

Foreign film in Poland, 1964–1975: selection, import and audience. An introduction

ABSTRACT. Klejsa Konrad, *Foreign film in Poland, 1964–1975: selection, import and audience. An introduction*. “Images” vol. XXXII, no. 41. Poznań 2022. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. Pp. 79–98. ISSN 1731-450X. DOI 10.14746/i.2022.41.05.

The topic of this article is part of the broader research project on film distribution in the People’s Republic of Poland. An important base for this text is the archival resources of the Film Polski Export and Import Company, established in 1964, the year therefore chosen as the starting point of the analysis. The point of departure is 1975, when important changes in the film import volume occurred. The article comprises of sections dedicated, respectively, to pre-selection of feature films, new releases and films in circulation. The data on the number of released titles show that in almost the entire period under study, the total number of foreign films from other ‘people’s republics’ was lower in any given calendar year than the number of films from capitalist states. However, the fact that more films from communist countries were imported to Poland did not mean that the former had larger audiences and generated greater revenues.

KEYWORDS: Polish culture after 1945, film import, film distribution in the Soviet bloc, cinema programming

The topic of this article is part of the broader research field of film distribution policy in the People’s Republic of Poland.[1] Although it also includes issues such as censorship and repertoire programming, as well as promotion in the cinemas themselves, the former will only be hinted at here, while the latter will be omitted, as it deserves to be addressed elsewhere. It is also not difficult to imagine an article on a similar topic, even based on the same sources, which would tackle other dimensions of film distribution such as economics (some figures in this study relate to nationwide attendance figures) or foreign policy.[2]

The latter perspective is worth emphasizing insofar as an important base for this text is provided by the archival resources of the state-run institution Film Polski Export i Import Filmów (hereafter: FP), established in January 1964.[3] Thus, matters of foreign exchange

[1] E. Gębicka, *Sieć kin i rozpowszechnianie filmów*, [in:] *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Film, kinematografia*, ed. E. Zajiček, Warszawa 1994; Z. Chrzanowski, *Rozpowszechnianie filmów*, [in:] *Kinematografia polska w XXV-leciu PRL*, Warszawa 1969.

[2] In a valuable work published recently, it is discussed in relation to selected issues of export and cultural diplomacy. See J. Szczutkowska, *Zagranicz-*

na polityka kinematograficzna PRL w latach 70. XX wieku, Bydgoszcz 2021.

[3] In 1985, the institution was transformed into a company Film Polski Eksport i Import Filmów, which existed until 1993. Later, the company turned into an entity called Film Polski – Instytucja Filmowa, which in 2000 was transformed into Film Polski – Agencja Promocji, an institution dissolved

in the field of films were excluded from the monopoly of the Film Rental Office (CWF), which was part of the Supreme Board of Cinema Affairs (NZK), supervised by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts. While the year of the FP's establishment opens the timeframe for the investigations undertaken in this study, their end point is related to another transformation of the organization of Polish film culture pertaining to the practice of film distribution. In September 1974, the CWF and its twin educational film rental company *Filmos* were merged into a single Film Distribution Office, which was a prelude to an even greater reform: the merger of all institutions dealing with distribution and exploitation (including cinemas) into a single institution, starting from January 1976. Therefore, the year 1975 is a kind of "transition" year, also important because of the changes in the film import structure, which will be mentioned in this article.

In this article, the broadcast of foreign films by Polish Television will only be mentioned in the context of the activity of the FP. Although this company also supplied foreign films (as well as series) to television, the latter was also able to purchase titles directly from other television producers. Another issue worth discussing in the future is the competition between cinema chains and television, as it sometimes happened (in the 1960s) that the latter released foreign films before they were released in cinemas.

The way to the screen

To understand the rest of the argument, it is important to grasp the difference between purchased films, new releases and films in circulation. Before the first of these categories can be discussed, however, another must be introduced: the "pre-selection" stage, which was complex in itself and related mainly to the activities of the CWF and its subordinate Film Repertoire Council (FRR) – an advisory body appointed to recommend foreign films for purchase.^[4] The list of films recommended by FRR was forwarded by the CWF to the FP, which handled the conclusion of commercial agreements. The vast majority of the titles purchased were then released in cinemas after being approved by officials of the Main Office for Control of Press, Publication and Performances (GUKPPiW). The nationwide repertoire (films distributed through the year) was built by new releases (foreign and domestic), as well as foreign films that had premiered earlier. For films from Western countries, the license period was usually five years, although sometimes films whose distribution rights in Poland had expired were re-released [Table 1].

by the Act on Cinematography of 2005. Throughout its existence, *Film Polski* performed tasks related to the promotion of Polish film abroad (until 1985, it also had a monopoly on the import of cinema films).

[4] Further research on the mechanism for selecting films for the television schedule needs to be undertaken; the preliminary findings allow one to con-

clude that *Telewizja Polska* had its own commission responsible for qualifying films. So far, it has not been possible to establish when it was set up, but in relation to the period I am interested in, it should be said that the members of the Film Repertoire Council were also people connected with television (Witalis Jankowski and Jacek Fuksiewicz).

Table 1. Number of foreign feature films released in Polish cinemas, 1964–1975

YEAR	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	TOTAL RELEASED
No of foreign feature films released in PL	166	173	170	172	166	164	162	165	161	159	177	171	2006
USSR	30	34	26	30	26	32	28	24	26	26	29	35	346
Czechoslovakia	14	19	17	16	12	9	12	9	13	14	14	12	161
Hungary	5	10	10	9	11	9	12	12	10	11	8	11	118
Yugoslavia	9	8	7	10	12	8	9	8	7	8	7	7	100
East Germany	8	5	5	8	5	10	3	9	7	6	5	12	83
Romania	4	3	5	2	7	4	4	8	5	6	10	7	65
Bulgaria	3	2	5	4	6	4	3	4	6	3	6	6	52
Cuba	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	1	12
North Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5
Vietnam	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
France	28	19	22	26	25	26	26	19	24	22	22	20	279
USA	18	28	30	29	22	13	18	21	20	21	18	25	263
Italy	16	19	14	8	17	10	15	18	16	14	19	12	178
Great Britain	15	10	7	12	9	21	10	15	10	12	12	8	141
Japan	3	3	7	3	3	6	3	7	6	6	4	2	53
West Germany	3	3	4	4	5	1	2	3	3	2	1	2	33
Sweden	2	2	5	1	1	4	5	2	1	1	4	3	31
Spain	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	4	17
Denmark	2	1	1	1	0	2	4	0	1	0	2	0	14
Mexico	2	0	2	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	12
Brasil	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Canada	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Switzerland	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Other (total 1 or 2 per country)	2	0	2	3	0	3	3	1	2	0	7	2	25
No of titles from People's Democracies	74	84	75	81	79	77	73	77	75	77	83	91	946
No of titles from capitalist countries	92	89	95	91	87	87	89	88	86	82	94	80	1060

Source: Grzegorz Balski, Konrad Klejsa, <www.ogladanewprl.uni.lodz.pl>, accessed: 10.05.2022. In the case of co-productions, the country of the main producing company was the criterion.

Due to the specific situation of Poland (a country subordinated to the geo-strategic interests of the Soviet Union at the time) the country of origin was an important criterion for the selection of films that could be shown on screen. The division into capitalist and socialist countries was applied by the cinematography of the People's Poland from the very beginning of its existence.[5] During this period, this criterion was used by all institutions mentioned in this article. The data in their tabular lists and annual reports was divided into groups: those concerning capitalist countries (in practice, this also included "third world" countries, as well as those belonging to the "bloc of non-aligned countries," with the exception of Yugoslavia), and so-called "people's democracy" countries (this Orwellian term was meant to refer to the dictatorship of the communist party). In the latter pool, separate treatment was given to films produced by the USSR on one hand, and by other "people's democracies" on the other. In the latter case, the percentage lists sometimes concerned only foreign films, while at other times, they also included domestic (Polish) productions.

The data on the number of released titles show that in almost the entire period of my interest, the total number of foreign films from

[5] See K. Klejsa, „Świat, który przewyżczamy i pozostawiamy za sobą”. *Import, rozpowszechnianie i widownia filmów z krajów kapitalistycznych w Polsce*

Ludowej w latach 1949–1956 w świetle badań archiwalnych, „Kwartalnik Filmowy” 2019, no. 108.

People's Democracies was lower in any given calendar year than the number of films from the capitalist countries.[6] The exception was 1975, when more films from the USSR and the GDR were released than in the previous years, and slightly fewer French, Italian and British films. This trend of the majority of films from the communist countries and fewer from the capitalist countries would continue almost until the end of the People's Republic of Poland (up to and including 1988), and is an additional argument in favour of recognising 1975 as the turning point.[7]

The reports of the FP further presented in part of the material refer to films purchased, the number of which is not consistent with the number of premiere films in a given year. From purchase to premiere, a film had to go through a long process: dubbing or subtitling (translation was done by Film Translation Studio in Warsaw) and prints processing (some of them were purchased abroad and some were made in Poland at the Lodz Film Print Production Works [ŁZWKF], which will be mentioned in the last part of the article).

Obviously, new releases constituted only a part of the total number of films in circulation. Very few lists presenting statistical figures for the latter group have survived in the archives (see Table 2). However, these do actually determine what the repertoire in Polish cinemas looked like (although in the provinces, where there were hardly any premiere cinemas, it was significantly different than in the cities). The specifics of the particular cinemas were also important. In particular, the right (or lack thereof) to use the films of the so-called "special pool," mainly auteur films, was reserved for art house cinemas (*kina studyjne*) and Film Discussion Clubs (which could also borrow copies from the National Film Archive) [Table 2].

Several conclusions emerge from a comparison of films in the repertory in 1965 and 1975. First of all, foreign films accounted for about 80 percent of all annual program items. With regard to individual countries or geopolitical blocs, the percentage advantage of titles obviously did not translate into viewership. An oversupply of Soviet films and those from other Eastern Bloc countries was evident: they accounted for a significant percentage of films in distribution but attracted a smaller part of the audience than the films from the capitalist countries. Domestic productions were the exception: in 1975, when they accounted for just over a quarter of the titles in distribution, they were seen by more than a third of all viewers.

A report on international cooperation from 1969 states: "the quantitative plan of film titles envisages the purchase of 80 films each

[6] One can compare this fact with film import statistics of other Soviet bloc countries, where the volume of feature films from the West was usually more limited. For the German Democratic Republic see R. Stott, *Crossing the Wall, The Western Feature Film Import in East Germany*, Bern 2012.

[7] Furthermore, this recognition constitutes an argument questioning the often-quoted opinion in journalism about the 1970s Poland allegedly being more "open to the West." This view is certainly more relevant to the first half of the decade.

Table 2. Feature films in theatre circulation in 1965 and 1975

Country of production		1965				1975			
		Feature films in circulation		Audience		Feature films in circulation		Audience	
		Titles	%	million	%	Titles	%	million	%
1	Poland	240	17.5	38	22.5	504	27.2	52.1	36
2	USSR	376	27.5	16.3	9.7	449	24.2	13.2	9
3	Czechoslovakia	98	7.1	5.4	3.2	73	3.9	n/a	n/a
4	Hungary	42	3	2.8	1.7	93	5	n/a	n/a
5	Yugoslavia	39	2.9	3.9	2.3	75	4	n/a	n/a
6	East Germany	37	2.7	2.7	1.6	70	3.8	n/a	n/a
7	Romania	17	1.2	1.3	0.8	58	3.1	n/a	n/a
8	Bulgaria	13	1	1.1	0.7	46	2.5	n/a	n/a
9	China	5	0.4	0.3	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
10	Other Com-C*	n/a [8]		n/a	n/a	19	1.2	n/a	n/a
11	TOTAL: other ComC (3-10)	259	18.9	17.5	10.4	434	23.4	12.2	9
12	TOTAL ComC (1+2+11)	878*	64	71.8	42.6	1387	75	77.5	54
13	France	125	9.1	23.5	13.9	119	6.4	n/a	n/a
14	USA	108	7.9	36.2	21.5	111	6	n/a	n/a
15	United Kingdom	81	5.9	15.6	9.2	66	3.5	n/a	n/a
16	Italy	74	5.4	11.7	6.9	78	4.2	n/a	n/a
17	West Germany	25	1.8	5.5	3.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
18	Japan	18	1	1	0.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
19	Sweden	17	1	0.4	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	Mexico	8	0.5	0.7	0.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
21	Spain	7	0.5	0.3	0.2	12	0.6	n/a	n/a
22	Denmark	6	-	0.4	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
23	Austria	5	-	0.3	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
24	Argentina	4	-	0.3	0.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
25	Other CapC	n/a [13]	n/a	n/a	n/a	79	4.2	n/a	n/a
26	Other (ComC + CapC)*	21		0.8	0.5	[98]*		n/a	n/a
27	TOTAL CapC	489*	36	95.9	56.9	465	25	66	46
28	TOTAL	1366	100	168.5	100	1852	100	143.5	100

* Data for 1965 included position "Other" (with no differentiation whether they were ComC or CapC), which was not mentioned for 1975 (when CapC and ComC were treated separately).

Source: AAN, collection: KC PZPR, file XVIII-285, p. 182. CapC – capitalist countries. ComC – communist countries. n/a – data unavailable.

year from CapC [capitalist countries] and ComC [communist countries] (a total of 160 titles), which, together with 20 to 25 Polish-produced films, allows for the introduction of about 180 films a year.” [8] One could say that this sentence contains a “golden formula” for building up the central premiere repertoire in Polish cinemas in the period roughly between 1960 and 1975. Its stability is somewhat surprising, considering the fact that both the demographic structure of the Polish audience and the cinema network changed over these 15 years. In practice, as it has already been stated, slightly fewer films were imported from communist countries, and slightly more from capitalist countries (including Third World countries). However, if Polish feature films are included in the ComC pool, the balance was still in favour of the Eastern Bloc states.

Selection

Decisions on which films to recommend for purchase were made by the director of the CWF, following the recommendations of the FRR. Its duties and structure were regulated by order of the president of the NZK (and at the same time, the deputy secretary of state in the Ministry of Culture and Art), who also appointed the members of the Council, although at the request of the director of the CWF. The latter could also invite people from outside the Council to evaluate specific films. [9] In 1964, the FRR had 33 members; in May 1968, 52 members; and in June 1972, 46. [10] In the lists of Council members from 1964–1972 the majority of names are those of film critics, supplemented by a few academic scholars. The sparse presence of filmmakers is noteworthy; other archival documents also allow the conclusion to be drawn that as a rule, they were not involved in matters regarding film distribution. However, it is worth noting that there was always one military officer on the Council, delegated by the Ministry of Defence. [11]

The Presidium played a particularly important role in the work of the FRF. It was dominated by critics (among them Ryszard Koniczek, who was at the same time head of the Department of Culture in the Warsaw Provincial Committee of the PZPR, as well as Jerzy Płażewski, Bolesław Michałek, Lech Pijanowski, Witalis Jankowski from Polish Television and Witold Zalewski, a journalist from the “Kultura” weekly and literary manager of the TOR film unit). In February 1970, a seventh member was co-opted, Benedykt Nosal, an instructor at the Cultural Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (and editor-in-chief of “Ekran”). As Jerzy Płażewski wrote, “the Presidium of

[8] *Działalność kinematografii w zakresie eksportu i importu*. Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych, hereafter: AAN), collection: Central Committee of the Polish Workers’ United Party (Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, hereafter: KC PZPR), LVI-1715, p. 2. A handwritten note on the document: “February 1969,” probably indicating the time of the document’s creation.

[9] Ordinance No. 2 of the Supreme Board of Cinema Affairs of 25 April 1968 (with effect from 1 January). AAN, collection: NZK, file 1.35, pp. 88–89.

[10] AAN, collection: NZK, file 1.34, p. 68–75 and AAN, collection: NZK, file 1.35, p. 267.

[11] AAA, collection: NZK, file 1.35, p. 237.

the Council divided the tasks among themselves in such a way that each of the experts was responsible for a linguistically and geographically specified part of world production.”[12]

The Presidium had a very important task, namely, to accept or correct evaluations made by other members. According to the FRR regulations,[13] films were either recommended (for wide or narrow distribution) or rejected by a majority of votes by the so-called “groups” at screenings in Warsaw or abroad. In addition, other “employees of film institutions” and a representative of the GUKPPiW could be present at the meeting, with the right to participate in the discussion, but without the right to vote. One member of the Council claimed that he usually received information about his “appointment” to the “group” by telephone about a week in advance.[14] Furthermore, information about the screening of a particular film on a given day was sometimes spread by ‘word of mouth’, and not only among members of the Council, which sometimes resulted in the screening room becoming rather crowded.

The group that travelled abroad, on the other hand, consisted of three to five people (chosen both from among the members of the Council and from outside; according to Płażewski’s account, this was usually the translator[15]). This group could also propose a so-called re-qualification, i.e. bringing a screening copy to Warsaw. “Outgoing” meetings of the groups usually took place during film festivals, but not exclusively. The 1965 report reveals that almost from the beginning of this decade, the ‘people’s democracies’ invited the selection committees two or three times a year and presented them with all the films produced in the recent period.[16] The distributors from the capitalist countries, on the other hand, were less and less willing to send screening copies to the FRR as time went by. Alicja Ciężkowska, director of the FP, revealed in an interview in 1975: “We basically have three forms of qualification: on location in Warsaw, at festivals and at special reviews abroad. In our contacts with the cinematographies of socialist countries, we have been using only the last form in recent years. It is also being used more and more widely when qualifying films from other countries. It is certainly the most effective. Between May and December 1974, 21 English and American films were qualified: four at the Cannes and Karlovy Vary festivals, nine in Warsaw and eight at a special screening organized for us last September in London. The average period from qualification to submission of the source material to the CRF was six months for these films, with three to four months for the «London» films and about

[12] J. Płażewski, *Film zagraniczny w Polsce*, [in:] *Film. Kinematografia*, ed. E. Zajiček, Warszawa 1994, p. 340.

[13] *Regulamin FRR przy CWF z 25 kwietnia 1968*, AAN, collection: NZK, file 1.35, pp. 90–93.

[14] Interview with Rafał Marszałek, conducted by Konrad Klejsa, April 7, 2022.

[15] J. Płażewski, *Przywrócić polskim kinom najlepszy repertuar w Europie*, „Ethos. Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawła II KUL” 2010, no. 1(89), p. 219.

[16] *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu Filmów w zakresie rozpowszechniania filmów, 1960–1964*, AAN, collection: NZK, file 10/47, p. 5.

eight months for the «Warsaw» films.”[17] When asked for the reason why a similar pace could not be maintained for qualifying in Warsaw, Ciężkowska replied, “Distributors are reluctant to send copies of well-known or currently successful box office films. And the attractiveness of buying these titles seems obvious to them, as they do not take into consideration our system of qualifying for distribution. [...] Above all, foreign distributors often do not have free copies. The film is running in cinemas and is successful, so it doesn’t pay to stop exploitation in the great cinemas of London’s West End or on the Champs Elysees in Paris. We have to wait until they find a free print.”[18]

The fact that the majority of the FRR were film critics obviously influenced their decisions. In the already quoted document, it is stated: “Such an arrangement, appropriate from the point of view of securing a sound selection of films, cannot fail to have an impact on the professional specificity of reception. Hence the tendency, sometimes criticized by viewers and the distribution apparatus, to positively qualify films dominated by overly formal values or films described as outstanding artistic works, made by critically acclaimed filmmakers (Antonioni, Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard) and representing specifically individual artistic directions of filmmaking.”[19] Not a single document was found in which the evaluation criteria would be formulated *expressis verbis*. Interestingly, what is written explicitly in the internal documents of the CWF is a somewhat more lenient evaluation criteria for films from the “people’s democracies” and the not-always-desirable implications of this. The already-cited analysis reveals: “The Film Repertoire Council generally applies strict eligibility criteria, especially of an artistic nature. It applies them with full consistency in relation to Western films. When evaluating films coming from our bloc, a certain «discount» is sometimes accepted, especially with regard to such films, in which deficiencies of artistic craftsmanship and lower attractiveness are compensated by ideological values. Although there have been many changes for the better in this respect in recent times, one could use as examples the increase in the artistic level of many Soviet films or the clear rise to the top of the world of Czechoslovakian films. Unfortunately, this does not always go hand in hand with the concept of attractiveness for the average mass audience.”[20]

On average, “600–700 films were subject to qualification annually, of which about 200 are positively qualified (on average, about 160 films are purchased each year).”[21] The document does not say anything about the number of films from communist countries. However, it can be assumed that there were slightly more films from capitalist countries in the total pool of qualified films, as other material shows that in this

[17] *Jak się dziś filmami handluje. Rozmowa z Alicją Ciężkowską, dyrektorem przedsiębiorstwa “Film Polski”, “Film” 1975, no. 33, p. 3.*

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[19] *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu...*, p. 6.

[20] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[21] *Ibidem*.

group “the number of screening copies presented to the commission for evaluation varies between 350 and 400 on an annual basis.”[22] This data confirms the Council’s greater selectivity with regard to films from capitalist countries. As Płażewski wrote, “if almost half of Soviet productions were bought, and only a few percent each of American and Italian productions, then the default viewer, even assuming that the levels of these three cinematographies were equal, had a much better chance of coming across a good American or Italian film than a Soviet one.”[23]

These figures can be also considered reliable with regard to the other years within the spectrum of interest of this study. This is proved by a valuable archival resource from the collection of Filmoteka Narodowa, namely, the collection of information materials of the Film Repertoire Council. It includes irregularly issued (monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly) internal bulletins of the FRR. The collection does not contain a full set of these materials. In relation to the subject of this article, the issues from the years 1965–1966 and 1971–1972 were analyzed, as most of the material from this period survived.

Each bulletin is composed according to a similar pattern. The main part of the bulletin consists of lists of titles: recommended full-length titles, rejected full-length titles (in both cases with a breakdown by copy), short films, and similarly, Polish versions of titles of films already purchased and films recommended to be imported for qualification. From the point of view of this article, the most interesting is the last part of each bulletin: “From the current work of the FRR Bureau.” It contains short reports on visits to festivals abroad (including the composition of the delegation and the number of films recommended), various suggestions made by the Council (concerning, for example, age categories or Polish films which, as a rule, the FRR did not deal with), and list of modifications that the Presidium made to the choices of the “groups.” For example, a bulletin from mid-1964 reads, “The Presidium watched the US film *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. After adding the votes of the members of the Presidium, the final result is: 6 votes for, 5 votes against. The film was thus qualified for purchase.”[24] In other words, the “group” rejected the film, the Presidium changed that decision and the film was recommended, but ultimately not released. Three explanations are possible: the director of the CWF did not recommend the film to the FP (Płażewski claims that this never happened[25]), or maybe he did, but the FP did not manage to buy the film, or perhaps the FP managed to buy the film, but the censors did not agree to its distribution.

As evidence shows, the pre-selection mechanism was based in principle on the opinion of the “group,” but at the same time, this

[22] *Działalność kinematografii w zakresie...*, p. 2.

[23] J. Płażewski, *Film zagraniczny w Polsce...*, p. 341.

[24] *Materiały informacyjne FRR za czerwiec–lipiec–sierpień 1964 r.*, Archiwum Filmoteki Narodowej –

Instytutu Audiowizualnego (hereafter: FINA), file A-336, ref. 7, p. 660.

[25] J. Płażewski, *Film zagraniczny w Polsce...*, p. 338.

decision could be challenged by the Presidium of the Council. However, as the FRR was only an advisory body to the CWF, its director could theoretically order a film to be rejected by the Council.[26] In practice, it usually happened that the CWF director submitted to the FP a list of films exceeding the annual import plan.[27] Perhaps (and this cannot be ruled out, although there is no evidence to support this) it was anticipated that some films would still be rejected by the censors. Most probably, however, the qualification “with an upper limit” was due to more prosaic reasons, namely, the lack of funds to purchase all the desired films. As Ciężkowska explained, “These films are the easiest to qualify, but the hardest to buy. Their distributors know that they have a valuable commodity in their hands and do not easily give up the exorbitant price.”[28]

The Deal

With the establishment of Film Polski, CWF lost its prerogatives regarding the trade agreements with foreign distributors. These were taken over by Film Polski. According to its statute, the Ministry of Culture and Art supervised FP in terms of “programming,” while “in terms of foreign trade activities, the company was subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Trade.”[29] The archival resources gathered in the state archive in Milanówek leave no doubt that it was primarily a commercial enterprise, which is evidenced by valuable annual analyses of its activities (with regard to the period in question, a complete set of documents of this kind has survived). The reports contain concise substantive discussions of the actions undertaken by the enterprise in a given year, but above all, they emphasize the economic balance sheet. The “culture and art” component of the reports is negligible (it is limited to indicating a few “particularly important” titles, the acquisition of which FP wanted to highlight).

Film Polski operated in a socialist planned economy, hence in the FP reports, one can read about “five-year plans,” “annual tasks” and “planned indicators”[30] (in relation to imports and exported films and services). The notion of “geographical trading plans” (presumably indicating the balance of trade) also appears in the reports in tables comparing imports and exports from and to individual countries. Comparisons of the number and percentage of films from CapC’s and ComC’s were referred to as “geographical layout.” In the FP annual reports, titles are further broken down by running time, genre and commissioning agent, and since 1967, also include wide-format film [see Table 3]. The data shows that the most “disadvantaged” genre was educational short film.

[26] With regard to the first half of the 1960s, the analysis already cited reads: “In general, films rejected by the FRR are not bought. Over the last few years, there have been only a few exceptions.” *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu...*, p. 8.

[27] *Ibidem*.

[28] *Jak się dziś...*, p. 3.

[29] *Regulamin organizacyjny PEiIF „Film Polski” z 10 października 1966*, AAN, zesp. NZK, sygn. 2.74, k. 11.

[30] *Wstępna ocena działalności „Filmu Polskiego” w roku 1974 i perspektywy na rok 1975*, AAN, zesp. NZK, sygn. 274, k. 65.

The small number of feature films for television coming from socialist countries also needs to be explained: While films from capitalist countries had to be licensed separately for cinema and for television, the cinema license for a film from a people's democracy country generally included permission to show the film on television.^[31]

The reporting requirements were reflected in the day-to-day work of the institution, including its organizational structure. In 1966, three departments were subordinated to the Deputy Director for Trade Affairs: the Socialist Countries Department, the Western European Countries Department (with two separate sections: the Romance Countries Section and the Germanic Countries Section) and the Overseas Countries Department.^[32] In 1973, the structure was changed, with the three departments (no longer including the Romance and Germanic sections) reporting to two deputy directors: Imports, and Exports.^[33] According to a document dated March 1973, the Socialist Countries Department employed five people, the Western European Countries Department nine people and the Overseas Countries Department as many as 10.^[34]

FP operated in the key area of international transactions. It had at its disposal a specific pool of foreign currency allocated by the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers (in the conditions of the PRP economy, this was a scarce commodity) and specific objectives for its "multiplication" (through exports and services). Therefore, it is not surprising (and such a conclusion can be drawn from the very structure of the reports) that the main area of the enterprise's activity was exports, the discussion of which takes up a significant amount of space at the beginning of each report. On the other hand, its "reverse" (i.e., import) was certainly treated with less attention (if not neglected altogether) than both export and the third sphere of activities for which FP was responsible, namely, the so-called film services (provided in Poland in favour of foreign producers). This impression is justified by the very logic of the enterprise: While the funds obtained from exports constituted income, imports were de facto expenses because on the annual balance sheets of FP, the imports were not recorded under the item "expenses." They were booked, like the exports, "in plus," or as goods (films and licenses for their screening) acquired for the benefit of the ordering parties, (i.e. the Ministry of Culture and Arts, to which CWF and Filmos were subordinate) and the Radio and Television Committee. In other words, the "in-plus" accounting of imports resulted from the fact that the expenses for this purpose were "reimbursed" by the "ministries," as the actual "payers" (i.e., the MKIS and the Radio and

[31] The exceptions were "films produced directly by Telewizja Polska and TV stations of other KS. Then the Polish Television makes a direct exchange." *Działalność kinematografii w zakresie...*, p. 2.

[32] AAN, collection NZK, file 2.74, p. 10.

[33] AAN, collection NZK, file 2.74, p. 41.

[34] At the end of 1974, the staffing level in the whole of Film Polski was 82 posts. See *Wstępna ocena działalności "Filmu Polskiego"...*, p. 78.

Television Committee). The division between institutions “reimbursing” purchases was also reflected in FP reporting [see Table 3].

It is worth remembering that these data refer to films purchased by FP and are not necessarily the same as the number of films actually released by CWF in a given year. The negotiations, preparation for the signing of the contract, and finally, the execution of the purchase were also time-consuming. A document from 1969 shows that the average period from the signing of the contract to its execution lasted between six and nine months.^[35] In practice, there were times when the CWF received many films in a single “tranche,” while at other times, during the “dry” months, they had to wait for new films. Not surprisingly, archival documents from time to time contain complaints about the “rhythmicity of deliveries”^[36] (in Poland, the most profitable time for cinemas is autumn, while it happened that in the fourth quarter the CWF was not able to deliver a sufficient number of new releases to premiere cinemas, as it was only towards the end of the year that FP was finalizing a number of transactions^[37]). The second intriguing notion is the “repertory reserve” for CWF, the “securing” of which was treated as one of the tasks of FP.^[38] It was understood as a group of films, probably moderately attractive, qualified “for backup,” which could be “activated” in a situation of repertoire “downtime.” The latter was complained about several times by the CWF, which after the first year of the FP’s functioning had already complained about the overly “bookkeeping” way in which the company operated: “The formal execution of the import plan by «Film Polski» at the end of the year does not really settle anything, apart from the ticking off of the import plan itself. [...] The situation is further aggravated by the fact that, after the split of the company, the CWF management in practice had no influence on the order of execution of the film purchase orders submitted to FP, let alone on the acceleration of the deadline for a transaction concerning a particular film when repertoire policy considerations call for it. [...] Moreover, CWF is not oriented in the execution of foreign exchange plans. Informing occasionally that foreign exchange funds are almost exhausted cannot be, for the purposes of distribution, some kind of general absolution for the import and export company.”^[39]

The accusation that the FP was paying inadequate attention to imports was made by the CWF *expressis verbis*: “CWF may have legitimate concerns that import issues are not sufficiently appreciated by the Polish Film units concerned and that in terms of export incentives, they have become a secondary issue.”^[40] In fact, the plan for the CWF in its essential part (feature films) was not implemented in 1965 and

[35] *Działalność kinematografii w zakresie...*, p. 2.

[36] *Wstępna ocena działalności “Filmu Polskiego”...*, p. 75.

[37] *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu...*, p. 75.

[38] *Wstępna ocena działalności “Filmu Polskiego”...*, p. 80 (“striving to secure the programming reserve of the CRF by bringing in more show copies for qualifying reviews”).

[39] *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu...*, p. 8.

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 12.

Table 3. Structure of film import as reported by Film Polski enterprise in the annual reports, 1965–1969

	Plan 1965	Perfor- mance 1965	Plan 1966	Perfor- mance 1966	Plan 1967	Perfor- mance 1967	Plan 1968	Perfor- mance 1968	Plan 1969	Perfor- mance 1969
<i>Feature films for CWF</i>	160	147	160	160	160	147	160	160	160	160
ComC	n/a	n/a	80	76	80	67	80	80	80	80
CapC	n/a	n/a	80	84	80	80	80	80	80	80
<i>Feature films 70mm</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	3	8	7	8	1
ComC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	3	2	4	n/a	n/a
CapC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	n/a	6	3	8	1
<i>Documetraries for CWF</i>	10	6	12	4	6	2	8	6	5	2
ComC	n/a	n/a	6	2	3	1	3	4	2	-
CapC	n/a	n/a	6	2	3	1	5	2	3	2
<i>Feature films for Film Clubs circuit</i>	12	8	12	12	12	9	12	9	12	6
ComC	n/a	n/a	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
CapC	n/a	n/a	9	10	10	8	10	8	10	5
<i>Short films for CWF</i>	73	52	75	55	80	33	80	39	80	35
ComC	n/a	n/a	42	43	40	19	40	31	40	22
CapC	n/a	n/a	33	12	40	14	40	8	40	13
<i>Short films for FILMOS (schools)</i>	150	107	150	127	135	72	135	39	135	47
ComC	n/a	n/a	80	90	70	55	70	20	70	41
CapC	n/a	n/a	70	37	65	17	65	19	69	6
<i>Feature films for TV</i>	168	284	168	173	252	158	235	202	322	209
ComC	n/a	n/a	40	18	65	7	30	26	40	27
CapC	n/a	n/a	128	155	187	151	205	176	282	182
<i>TV series (episodes)</i>	208	122	n/a	186	n/a	318	n/a	237	n/a	227
ComC	n/a	n/a								
CapC	n/a	n/a	208	186	208	318	182	237	197	227
<i>Short films for TV</i>	110	162	n/a	n/a	180	165	140	168	128	148
ComC	n/a	n/a	85	28	85	84	60	128	60	107
CapC	n/a	n/a	25	47	95	78	80	42	48	41

Source: ADOP, collection: Film Polski – Agencja Promocji, files: 24–29.

1967; an improvement took place from 1968 onwards [Table 3]. As far as capitalist countries were concerned, the situation was particularly bad with regard to feature-length films for television (in 1967–1970, the lack of execution of the plan under this heading was compensated by a greater number of series purchased). This seems to have been caused by a combination of economic and political decisions. One of the staff memos reads: “In 1965, a decision was taken to reduce purchases on the American market in favor of Western European films. Prices on this market are higher than those for American films and show a steady upward trend.”[41]

In its annual reports explaining the failure to meet the import plan, FP often blamed the principals, pointing to the “insufficient quantitative qualification of films by the Repertoire Councils of the Film Rental Office and Filmos.”[42] Although in 1964, FP underlined that “the level of realization of socialist film imports corresponds in principle to the level of orders,”[43] in the very next year, it also pointed to “the still-insufficient pool of films produced by other socialist countries”[44] (in this context, foreign exchange restrictions on imports from Yugoslavia were often mentioned[45]).

Of course, importing films is always an “investment” expense, as it is a necessary stage of providing a service (a film screening), which is supposed to generate revenue (from ticket sales). However, the distribution revenues were credited to the accounts of completely different companies: CWF (and Filmos), as well as provincial cinema managements. The system’s deficiencies caused (as noted by Edward Zajiček) the distribution of films to produce a negative financial result, both in the whole period covered by this study and in its individual years (the difference between sales and own costs amounted to 74.5 million zlotys in 1964, 155.1 million zlotys five years later and 45.7 million zlotys in 1974).[46] At the same time, the same study shows that the cinema companies themselves (in the state network) generated profits until 1969 (the difference in sales and own costs in 1964 was 41.8 million zlotys and 27 million zlotys five years later), and losses after that year (154 million in 1974). On the scale of the entire cinematography, the latter increased dramatically from 1975, when the rental and exhibition enterprises were combined into a single company (a negative balance of 320 million zł in 1975).[47]

[41] The recipients of the memo were informed that the cost of buying an American film at that time was 700–800 dollars, while “the Dino Laurentis company does not want to sell more cheaply than at 1000 dollars per film” (*Notatka służbowa w sprawie płatności dewizowych za filmy do program telewizyjnego*. AAN, collection: KC PZPR, file LVI-1715, k. 50–51).

[42] *Analiza działalności gospodarczej FP za rok 1965*, Archive of Personal and Pensionary Files in Milan-

ówek (Archiwum Dokumentacji Osobowej i Płacowej w Milanówku, hereafter: ADOP), collection: Film Polski – Agencja Promocji, file 24, p. 47.

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 38.

[44] *Analiza działalności gospodarczej FP...*, p. 13.

[45] *Ibidem*.

[46] E. Zajiček, *Polska produkcja filmowa. Problem rentowności*, Katowice 1983, p. 144 (Table IV/6).

[47] *Ibidem* (Table IV/7).

The “golden ratio” of building a national repertoire has already been mentioned (about 80 premiere films from capitalist countries every year, and a little less from socialist countries). In a document from the late 1960s, one can find a clarification of these proportions: “The proportions of purchases from the CapCs in relation to the country of production for the last two years (and this is also the plan for 1969) are as follows: American films, 15 titles; English films, 15 titles; French and Italian films, 35 titles; films from other countries, 15 titles.”[48] Again, the “rule of fifteen” was a rather simplified, general guideline suggesting the “right” proportions of imports. The treatment of French and Italian films together is noteworthy, but not surprising, considering that since the second half of the 1960s the co-productions between these two cinematographies were extremely numerous. In some cases, it is even difficult to establish whether a given film is “more French” or “more Italian.”

In the financial part of the annual reports, FP often pointed out the consequences of the “expiration of the contract for non-dollar payments from the IMG Fund.”[49] This financial mechanism, according to other documents,[50] enabled the purchase of American films for PLN (the difference with respect to the real exchange rate was most probably covered by this fund). Other arguments raised were two-fold in nature, related either to internal difficulties (several times FP formulates a request for an increase in the allocation of foreign currency), or to price increases on foreign markets. Here is an example: “The general inflation in the markets of the capitalist countries, as well as the large purchase of new films, with world publicity, caused a 20% increase in the average annual purchase price of film from the capitalist countries, whereas in 1973, the average license price was \$5550, and last year the average license purchase cost was already \$6735. The general rise in prices in the markets of the capitalist countries has also caused the cost of laboratory processing of film stock to rise. In 1973, the cost of purchasing a set of film materials was between \$6000 and \$8000, while last year the purchase of film materials for one film oscillated between \$6500 and \$14000. In this situation, the only means of lowering purchase prices was to negotiate with foreign suppliers for the rental of source material for purchased films. In 1974, the number of feature films purchased on these terms amounted to 34 titles and contributed to the achievement of considerable free foreign exchange savings amounting to ca. PLN 850.000. Such a rational policy of purchases, which is very profitable in foreign exchange terms, often creates many difficulties in our operational work, as it delays the delivery of films for the CRF, both due to lengthy negotiations and long waiting times for the delivery of film materials.”[51]

[48] *Działalność kinematografii...*, k. 3.

[49] *Analiza działalności gospodarczej FP...*, p. 13.

[50] *Działalność kinematografii...*, pp. 3 and 7. The document shows that the IMG fund was used from

1957, which made it possible to increase the import of American films in the late 1950s.

[51] *Wstępna ocena działalności “Filmu Polskiego”...*, p. 76.

The Prints

The dilemma of whether to order copies abroad or to have them produced domestically (at the ŁZWKF) runs through many archival documents. In 1965, the CWF stated: “it is also not always possible to forgo the purchase of already produced copies even if their quality is not satisfactory. Often, such abandonment leads to the necessity of considerable delays in bringing a given title to the screens.”[52] FP, on the other hand, complained less frequently about copies in terms of deadlines (in this aspect, the dissatisfaction concerned services related to making copies for export), and more often about prices (as in the report cited at the end of the previous paragraph). It was even suggested to consider building a common film print factory for all of the Soviet bloc countries.[53]

A similar idea concerned plans for “mutual lending of film materials (films produced in the West) with socialist countries.”[54] While researching film imports from that period, I have heard numerous rumors about making illegal copies of foreign films in the laboratories of Soviet bloc countries. The story of “the pirates internationale” (or rather, buccaneers, since the alleged procedure was carried out by state institutions), however fascinating, is difficult to verify today. Nevertheless, this quote certainly makes it seem plausible.

The importer’s perspective was different from that of “ordinary viewers.” Such opinions can be formulated on the basis of a feature article published in the weekly “Film” in 1973. The author, hiding under the pseudonym “Puzzled,” complains: “That the colored copies of the film *The Boy Friend* screened in our cinemas resemble laundry that has become stained, I am not surprised. I’m already used to the fact that the colors in «Made in ŁZWKF» resemble washed cloth. We can’t do them, and according to knowledgeable people, we can’t do better on the Orwo-Color tape supplied to us for this purpose. What surprises me is: 1) In bringing the film *The Boy Friend* to our screens, we did not buy finished copies abroad, as is done in many cases. Wouldn’t it be better to have at least half as many copies – decent, Eastman color copies – instead of 23 copies, effectively eliminating all of the film’s elaborate, pampered color effects? 2) Simply defective copies are allowed to be used. At a screening at the Atlantic cinema in Warsaw, blurred ghosts were wandering around the screen. The sharpness was «off» for most of the film, if not in the foreground, then in the background. When I intervened with the staff, I found out that they had been struggling with this film print since the beginning, and nothing could be done...”[55]

There must have been more comments similar to the one quoted above—both concerning the “shortage” of prints and the postulate to

[52] *Analiza działalności Centrali Wynajmu...*, p. 8.

[53] *Analizy działalności gospodarczej FP za 1968/69 rok*, ADOP, collection: Film Polski – Agencja Promocji, file 27, p. 4.

[54] *Wstępna ocena działalności “Filmu Polskiego”...*, p. 81.

[55] *Zdziwiony* (pseud.), *Łyka i łyka*, “Film” 1973, no. 36, p. 2.

buy them abroad – since a few months later, Henryk Olszewski, the new director of the Film Distribution Office, spoke out on both matters. He said: “The production of screen prints is indeed a bottleneck in which many valuable films are imprisoned. Further increasing the capacity of the Łódź film prints factory is of vital importance to us. However, for films with smaller print runs, we try to buy original copies abroad. As a rule, we buy original prints for arthouse cinemas and DKFs. This speeds up the premieres a lot. But we can’t buy all the prints.”[56] This statement implies that copies for films from the “special pool” were produced abroad (“as a rule”); this information is confirmed by the lists published in the “Film Press Service.” At the same time, however, Olszewski declared with a certain degree of irony: “We make many very valuable films available to the clubs before the premiere, such as *Rome*, *Death in Venice*, *Cries and Whispers*, only we increasingly wonder how much longer we will be lending them. Film club screenings often take place on such bad projectors that after ten screenings, instead of being shown on screens, the print has to go to conservation.”[57] It seems, therefore, that the more expensive prints produced abroad were aimed at a more “sophisticated” audience, but at the same time, were used in a chain of cinemas with poorer technical equipment, and thus were exposed to faster wear and tear.

While criticizing the distribution policy adopted by his predecessor, in the interview cited above, Olszewski points to another aspect: “So what if we wanted to reissue *Spartacus* if all the prints were completely destroyed? A mistake was unfortunately made once, and only 23 copies were made for this film (for *Cleopatra* – 50). *Helga* will probably have to be bought anew, because already half of the copies need regeneration, and not enough of them were made.”[58] Although the latter film was not among the films with the largest number of viewers in the first half of the 1970s [Table 4], this was probably due to the number of copies made, as mentioned by director Olszewski. *Helga* was released in only 18 copies, which generated 1,632,362 views over the year.[59] On average, there were 208 viewers at a screening. According to my calculations, only three other foreign films in the first half of the 1970s (*The Godfather*, *Love Story* and the aforementioned *Spartacus*) were more crowded on average.

The cited data shows that the repertoire was significantly differentiated by the technical facilities of cinemas, especially with regard to the projection equipment. In rural areas, the 16mm standard prevailed (the network was still extended in the Stalinist years), and only some films were reduced to the so-called “small gauge.” Data on this subject from “Mały Rocznik Filmowy” [Small Film Annuals] (in the first half

[56] *Przede wszystkim – co? Ale także – gdzie i jak...* Rozmowa z Henrykiem Olszewskim, dyrektorem Centrali Wynajmu Filmów, “Film” 1974, no. 1, p. 6.

[57] Ibidem, p. 7.

[58] Ibidem, p. 6.

[59] Attendance figures for feature films released in 1973 – after one year of screening. “Mały Rocznik Filmowy” 1974, p. 137. *Helga* was ranked 10th in this ranking.

Table 4. Films released in Poland in the period 1970–1974 with the highest audience attendance within one year after the Polish premiere

	Original title / english title	Country of production	Polish release	70 mm	35 mm	16 mm	No. of screenings	No. of audience	Mean audience/ screenings
1	<i>W pustyni i w puszczy / In Desert and Wilderness</i>	Poland	1973		75	60	44721	10559638	237
2	<i>Potop / The Deluge</i>	Poland	1974	5	90	74	45966	9641432	240
3	<i>Hubal / Major Hubal</i>	Poland	1973	3	58	76	35077	6262332	178
4	<i>Nie ma mocnych / Take It Easy</i>	Poland	1974		56	52	30280	6027516	199
5	<i>Love Story</i>	USA	1972		50		25003	5866390	235
6	<i>The Godfather</i>	USA	1974		23		18289	5755178	315
7	<i>Spartacus</i>	USA	1970	2	23		16769	4417568	263
8	<i>La grande Vadrouille / Don't Look Now... We're Being Shot At!</i>	France	1972		51		19979	3836767	192
9	<i>Winnetou und Shatterhand im Tal der Toten / The Valley of Death</i>	West Germany / Yugoslavia / Italy	1971		45		18175	3377075	186
10	<i>Les pétroleuses / Frenchie King</i>	France / Spain / Italy / UK	1974		40	54	18468	3245041	176
11	<i>The Best of Laurel and Hardy</i>	USA	1971		43	50	19979	3227182	162
12	<i>The Professionals</i>	USA	1970	1	33		15445	3132616	203
13	<i>Where Eagles Dare</i>	UK	1972	3	50		16667	3129874	188
14	<i>Return of the Gunfighter</i>	USA	1970		40	50	20015	3079934	154
15	<i>Angélique et le sultan / Angélique and the Sultan</i>	France / West Germany / Italy	1970		35		15227	2847709	187
16	<i>Soldier Blue</i>	USA	1973		45		14543	2799776	193
17	<i>Der Ölprinz / The Oil Prince</i>	West Germany / Yugoslavia	1970		40		15551	2701670	174
18	<i>Kopernik / Copernicus</i>	Poland	1973	3	50	60	16408	2683207	164
19	<i>Unter Geiern / Amongst Vultures</i>	West Germany / Yugoslavia / France / Italy	1970		40		15520	2650393	171
20	<i>100 Rifles</i>	USA	1971		45	50	19408	2614801	135

Source: film listings published in "Small Film Annuals" 1971-1975. In the case of two-part films, the sum of results (for audience as well as for copies) generated by both installments has been given.

of the 1970s) and film descriptions in “Filmowy Serwis Prasowy” [Film Press Services] (in relation to the previous decades) leave no doubt that in the People’s Republic of Poland, the 16mm cinema chain had a significantly different repertoire. Western films were much less frequent there; films of US production were a rarity.

The fact that more films from communist countries than from capitalist countries were imported into Poland did not mean that the former had larger audiences and generated greater revenues. Audience statistics clearly revealed that audiences were more likely to go to films from capitalist countries [Table 5]. Audience data for films from each country are residual [Table 1]. They were not published in the Small Film Annuals, nor have I found them in the archives of the NZK.

Conclusion

Table 5. Audience of Polish, Soviet and American Films in Poland in the mid-1960s

	1964	1966	1968
Poland	77.7 mln = 20.9 %	32 mln = 19.9 %	33.5 mln = 21 %
USA	33.7 mln = 18.7 %	40.7 mln = 25.3 %	36.3 mln = 23.4 %
USRR	24.1 mln = 13.3 %	12.1 mln = 7.5 %	13.5 mln = 9 %

Source: AAN, collection: GUKPPiW, file 3292, p. 151

Interestingly, the issue of the relationship between ‘geopolitical parity’ and viewing figures was of interest to the censors [Table 5], which may mean that they took it into account in their decisions (perhaps aiming to reduce the number of attractive American films). In a document from 1967, the GUKPPiW notes with concern that in the previous year, the audience for American films had surpassed the audience for Polish films.[60] An analogous warning also appears in a document from 1969: the commentary on the data expresses satisfaction that although the number of viewers of Polish films has increased and the number of viewers of American films has decreased, at the same time, it repeats the lament that the latter are still more popular than films of domestic production.[61]

It is difficult to say whether this finding can also be applied to the first half of the 1970s. With the exception of data for 1975 [Table 1], as far as foreign films are concerned, we only have data on the distribution results of the premiere titles within a year of their release [Table 4]. It is clear from these data that in terms of genre, costume dramas enjoyed the greatest popularity, while foreign films were mostly westerns (Hollywood films and European co-productions, including films about Winnetou produced by Arthur Brauner). As far as the “geopolitical” categories are concerned, the list is strikingly dominated by

[60] *Informacja na temat publicznej działalności artystycznej w świetle ingerencji dokonanych przez Departament Widowisk GUKPPiW za okres 1 X 1966 –*

30 IX 1967. AAN, collection: GUKPPiW, file: 3290, pp. 185–186.

[61] AAN, collection: GUKPPiW, file: 3292, p. 151.

films produced in Poland and the USA, which together took thirteen out of twenty positions.[62] This means that the opinion expressed by the protagonist of the Polish cult comedy *Rejs* – “I especially do not go to Polish films” – cannot be related to the actual practices of the Polish audience in the second half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.

Konrad Klejsa’s research on film distribution was made possible through a grant from the National Science Centre, Poland (2016/22/E/HS2/00135).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chrzanowski Z., *Rozpowszechnianie filmów*, [in:] *Kinematografia polska w XXV-leciu PRL*, Warszawa 1969
- Garncarz, J. *Hollywood in Deutschland. Zur Internationalisierung der Kinokultur 1925–1990*, Frankfurt am Main 2013
- Gębicka E., *Sieć kin i rozpowszechnianie filmów*, [in:] *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Film, kinematografia*, ed. E. Zajiček, Warszawa 1994
- Jak się dziś filmami handluje. Rozmowa z Alicją Ciężkowską, dyrektorem przedsiębiorstwa “Film Polski”*, “Film” 1975, no. 33
- Klejsa K., „Świat, który przewyciężamy i pozostawiamy za sobą”. *Import, rozpowszechnianie i widownia filmów z krajów kapitalistycznych w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1949–1956 w świetle badań archiwalnych*, “Kwartalnik Filmowy” 2019, no. 108
- Płażewski J., *Film zagraniczny w Polsce*, [in:] *Film. Kinematografia*, ed. E. Zajiček, Warszawa 1994
- Płażewski J., *Przywrócić polskim kinom najlepszy repertuar w Europie*, „Ethos. Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawła II KUL” 2010, no. 1(89)
- Przed wszystkim – co? Ale także – gdzie i jak... Rozmowa z Henrykiem Olszewskim, dyrektorem Centrali Wynajmu Filmów*, “Film” 1974, no. 1
- Stott R., *Crossing the Wall The Western Feature Film Import in East Germany*, Bern 2012
- Szczutkowska J., *Zagraniczna polityka kinematograficzna PRL w latach 70. XX wieku*, Bydgoszcz 2021
- Zajiček, E. *Polska produkcja filmowa. Problem rentowności*, Katowice 1983
- Zdziwiony (pseud.), *Łyka i łyka*, “Film” 1973, no. 36

[62] Similar findings – with regard to the ‘top 10’ most popular films and the presence in these lists of productions from West Germany and the USA – appear in the commentary on the most popular films

in West Germany in the second half of the 1960s. See J. Garncarz, *Hollywood in Deutschland. Zur Internationalisierung der Kinokultur 1925–1990*, Frankfurt am Main 2013, pp. 191–200.