed that he made the film as a challenge to the "mendacious" epics that glorified the Red Army.[5] In *Twenty Days Without War*, propaganda is insidious, creating a psychological rift between the conditions of real life and the government's brash, grand, simplistic version of reality, which demanded inhuman standards of behaviour.

German completed his next film, *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* (*Moy drug Ivan Lapshin*), in 1985, and set it in 1936, on the eve of Stalin's purges. In a town on the rural outskirts of Moscow, we see the communist totalitarian presence budding in slogans, banners, joking threats, and even a musical cue that references a key, real-life assassination. However, the tone of the film is overwhelmingly tender. It is a "declaration of love" to the intimacy, trust, and collaborative spirit that the purges would ravage. In German's words: "The village, the whole system was being destroyed. The idea of the revolution was being destroyed. And all the moral principles were being destroyed. We wanted to show life and some of the things that brought the people to death later."[6]

German's final two films show totalitarianism at its most entrenched. Baseless violence and execution are a constant threat. Surveillance and betrayal are endemic, communication and insight are fatal, and trust has entirely eroded. The populace exists in a state of paranoid solipsism: self-pleasuring, apathetic, or drunkenly degraded. Privacy and intimacy do not exist, and, as a result, sex serves only to extend political currency. Even household spaces have lost their boundaries.

Khrustalyov, My Car! (*Khrustalyov, mashinu!*, 1998) is set during the paranoid, capricious, teetering final month before Joseph Stalin's death. Deportation and arrest were constant threats, and conspiracies at the top unravelled those below. As in the war films, the enemy is treasonous foreign influence, but the front lines have become internalised, corrupting thoughts, impulses, and identities.

But *Khrustalyov* feels like a reckless, absurd and brutal hallucination of a world on the brink of psychological breakdown. When asked, in the late 1990s, whether the film reflected Putin's

5 - Op. cit. Dolin, Arrow Academy. 28.
6 - Ronald Holloway, 'A stubborn quest for historical truth' in *Kinoeye*. (Web. 13 Sep, 2004).

Russia, German responded, "Of course," adding, "Maybe things are simpler now – they just shoot you."[7] A decade earlier, the director had remarked, "I don't think that a foreigner who has never been in our country can understand everything [from German's films]. He can probably feel some expression, but no more than that."[8]

The restoration and release of *Khrustalyov* in 2018 provides viewers with an opportunity. In the west, fascism is on the rise. Xenophobic uprisings mirror government policy; there are wide-scale deportations, and millions of people are living displaced in camps. Surveillance, spying, and foreign influence remain front-page news. Particularly in the United States, the government is mired in conspiracy and accusations of disloyalty, resulting in cullings among the top ranks. With reference to alternative facts and statements like "truth isn't truth", attacks on language and logic prevail and fake news draws real blood.

Will western audiences finally be ready to recognize the world in German's painstaking creations?

His films share so many thematic and aesthetic links that they appear as five glimpses of a single world devolving. In a testament to the director's exhaustive attention to detail, words, phrases, sound effects, gestures and images predict and echo one another throughout his films, gaining definition and relevance in each context.

In *My Friend Ivan Lapshin*, the protagonist is caught up in a love triangle. Rejected by the woman he loves, Lapshin jumps from her window, landing on a bottle of vodka in his pocket. Picking out the fragments of glass, he mutters, "It's a three-ring circus." This metaphor of the circus consumes German's next film, *Trial on the Road*. "Make way for the performers! We're off to the circus!" two boys announce, but this seems superfluous – their world already resembles one.

Nearly every scene of *Khrustalyov* is studded with sight gags, pratfalls, and impromptu dance routines. Inhibitions have eroded, behaviour is exaggerated to the absurd, and, whether or not they glance at the camera, everyone seems to be performing for an audience. Even in the face of death, a government agent meets his assassins with swanning, put-em-up punches. This circus is overrun by animals – a miniature pug is sent sailing down a zipline, a stuffed leopard and the mounted head of a wolf grace the general's apartment, and a lion roars in the park next door.

7 - James Hoberman, 'Exorcism: Aleksei German Among the Long Shadows' in *Film Comment*. (Web. Jan/Feb, 1999).
8 - Op. cit. Holloway.

German admired Federico Fellini, whom he called "cinema's only realist".[9] *Khrustalyov* is the director's most Fellini-esque endeavour, with long tracking shots through carnivalesque setpieces. A few direct references are clear – the general's secretary bears an uncanny resemblance to Giulietta Masina, Fellini's wife and frequent collaborator, and twin girls traipse through our narrator's home, chanting "Asa! Asa! Asa!", a nod to a famous childhood spell in *8 ½* (1963).

The protagonist, General Yuri Klenski, carries much of the circus metaphor. Klenski is played with an irresistible mix of childlike bravado and pathos by Yuri Tsurilo, whose bald head, moustache and enormous shoulders give the general the appearance of a circus strongman. He bends metal and breathes fire, appears illuminated in naturally occurring spotlights, and thinks best suspended upside-down on rings. German even gives Klenski a circus theme, played scratchily on a violin, and his goofy disguise, a medieval helmet, eerily presages the world of *Hard to Be a God*.

The general runs a hospital, where he acts as a ringleader, with other characters scurrying to perform his commands, no matter how ludicrous. However, as the general's physical and psychological breakdowns reveal, any sense of control is illusory in the final month of the Stalin era. German shows us a society that is, at best, teetering on the brink of a nervous breakdown. Gravity itself is undermined, and each character is caught in a freefall. When a woman catches sight of a man she loves, her briefcase flies open, and ping pong balls tumble out. Instead of a retort, another snaps her necklace so that the pearls cascade onto the table.

In the title sequence, the adolescent protagonist, Alesha (Mikhail Dementyev), mimics the general, his dad, by spitting manfully at the mirror, but this somehow topples the wash basin at the far end of the room and he panics. Alesha is a frequent victim of antigravity – he is held upside down by bullies and booby-trapped so that flour cascades over his half-naked body.

Gravity is not the only constant to be upended in this world. The general opens a door during a dinner party to reveal stark daylight and brings a long-dead trout back to life with a single command. Cause and effect have also become disjointed. Sound effects, such as a whistle, the twang of a ukulele, and the sound of a ring being flicked into the air continuously recur, in and out of contexts. This lack of clear causation reflects the horror of an era in which "The question of whether you are guilty is decided by the fact of your arrest."[10]

9 - Tony Wood, 'Time Unfrozen – The Films of Aleksei German' in *New Left Review 7*. (Web. Jan-Feb, 2001).
10 - Jonathan Brent and Vladimir Naumov, *Stalin's Last Crime – The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors, 1948-1953.* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003). 333.

The film begins and ends with a clownish stoker, Fedia Aramyshev (Aleksandr Bashirov), AKA Condom, who remains buoyant through his arrest and imprisonment, though neither he nor we can fathom his crime. The stoker's optimism outlives Stalin, but only just. Released from the gulag, armed with a new hat and some English, the character protests some unjust treatment, and receives a thorough beating. Stalin is dead, and to be assaulted again for reasons he can't understand is too much for the stoker. Like each of our primary characters before him, the stoker erupts violently then collapses, sobbing "What did I do? All my life, they beat me, all my life!" This phrase recurs pointedly in *Hard to Be a God*, in a dying man's final wheezes.

A futile search for the cause of trauma forms the structure of *Khrustalyov, My Car!* We see the world through adult Alesha's memories of his childhood in the spring of 1953. The goal is to piece together the causes of his father's disappearance. "Father's name didn't appear among those arrested or killed", our adult narrator explains, so with no clear evidence, he resorts to invention. We follow the general throughout the ordeals he endures after leaving his family.

The imaginative quality of the film gives it some of its most fantastic sequences, including the general's flight through the back corridors of the Kremlin, where a senseless, mercenary character called Death lurks among mannequins dressed in doctors' uniforms and gas masks, and dusty busts of former leaders.

Khrustalyov contains the elements expected of a film set in the late Stalin era, including random beatings by government thugs, relocations, deportations, a rural gulag, persecution, informing, spying, and an opulent Kremlin contrasted with overcrowded and decrepit communal apartments. However, these elements lack the sentimental glaze contained even in black comedies, such as *The Death of Stalin* (2017). German preferred immediacy to moralisation, planting us in the middle of the action and forcing us to rely on our powers of interpretation. In his words, "I wanted to be *in* history, and not above it."[11] As voyeurs in the narrator's memories, we catch contextual details as they arise organically, by observing and inferring.

Historical references are abundant, even in the film's first 15 minutes, but they are obscured by everyday minutia. In cloaking these references, German gives *Khrustalyov* the elastic quality of speculative fiction. A person with no knowledge of the Stalin era will feel that they have come close to experiencing the degradation, surveillance, and entrapment.

The primary reference concerns the Doctors' Plot, a state-sponsored conspiracy in which high-ranking doctors, many of them Jewish, were charged with planning to bring down the

11 - Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). 213.

government by assassinating members of Stalin's inner circle. Stalin developed the spectre of the treasonous Jewish doctor during the purges of the 1930s, and, after the war, incorporated it into a far-reaching campaign to eradicate intellectuals, foreigners, so-called Jewish nationalists, and members of the security service whom he deemed unreliable.

The selection of the Doctors' Plot as a vehicle with which to navigatethe effects of entrenched communist totalitarianism was well-considered. Jonathan Brent and Vladimir P. Naumov, the authors of an exhaustive investigation of the conspiracy, explained: "Tracing the evolution of the Doctors' Plot takes us into the inner life of this inverted world, where most previous norms of political, religious, and social life had been discredited [and] rational thought itself was subject to the dictates of the state."[12]

When General Klenski learns that a Jewish doctor working under him is to be deported, he suspects that his own arrest is imminent. Members of his family are Jewish, and the general's fears are confounded when he discovers a man who could be his twin hidden in his own hospital. This man is even convinced that he is the real Yuri Klenski. At the time, the state commonly employed body doubles to give the correct confessions at show trials.

A third blow falls when a Jewish foreigner arrives on the general's doorstep, supposedly carrying a letter from the general's sister abroad. The general throws his guest out, realising that this is an attempt to entrap him with charges of conspiring with foreign powers and Jewish nationalists.

The general escapes the Kremlin and the storyline splits. In his father's absence, Alesha and his mother are relocated to a squalid communal apartment. Meanwhile, the general visits his son's schoolteacher, and agrees to impregnate her in exchange for assistance. We never see the General Klenski's betrayal or arrest, which could be too upsetting for our narrator to imagine.

However, Alesha does construct ordeals that explain his father's unravelling and ultimate disappearance. He does this mimetically, using material from his own experience. In the film's first half, we saw Alesha humiliated in a schoolyard fight, after which his father slapped him in front of everyone. In the film's second half, the general is similarly humiliated when a gang of boys close to Alesha's age attack him in a snowy prison yard.

Alesha imagines a rape, which reduces his father to an animalistic state, giving it choreography that mirrors an encounter Alesha had with his cousins. Alesha and his father are initially

12 - Op. cit. Brent, Naumov. 5.

distracted by a circus-like performance, then knocked to the ground and stripped from the waist down. In the aftermath of the rape, the general clings and crawls, frightened and defensive with wads of bandaging around the site of his trauma. It is as though, in sympathy or revenge, Alesha explains his father's abandonment of his family by regressing him developmentally.

Alesha has one more appearance and disappearance to explain. We see government agents collect and attempt to rehabilitate the general in a rural sanatorium, while lists of names to be implicated in the Doctors' Plot are passed around. Ultimately, the general must minister to a dying Stalin, who reeks and soils himself, foams at the mouth, and ultimately dies, flopping like a fish.

The scene is grotesque but factual.[13] German filmed the scene on location in the Kuntsevo Dacha, and he never strays far from Svetlana Alliluyeva's account of her father's death. German also took the name of his film from Alliluyeva's memoir.[14]

Plague is a common metaphor for Stalin's system of government. In the words of Soviet political cartoonist Boris Yefimov, "It was efficient. If somebody heard you tell a joke, or someone was just out for revenge, he would denounce the other person as unreliable and the person was arrested immediately. But they also took the informer. It was like the plague spreading all over the country, a general plague of terror."[15] In *Khrustalyov*, this plague is manifested visually. The film is saturated with illness, from the schoolteacher's sinusitis to Lavrentiy Beria's fever. Those in high places are particularly vulnerable, and it makes sense that the source of contagion, the most physically degraded character, is Stalin himself.

The general's illness involves an explosive phlegmy cough, and he punctuates dialogue with sniffles and snorts. In the earlier films, we see noses drip and characters cough in response to immediate or remembered state-sanctioned violence. It is as though German is equating this violence with the invasive pathogens that mucus flushes from the body. In these films, totalitarianism is an encroaching threat, appearing in isolated outbursts. In *Khrustalyov*, the government's hold is inextricable – it has invaded the body.

German visualises the intrusive qualities of Stalin's government in various ways. For example, when preparing to escape, the general listens to reporting on his own actions, then takes a pair of scissors and snips an invisible cord above his head, cutting off the transmission. In 1951, two years before *Khrustalyov* was set, there were 10 million paid and unpaid informants in the

13 - Op. cit. Hoberman.
14 - Svetlana Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters to a Friend.* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2016). 8.
15 - *Stalin: Inside the Terror.* Dir. Tony Bulley. (TV, 2003).

USSR, which had a population of roughly 180 million.[16] The relentlessness of the surveillance is pronounced – characters glance into the camera nervously and with suspicion, and even every sex scene is overheard or observed.

When privacy and intimacy cease to exist, and misinterpretation can be fatal, language loses its function. Traditional attempts to communicate become tangled, in the difference between a nation and a people or the spelling of a surname. The general, drunk and desperate to explain his fears, uses metaphors that others can't or won't unpack. His mother pads from room to room, speaking in quoted poetry and is largely ignored.

When referring to state activities, characters stick to sounds or gestures. Two agents betray a spy by blowing raspberries, and a third explains that Alesha's family will be dispersed by bunching his fingertips and blowing them apart. "Dzing!", "bom bom bom", and "brrrr!" refer to execution in *Khrustalyov* and recur, emphasised, in *Hard to Be a God*.

The viewer's ability to observe and interpret is continually blocked, as though Alesha's memories have been redacted. In a rare attempt at exposition, he starts to explain: "My cousins are Jews, but we're Russians. Their parents were exiled to the north…" but a servant quickly intervenes and places a cushion over the camera. Later, as we gaze around a cocktail party, another servant appears, barring our vision and hearing by whisking eggs directly under the camera.

Of course, seeing too much can have dire consequences. When the general appeals for help as a fugitive, he interrupts himself to warn, "Blink, blink, it's better if you do". Stalin demanded total "vigilance" in the ordinary citizen. This involved surveillance and informing, but also that each person carefully infers and performs the will of the government, whether or not they had received orders. According to Brent and Naumov, vigilance required that "All played roles in a drama without explicit stage directions or directives."[17]

Nikita Khrushchev remembered, "Stalin's version of vigilance turned our world into an insane asylum in which everyone was encouraged to search for nonexistent facts about everyone else".[18] In *Khrustalyov*, the feel of the asylum is pervasive. Elderly patients and nurses weave in and out of an elegant dinner party, and the definition of spaces seems to blur and morph, as though the environment has a dissociative identity.

16 - Op. cit. Brent, Naumov. 91.
17 - Op. cit. Brent, Naumov. 270.
18 - Op. cit. Brent, Naumov.245.

The general is a surgeon who "operated on open skulls", and we visit his hospital, where he and the patients both display disruptive, slap-happy behaviour that might read as isolated psychosis in a different film. In *Khrustalyov*, however, madness is collective. The general's rape takes place in the back of a champagne truck, which, by clown car logic, is roomy enough for 15 prisoners to stand in. Two distract the general with a grotesque tumbling act while others tackle him, penetrating him orally and anally. In a nightmarish dissolution of boundaries, everyone except the general becomes aroused, and what began as hazing becomes an orgy.

Back in Moscow, contact with the state spurs psychological breakdowns among the general's family and servants. Alesha and his mother have been relocated to a chaotic, claustrophobic, communal apartment. Realising that hers is the only family without a toilet seat, the mother slowly erupts. In a superb performance, Nina Ruslanova runs us through much of German's palette of madness. She is at first operatic and violent, then gregarious and nonsensical, matching the tone of the flat's other inhabitants, before she dumps a full tub of laundry over her head and collapses.

The general's second and final breakdown takes place in the same apartment, upon his release from prison. Someone hands him a drink, telling him to forget, but his old coping mechanism has become intolerable, and the general seems to explode, spraying the liquor, falling into a closet and sobbing, pushing his son away.

In German's films, children are like litmus strips, reflecting the extent of the totalitarian grasp. In *My Friend Ivan Lapshin*, scouts recite Party slogans. In *Trial on the Road* and *Twenty Days Without War*, boys are soldiers or work overtime in a munitions factory. Alesha is privileged as the son of a famous general, but he suffers psychologically as well as physically. It is implied that Alesha is sexually abused by the house informant: "We saw what you were doing with Paulina", one cousin says, as both tackle him to the ground and expose his penis. Shortly after this, he is roped into informing. A government agent tells Alesha that he must report any sign of his father's return, to protect himself and his mother. Catching sight of his father one day in the park sends Alesha into a tailspin of indecision, and he is the only child in German's oeuvre to suffer a breakdown.

Like most of German's breakdowns, Alesha's is animalistic. We leave him searching for his father's body in the wreckage of a crash. Unable to find it, he stares at us and emits a frustrated bark. Our final narration from the adult Alesha is drowned out by a baby animal's desperate mews. The general's devolution is a response to his rape. Nonverbal and feral, he scuttles,

sniffing the ground and lapping water from a hole in the snow. As a doctor diagnoses, "He stares like a wolf".

German's protagonists have each displayed bestial qualities immediately before or after committing a violent act. However, the transformation is temporary. Each is redeemed because they have sacrificed their humanity on behalf of the community.

In *Trial on the Road*, our protagonist must prove himself by performing a heroic act "so that others can witness it." In *Khrustalyov, My Car!* witnesses are everywhere, but the sense of community has been corroded, and heroism exists only on the government's terms. The general refuses to intervene on behalf of a Jewish colleague because, as he puts it, "I have 17 officers in my clinic with a punim". He escapes, knowing that it will endanger his family, though they may have fared worse if he had been arrested as a conspirator in the Doctors' Plot.

The general's real departure from German's prior protagonists is his reliance on the privilege of his rank. He brushes off medical and official complaints by commanding them away, and he assumes, correctly, that his status will ensure his eventual rescue from prison. Perhaps because he relies on the power of the state in this way, the general is never redeemed. Instead, he brutalises a stranger on a train, re-enacting the cause of his own undoing. Ironically, the train is bringing prisoners home to Moscow, a happy ending he couldn't endure.

In his final vision of the father who abandoned him, Alesha shows us a grunting shell of a man, who is permanently drunk, barely audible, and who takes pleasure in senseless cruelty. Alesha leaves him with some trappings of his former life. We leave the general as the ringleader again, entertaining adoring onlookers on the roof of a moving train. Performing a final trick, the general seems to be conquering gravity, but he has lost the ballast needed to resist the effects of Stalin's "inverted world".

Brass bands usually appear at the end of German's films, signalling that the menace of state propaganda persists, much in the way that horror films herald sequels by showing us that the monster has somehow survived. At the end of *Khrustalyov*, a brass band celebrates the release of prisoners from a gulag. The prisoners are optimistic, but the conductor has an elongated putty nose and a sinister plastered grin.

Greg Dolgopolov writes that *Khrustalyov* was "one of the most disturbing Russian films of all time".[19] If this is true, it is because of the film's relentless fusion of the comic, the grotesque,

19 - Greg Dolgopolov, *1998: Khrustalyov, My Car! (Aleksei German)* in Senses of Cinema. (Web. Dec, 2017).

and the tragic. As *Khrustalyov* continues, the brutality grows more visceral, the degradation more overt, and the emotional and physical pain more poignant, but the queasy humour maintains its hold.

It's upsetting that the rapist's inability to orgasm, for example, is *successfully* played for laughs. The film is funny when we wish it weren't, and our laughter implicates us in this world without empathy. German didn't believe in a passive viewing experience. He regularly removes sound, freezes images, adds colour, and omits key plot points to keep us engaged and questioning. When asked why he shot in black and white, German responded, "A black and white image forces your brain to add colour. Therefore, the less colour used in the film, the better".

Tim Harte suggests that by overwhelming and confounding our vision and hearing, German forces the audience to rely on other means of interpreting cinema.[20] Harte proposes that, by peppering the film with cues for smell, German is invoking the sense tied closest to memory as an invitation for viewers to incorporate personal experience.

German also teases and frustrates our desire for information. Despite the voiceover narration, we receive minimal exposition. Half a film may pass before we learn lead characters' names and can figure out their relationships. This forces us to gather evidence slowly, watching carefully for clues, forming and reforming judgments based on individual actions.

The director must have known that few would expect or welcome such a demanding experience. He cannot have been surprised when *Life is Beautiful* (*La vita è bella,* 1997), a conventional film in which a father and son use the power of play to combat anti-Semitic persecution in a mid-century dictatorship, won the Grand Prix at Cannes the same year *Khrustalyov* met with jeers and walkouts.

So, why did German demand such a high level of engagement and endurance? What was the goal of his uniquely immersive approach to cinema? What exactly was he asking of us?

Frustrated by inaudible dialogue, some Russian critics complained that they needed a subtitled print of *Khrustalyov*, that they felt "locked in an 'information prison' like the characters themselves."[21] This was the point. German drops us in the middle of the action so that we come as close as possible to experiencing what the characters are going through.

20 - Tim Harte, 'Stalinism's Sights and Smells in the Films of Aleksei German, Sr' in *Russian History through the Senses: From 1700 to the Present.* Ed. Matthew P. Romaniello, Tricia Starks. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 22 Sep, 2016). 267–281.
21 - Op. cit. Condee. 206.

In an interview about *Hard to Be a God*, German said, "We issued a challenge with *Trial on the Road* too, politically: 'Have pity for a Russian man.'"[22] In *Trial on the Road* and *Twenty Days Without War*, the camera hovers at shoulder height, peering anxiously and lovingly into faces. We take detours to follow extras, lingering long enough for each to convey the good-natured humour, concern, or stoicism with which they met the challenges of war. The goal, initially, was to humanise the people of the past, inspire empathy, and draw parallels. With his immersive style, German broke cinematic conventions in an effort to put us in their shoes.

As time wore on, the subject shifted from life in wartime to life under a totalitarian government, and German's demands on the audience grew more insistent. Characters look directly at us, they speak to us and get in our faces. In *Khrustalyov, My Car!* and *Hard to Be a God*, German grabs our attention and never lets us relax, forcing us to confront our position within the political metaphor.

In comparing the conditions of *Hard to Be a God* with those of Putin's Russia, German said, "The same thievery goes on, everyone is corrupt, universities are broken apart for wood [...] Politically, this film is a warning. For all of us."[23] Of *Khrustalyov*, German explained: "The artist is a canary in a mine shaft. [...] We didn't really want to depict 1953, we wanted to show what Russians are like."[24] German's political challenges have never been overlooked in his home country. His first attempt at making *Hard to Be a God* was shut down for being too relevant to Soviet troops invading Czechoslovakia in 1968.[25]

Before *Khrustalyov*, each of the director's films had been shelved prior to release, for 15 years in the case of *Trial on the Road*, which was defended as accurate but condemned as anti-heroic. In each film, he claimed to tell "the truth of the trench" by meticulously recreating real conditions from photographs, first-person accounts, and street footage.[26]

From the earliest days, foreign audiences have not picked up on German's political challenges. When German covertly screened *Trial on the Road* for some American directors, they, "liked some of the pictures [...] But they were not interested in what was said there; which words were used; what kind of problems were being discussed."[27]

22 - Op. cit. Dolin, Arrow Academy. 28.
23 - Op. cit. Dolin, Arrow Academy. 17.
24 - Op. cit. Hoberman. 199.
25 - Op. cit. Dolin, Arrow Academy. 15.
26 - Op. cit. Holloway.
27 - Ibid.

At the time of writing, alleged Russian agents continue to make headlines in the American and British press, which also accuses the Russian government of attempting to assassinate another dissenter in exile. In Ukraine, journalist Arkady Babchenko recently faked his own death in an effort to avoid similar assassination. Concerns over surveillance and foreign political interference are pervasive, while explicit and proto-fascist movements are ascendant in the US and Europe. Upswells in xenophobia influence western policy, and vice-versa, while mass deportations are ongoing.[28]

In the US, nearly 2.3 million[29] people are incarcerated, a figure uncomfortably close to the 2.5 million imprisoned in gulags at the time of Stalin's death.[30] The comparison between Donald Trump and Stalin was propagated by a politician in Trump's own party, in response to the President describing the press as the "enemy of the people".[31]

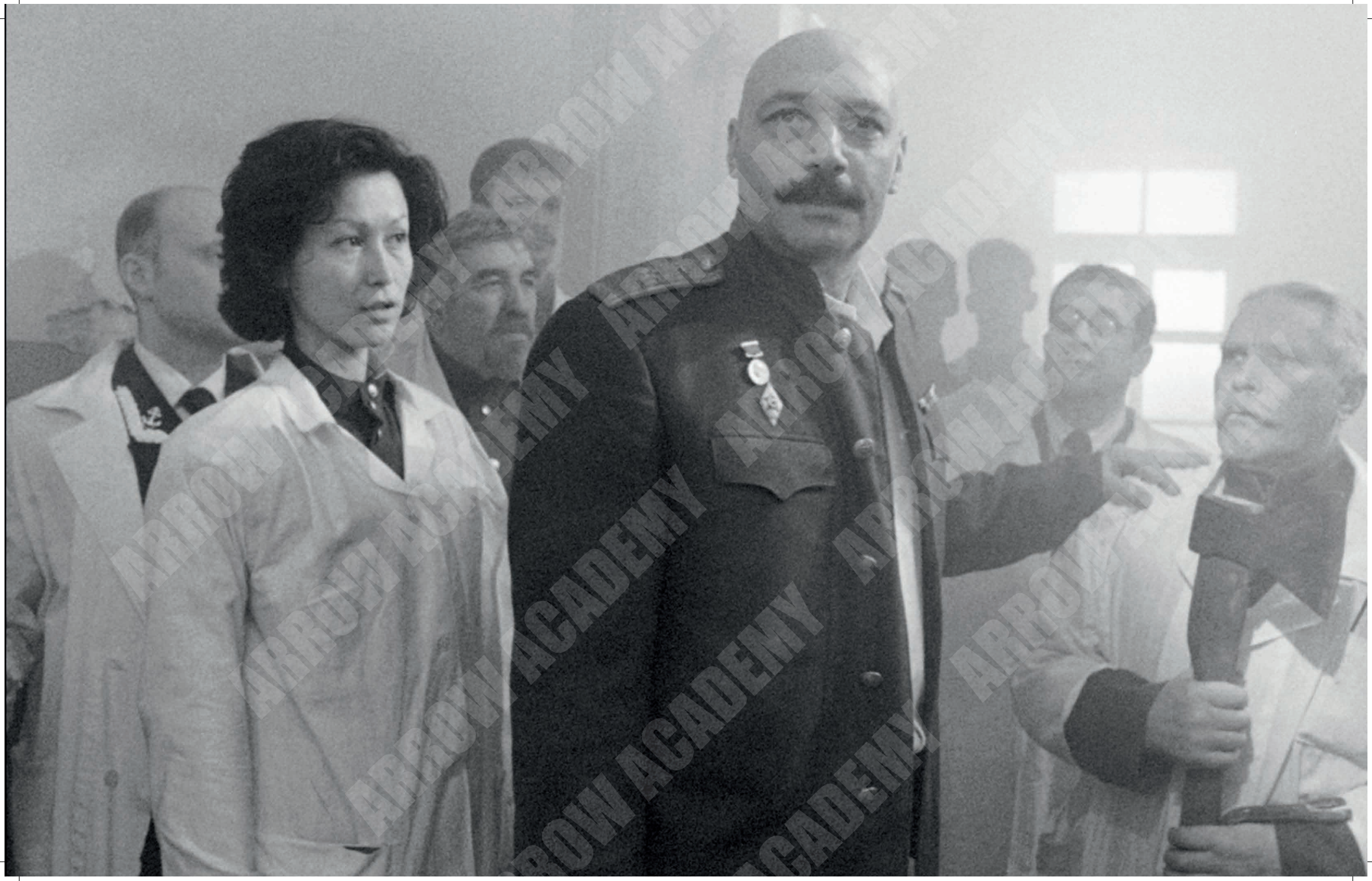
A 2018 investigation into the Trump presidency depicts a "White House in constant chaos, with backstabbing and factional fighting that was not only witnessed but reportedly encouraged by Trump", Al Jazeera reported, recalling two concise descriptions of Stalin's style of government: "The conspiratorial system can succeed only in times of crisis", and "Stalin had absolute power [...] because he succeeded in finding means to delegitimize the state".

This state seems increasingly fractured and distracted by suspicion, high-profile trials, dramatic dismissals, alleged conspiracies by the press, and charges of treasonous disloyalty. Even the Vice President Mike Pence is not immune from accusations of plotting to seize control of the government. Describing what she terms "the conspiracy trap", Russian-American journalist and author Masha Gessen proposes that conspiracies are attractive because they offer a simplified explanation of the past, present, and future, and that conspiracies are dangerous because this easy explanation becomes a substitute for reality.

A replacement of reality seems a priority for the government responsible for "alternative facts" and the contention that "truth isn't truth." In a July 2018 speech, the president assured the Veterans of Foreign Wars national convention, "Just remember, what you are seeing and what you are reading is not what's happening."

The dangers of seeing and interpreting and the unravelling effects of engagement with a state-sponsored reality may seem familiar to western audiences viewing *Khrustalyov, My Car!*

28 - 'Figures at a Glance', *UNHCR.* (Web. Jun, 2018) 8
29 - Peter Wagner, Wendy Sawyer, 'Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2018'. *Prison Policy Initiative.* (Web. 14 Mar, 2018).
30 - Masha Gessen, 'Inside the Gulags of the Soviet Union'. *Literary Hub.* (Web. 20 Mar, 2018).
31 - Tom Embury-Dennis, 'Donald Trump's "repulsive" attacks on media likened to Josef Stalin by Republican senator'. *Independent.* (Web. 16 Jan, 2018).



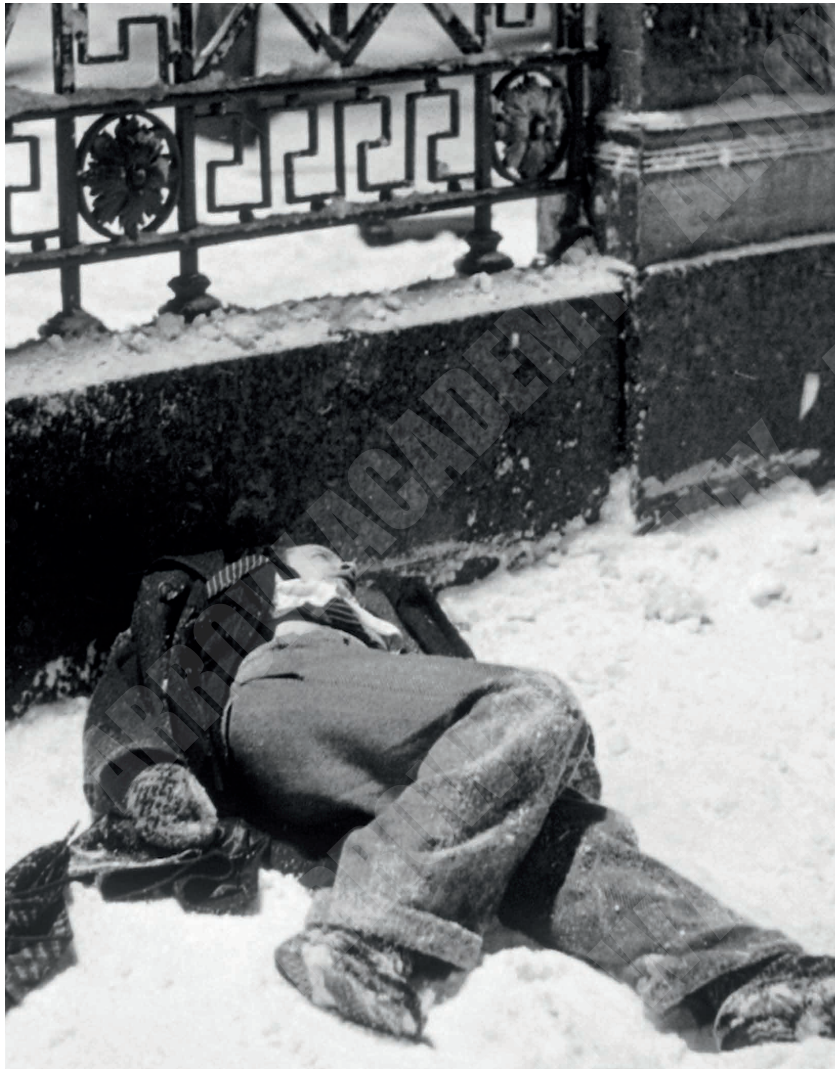
Recent screenings of *Hard to Be a God* sold out in London and New York. Not, apparently, because these audiences were intrigued by a political metaphor, but because these viewers are treating the film as a test of endurance, as Travis Crawford has pointed out.

Khrustalyov does not provide the shock value of *Hard to Be a God*. It is too chimeric, too much fun, as dynamic as it is disturbing, slippery with sweat and effervescent. For anyone who appreciated the artistry and the uncompromising immersive experience of *Hard to Be a God*, *Khrustalyov* couples those qualities with pathos and humour.

It also rewards repeated viewings. Once we know to leave our expectations of convention at the door, we can sit back and admire the shimmering, inky compositions, the irrepressible, surreal rhythm of sounds, words, and objects. The film is always elusive and provocative, but after the first viewing, the political danger and pathos grows more distinct...

If we are willing to take up German's challenge and attempt to read the film as a political metaphor, what then? When a conspiratorial state promotes a corrupting substitute for reality, what would resistance look like? For examples, we need only seek out German's earlier work.

Gianna D'Emilio is especially interested in films from Eastern Europe, France, and Britain. Recently, she contributed two chapters to* Lost Girls: The Phantasmagorical Cinema of Jean Rollin (Spectacular Optical). *She is based in the UK.



KHRUSTALYOV, THE KEYS TO MY CAR!

by Joël Chapron

Disorientated by complicated, unusual sights, saturated with objects and bizarre phrases, both critics and spectators in Cannes, including Russians, gave Aleksei German's fifth feature film a very frosty reception. Expectations were high, generated by the many problems and changes of circumstance that had drawn out production for almost 10 years.

While dazzled by the jaw-dropping staging, the exceptional tracking shots and long takes, audiences were disappointed nonetheless by a story that was incomprehensible. They were confused by the overabundance of props within the camera frame, disturbed by the attitudes of certain characters and, ultimately, lost in the labyrinth of dialogue that the subtitles rendered only even more confusing.

No doubt, Aleksei German, as he said himself, overestimated the awareness westerners have of this crucial period of Soviet history. He thought the Doctors' Plot – the last great trial of Stalinism against the Jewish mandarins of Soviet medicine accused of Zionism – was part of a widely shared cultural heritage. German thought that [Lavrentiy] Beria (Mulid Makoev), as the great mastermind of the last purges and executions, would be famous enough to be instantly recognisable (even if he would at first be presented on screen without his famous pince-nez). In short, he felt that the history of his country in those dark times was known to everyone and that it was enough for him to make just a few hints so that everyone could remember from the outset his own years as a schoolboy. This is the only mistake that the unclassifiable director acknowledges, convinced that time will prove him right, as it did with his previous works…

No doubt German is mistaken on several points. First, today many Russians are completely unaware of the Doctors' Plot, nor do they recognise Beria in photos, and remain oblivious to many of the aspects of history that have disappeared from everyday life. (Westerners are not alone in this respect.) What is more, with regards to this last point, the moving images that the cinema has offered since its creation have forged in the minds of spectators a representation – one that, while incomplete, is nevertheless shared widely by civilizations, countries and cultures. However unrealistic a film may be, it nevertheless conveys clichéd images which the human mind refers to when it evokes other countries. In the specific case of the cinema of Eastern European countries, in accordance to the wishes of Party, imagery that failed to adhere to Communist ideology did not go unnoticed. Soviet films have never been faithful to reality. Never were images more diverted from their truth: they did not have to be true, they only needed to be plausible. This is the inherent paradox of German's work: as he neglects to capture contemporary life (the action in all of his films spans between 1917 and 1953), he recreates a historical reality down to the smallest details by drawing extensively on archival documentaries. A film concerned with the installation of gutters on old buildings is not concerned with, for example, the street in the background, so it does not falsify it – it is simply of no concern.

But this "true" reality is not recognised by anyone, since all of us, eastern and western, only have access to a "probable" reality. This is the finesse of ideology: even the Soviets were overwhelmingly convinced that the miserable reality in which most of them lived was just the sad lot of only a few people, since what they saw on the big screen was a reality that they were told was true, widespread, and would soon be theirs. Never, in Soviet films, were people warming themselves in winter in front of makeshift braziers (their presence in *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* [*Moy drug Ivan Lapshin*, 1985] was one of the reasons for its banning). On the other hand, the authenticity of German's re-enactment of Tashkent during World War Two in *Twenty Days Without War* (*Dvadtsat dney bez voyny*, German's third feature, made in 1977) meant that it was used as a documentary film during a period of reform by the regime, because there was no reliable, authentic documentary film covering this period. In *Khrustalyov, My Car!* (*Khrustalyov, mashinu!*, 1998), the "true" reality is brought to its paroxysm. Paradoxically, there are many, even if it is an abuse of the term, who qualify the film as "surrealist". But there is no Soviet film that is more realistic than this one.

The definition of a "true" 50-year-old reality can only be judged here by images that have been both falsified and rehearsed, because even visual memory favours a reconstructed truth over a proven authenticity. Certainly, this non-recognition of "true" reality is not the only

handicap to an understanding of history. But the story is, unfortunately, very straightforward and, ultimately, somewhat typical in these not-so-distant times. Klensky (Yuri Tsurilo), an outstanding neurosurgeon and general, has everything: a reputation (even celebrity); a hospital that he runs; a wife and child; and, vitally in the Soviet Union, the advantages conferred upon him by his position: a huge apartment, servants, a chauffeur, a car… In short, everything westerners have at their disposal.

We are not, however, in the west. All these things do not belong to him, because private property does not exist and money is nothing. He enjoys all of this only through the will of one man, Stalin, who has the final say in the life and death of his subjects. Stalin alone can hoist them up to the top or humiliate them by casting them into the abyss; removing them the next day, or the day before, reigning unchallenged over 300 million slaves.

Klensky knows all of that. Doubtless he believes that his elevated position allows him to safely house two Jewish sisters whose parents have been arrested and who are forbidden from staying in the capital. Perhaps he thinks that the friendliness he still shows towards Dr. Weinstein in his hospital, or that the critics of the regime which his mother-in-law entertains, will never be reproached. No doubt he does not imagine for a moment that his own son, though brought up to in tandem with the regime's ideology, could betray him. In short, he thinks that the great terror would not fall on him. On March 1st, 1953, however, Klensky's destiny changes.

Little by little, he realises that the vice he did not want to believe in tightens around him. We alone see the poor heating engineer being arrested for attempting to steal the radiator cap of a Studebaker that, unfortunately for him, was occupied by four men of the MGB (the precursor of the KGB) guarding the general's building. The fate of this man, for very different reasons, will soon resemble that of Klensky. In a corner of his hospital, the latter discovers a lookalike that is preparing to become Klensky: adopting his behaviour and shaven head. (Klensky will teach his double by challenging him to drink hot tea his own way: drowned in cognac and downed in one before chewing a slice of lemon.) "No life expectancy!", he tells him afterwards.

Back home, Klensky's descent into hell accelerates: the naivety, even greater than his own, of a Swedish journalist stationed in Moscow who tries to give Klensky news of his sister exiled in Stockholm, seals the fate of the general. The reporter does not notice that he is being followed; he thinks that his foreign status gives him immunity and, therefore, refuses to listen to the warnings of MGB agents. When he dies, Klensky leaves his house and goes to a birthday party, where he tries to recount a children's tale in which the shadow of a man comes to life and becomes his double. Klensky then makes fun of the death of a gerontologist, who dies at 52

after promising "you know who" – the only allusion to Stalin in the dialogue – that he would live to the age of 120. He leaves for the hospital in the middle of the night.

Klensky knows that he is being watched, so he takes money, runs away, and finds refuge in the house of one of his patients, an obese old girl who is in love with him and forces him to have sex with her. He goes hitch-hiking on a truck, and ends up in a village on the outskirts of Moscow, where hatred, misery and rape reign. It is there, during the cold morning of March 2nd, that Klensky is caught by the MGB. Meanwhile, a search of Klensky's Moscow apartment is in full swing. The servants tear each other apart, and the grandmother confesses to only one article of the Criminal Code – "spreading rumours about an imminent famine" – but vigorously denies the accusation of "agitation". Meanwhile, his wife and son are evicted and relocated a few hundred meters away, in a communal apartment shared with other remnants of families belonging to the intelligentsia beheaded by Stalin.

Meanwhile, from truck to truck, Klensky is deported and suffers, with his guards bystanding, a humiliating rape. After being on the run for little over 24 hours, he reaches the bottom of the abyss.

Suddenly, a car appears in the countryside: Klensky is taken to a house, where he is made presentable, the lookalike returns his clothes and he is taken to a dacha that is under high surveillance. A large man whom Klensky does not recognise (Beria) brings him before a dying man who is no longer recognisable (Stalin, played by Ali Misirov) and demands that he save him. But it's too late. Stalin dies. Beria comes out of the room, hailing his driver, "Khrustalyov, my car!" – the first words, legend has it, of a new era. Klensky returns to Moscow, finds his family in the communal apartment, and, before interrupting him, is denounced by his son. Finally, he disappears on the evening of March 2nd, 1953.

It will be another three days before the new leaders of the country announce the news of the death of the Supreme Leader (officially, he died on March 5th). It's still more time that it took for Klensky to see his world turned upside down. In less than 48 hours, this man's path resembles the outline of a square root: a vertiginous descent, an ascent that is no less steep, then a departure towards somewhere else.

For Klensky, his previous life is over. We find him again in the spring of 1963 working on a train, and infer that he now makes his living through schemes and petty theft. It is here that, for the first time, Klensky will cross the path of the poor heating engineer, released after 10 years in a camp for an escapade he did not even have time to carry out.

The 10 years that Aleksei German worked on his film probably deprived him of a more objective, external perspective; this sadly linear story is rendered incomprehensible by the saturation of props in all the scenes which Klensky passes through. His apartment is crumbling under the weight of the antiques and the presents that his patients give him all day long. The room in the communal apartment where he finds refuge for the night appears to have come straight out of a science fiction film: one nine metre square space, in which someone lives with their old infirm mother, whose laundry dries on clothes lines crossing the room, and a teacher tries, on the same table, to eat meals, while preparing lessons and dying curtains. The same goes for the other communal apartment featured, which is packed with promiscuous activity while the harsh winter does not permit any escape into the street.

The problem is that, once again, the attention to detail and the desire for veracity creates a handicap for the viewer, already dumbstruck by the on-screen antics. The gestures, the behaviour, the mimicry, the whole expression of the body, except language itself, differs from one person to the next. It is the basis of semiology. But the spectator, even one who is a great connoisseur of the history of the Soviet Union, is not necessarily a good semiologist. The multiplication of physical gestures makes these Russians misleadingly appear like semi-savages, even though their characteristics are exactly what Nikita Mikhalkov would reflect in *Burnt by the Sun* (*Utomlyonnye solntsem*, 1994).

The film, therefore, suffers from excess: a surfeit of prominent unidentified objects (each apartment tenant has their own toilet seat in the main corridor), and obscure references unknown to the vast majority of viewers. Few will understand that only a foreigner would put on galoshes to walk in the thick snow, or go out into the sub-zero winter with an umbrella. Few today will know that an umbrella with an automatic opening mechanism definitively designates it as of non-Soviet origin. Who will remember all of this from 30 years ago? Who will understand that the sign reading "Soviet Champagne" written on the side of the MGB van carrying Klensky is a reference to Solzhenitsyn's account of the transfer of political prisoners? And then there is the dialogue.

Indeed, even Russian-speakers would fail to identify the Swedish journalist at first because he is voiced by a Baltic actor who interprets his role without any accent. An additional problem facing non-Russian speakers is connected to the subtitles – without the subtitles being in any way at fault. The aspiration, once again, towards truth has led Aleksei German to develop a soundtrack in which most of the words are spoken at the same time and in the same tone, but also delivered with the same strength. The dominant sound, the broken sentences, the

monologues interspersed with other monologues, can only be rendered by the dubbing of every actor. The non-Russian speaking viewer is often left unable to identify the character who is speaking through the subtitle under his or her eyes (sometimes even the Russian-speaking viewer is at a loss).

Everything, however, cannot be subtitled. Decisions about what to subtitle must be made, in agreement with the director. This has actually been done, but there is an overabundance of subtitles. In fact, instead of helping the viewer to find their way through the maze of densely saturated images, some of the subtitles are superfluous to the linear comprehension of the narrative and might confuse non-Russian speakers, as they hang onto linguistic and culturally-specific references, diverting them away from the narrative thrust. This is the limit of subtitling: the text on-screen is only a guide for the viewer's semiological understanding of the film. Conversely, any background dialogue that is not subtitled is rejected beyond the limits of misunderstanding and becomes an incomprehensible piece of decor. Subtitling ultimately annihilates, because it forces the attention of the viewer towards one of several differing meanings specified by the director.

Once this unclassifiable and disturbing work is beyond the comprehension of the spectator, it, by definition, fails. It fails because, to be understood, it cannot exist by itself. It requires explanations, comments and guides, without which, though profoundly impressive, it becomes a useless exercise of style – which the film is in no way. Admittedly, the repeated glances towards the camera (a device which German had already used a lot in *My Friend Ivan Lapshin*) to challenge the spectator become tiring. Meanwhile, magnificent shots of roads in front of vehicles lose their force through repetition.

In spite of everything, however, from the narrative to the staging; the hallucinatory decor to the black and white vestige of a cinema that has never been seen before, it has everything for the film buff. While it is fictional, it is also autobiographical: Aleksei German is the son of the famous Soviet writer Yuri German, whom Stalin welcomed at his table and bestowed with all the advantages of Klensky. Yuri, believing that, one day, disgrace and horrors would fall down upon his family, asked his wife and his son to pack their bags, before they spent an entire night waiting for their arrest. But the Great Terror did not visit them. Forty years later, Aleksei decided to write the rest of this story: what would have happened to them if…

Joël Chapron's article was originally published in* Revue Russe *n°23, 2003. Pages 77-82.

CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS

It's arguable that we don't need to follow the narrative because the film communicates so intensely through its images. Shot in starkly contrasted black-and-white, *Khrustalyov* has a density of detail and side incident rarely seen in cinema since Fellini (German once identified *Amarcord* [1973] as a key influence). Intricately choreographed takes unwind at length, often deploying masses of extras who come on to perform a piece of business then promptly vanish to dizzying effect. Klensky's apartment is animated by a constant traffic of soup tureens and foxes heads, people leaping out of cupboards and peering out of doorways, with sundry explosions and showers further to impede our view.

[…] All this would make *Khrustalyov* a hard sell even if the current mood of the market was not violently opposed to anything smacking of auteur waywardness. The film is not just a problem for westerners either – it seems that Russian critics are every bit as nonplussed. German was reputedly so upset by its Cannes reception that he withdrew the film from the Sochi festival for further editing. I'm told, however, that the uncut Cannes version is the one Polygram will release in France.

It would be a shame if British audiences never had the chance to see *Khrustalyov*. It's not a bad film, not even just a disappointing or failed one. This is a genuine film maudit – damned by its own ambition, excessive energies and over richness of conception. It may not be easy to watch, but if you're prepared to lose yourself in German's wildly discordant music, you can't deny the smack of genuine cinematic madness.

Jonathan Romney, *Sight and Sound*, November 1998

Winter is never-ending in Aleksei German's impenetrable film *Khrustalyov, My Car!*, a nearly two-and-a-half hour absurdist nightmare of life in the Soviet Union during the final days of Stalin's rule. Snow falls in almost every scene of this starkly grim, black-and-white movie, which follows the triumph, fall from grace and hasty rehabilitation of a hulking Red Army general and brain surgeon named Yuri Klensky [sic] (Yuri Tsurilo). Processions of black government vehicles are forever materializing like ominous phantoms through the curtains of snow that drift over a dilapidated town decorated with gleaming white statues of the beady-eyed, moustached Soviet dictator.

In this land of horrors everything that isn't white (the snow, the statues, the characters' breath, the clouds of steam and smoke rising from ash cans) is inky black. The soundtrack is studded with harsh, grating whistles and screams, the dialogue is fragmentary and hysterically agitated. In the scenes of Yuri at home with his large family, everyone runs around in circles shouting at once like lunatics in a mental hospital. When they're not yelling, they're spitting, coughing, smoking and drinking cognac out of mugs, pretending it is tea.

Before he is arrested in an anti-Semitic purge and shipped off to the gulag, Yuri rules the roost like a miniature Stalin. He has a string of mistresses. And when he visits the local hospital his staff follow him around him [sic] like terrified minions.

The ugliest moment in a film that portrays human beings as stinking phlegmatic beasts comes while Yuri is being transported to the gulag. In the back of the truck, his trousers are ripped off, and he is assaulted anally with the handle of a shovel.

Khrustalyov, My Car! is a nightmare all right. But it is one virtually impossible to decipher. Its characters aren't properly identified, its politics not elucidated, its geography vague. The best way to appreciate the film is to sit back and view it as a Boschean vision of hell. Not everyone will have the patience to stay until the end, when Yuri is brought to Stalin's deathbed in a futile attempt to save the dictator's life. The movie, which is being shown this evening as part of the New York Film Festival, is an endurance test.

Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*, 28 September 1998

This is a disquieting, ambitious and delirious two-part movie that reveals a society jerked from feudal repression to the horrors of Communist dictatorship and latter-day mafia control.

[…] Nobody is saying that so much Slavic madness is easy to sit through, and many walked out of the screening here. But German also shows haunting shots of silent Moscow streets, banked in snow, ominously moving cars, and closes in on a family saga that, with not one likeable character, holds a numbing fascination.

Joan Dupont, *International Herald Tribune*, undated

Leningrad director Aleksei German, one of the most singular talents to emerge from the Soviet Union in the 70s, whose 1982 portrayal of the bleakness of Soviet society, *My Friend Ivan Lapshin*, won him a cult following inside and outside the USSR, returns to the scene after 16 years with the mightily disappointing *Khrustalyov, My Car!*. After attempting to finance the project for more than a decade, German seems to explode with long-repressed ideas like a swollen balloon, spewing forth a cacophony of images, characters and camera pyrotechnics while trying to tell a story that is almost impossible to follow. As admirable as many of the bits and pieces are, the details largely fail to come together or even make much sense to the western viewer. The French-Russian co-production may arouse initial interest on a curious basis, but looks to sink quickly in specialized markets.

[…] There is such a wealth of material here that one can say *Khrustalyov* is truly a film that has everything, including the kitchen sink. But throughout, German shows a lack of control over many of his ideas, largely voiding their meaning. It would take a massive re-edit, and merciless trimming of the first part, to get this anarchic film into some kind of shape for non-Russian audiences.

So many fine thesps cram the screen that it's hard to single out [performances] in what is very much a choral work. Tsurilo carries the main role with unflagging manic energy, yet the General, like the others, is too abstract and symbolic a character to touch emotional chords, whatever befalls him.

Outdoor lensing in the eerie silence of snow-covered city streets is particularly atmospheric. The hectic hand-held camerawork used for the indoor studio scenes is technically astonishing, but despite the inventive shots it becomes very tiring after a while and gives a strangely déjà vu quality, recalling Soviet films from the 70s. In fact, the screenplay everywhere shows its age, taking no apparent inspiration from recent political and cultural developments.

Deborah Young, *Variety*, 22 May 1988

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Khrustalyov, My Car! has been exclusively restored by Arrow Films and is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.37:1 with stereo sound.

The original 35mm fine grain positive was scanned in 2K resolution on an Arriscan at Eclair, Paris. The film was graded and restored at Dragon DI, Wales. Picture grading was completed on a Pablo Rio system and restoration was completed using a combination of PFClean and Revival software.

Restoration supervised by James White, Arrow Films

Eclair
Pierre Boustouller, Karine Grebet

Dragon DI
Mylene Bradford, Paul Wright, Owain Morgan, Khristian Hawkes

All original materials used in this restoration were made available by Métis Films.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by James Blackford
Executive Producers Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni
Technical Producer James White
QC Manager Nora Mehenni
QC Alan Simmons
Production Assistant Nick Mastrini
Blu-ray Authoring Fidelity in Motion
Subtitling The Engine House Media Services
Artist Andrzej Klimowski
Design Obviously Creative

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Marc Bence, Daniel Bird, Jonathan Brent, Gianna D'Emilio, Guy Séligmann, Eugénie Zvonkine