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showed a distinct preference for the latter. It was some time before the city people who made Soviet films learned how to show village life on the screen.

Another result of the solvency which NEP brought to the Soviet film industry was the transformation of some of the technical intelligentsia, even some who had run away after the October Revolution, into supporters of Soviet policy and, in turn, into beneficiaries of the new cultural policies; this may have been one way to bridge the often-noted 'difference between the ideological tasks of the foreign and the Soviet cinema'. Just before their merger with Mezhrabpom the Russ collective invited several film technicians to return from their voluntary exile. The most important of these was Yakov Protazanov, who had been working in Berlin and Paris since 1917.* One of the first films released by the new Mezhrabpom-Russ was Protazanov's *Aelita*, which though least important technically and socially of all Protazanov's Russian films, received more publicity abroad than any other Soviet film until the international success of *Potemkin*. Its method was fundamentally antique with a new use of stylization that he had brought back from the Berlin and Paris art and theatre world, though he borrowed too from the limited experiments being made at the Moscow Kamerny Theatre at that time. The film as seen today achieves its most memorable moments not from the over-vaunted theatrical settings and costumes of Alexandra Exter and Isaac Rabinovich (more expressive in stills than on the screen), but from the robust comedy performances (upon which Protazanov was so wisely to depend later) of Ilinsky and Batalov, who made his first film appearance in *Aelita*. Protazanov's reappearance in Russian, now Soviet, film history had a deeper effect than shows on the surface. True, he did not help the theorists or the experimentalists, but he did preserve a kind of healthy simple folk-humour in Soviet films for which they are very grateful in this age of sound.

Protazanov's second film of his Soviet period, filmed this winter and released in 1925, was more openly 'agitational'—*His Call*, written by Vera Eri on the theme of the Communist Party's appeal, after Lenin's death, to enlarge its membership. The surprise and contribution of this film was that both the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' seemed credible human beings, reminding the spectators of people they themselves had met in life. *Strike* pointed a way towards a new film form, but while that future was still on its way, *His Call* served the more immediately useful function of showing how the traditional dramatic film could absorb realistic dramas of propaganda intent. Pudovkin learned something from it for his *Mother* and praised it generously.²¹ Less expected praise came from an American visitor already quoted:

'Last summer in the projection-room of the Mezhrabpom-Russ, a Moscow concern operating with mixed capital, half private money and half a state grant invested in the name of the International Labour Defence Society, I saw one of the most impressive pictures of my life.

* In Berlin he made for UFA, *Der Liebe Pielgerfahrt*, and others. In Paris he worked for Yermoliev's new company (*L'Amour et la Loi*, etc.); for Gaumont and Le Film d'Art (Zola's *Pour une nuit d'amour*, *Justice d'abord* [a re-make of his 1917 *Public Prosecutor*] etc.) and for Diane KARENNE *Les ombres qui passent*. The Russ Collective invited Protazanov back to produce *Taraz Bulba*—an unrealized project.

'The film, which with fighting between the little girl was taken the village had fled to went to work in the factory, after many scenes get the treasure. The Bolshevik did the best became, somehow, not a Soviet meeting, to station in the bitter people.'²²

Another from the Gardin, who had hectic days, making elements' in Soviet latter introduced to tion to the Soviet days was Yuri Zhely director without reliable, *Morozko*, and :

Zhelyabuzhsky's *The Station Master*, and an unscrupulous as the film to follow. *The Station Master* then used at the M designer there, to do or sympathetic with actor at the theatre, for it. Much of the rehearsal and an even seen on the faces of stration to all of the

'During the filming of Semyon Vyrin even he stepped from the not yet in make-up gait of a "station- automobile as Moscow official of Nikolai th

* Filmed so recent Mezhrabpom felt obli

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