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**The Kremlin's Program for Patriotic
Education and Russian War Movies (2000-
2010)**

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Abstract

This dissertation considers films to be double-sided mirrors that absorb political and cultural content from one side, with filmmakers filtering and elaborating the content between the two surfaces, and then transmitting the elaborated points to the audience. The elaboration of political content can be performed in an educational and propagandistic way, depicting and supporting specific political ideas. This dissertation analyses the first two programs of a Russian government program, Patriotic Education for Russian Federation Citizens (2001-2005 and 2006-2010) (hereinafter, 'Patriotic Education'), and identifies six political priorities that can be observed and analysed in eleven Russian war movies. It will first be explained how the movies serve as propagandistic and educational tools in the context of Patriotic Education, projecting its political priorities to the audience. Second, it will be explained how a continuity with the Soviet past is displayed in the content of war films and the way they depict some of the elements promoted by Patriotic Education.

Abstrakt

Tato disertační práce uvažuje o filmech, jako o dvoustranných zrcadlech, které absorbují politický a kulturní obsah z jedné strany, kde tvůrci filmů filtrují a rozpracovávají obsah mezi dvěma povrchy a poté přenášející body obecnstvu. Rozpracování politického obsahu může být provedeno ve vzdělávacím a propagandistickém způsobu, jenž líčí a podporuje specifické politické ideje. Tato disertační práce analyzuje první dva programy z ruského vládního programu, vlastenecké výchovy pro ruské federační občany (2001-2005 a 2006-2010) (hereinafter, 'Patriotic Education'), a indentifikuje šest politických priorit, které mohou být pozorovány a analyzovány v jedenácti ruských válečných filmech. Nejdříve bude vysvětleno, jak filmy slouží jako propagandistické a vzdělávací nástroje v rámci

vlastenecké výchovy, promítající její politické priority obecnstvu. Poté bude vysvětleno, jak kontinuita se sovětskou minulostí je zobrazena v rámci válečných filmů a způsob, jakým vykreslují některé z elementů prosazovaných vlasteneckou výchovou.

Keywords: Educational Tool, Film, Kremlin, Patriotic Education, Patriotism, Propaganda, Russian Cinema, Soviet Cinema, War.

Range of thesis: 413.746

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that she compiled this dissertation independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, November 2016

Francesca Mazzali, M.A.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my beloved parents

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Introduction

For Russia, the turn of the millennium that occurred in the year 2000 represented a change in terms of its political agenda and leadership, as Vladimir Putin became acting President of the Russian Federation, following the unexpected resignation of Boris Yeltsin. Putin described his decision to accept the office as not easy to make and ‘a rather heavy load to bear’,¹ but also a great opportunity to work and serve his country at the very highest level.² Presidential elections were held on 26 March 2000. Putin won in the first round with 53% of the vote and then was inaugurated as President on 7 May 2000. The resulting change in Russia’s political discourse and agenda had been discussed by several authors. Putin’s Kremlin decided that measures had to be taken to restore Russia as a great power³ and to reform the situation inside the country. In order to provide measures for solving the problems that Russian society faced following the period from the end of 1980s through the 1990s, a program for patriotic education of Russian Federation citizens during the years 2001-2005 was launched. Hesitating steps in the same direction had been attempted at the end of the 1990s under Yeltsin’s political leadership, but never led anywhere. Under Putin, patriotic education was re-introduced in Russia and was fostered with a widespread political campaign (Blum, 2006). As the name ‘Patriotic Education’ might suggest, Putin’s program is focused on a patriotism that is a spiritual attribute of the individual, one of the most important elements of social consciousness and the foundation of the social and state systems, as well as a moral and spiritual base that allows the system and the people to function and live effectively.⁴ Vital importance is placed on patriotism, because according to Patriotic Education, its revival represents a step toward the revival of Russia itself. It is

¹ From the personal web-page of Vladimir Putin: <http://eng.putin.kremlin.ru/bio>

² Ibid.

³ In the Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Citizens 2001-2005 and in the ‘Concept’ of the year 2003, it is openly stated that the aim is to restore Russia as a great power, nationally and internationally.

⁴ See the Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005.

possible to understand from the ideas expressed in the first program of Patriotic Education that political priorities had changed since the 1990s and that Russia needed a new direction in every aspect.

This dissertation is interested in understanding whether the turn of political events and the new environment have been noticed by Russian film directors and if their films reflect them on the screen, portraying different content, heroes and taking a different approach to some events and concepts, for instance, to patriotism as defined by the Patriotic Education programs. Do the new heroes of the 2000s represent a patriotic model of the citizen, as desired by that program? Has patriotism become a main theme in films and has it been depicted as expected by the program? Russian cinema always had a strong connection to the history of the country and reflected political changes in its contents and aesthetic, from the very first film produced in Russia, in 1908: *Stenka Razin* by Alexander Drankov, which was based on events narrated in a popular folk song; to the first films of the Soviet era, which reflected the revolutionary change in the political regime, to the post-Soviet period after the 1980s, which witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and represented a challenging and difficult period for Russia and its cinema industry in many spheres (economy, politics, culture and society).

Russian cinema suffered an economic crisis in the 1990s, the peak of which was reached in the years 1996 and 1997, when only 28 and 52 films, respectively, were released (Beumers 1999: 3). In 1997-1998 the situation began to change. Projects to rehabilitate the national cinema were launched that successfully fought the video piracy that presented an immense problem for the film industry (Beumers, 1999: 3). However, a complete turn of the corner in financial and economic terms took place in the early 2000s, as the Russian economy boomed.

Aside from these changes, another change was observed in films produced around the year 2000, in regard to the content and aesthetic of movies. This change is

observable in different genres, but most particularly in war films, a category that always held an important place in Russian cinema (Gillespie, 2005; Norris, 2012). In the 1990s, filmmakers tended to present a dark reality of Russia in bleak, black tones, with protagonists who held out no hope for a better future and tried to escape the country's dramatic situation in one way or another. Films tended to present the loss of identity and ideology that marked the country at the collapse of the Soviet Union, as an entire system of values, ideology and identity completely fell apart.

As Birgit Beumers explains, this was referred as to *chernukha*, and it involved not only films, but also literature, the visual arts and music (Beumers, 1999: 1). This way of depicting reality, in particular in the way war was featured, completely changed after 2000 and different content was observed in movies. This new content reminded audiences of patriotism and inherent values, and portrayed a country that was not on the verge of collapse but victorious and strong, where protagonists were not lost, negative characters, but positive figures with values, ideals and a purpose in life. These protagonists were not escaping reality anymore, but lived with bright future prospects. In the particular case of the soldier, this figure was not a marginal person who could not fit into society, but a national hero to be respected. Could it be that these films represented some of the political priorities set forth in the program for Patriotic Education introduced by the Kremlin in the year 2000?

This dissertation explores the contents of a number of Russian war movies to understand whether or not they depict the priorities and ideas contained in the program for Patriotic Education, and how its political priorities actually are featured in films. In doing so, this dissertation aims to understand whether these films serve as educational and propagandistic tools, keeping in mind the difference between those two purposes, which will be explained below in the Introduction.

This research focuses on a number of war movies produced between 2000 and 2011, movies that fall within the time-frame of the first two programs for Patriotic Education that ran in the years 2001-2005 and 2006-2010. The choice of this period of time is dictated by the fact that it represents the first ten years of the new political discourse in Russia under its new leadership, and as well by the fact that studying a third or fourth such program would increase the quantity of data so much that it would be difficult to handle. The study and analysis of further programs for patriotic education, to see how political priorities promoted in the previous ones changed and whether they have been reinforced in film, can be left for future research projects.

Patriotic Education does not represent something new in the political agenda of Russia, as similar programs were introduced in Soviet times under Stalin's leadership (Rapoport, 2009). According to Anatoli Rapoport, the programs launched in Russia under Putin are similar to those of the Soviet era, including their strong military features and some of their political content. In that light, this dissertation aims to discover, in the context of Patriotic Education, whether continuity with the Soviet past exists in terms of film narrative and content, and to understand whether some political ideas have been presented at both times and in similar ways.

Saying 'the Soviet era' might sound rather vague, and it indeed does represent a long era with different leaders and different political approaches. The time span chosen for comparison in this dissertation stretches from the end of the 1930s to the beginning of the 1950s, years marked by the leadership of Stalin. This dissertation absolutely does not intend to compare the leadership of Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Putin, nor does it aim to compare their two programs of patriotic education.

The period of time for cinema during the Soviet era was chosen for two reasons. First, it was under Stalin's government that patriotic education and Soviet patriotism were skilfully used for political and propagandistic ends (Rapoport, 2009).

Second, this time period encompasses the years before, during and after the Great Patriotic War, an event that holds an important place in Russian history, plays a central role in Patriotic Education and that still evokes emotion in the Russian people, representing as it does a unifying experience for Russian citizens. In the programs for Patriotic Education for 2001-2010, the Great Patriotic War is used to foster the programs' goals, to evoke patriotic sentiments in citizens, to educate the younger generation, and to connect past and future generations. Therefore, it was important to select a period of time in Soviet cinema that directly experienced World War II and when patriotic war movies about it were produced. War films, and more generally movies featuring the Great Patriotic War, were made during the entire decade of the 1940s and also at beginning of the 1950s. They were very popular with the public (Beumers, 2009).

The research questions for the present dissertation are first, 'which of the political priorities indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education do Russian war films feature? Do those films depict those political priorities using educational and propagandistic means?' Second, 'in the context of Patriotic Education, is there (dis)continuity in the depiction of political elements?' This dissertation will analyse the first two programs for Patriotic Education for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, identifying the main political priorities observed in films:

- the need to create role models to serve as examples for the people,
- the role of war in educating the people and instilling patriotic feelings,
- the role of heroes who inspire with their heroic acts,
- the importance of serving in the Army and as soldiers and officers,
- the necessity of fostering patriotism as a cardinal value as well as other, different values that all come under the umbrella of Patriotic Education discourse,
- the reintroduction of the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland, and,

- the elaboration of a mission for Russia to return as great power on the national and international levels.

Because of the nature of Patriotic Education, militaristic elements are dominant and assume a central role in the programs, as explained in the discussion below of the 2003 'Concept' and the two programs. Therefore, the genre of war films was chosen for research. This genre is the most well-suited to depicting political discourse and patriotic content, especially given the importance of war films in Russia.

The decision to consider films instead of other art forms is explained by two different reasons. First, a change in aesthetic and content was immediately appreciable in the new movies of the 2000s, different from the movies of the 1990s. Confronting war films from these two different periods gives a perspective on how filmmakers of the 2000's featured the topic of war, portraying soldiers as heroes who saved the Motherland and were awarded for their actions and courage. The country itself is presented differently; it is not bleak, dark and empty, but a place where a purpose in life can be found, where hope for a bright future is possible and where the Motherland takes care of her children.

It is interesting to observe that in the first decade of the 2000s, voices not aligned with this new view and the new way of depicting war were very few, and the number of films that could be categorised as anti-war was much reduced (Kucherenko, 2011). Moreover, the programs for Patriotic Education stressed the importance of producing films and TV series based on patriotic themes and openly called for cinema and movies to contribute to patriotic state propaganda. The first program in particular dedicated great attention to the production of films and on directly involving the cinema and the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation in some of the activities planned in that program.

The programs also mentioned art in terms of literature, that is, the production of books with patriotic content and art exhibitions and competitions. However, it must be said that film as an art form has a different impact on people. Films have an immediate and very direct impact on the audience because they are made up of quick sequences of images, spoken dialogue and music. Film combines images and words and thus emotional aspects can be emphasised more than in a written text. All the senses are involved when watching a movie. Reading a book, for instance, entails a process of thought and consideration of content that is zeroed out in films, due to their fast pace and the fact they are made up of images and sounds. A book or other form of art might offer a chance to create one's own fantasy and viewpoint; media in general and the movies in particular do not give one the same chance.

Because of their nature, which involves all the spectator's senses and negates the process of pondering while watching a film, it is indeed very interesting to study movies in the context of Patriotic Education, as those programs openly call for patriotic propaganda in media. Fostering propaganda strongly connected to the military makes films one of the most suitable means to achieve the ends of the programs. In the context of Patriotic Education, which stresses the importance of educating Russian citizens about patriotism and many other things, films can be useful didactic tools. The message conveyed by a film is instantly absorbed by the audience because the nature of the art form does not leave space for immediate thought and critical consideration.

The Theoretical Approach of the Dissertation

The theoretical approach of this dissertation is to consider films as a double-sided mirror, with potential as tools of education and propaganda. To be a didactic means and a tool of propaganda are different things, and the difference will be explained

below. In the context of Patriotic Education it should be noted that the difference is subtle, especially if the literal text of the programs is taken into consideration. Patriotic Education considers cinema and films to be very useful and important tools of both propaganda and education. As for propaganda, the programs directly mention that media in general and movies in particular should focus upon and feature patriotic themes, fostering the aims of the programs and providing works that instil sentiments of patriotism into Russian citizens.

By instilling deep feelings of patriotism into the people, it hopes to then inspire and promote other related values and sentiments, all falling under the umbrella of Patriotic Education: unconditioned devotion to the Fatherland; willingness to serve it and to serve in the Army; protecting the Motherland; readiness for self-sacrifice if extreme situations call for it; and respecting the law and military and civic duties. To be successful as a propagandistic tool of a political program, content should be positive in tone, without any criticism or disagreement with stated political priorities.

The second, subtler, role of film in the programs for Patriotic Education is in education. This means that a movie should portray content and be directed in such a way as to teach the necessity of understanding the program's content and follow it. It is clear that movies should educate about patriotism and all that is linked to it, thereby instructing the importance of serving the Fatherland and of protecting the Motherland from possible threats, of serving in the Army and of following other civic duties, including behaving like an honest patriot.

In this respect, filmmakers should create protagonists who provide role models to follow, examples to inspire people and to be emulated. This role model should become a hero by performing some specific deeds: serving as soldier and performing his or her duties with honour and courage, sacrificing what is important in his or her life to the Fatherland, protecting the Motherland at any cost, and following orders and

being an example of moral integrity. This is all implied by the context of Patriotic Education, and it is possible to see that when a film educates its audience, it becomes a propagandistic tool by featuring political content in a specific way. This will be observed and explained through analysis of several films and will proceed on the basis of seven common parameters that have been identified in the main political priorities expressed in the two programs for Patriotic Education: the protagonist as role model and hero, the impact of war the soldier-figure, the Fatherland and Motherland, patriotism as a core value, the nature of the enemy and others, and the memory of the past.

What is meant by a double-sided mirror? It means that a film produced by a filmmaker has two surfaces: one which receives and absorbs political contents and ideas, in this case those indicated in the Patriotic Education programs. The film director takes what is expressed in Patriotic Education and decides how to translate it into a movie, in which way political contents are transmitted to the audience.

At this point, a gap is created between the two surfaces, where the movie-maker filters what he or she has received and plans a strategy for depicting it. It is this part that is very important to the goals of this dissertation. It will be through the analysis of eleven war movies produced between 2000 and 2011 that an answer will be found. This gap is the specific moment when a film is turned into either propaganda or a means of education depending on whether it follows the content of the political programs without disagreement, or injects some criticism into the work.

A film can even be turned into nothing in particular, but in the context of Patriotic Education and war movies it is hard to find neutral films. Either they tend to glorify conflict by representing it as a sacrifice and tragedy necessary to defend the country, or they feature it as a meaningless theatre of violence, showing its negative, cruel side and exposing war-crimes and inhuman brutality.

The second face of the mirror is the one that transmits the elaborated contents to the audience through the film itself. This side of the mirror will be analysed in terms of how the elaborated content is portrayed and what elements, images, dialogue and themes are used.

Considering this second side of the mirror, the one projecting contents onto the audience, and considering the potential of films as propagandistic and didactic tools, it is clear that there must be a point in each film where the audience identifies with the protagonist. Only in this way can the educational and also the propagandistic roles of the film be fulfilled. Therefore, the overall approach of this dissertation can be strengthened and completed if we refer to the basic concepts of Psychoanalytical Film Theory, which explain how an audience identifies with the hero of a film (Metz, 1977; Nichols, 1989; Turner, 1999; Hayward, 2000; Hashamova, 2007). However, this dissertation does not take the psychoanalytical approach and methods to analysis of film, because it does not identify with elements drawn from Freud, Jung, or Lacan. The theory of the mirror-stage, widely referenced in film studies, is not the basis for the approach of this dissertation. All that interests us here is the basic concept that the spectator identifies with the protagonist of the movie, which is essential to providing a role model to be followed as an example and to serve as a means of education.

The metaphor of the double-sided mirror used in this dissertation was primarily inspired by an idea articulated by Barry Buzan in 'America in Space: The International Relations of Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica' (2010), wherein he illustrates the concept that 'popular culture can be used as a mirror to reflect on how societies think of themselves' (Buzan, 2010: 1) This dissertation does not focus on how society, in particular Russian society, sees itself, because the present research is not interested in understanding that issue or how it is related to the present political environment. Rather, it is interested in using films as a medium/mirror to reflect how a

certain institution acts and sees itself. In the context of the present dissertation, film acts as a medium that expands upon and projects certain political ideas on the audience, and hence on the citizenry of Russia.

The approach of considering the propagandistic potential of film was inspired by the programs for Patriotic Education, in particular the first one, which directly mentions the use of media and cinema to foster the state's patriotic propaganda. It is also based on what John W. Cones explains in his book *A Study in Motion Picture Propaganda*. Cones explains that movies rarely are produced for entertainment only: 'This book is dedicated to all of those people who foolishly believe that movies are merely entertainment. Propaganda works best with them' (Cones, 2005). As already explained, this dissertation also considers the educational role of films in the context of Patriotic Education and how both roles are strongly interconnected will be shown through analysis of the selected movies.

Contribution of the Dissertation to the Research Field

When it comes to Russian cinema the existing literature is very large and concerns many different areas and disciplines. A large number of studies has been addressed to the change in the politics of Russia at the turn of the millennium, to patriotic films produced in the 2000s, and to how certain features of cinema reflect the new era under Putin. In terms of studies of Russian culture after year 2000, works by several authors were read and taken into account. Some authors were of significant importance for the present research, such as Beumers, Condee, Gillespie, Kucherenko, Liñán, Norris, Rapoport, Stojanova, and others. There are several studies that concentrate on the turn of the millennium and on how cinema in Russia, after the crises the country faced in the 1990s, was finally able to produce blockbusters again and build new production facilities, and how themes, heroes and elements moved in a direction different from

that of the 1990s (Beumers 1999, 2008; Condee 2001, 2009; Larsen 2000, 2003; Stojanova 2005).

Beumers explains in *“Killers and Gangsters: the Heroes of Russian Blockbusters of the Putin Era”* (2008) that two paradigms of the film hero formed in the late 1990s and in the 2000s, ‘reflecting the development from the police corruption of the late Yeltsin era to an attempt to instil trust in the police force in the Putin years, asserting that the forces need to be trusted and that individuals in the police force can defend the people from evil acts, whether they are terroristic attacks or the disasters brought upon by abstract, evil forces’ (Beumers, 2008: 204). Beumers explains how the change in politics has been reflected in the portrayal of police forces as trustworthy elements in Russia.

Nancy Condee describes how in the 2000s, the Ministry of Culture, led by Minister Mikhail Shvydkoi, developed a plan to increase annual production of films, so successful that by 2006 ‘the total cinema box-office release was \$5 billion, the target intended to be reached only by 2008-10’ (Condee, 2009: 82). As Condee writes ‘it would seem that Russian citizens had recovered from their bout of cine-amnesia: [...] they had begun to remember what it was like to go to the cinema again’ (Condee, 2009: 84).

Susan Larsen discusses ‘the problem of creating a new hero of our time’ (Larsen, 2003: 493), describing these new role models as ‘emphatically masculine’ (Larsen, 2003: 493) and explaining how ‘the conflation of national identity with masculine authority is a key component of these films’ appeal to Russian viewers [...]’ (Larsen, 2003: 493).

In ‘The Russian Cinema at the Beginning of the New Millennium’⁵, Christina Stojanova looks into ‘an intriguing recent phenomenon [...]: the revival of nationalist Russian movies, which had demonstrated remarkable resilience throughout the history of Soviet cinema’ (Stojanova, 2005). Stojanova explains how this phenomenon is called ‘Putin’s cinema’, where military elements, KGB men and soldiers are featured as acting heroically during war and peacetime.

This dissertation contributes by studying the Patriotic Education programs issued by Kremlin after the year 2001 and looking at how cinema has translated some of their political points into film. It is not concerned with arguing about ‘Putin’s cinema’ or ‘Putin’s heroes’, but rather is primarily concerned with the content of Patriotic Education under Putin’s presidency and with understanding whether films serve as the propagandistic and educational tools desired by the programs.

One other study concentrated on films expressing how Russia feels toward the West, illustrating different reactions identified as fantasies, anxieties and defences (Hashamova, 2007). The present dissertation contributes to this aspect of the research by offering a view of how Russia perceives ‘the other’ and how her system of values is portrayed in comparison to that of her enemies and the ‘the other’. Director Nikita Mikhalkov, for example, presents Russia as superior in terms of its values, morals and sense of duty. The further contribution here is that this dissertation is written in the context of Patriotic Education, an entire system of values and ideology that could conceivably serve as alternative system to that of the West (Karaganov, 2016).

While many authors primarily concentrate on the figure of Vladimir Putin when they talk about the heroes and films of his political era, this dissertation focuses on war films in the specific context of Patriotic Education. It offers an analysis of the first two programs (2001-2005 and 2006-2010) where six main political priorities

⁵ See direct link to Christina Stojanova’s article: ‘The Russian Cinema at the Beginning of the New Millennium’, 2005: <http://www.kinema.uwaterloo.ca/article.php?id=263&feature>

have been identified and then, according to said priorities, seven parameters are created to proceed with analysis of the films. The content of the programs is directly used and translated into elements of analysis to understand the role of films and filmmaker in the context of Patriotic Education.

This study of eleven movies, done on the basis of the seven elements identified as political ideas, is a contribution to research in terms of its analytical strategy and methodology. In the light of Patriotic Education, the present research project offers detailed insight into a different feature, which does not concern the education of scholars and programs (Rapoport, 2009; Liñán, 2010), but concentrates on how cinema is related to Patriotic Education and how it might contribute to fostering its political content. Liñán in 'History as a Propaganda Tool in Putin's Russia' (2010) explains the uses for and promotion of a Kremlin-friendly version of history for political purposes through two channels of a propaganda campaign: school textbooks and the film industry. In that article, the film industry is described as a channel for propaganda meant to glorify the image of Putin and the national past (Liñán, 2010: 174). Its use for political purposes is already implied, but not its educational role as additionally intended by the programs for Patriotic Education. The article does not offer a deep analysis of the films it cites, while this dissertation does, and thus allows direct observation of the use of movies for political purposes in specific cases.

In his "Blockbuster History in the New Russia: Movies, Memories and Patriotism", Stephen M. Norris explains that war movies are an important genre in Russian cinema and that not many works of analysis have been dedicated to them (Norris, 2012). In that respect, this dissertation aims to contribute to the specific area of research, Russian war movies, in relation to Patriotic Education, again presenting a detailed analysis of a number of films that have not received in-depth study. For

example, *Marsh Brosok* (2003) by Stambula was analysed by David Gillespie (2005). but in a different context. Nothing much could be found regarding *We are from the Future 1 and 2* (2008 and 2010), nor could much be found related to the specific content of Patriotic Education.

In terms of Russian film studies, Beumers (1999, 2005, 2008, 2009), Condee (2001, 2009), Larsen (2001, 2003) and Stojanova (2005) (to mention only a few names) have written exhaustive books and articles about how the depiction of heroes was transformed under Putin from that of the 1990s, offering up new, strong, masculine heroes in the form of soldiers, killer-heroes and secret agents. Their works greatly contributed to the research for this dissertation, on several levels.

With the analysis of the selected films and the creation of the ‘protagonist as role model and hero’ parameter and with contextualizing them in terms of Patriotic Education, the present research also aims to contribute first, by uncovering new nuances in the hero/role model through analysis of movies not so far studied in this specific political context, and second, by suggesting the existence of a different type of hero, one who starts out as a role model, embodying all the characteristics of an ideal patriot, and becomes a hero through his deeds as a soldier or officer in the Russian Army. If the protagonist is not a role model, as is the case in *We are from the Future (1 and 2)* (2008, 2010), the analysis will show the role model’s growth first into an example for other people and second, his or her journey to becoming a complete hero. The hero as defined in this dissertation is complete in terms of his or her physical, mental, moral and values. The heroes of the eleven selected films are all equally attractive, with strong, magnetic personalities, skilled and prepared both mentally and physically, holding up important values.

Some authors concentrate on films depicting the Great Patriotic War or on selected features of them only (Gillespie, 2005; Liñán, 2010; Kucherenko, 2011). The

present work expands the research with war movies depicting the Soviet-Afghan War and the Chechen wars and their connection to patriotic themes. In 'Defence of the Realm: The 'New' Russian Patriotism on Screen' David Gillespie explains how the 'war film was a staple feature of the Soviet Film industry from the Second World War onwards, and continues to be of major significance in post-Soviet times' (Gillespie, 2005: 2). He shows how the parameters established in war movies made during the Second World War remain 'more or less constant for the depiction of war up to and since the accession of Vladimir Putin to the Presidency of the Russian Federation in 2000' (Gillespie, 2005: 2). The parameters identified by Gillespie are: 'the demonization of the enemy, the affirmation of war as a just cause in the defence of Holy Russia, and the ordinary Russian soldier as symbol of the honesty and integrity of the Russian soul' (Gillespie, 2005: 2).

This dissertation proposes further parameters for films analysis that show continuity with the Soviet era: how Russia positions herself with regard to the enemy and the 'other', the importance of having a role model who inspires the audience to follow in his footsteps, the role of war in connection with the educational and propagandistic roles of movies, the use of the past for didactic purposes in order to connect past and future generations on a historical basis, and how the concepts of Motherland and Fatherland are re-introduced and featured.

The dissertation identifies the soldier-figure not only as a symbol of honesty and integrity, but as a hero as well and a prototype of the Russian patriot who selflessly follows orders and protects his Motherland. These other parameters are also studied in the context of Patriotic Education programs, giving us a chance to appreciate how well the films follow the points outlined in those programs. A new method of analysis and a new approach are offered, having two steps, on the basis of

seven common elements or parameters, which allows a more detailed and extended analysis directly connected to the political context of Patriotic Education.

Miguel Vazquez Liñán's article, 'History as a Propaganda Tool in Putin's Russia' analyses 'the propaganda campaign orchestrated by the Russian authorities with the aim of promoting a version of the country's history for political purposes' (Liñán, 2010: 167). This dissertation analyses the use of the memory of the past and the Great Patriotic War in films to understand whether they portray the War in an educational way and in accord with the intent of Patriotic Education programs. The uses of history, in this case, that of the War, are viewed in the context of film analysis. While a certain dose of historical manipulation can be observed in some movies, investigating its extent is not the primary concern of this dissertation.

In 'That'll Teach 'Em to Love their Motherland! Russian Youth Revisit the Battles of World War II', Olga Kucherenko studies the cult of WWII in Russia, describing the War as a matter of pride for most Russians, as a model for social solidarity and unity, as a means of social control and as a formative experience, into which each new generation is initiated (Kucherenko, 2011). She explains how films are a means of state propaganda and that war is 'a truly formative experience offered to the young generation in Russia, because the Russian character only emerges in extreme conditions' (Kucherenko, 2011).

This dissertation examines the role of war and in particular the Great Patriotic War in the context of Patriotic Education, analysing films where war is actually portrayed as rite of passage, a 'formative experience' for younger generations. In this way the present work offers a chance to appreciate how war is portrayed in films that might be considered propagandistic and educational tools. Its analysis will expose new aspects inherent in the depiction of war, which describe it as a duty to be fulfilled in order to protect the Motherland, as a necessary sacrifice or even as salvation, and

showing how through war the protagonists, most all of them soldiers and officers, become heroes and stereotypical patriotic role models to be received by the audience as examples to follow.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided in two main parts: a theoretical part containing two chapters and an empirical part in one chapter. Conclusions will follow, offering a summary of the main findings. Chapter Three will answer the research questions posed by the dissertation, as developed through analysis of eleven selected Russian films produced between 2000 and 2011, matching the time-frame of the two programs of Patriotic Education for Russian Federation citizens studied in Chapter One.

Chapter One will explain the overall approach of this dissertation, which considers films to be a double-sided mirror, and the meaning of film's educational and propagandistic roles. The chapter will then introduce the concept of patriotism, as expressed in the 'Concept' of 2003, which is the second updated version of an earlier 'Concept' (2001), a document outlining the official views adopted by the Russian State and the official definition of patriotism. Analysis of the first two programs for Patriotic Education, one for 2001-2005 and the second for 2006-2010 will follow. The main political priorities will be identified and described, explaining why they have been selected for elaboration in films. The second program will be analysed in a brief comparison with the first version, to understand whether their political priorities changed or not.

Chapter Two will be dedicated to the methodology of the dissertation. How the analysis of the films will proceed will be explained. In this regard, seven common parameters that will be used to study the selected movies will be described. An explanation will be given of how they were identified among the political priorities

indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education and how it is possible to identify and observe them in films. The chapter will then proceed to define the general selection criteria that helped in the first phase of selecting films. The eleven movies will be introduced, giving the particular reasons for choosing those films.

Chapter Three will be divided in two parts and will answer the research questions. The first part will analyse the films one by one, based on the seven parameters, observing how the parameters have been depicted and whether the films follow the lines and priorities indicated by Patriotic Education. In this part, the first question for research will be answered, From the analysis it will be possible to understand if the filmmakers featured the political priorities in a critical way, or if they accepted them as presented in the programs and translated them into their films, fulfilling the programs' goal of having movies that serve as educational tools and patriotic propaganda. Each film will be studied on the basis of seven parameters that have been identified in the political priorities expressed in Patriotic Education: the protagonist as role model and hero, war, the soldier-figure, the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland, patriotism as a main value, the enemy and the 'other', and the memory of the past.

The second part of this dissertation will present a matrix that combines the eleven films with the seven parameters to see more directly whether the seven elements were main themes, were present but not dominant, strong features, or were marginal and depicted simply as a narrative framework. The second part will then move on to compare the seven parameters horizontally across the eleven movies, to see how they differ from film to film, which parameters are dominant in which films and for what reasons. At the same time, it will be possible through this comparison to better understand which films feature certain political priorities and ideas rather than others.

Because this dissertation seeks to understand whether continuities with Soviet war films exist in terms of content and film-narrative, it will be explained for each parameter how, if at all, they were depicted in Soviet films, in order to see whether there are common traits and themes they share with films produced under the programs for Patriotic Education.

The films that will be analysed are the following: *Brat 2* (2000) by Balabanov, *The Star* (2002) by Lebedev, *Marsh Brosok [The Forced March]* (2003) by Stambula, *The Ninth Company* (2005) by Bondarchuk, *12* (2007) by Mikhalkov, *The Admiral* (2008) by Kravchuk, *We are from the Future* (2008) by Malyukov, *The Priest* (2009) by Khotinenko, *The Brest Fortress* (2010) by Kott, *We are from the Future 2*, by Samokhvalov and Rostov, and *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel* (2010, 2011) by Mikhalkov. The last two films by Nikita Mikhalkov will be analysed as one because the two parts are strongly connected and together represent one story divided into two episodes.

The last part of this dissertation will contain conclusions and will summarise what has been found and observed through the analysis, offering a brief overview of the selected films and once more explaining the contribution of this dissertation to the specific field of research of Russian movies in the context of patriotic political propaganda.

Chapter 1: Analysis of Patriotic Education in Russia: 2001-2010

Introduction:

Having watched a considerable number of Russian movies produced in the 1990s and 2000s, most of them in the war genre or somehow related to it, different thoughts formed in this author's mind about the present dissertation. If it were to focus on war movies only, it would become clear that some typical elements of the genre had changed over the years, especially following the year 2000. Several authors have discussed how many Russian films produced in the 1990's represented the bleakness and darkness of Russian society, creating protagonists who, in the words of Nikita Mikhalkov, hardly resembled the heroes that Russia needed (Mikhalkov: 1997, in Beumers: 1999: 50-53). The film director demanded a hero who could save Russia from the voids then opening up in many social spheres and who could provide a model to follow and emulate, especially for the younger generation that, in his eyes, needed a strong leading figure who embraced archetypical Russian values.

The 'war hero' described by Birgit Beumers in *Russia on Reels: The Soviet Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (1999) is a marginal figure who does not interact with society and who has adopted new values and habits after having served in Afghanistan. This figure hardly represents the ideal of the patriotic Russian citizen that Vladimir Putin and Russian political authorities had in mind when they created the 'Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens', first for the years 2001-2005 and then another for the years 2006-2010 (updated versions followed every four years). By watching war movies from 2000-2001, it can be seen how some of their elements completely changed from those of the previous decade. Some of those

elements were in line with priorities defined by the Kremlin, in particular in the programs for Patriotic Education.

As explained in the introduction, films can be seen as a double-sided mirror, a medium that continues and projects political content and ideas identified as priorities by the Kremlin in the programs for the Patriotic Education of Russian citizens. This chapter will first explain the main approach of this dissertation to the films, illustrating how that approach was inspired by an article by Barry Buzan. It will discuss an interesting relationship with Lenin's statement that films are an educational tool, taking a moment to reflect on the propagandistic uses of movies and the media, which are mentioned directly in the programs.

Several authors and political figures have discussed the potential use of films as an educational tool. However it is interesting to take a moment to understand Lenin's ideas about the pedagogical uses of films, for the simple reason that this dissertation seeks to understand whether a degree of continuity with the Soviet past in terms of film narrative can be identified. By film narrative is meant the way some elements and political ideas are depicted on the screen, where some trends reflect continuity with the past.

This chapter will then introduce and analyse the program of 'Patriotic Education for Russian Federation Citizens' for 2001-2005, and the second version that was created for 2006-2010. Updated versions of the program are prepared every four years, but this dissertation will concentrate on the first two editions. It will then compare the two programs, in order to understand their common points, what has changed in them, how they have changed and whether the Kremlin was promoting some elements more than others.

The analysis of the programs will be accompanied by an explanation and analysis of the 'Concept', an official document formulated in 2001 and updated in

2003 that strengthened the above-mentioned programs and articulated the official viewpoints adopted by the Russian State in the field of patriotic education. In that document, the official definition and meaning of patriotism is specified and the peculiarities of Russian patriotism are described, while also explaining their importance and prominence in the national character. The ‘Concept’ expresses a role and mission for patriotism in re-forging the Russian national spirit and its citizens, basic to the goals the programs were devised to achieve.

Theoretical Approach of the Dissertation

The overall approach of this dissertation begins with consideration of films as a double-sided mirror, reflecting in two directions, and as tools of propaganda. This means that film is a medium that projects and continues certain political priorities, and guides the audience through those priorities in the way they are portrayed. Films present and illustrate given political priorities, and then reflect and project their content onto the audience and society. The spectator will therefore identify with the protagonist of a movie showing certain elements, concepts and passing on particular values, for instance, patriotism.

This idea of film as mirror is widely used in several disciplines and has been employed by different theorists (Jean Louis Baudry, 1970; Christian Metz, 1977; Jacques Lacan, 1949; Charles Altman in Nichols, 1985; Barry Buzan, 2010); not, however, in the same theoretical framework.

From one side of the mirror the filmmaker receives and is exposed to a number of political ideas and priorities. The filmmaker then must filter these ideas and decide how to interpret them in order to best depict them on the screen. Once the interpretation is complete, the second side of the mirror casts a reflection of the filmed depiction onto the audience. The film absorbs, depicts and then projects on people

certain political ideas that can be modified from their original form or kept in their essential nature. If a film projects something that has not been modified in any important way, thereby indicating the will of the film director to follow the directives he or she has been given in a political program, the audience is exposed to a propagandistic and/or educational work.

As explained in the introduction, there is a difference between the two potential roles of films, because their didactic use is meant to educate the audience about certain content, while their propagandistic use is intended to support and foster particular political ideas and priorities. The approach of the double-sided mirror makes more sense and becomes stronger if paired with the basic concept of Psychoanalytical Film Theory, which explains how an audience identifies with the hero of a film (Metz, 1977; Nichols, 1989; Turner, 1999; Hayward, 2000; Hashamova, 2007). It must be immediately noted that this dissertation does not take the psychoanalytical approach to analysis of films, because it does not identify with all elements from Freud, Jung, or Lacan, even though the theory of the mirror stage represents a significant contribution to film theory.

The metaphor of the mirror used in this dissertation primarily follows the ideas expressed by Barry Buzan in ‘America in Space: The International Relations of Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica’ (2010), an article in which Buzan illustrates the idea that ‘popular culture can be used as a mirror to reflect on how societies think about themselves’ (Buzan, 2010: 1). Even though this dissertation does not especially focus on the matter of how society sees itself, it is interesting to use Buzan’s approach to film, as a medium/mirror that reflects how a certain institution acts or sees itself. In his article, Buzan considers the examples of *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica* to reveal how the United States views its destiny, its relationship to technology and its place in the universe. The present research does not focus on the USA, rather on

Russia, but nevertheless, Busan's ideas can be translated to other realities and times. That is done here by concentrating attention on Russia, where cinema has often played a key role in expressing the turmoil of that country's history, its transitions of power, the effects that various regimes have had on the country, and simply specific moments in its history and its varying political priorities.

The 1990s for instance produced an entirely new genre, known as *chernukha*, that was characterised by a number of movies depicting the black, lost reality of those years. After the year 2000, the situation changed. What is specific to Russia is how the Kremlin turned its attention to cinema as a peculiar vehicle for political propaganda, as the Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens (2001-2005) testifies by dedicating an entire section to the influence of state propaganda on media and movies.

Here we can explain the necessity of considering films and cinema as propagandistic tools and their educational potential for political purposes. In the program it is explained how movies focused on patriotic themes should foster the program of education and should enhance several aspects of patriotism: a sense of loyalty to the Fatherland, a sense of respect, deep devotion, a sense of duty to serve in the Army, and more. Nancy Condee in *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (2009) explains how in 2005 the Kremlin financed 'state friendly films' (Richardson, 2007 in Condee, 2009: 89) by allocating 10 million dollars to Mikhalkov's TriTe Studio (Richardson, 2007 in Condee, 2009: 89), surely a good example of a cinema and filmmaker who is 'state friendly'. Differently from Buzan, the aim here is not to reveal how Russia perceives its destiny or its place in the universe, but to observe how Putin's political agenda, as expressed in the programs for Patriotic Education, has been translated into films by filmmakers, what political priorities are thereby illustrated and how they are depicted on the screen.

As already explained above, the second point of this approach is consideration of film's propagandistic role and potential, in addition to the educational role for it desired by Lenin and Stalin, who present two individual cases of relating to Russia's history and making use of cinema. Lenin and Stalin of course do not represent the only leaders who made use of cinema during the Soviet era, nor are they only ones who grasped its educational potential. Nevertheless, they are the two leaders who have been most discussed in relation to Russia's politics and culture, being as they are the two icons of the Soviet era. It is not the place of this dissertation to define what kind of icons they represent. Anatoli Rapoport (2009) pointed out the continuity between the programs for Patriotic Education issued after 2001 and the patriotic education promoted in Soviet Union under Stalin. Rapoport provides a basis for investigation of the continuity between the past and present in the depiction of certain political ideas in movies:

The new model aims at the promotion and restoration of some of the Soviet features, including 'centralised control, curricular rigidity and political ideological functions' (Karpov and Lisovskaya, p.23). They argue that restoration of military education and focus on patriotic education are vivid signs of stylistic re-Sovietization. [...] The list of examples of militarization of consciousness is long and almost emulates, stylistically and operationally, activities and programs from patriotic education curricula of the Soviet period (Sredin, 1988; Vyrshchikov, 1990). This striking resemblance of the Soviet period curricula explains why everyone in Russia perceives patriotic education as a rationale with dominating military agenda. The term that was commonly used in the Soviet Union for patriotic education was 'military-patriotic education' (Rapoport, 2009: 4, 23)

Films have been often used for political purposes in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, as demonstrated by Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy. While both regimes make use of films' propagandistic potential, there is a difference in the way they use them and their purposes. A democratic regime might try to make use of some films to support a given set of values and political ideas, without imposing any censorship on movies depicting a different view or position. An authoritarian regime

would try to control an entire national cinema and forbid the production of works disagreeing with its ideology. Furthermore, under an authoritarian regime, propaganda is required to move people to support the regime and to destroy and condemn potential political opponents, as occurred under Stalin. An authoritarian regime also uses cinema to glorify its ideology, its set of values, its political leaders and their achievements, as well as the regime itself. While under a normal democratic government there is space for disagreement and criticism, this is hardly possible in authoritarian regimes, and even less so under totalitarianism.

John W. Cones contends that films are rarely produced simply for entertainment in his book *A Study in Motion Picture Propaganda*: ‘This book is dedicated to all of those people who foolishly believe that movies are merely entertainment. Propaganda works best with them’ (Cones, 2005). The concept of films as propaganda tool helps us to understand the potential use political leaders can make of them and the goals filmmakers can achieve by trying to educate and shape citizens’ minds and political inclinations.

The characteristics and values that are portrayed in films, and the principal messages being passed to the audience, reveal important information in terms of the political goals to be achieved and the controls imposed, or attempted to be imposed, on a society and culture. Indeed, cinema has enormous potential as a political tool, and not only cinema but TV programs and series as well, especially nowadays. In general, a film can reach a greater number of people and has more immediate and dynamic impact than a book, because it inhibits the thinking process by exposing the onlooker to images and sounds.

This dissertation does not focus primarily on the question of how the political power in Russia tries to control the cinema industry and society with programmed and well-structured propaganda. However, analysis of the two programs for Patriotic

Education and of the selected films will show that films are a means of patriotic propaganda. It adds a new dimension to the process of reviewing movies and researching the propagandistic uses of cinema.

It is clear that two different methods of propagandizing can be discerned: one passive and one active. The passive method implies acceptance by the filmmaker of the political environment and a decision to follow the imposed (or preferably, the politically approved) line of thought, either for economic reasons or for other reasons such as a desire to side with the main political stream of thought without actively participating in it. The active method means dynamic, direct involvement, with full willingness to create a propagandistic tool and thus to support and serve power. The case of Nikita Mikhalkov and his direct, strong involvement in Russian politics, openly and actively supporting Vladimir Putin, is an example of the very active type of propaganda (Condee, 2009). The scope of the present dissertation is not concerned with this distinction, however.

Official Definition of Patriotism Adopted for Patriotic Education Programs

This chapter will now proceed to elucidate and explain the official view and definition of patriotism adopted by the Kremlin. It will then move on to analyse two programs for Patriotic Education (2001-2005 and 2006-2010). Patriotism is the key concept of the political agenda expressed in the two programs and their documentation. Patriotism permeates all aspects and levels of the programs. The model citizen who serves as an example to others must be a patriot and his patriotism must be strong and grow, maturing over time. Being a patriotic citizen means loving one's country, and it also means serving the Fatherland and preserving and defending the interests of the Motherland. Patriotic Education outlines the characteristics and personality traits required in order to be a good citizen and soldier.

An integral and vital aspect of this is military patriotic education and the military nuances of patriotism, which engender immediate willingness to serve the Fatherland through military service and self-sacrifice in case the country is threatened. The memory of the Great Patriotic War and all the outstanding achievements by Russia in different fields then and since are also connected to being a good patriot, because a patriot never forgets the glorious past of his or her beloved country. With the help of veterans, Patriotic Education aims to pass knowledge and feelings to younger generations in order to perpetuate the memory of the past.

The patriotism at the core of the two programs is the subject of the present research, and it will be particularly evident when analysis of the selected films is introduced. Its definition and scope as outlined in the 'Concept' document, which provides the official viewpoint of the Russian state and its authorities, will be now explained. It is stated in the 'Concept' that the objective is to make the patriotic education of all Russian citizens as the State's most important activity.

Two 'Concept' documents were formulated. The first version was created in 2001 and was updated in 2003. The 2003 version repeated the main points of the first document and did not change much in terms of approach or content. In terms of their definitions of patriotism and the main objectives to be achieved, the documents are the same, and both establish the patriotic education of Russian citizens as the most important activity for the State. Patriotic education is described as essential to survival and the key to development of society and civil society, allowing the Russian State to become strong and be revived as a great power.

In both versions, military-patriotic education is described as an integral part of Patriotic Education, but as this analysis of the documents proceeds, it will be possible to understand how Patriotic Education and military-patriotic education are actually one thing. Even if the content and aims of the programs are not explicitly

called 'military-patriotic education', they cannot be mistaken in their deep militaristic essence. Even the 'Concept' document stresses the importance of serving in the Army and the formation of young people and citizens who are selflessly ready to defend their country (2003).

This dissertation will be based on the concept of patriotism formulated in the 2003 document, because that is the one on which the later programs of Patriotic Education are based. The official concepts of patriotism and Patriotic Education indicate that increasing the prestige of the State, and in particular of military service, is one goal to be pursued and achieved. Once more, attention is paid to the necessity of strengthening Russia's military power and making sure citizens and young people do not shirk their duty to serve in the Army, which is further evidences that military-patriotic education and Patriotic Education are the same (Blum, 2006; Rapoport, 2009; Liñán, 2010).

The drastic, dramatic changes the country faced at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century brought about a change in the minds of Russian citizens and in many spheres of the country, leading to a point where Russians found themselves lost and without identity or hope for the future. Douglas W. Blum explains how in Russia after the 1990s, it was necessary to call for 'increasing security', to increase military power and undertake 'a thoroughgoing reconstruction and reinvigoration of national identity' (Blum, 2006: 1). In the document issued by the Russian authorities, a dose of patriotism is prescribed to give a 'new impetus' to the people and to improve their spirituality, in order to form a unified Russian civil society, although no definition of civil society or any concrete measures to improve it are provided in the documents.

The official definition of patriotism is formulated in the 2003 'Concept' is as follows: patriotism expresses love for one's country, devotion to the Fatherland, a

desire to serve the Fatherland with self-sacrifice in extreme situations, and a desire to protect the Motherland. The Fatherland is conceived of as a strong (political) authority that must be respected, while the Motherland is a maternal entity, the Russian land that takes care of her people and makes them feel a sense of belonging. There are two levels to this, personal and 'macro'. On the former level, patriotism is the principal characteristic of a person, which he or she expresses in viewpoint, morals and behaviour. On the latter level, patriotism serves as a significant feature of public consciousness. Patriotism is manifested in the actions and activities of the people, originating out of love for their native land. It is viewed as the moral basis of the state and society, and acts as a mobilizing force for readiness to serve the Fatherland. It expresses devotion and readiness to serve the Fatherland, and it is described as the opposite of nationalism. Love and service to the country ensure the integrity, sovereignty and national security of Russia.

Patriotism is described as one of the most prominent features of the Russian national character. Russian patriotism has its own features: a high humanistic orientation, tolerance and religious spirituality. It is law-abiding and it fosters a sense of community and the need for collective life. The patriotic consciousness of citizens is based on a strong sense of loyalty to the Fatherland and readiness to fulfil civic and constitutional duties in order to protect the interests of the Motherland. The official definition given in the document portrays Russia as a family, where authority is held by the father, while care and love is in the hands of the mother. The other members and children of the family are loyal to the father and follow his lead and orders as they do in a patriarchal family, and they are ready to protect the mother and the family as a whole.

Military patriotism plays a preponderant and integral role in Russian patriotism in the official view adopted by the Kremlin and the Russian authorities.

This uncovers a very interesting aspect of patriotism, because it goes beyond devotion and love for the country, which normally evoke the desire to protect it. It moves on to a further level, where patriotism forms good soldiers, ready to serve the Fatherland and follow orders and laws dictated by the state, to the formation of citizens willing to serve in the Army and feel it as duty and honour. These aspects will be further developed and explained below when this chapter presents the programs for Patriotic Education.

In his article ‘The Role and Place of Patriotism in Citizenship Education in Russia’ (2009), Anatoli Rapoport seeks to demonstrate that patriotic, military and nationalistic elements have prevailed in the contemporary civic curriculum in Russia. He provides a definition of patriotism that is worth mentioning in order to appreciate its differences with the official notion of patriotism found in the 2003 ‘Concept’. He suggests that patriotism cannot exist ‘without the framework of a state, or a nation-state to be exact. [...] It is always directed towards a political community whose epitomic form is a state of nation’ (Rapoport, 2009: 5). However, a nation needs specific discourse to justify its existence, and even if nationalism was of crucial importance at the beginning of nation building, it can become dangerously destructive (Rapoport, 2009). On the other hand, patriotism has proved to be different and intrinsically unifying:

Patriotism provides a perfect and visibly noble cause to unite a nation for the very sake of the nation. Ontologically, patriotism is a social construct that gradually develops in the result of human cultural activity. Patriotism in its various forms appeared as a social (tribal or communal) phenomenon and after going through reciprocal typification, and habitualization became an institutionalised construct, a part of social reality. [...] It is natural for humans to feel affection and love to the place where they spend their youth. It is also natural to love parents or the immediate community that supported an individual. [...] The natural attachment to one’s immediate community was transformed into a constructed sense of commitment to the imaginary

community of nation: principedom, kingdom, empire, or, in other words, a state.

In order to become an institutionalised concept, or in other words to be easily recognizable and ubiquitously acceptable, patriotism has to pass three important stages: habitualization, objectivation, and legitimization. (Rapoport, 2009: 5-6).

As is explained by Berger and Luckman (1966), ‘habitualization’ is the process whereby some actions are repeated frequently and a phenomenon becomes a pattern, making it a routine taken for granted. In Russia it now means becoming accustomed to what the programs prescribe in order to be a patriot: doing military service, being ready to serve the Fatherland and protect the Motherland, being ready for self-sacrifice when extreme situations call for it and respecting the law. Citizens accept these duties as something normal and habitual, a familiar routine.

The second stage is ‘objectivation’ where the action or phenomenon made into habit ‘attains the character of objectivity’ (Berger & Luckman, 1966: 57). The actions prescribed to be a real Russian patriot become an independent and existing reality, and Russian citizens start to believe in this reality. They believe it is true, and their belief impacts the development of patriotism, as the phenomenon of Russian patriotism (and everything that falls under its umbrella) consequently impacts its citizens.

The third and last stage is ‘legitimization’ and, as explained by Berger and Luckman, it reflects the institutionalization of a phenomenon and the need to legitimise it. In this case, the Russian authorities legitimise patriotism by creating a program for it, Patriotic Education, which explains the necessity of abiding by its rules and following its directions in order to revive Russia as great power, to revive Russia’s society and economy, to preserve political stability and to strengthen the country’s defences. Measures have been taken to make sure the public is constantly

reminded of the importance of patriotism and how its revival is a step towards the revival of Russia itself.

In Rapoport's definition, no military element can be observed in the 2003 'Concept', nor is it possible to identify a principle of service to the Fatherland as the symbol of authority, as meant by Patriotic Education. From Rapoport we are given to understand that patriotism moves from love for one's immediate, nuclear family and one's community to a feeling of commitment to a broader community: a nation, an empire, a state. Judging from the official definition of patriotism in the 'Concept' and what can be understood from the programs for Patriotic Education, the process seems to be reversed. Love for a smaller community and one's fellow community members can arise and be reinforced only if one is first devoted to and loves the Fatherland, i.e. the Russian State. Loyalty and deep devotion to the State, to the Fatherland, is the way to unify citizens and make them committed to each other and their homeland.

Another definition of patriotism is offered by Daniel Bar-Tal in his article 'Patriotism as Fundamental Beliefs of Group Members' (1993):

Patriotism is viewed from a social psychological perspective as an attachment of group members towards their group and the country in which they reside. This attachment is reflected in beliefs and emotions that individual holds. In its fundamental form, patriotism has positive implications, being an essential condition for group existence. It gives meaning to group membership and serves important functions of unity, cohesiveness and mobilization. Without patriotism groups disintegrate and therefore every group tries to inculcate it in its members through cultural, social and political mechanisms. But, although in its fundamental form patriotism is genuine, it may have negative consequences when beliefs on specific contents are added (Bar-Tal, 1993: 45).

The cohesive and unifying characteristic of patriotism is here described similarly to how it was identified in the 2003 'Concept', which praises patriotism's ability to enhance tolerance and the sense of community. Even if it is not within the scope of the present dissertation, in light of Bar-Tal's explanation it would be interesting to explore

whether Russian patriotism remains ‘genuine’ in its particular form and whether the added content, in particular the associations of a military nature, might have fewer consequences. The patriotism described in the 2003 ‘Concept’ has a distinctively military aspect that will be highlighted in the analysis of the first two programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens (2001-2005 and 2006-2010).

Analysis of the programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens

This section of the chapter will describe and analyse the structure and content of the programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, offering insight into the results expected to be realised by the program, the activities that were planned in many spheres in order to achieve its goals, the teaching methods the documents dictated, and the reasons for the creation of these programs, which explain why they focus so strongly on patriotism. A number of political priorities set by Kremlin have been identified in these official documents. Some of these priorities coincide with what is depicted in certain Russian movies, as the chosen selection of films will demonstrate. These main political points will be explained in the course of analysis and presentation of the programs. However, their principal ideas can be enumerated as follows:

- Instilling and fostering patriotism in citizens as a main value that will naturally nourish other important civic ideals (spirituality, honour, sense of respect, sense of duty, etc.),
- creating a military-patriotic consciousness and mindset,
- establishing a database of the state propaganda that has appeared in the media,
- strengthening the memory of the glorious past in terms of the great national achievements in different spheres (with special attention to the military sphere), of

victory in the Great Patriotic War and of the memory of those who died for the Fatherland,

- reviving the concept of Fatherland and Motherland, tilted in favour of the Fatherland,
- instilling a natural willingness to serve in the armed forces and understanding for how vital it is to the country's future,
- increasing Russia's power and international prestige,
- restoring the prestige of the Army and of the figure of the soldier who serves the Fatherland with devotion and respect, representing a role model for the young generation,
- reintroducing the concept of national heroes (Soviet and Russian) who should represent role models for every good patriot,
- introducing the in-depth study of the history of the Fatherland as an important subject to be taught by the books recommended in the programs,
- shaping teaching methods and tools in order to produce the best outcomes from Patriotic Education
- creating a legal basis for the programs of Patriotic Education,
- emphasising the necessity of contradicting and resisting the falsification and distortion of the history of the Fatherland⁶; and
- creating young patriots loyal to the Fatherland.

Not all the above-listed points have appeared in movies and attention will be focused only on the elements depicted in films, considering film as a medium for the continuation and projection of the political ideas in the programs to their intended

⁶ In May 2009 Dmitry Medvedev signed an executive order that established a presidential commission that aimed to 'oppose attempts to falsify history to the detriment of Russia's history' (Rapoport, 2009: 21).

audience. The chapter will now proceed with a study of the two programs for Patriotic Education and identification of six political priorities.

Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005

The first program was created for 2001-2005, and is the first document in a continuing series that is already planning for 2020. The program was adopted by the government of the Russian Federation on 16 February 2001. As is stated in the document, the programs' development and formation is managed by almost all federal departments, agencies, and administrations of the Russian Federation, prominent veterans, the Russian Orthodox Church, and creative, scientific and public organizations. The program is aimed at all social strata and age groups of Russian citizens, and it defines the principal ways of developing a comprehensive system of patriotic education of citizens.

Its implementation and execution has the purpose of preserving political stability, restoring the national economy and strengthening the defence of the country. It is already possible to discern three separate reasons that explain why it was thought necessary to create such a program. Taking a quick look at the political, economic and social situation Russia faced during the 1990s, the intent of this effort becomes clear. Douglas W. Blum in 'Official Patriotism in Russia: Its Essence and Implications' (2006), explains how former Russian President Boris Yeltsin began to take belated and uncertain steps to reconstruct and reinvigorate the lost national identity. However the real force for change arrived with Vladimir Putin, who 'quickly moved to institute a series of federal programs designed to transform the worldview, physical condition, and professional prospects of Russia's youth' (Blum, 2006: 2).

Both the first and second programs were aimed particularly at the younger generation in Russia. The military element is stressed in both documents, which use

the adjective ‘military’ repeatedly. However, we should proceed in order and recall the condition Russia was toward the end of the 1990s, in order to understand the urgent need felt by the Russian authorities who created the program. The document frankly explains the reasons for it:

Recent events have confirmed that economic disintegration, social differentiation of society and devaluation of spiritual values had a negative impact on public consciousness of the majority of social and age groups of the population, drastically reduced the educational influence of Russian culture, arts and education as the most important factors in the formation of patriotism. [...] In the public mind widespread indifference, selfishness, individualism, cynicism, unmotivated aggressiveness, disrespect to the state and social institutions. It has been a steady trend of falling prestige of military and civil service. In these circumstances, the urgency is obvious. The patriotic education system is at the base for the consolidation of society and strengthening of the state⁷ (2001: 4).

As Anatoli Rapoport explains in his article ‘The Role and Place of Patriotism in Citizenship Education in Russia’ (2009), there was a general feeling of the ‘deheroisation of Russian history, humiliation of Russian national dignity, prioritizing of universal human values over national values (Ivanova, 2005), neglect of military training (Bykov 2006a; Lesnyak, 2005; Lutovinov, 2006) and deideologization of the Russian youth (Karpelman, 2002)’. ‘Deheroisation’ is described as a ‘process of demythologization of Russian and Soviet history, a painful process of rationalising historic events’ (Rapoport, 2009: 16). This was a phenomenon mostly felt at the end of the 1980’s and in the 1990’s, when ‘deideologization’ was an attempt ‘to find and to instil in the society paradigms of interpersonal and inter-institutional relations that would be based on common sense devoid of Communist rhetoric’ (Rapoport, 2009: 16-17).

The 2001 Program for Patriotic Education address the problems listed above and rely on patriotism and military-patriotism to awaken a devoted citizen who loves

⁷ See the document ‘Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005.

his Fatherland, and who is ready as well to sacrifice himself to it and to serve in the Army. Some key-words used to describe the years under Yeltsin's political guidance are: devaluation of values, selfishness, indifference, loss of patriotism, individualism, disrespect and falling prestige of military service. The Program promotes opposing concepts for adoption as the leading qualities among the citizenry: selflessness, valuation of values, increase in patriotism, respect for and increased prestige of military service and the Army.

In order to achieve its desired results, the Program centres on patriotism as the key value and essential characteristic of mind, spirit, heart and body, in the sense of physical strength and preparation. At the very beginning, when the Program's aims and structure are introduced, it is stated that the revival of patriotism is a step toward the revival of Russia, because patriotism is a spiritual property of individuals, one of the most important elements of social consciousness, the foundation of society and the state system and a base for morality. The program declares that it intends to foster the readiness of Russian citizens to serve the Fatherland, meaning by that military service. It also seeks to strengthen the power of the country by consolidating the spiritual force of Russian society, keeping it united and instilling devotion and pride through patriotic feelings.

The last part of the Program, titled 'evaluating the effectiveness of the program' indicates the results expected from implementation of the program, and the spheres of society in which they are expected. Three important spheres are listed where results were desired. Starting with the social and ideological sphere, it is explained how the program is expected to provide spiritual and moral unity to society, to reduce ideological confrontation, to revive the spiritual values of Russia, and to consolidate friendship and union among the peoples of the Russian Federation. The socio-economic level is the second sphere. There, the necessity to ensure public

interest in developing the national economy is indicated, in order to reduce social tension and to maintain a good level of social and economic stability. The third sphere in which results are expected is the field of national defence, where the program aims to instil the desire to serve in the Army in young people, to defend the Fatherland, and to preserve and develop combat traditions.

The idea of the family as the primary cellular unit of society and basic social unity is one of essences of the Patriotic Education to be taught to society. It is explained in the 2003 'Concept' that the family has its own life goals and values, and a relationship to itself, to others and the Fatherland. It is the foundation at the base of moral, spiritual, cultural, physical and other personal development. The program strikes a traditional note and places the family in the important role of the original educator of people, in their formation as good human beings.

The armed forces and the military also promote Patriotic Education concepts by forming citizens in terms of physical strength, readiness for military service and valuable professional skills. The Russian Orthodox Church is another institution that is meant to improve and teach spiritual and moral ideals to the Russian people. Teachers, educators, artists and media representatives also have important roles, and the program is detailed in terms of teaching and training matter, providing the necessary tools and scientific-methodological base for forging good, efficient educators. It is possible to identify five important entities that play an educational role. One of them is the media, comprised of broadcast programs, TV, writers, journalists and filmmakers. This dissertation aims to understand which political priorities are represented in films and how they are depicted, wanting to see whether films and their directors filtered the political message in some way before reproducing it and showing it to the audience.

It has been explained that the approach of this dissertation takes into consideration the educational role of films, as distinct from their propagandistic use.

The program calls for making use of media in general and films in particular as agents for education, and it will be explained how it was planned to spread patriotic propaganda via the media, with the direct collaboration of the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation.

In listing the activities aimed at fostering Patriotic Education, a section concerning the ‘state influence on patriotic propaganda in the media’ appears. It centres on how media should collaborate in promoting the message of patriotism and the content of patriotic education. The program clearly states that it wishes filmmakers to produce films that foster patriotic propaganda, with the intent of evoking in citizens feelings of love for the Motherland and pride in the homeland. In this specific section it is possible to identify a number of often-repeated words and phrases that characterise the entire program: sense of pride, interest in the study of history of the Fatherland (with an accent on countering distortion and falsification of historical facts, quite an interesting aspect considering how films in general can alter perceptions of historical events in one way or another), respect, heroism and heroes, soldiers-liberators (figures who are considered in a quite strongly positive light), concepts of Fatherland and Motherland, serving and protecting, devotion and love for the homeland, war, the Army, patriotism and the military.

The adjective military is repeated countless times and everything that can be produced by media, whether a book, a film, a song or anything else, finds a relationship to the military. The words and adjectives identified above gravitate to a specific genre of film that can portray all of them directly: the war movie. This fact reflected in the decision to choose war films for analysis. It will be interesting to assess how filmmakers portray these ideas and concepts in words and images. The films and TV-series called for by the Program all belong to the war-genre or display

events related to the Great Patriotic War: for instance, *City of Heroes* and *Front and Rear*.

The key-words listed above are related to specific political priorities established by the programs and are also related to results expected to be achieved through their plans for Patriotic Education. By studying the program for 2001-2005, it is possible to discern several key elements and objectives that are part of the political agenda of the Kremlin and are outlined in the documents. However, not all those priorities can be identified in the films or can be easily portrayed.

Even if the general approach of the programs suggests portraying the vertical of power and the importance of a strong, central state, these are concepts that cannot be translated into films as easily as war can be. While images and words can give immediate expression to war, these more abstract concepts would require a set of sub-parameters and sub-elements that would lead to a completely different analysis from one set up for one or two concepts only. The political priorities that will be now described are those observed in films, which guided the creation of the seven parameters to be used in this analysis of films. Those priorities will be described one by one in separate sections.

Creation of a Role Model for the Citizen

In the program it is stated that education should be aimed at the individual citizen in order to create a patriot of the Motherland, an idea that implies the formation of an ideal citizen and model to be followed by other people. This idea is in fact expressed using the same words as the 2003 'Concept' document: 'the subject of patriotic upbringing may be a single person—an ordinary citizen or the representative of the government—who manifests patriotism, loyalty to his civic duty and becomes a motivating example and role model.' (2003: 6).

To become a role model it is necessary to embody all of the characteristics prescribed in the official definition of patriotism as expressed in the programs and in the ‘Concept’. The qualities that such a role model should possess have been mentioned already when discussing the key-words identified in the program: loyalty, selflessness, readiness to sacrifice, readiness to serve the Fatherland and protect the Motherland and every other possible quality implied by patriotism in the optic of these documents. The program aims as well to establish a prototype of a healthy lifestyle among Russian citizens and among young people in particular; in this respect, Patriotic Education should connect people who demonstrate elevated moral, civic and physical qualities. What this means is that the program seeks to shape citizens in all ways: mental, spiritual, moral and physical.

It should be noted that the program emphasises the words ‘hero’ and ‘heroism’, setting a very high bar for achievement in order to become the ideal patriot. In order to be a hero it is necessary to become first a role model and then, through heroic deeds and sacrifice, be elevated to the role of national hero. In order to become a national hero and deserve the people’s highest respect, it is necessary to be an honest and true patriot who loyally serves the Fatherland and functions as an example for others. It will be interesting to see how this is translated in movies, and whether or not both of these aspects of patriotism are represented. The program claims to be aimed at all social strata and age groups, which raises the following questions: who will represent the hero in the film? Which generation will the character aim to impress and to serve as example? The analysis of the films will provide the answers.

The program also insists on the importance of activities aimed at forming young people mentally, but more importantly, physically, by developing their strength and military skills. These abilities should be developed in order to form young patriots who will be ready for military service and hence serve their homeland. The activities

foreseen by the programs were designed to prepare young people to be soldiers and to persuade them to follow such a path. To better understand the importance of this aspect of the formation of the ideal patriot/role-model, one can read the part of the program calling for organization of ‘All-Russia competitions and parades, military and sports games and competitions’ (2001:25). The desired results are: ‘formation of readiness of the youth for the armed defence of the Motherland, intensification of in-depth interest in the history of the Fatherland, and increasing the interest of young people in military-applicable sports, the development of physical and volitional skills, and readiness for protection of the Fatherland’ (2001:26).

The defence of the Motherland means the defence of the country, of Russia as the homeland, in case of eventual threats. The protection of the Fatherland is intended as the protection of the political authority in Russia, defending it from possible menaces that might lead to instability.

Aside from the fact that the military aspect is very strong in the role model, it is clear that he or she must also possess spiritual values and physical qualities. Here, military discipline is the way to form the mind and the body of the younger generation which, of all generations, is the one that most suffered from the situation of the 1990s. In this way the young person should automatically grow strong and patriotic.

All the qualities embodied in this hero/role model citizen will be explained in the following section, concentrating on patriotism as the cardinal value to be fostered in every citizen in order to improve him or her in a moral, social, economic and civil way.

Fostering Patriotism as the Cardinal Value for the Revival of Russia

It has been illustrated how patriotism is the key element of the entire program of Patriotic Education and how it certainly represents a top political priority for the Kremlin. The program is focused on awakening patriotic consciousness in Russian

citizens and forging devoted patriots. Patriotism is described as the cardinal value for every person, since being a true patriot implies possession of other important qualities, morals and spirituality. It is stated that the revival of patriotism is a step towards the revival of Russia,⁸ – implying that devotion to the homeland is the way to build a strong nation. Patriotism is described as a spiritual property of individuals and a unifying element for all Russian people that will consolidate Russian society and strengthen the country's power. It is not simply a matter of forming a united group of people who love their homeland, but also a unified, extended group of citizens that by their loyal devotion will contribute to fortifying Russia as a world power (politically and military speaking). Russian patriotism is about loyalty, love and respect for the homeland, but also about military power and influence. We can see a strong connection with the previous point about the role-model: being a true patriot will provide the citizen with all the characteristics needed to be a role model for other people and perhaps, if he or she acts with real devotion, provide a chance to become a hero.

The program places patriotism at the centre of all values, as a catalyst for the education and formation of a certain type of citizen. Other qualities are related to patriotism, as described in the discussion of the previous political priority. These are the characteristics that should be awakened by becoming a real patriot. The program considers religious values central to the formation of Russian citizens, and while the document declares that it is aimed at all social and religious groups, it is the Russian Orthodox Church that plays the central role in guiding people towards spiritual and religious values. One of the conferences mentioned in a section of the program has a

⁸ See the 'Contents' section of the 'Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005'.

very peculiar title: ‘Fatherland. Army. Church’, as if stating a triad of the main and most important values.⁹

It is possible to observe in the program a tendency to describe the ideal patriot and patriotism in militaristic terms, as if simply loving one’s homeland is not enough. Russian patriotism requires a strong armed force and citizens who are willing to serve and defend their Motherland when necessary. This particular aspect will be explained in the following section dedicated to education of citizens in general, and young people in particular, about the importance of serving in the Army. In relation to the idea of a triad of cardinal values, Anatoli Rapoport reflects upon the official definition of patriotism given in the 2003 ‘Concept’ document:

The specific features of patriotism in Russia identified by the Concept—togetherness, integrality, obedience to the laws, need of collectiveness—remarkably resonate with basic principles of the famous Russian triad of ‘Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality’ that constituted the quintessence of the policy of State Patriotism in the second quarter of the 19th century during the reign of Nicolas I. (Rapoport, 2009: 19).

The three basic principles identified by Rapoport can be seen transposed into ‘Fatherland, Army, Church’. These are the three cardinal entities in Russia and in the Patriotic Education program, which embraces them in their entirety.

Persuading Russian citizens, and young people in particular, to enter military service and serve in the Army

The program for Patriotic Education aims to instil willingness to serve in the Army and not avoid military service into Russian citizens, in particular young Russians. It is clearly explained how in the past—the end of the 1980’s and 1990s—there was an evident deterioration of Russia’s military prestige and of military service, with many young people shirking that duty. The activities listed in the program are all aimed at elevating the role and profession of soldier to the place of those heroic figures who in

⁹ See section 6: ‘Formation of the Scientific-theoretical and Methodological Bases of Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation’.

the past had saved the country from its enemies, and at creating a reverential aura around those figures, who is described as soldier-saviours, professionals who should be embraced with deep pride in their sincere willingness to serve the Fatherland and protect the Motherland.

The program aims to increase sympathy and attraction for the Army by fostering several military-sport activities, holding events attended by veterans or high officers who served their country, and promoting a glorious image of the Army. The overall military nature of the program is very strong and dominant, which can be understood by noting how many times the noun or adjective ‘military’ is mentioned: 112 times, from page one through to the last page. That the program projects an image of the soldier as hero of the country is perfectly understandable.

Analysis of the films will show whether in them, being a soldier means being a hero to the country and whether to become a hero it is necessary to be a soldier, or at least to serve in the Army. It will also show how the figure of the soldier is now represented in films, which is in contrast with the 1990s, when soldiers were mostly social outcasts, and whether or not they are now considered essential members of society deserving high respect.

The program endeavours to promote respect for military service and for the profession of soldier, in light of the soldier’s valuable contributions to the country. The heroes of the Great Patriotic War are often mentioned with the intent of using all that the War continues to represent for Russia and its citizens. The word ‘soldier’ is often associated with the following words and concepts: courage, fatherland-defender (implying the existence of threat or enemy), readiness to fulfil duties, hero, heroic, pride, respect, perpetuation of memory (of soldiers’ heroic gestures during war), liberator, and willingness to sacrifice.

Serving in the armed forces did not diminish in importance in the second program. Many planned activities and measures were aimed at fostering the desire and willingness to serve in the Army. This is clearly is a political priority and has been openly stated as such by Vladimir Putin, as mentioned in Blum's article 'Official Patriotism in Russia' (2006), which reports part of a speech Putin gave in May 2006 during a meeting with representatives of a youth group. Although that speech took place during the implementation of the second program, its message is undoubtedly applicable to the first program as well:

We must explain to the entire generation of young people that the question of whether or not to serve in the army should not even come up for a young person to begin with. We must all realise that without the army there would be no country. Nobody should have the slightest doubt on this score. No army, no Russia.¹⁰

The program lists three results expected in three different areas. It must be noted how one of those concerns the field of national defence.¹¹ It is explained how 'the desire of young people to serve in the Armed Forces, the willingness of citizens to defend the Fatherland, the preservation and development of its glorious combat and labour traditions' will be achieved through implementation of the program. This priority relates to Putin's message, quoted above, to the young Russians: in order to guarantee the military and international prestige of Russia, the country must maintain strong and efficient armed forces where real patriots serve with loyalty and respect.

Inherent in the military essence of the program and true to the its patriotic nature, it is possible to discern that war is another of its dominant concepts, especially the Great Patriotic War, given what it represents for Russia and its place in history. The program glorifies the victory over the enemy in 1945, and the sacrifice of the soldiers who died defending their Motherland. Even though war cannot exactly be

¹⁰ In Blum 2006, p. 2: http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm_0420.pdf

¹¹ See section VII 'Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Program' in the 'Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005'.

considered a political priority, its role in Patriotic Education and its importance to proper education of young generations must be taken into account. War becomes a means of education and formation, supported by a role for veterans to connect young people to their past experience. Twenty-eight of 101 activities, events and measures to be taken according to the program relate to the Great Patriotic War or war in general.

This number gives a good perspective on how central that element is. Olga Kucherenko in her article *'That'll Teach 'Em to Love their Motherland! Russian Youth Revisit the Battles of World War II'* (2011) explains that the Great Patriotic War and the soldiers who fought in it like national heroes stir emotions in people even now, and serve political ends (Kucherenko, 2011). The acts portrayed in films by those heroes teach Russian children and young generations the meaning of values such as patriotism, honour, justice and respect. The impact of the films, and their didactic significance and weight, become stronger when the protagonist/hero is forced to make a choice that will most certainly end in the sacrifice of his or her life for the Motherland. It all becomes a very powerful formative experience and each generation is required to prove its worthiness to the Motherland (Kucherenko, 2011). The analysis of the films will consider this aspect and search for it in the selected cases.

Revival of the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland

Reviving the concepts of Fatherland (especially that of the Fatherland) and the Motherland is another political priority that can immediately be noticed in the number of times the words are repeated in the document on Patriotic Education. 'Fatherland' is repeated 36 times, while 'Motherland' only 10 times, a difference that raises the question: is devotion to the Fatherland more important than devotion to the Motherland? This particular political point is not made explicitly. In fact, there are no specific measures or activities planned under the title 'revival of fatherland-concept' or anything similar. However, the importance of this element is implied and

understood from the entire program. It is first stated in the introduction to the program that ‘Patriotic Education [is] a systematic and purposeful activity of State bodies and organizations on the formation of high patriotic consciousness among citizens, a sense of loyalty to the Fatherland, readiness to fulfil their civic duty and constitutional duty to protect the interests of the Motherland’.¹² Two main concepts are promoted: loyalty to and protection of the Fatherland, and defence of the Motherland.

The ideas of Fatherland and Motherland are strongly connected to the concept of patriotism because there can be no patriotic feelings without a country and a homeland. Furthermore, these concepts are bounded by how Russian patriotism is described and understood: it means love, devotion, loyalty and readiness to serve and protect. The program describes patriotism in terms of loving the homeland and willingly serving the Fatherland. The distinction between the concepts of Motherland and Fatherland are clearly expressed in the program. Somehow, the balance is in favour of the concept of Fatherland. This makes one think about a relationship that involves guidance coming from above and descending on the citizens vertically, as in a patriarchal family, where the father represents the highest authority.

Think a moment about the following words from Nikita Mikhalkov: ‘What will become of our children? What will they know about their own country? Why should they love their country? What should keep them in this land? What can help them to survive in such conditions?’ (Mikhalkov, 1998 in Beumers, 1999: 51). It seems rather clear from the program that Russian citizens should love their country and their homeland because the Fatherland will guide and lead them toward a brighter future of economic growth and a strong civil society based on strong spiritual and patriotic values, social unity and solidarity among all the Russian people. On the other

¹² See section II ‘Content Issues of Patriotic Education on the Rationale for its Decision Programming Methods’.

hand, their Motherland will take care of them and always make sure to provide them with a sense of belonging to one family and a feeling that they are children of Mother Russia.

Aside from the fact that both words, in particular ‘Fatherland’, are frequently repeated in the program, the indirect aim of reviving and fostering these concepts is also found in the choice of words and concepts associated with them. ‘Fatherland’ is associated with: defence, serving, respect, loyalty, readiness and willingness to serve, and military glory. These are words that remind one of an authoritative male entity, of a political authority to be respected and served, whose guidance and orders must be obeyed. ‘Motherland’ is connected with the following words: asylum, love, armed defence/protection, sense of belonging, and native land. It suggests a different entity, connoting a maternal image of a homeland—Russia as land—that loves her people and provides them with a family, and that should be repaid with love, protection and a sense of pride.

Throughout the program, it is suggested, and not in a subtle or indirect way, that real patriots who wish to be role models and heroes are those who serve their Fatherland and protect and love their Motherland. The programs desire to shape Russia into a family led by a strong and authoritative father and a caring and welcoming mother. There is a need to fortify the institution of the family and its role in educating people, as can be perceived in the fact that the family is identified as one of the most important subjects of education in the 2003 ‘Concept’. The family is there described as ‘the basic social unit of society’. The political priorities in the document do not stand separate and alone, but are all connected. Success in one area signifies success for other priorities.

Perpetuate and Foster the Memory of the Past

In order to develop and preserve a sense of pride in Russian citizens for their country and to enhance their devotion to the Fatherland, the program promotes the perpetuation of the memory of Russian soldiers and major events in the Fatherland's military history. Museums and historical events play a leading role in this task. The Great Patriotic War plays a central role in enhancing nostalgic, unifying sentiments among Russian citizens. The program defines 'heroic events of national history, outstanding achievements in the field of politics, economy, science, culture and sports' as 'moral ideals' to be developed in citizens by Patriotic Education and as educational tools, with a strong emphasis on military achievements. Several activities are planned around commemorative events dedicated the Great Patriotic War and the Great Victory, celebrating important anniversaries and the heroes who took part in the war and its battles.

The history of Russia is often described as heroic and glorious in the programs, and veterans are designated as the leading actors in educating the young generation about the past. History is used as an educational, formative tool for increasing patriotic feelings in the people and explaining the necessity of serving in the Army. Perpetuating the memory of the past is accompanied by an imperative of studying national history and intensifying the depth of interest in that subject. History and the deeds of the heroes of the past are to serve as examples for contemporary Russian citizens, in particular for the younger generation, which is targeted because it is believed to be more easily led along the desired patriotic path. Remembering the glorious past is strongly related to revival of patriotic military traditions, such as the practice of taking oaths of allegiance in 'museums of military glory' or before monuments and obelisks. Such plans for 2001 are mentioned in the program for implementing the Russian Federation law 'On Perpetuating the Memory of Those Killed in the Defence of the Fatherland'. Key words associated with the political

priority of remembrance of the past are history as a subject of scholarship, teachers, veterans, museums, monuments, re-enactments of battles, and active memory.

The media in general, and cinema in particular, are directly called upon to contribute to this task. As already explained, the program planned for creation of a TV series focused on the sixtieth anniversary of the Great Victory (in 2005) and as well for various other programs featuring the Great Patriotic War. It is all intended to intensify patriotic propaganda, re-awaken a sense of pride among the citizenry, intensify interest in studying the history of the Fatherland and increase respect for the 'heroism of soldier-liberators'. Significant attention is paid to countering 'distortion and falsification of historical facts', requiring TV programs and radio broadcasting to focus on 'true' Russian history and respect it. The attention paid to this end suggests that in order to strengthen patriotic propaganda in Russia, the political authorities would bless a version of national history that puts the accent on events considered more politically acceptable than others (Liñán, 2010; Kucherenko, 2011).

The role and mission of Russia in the world

Implementation of the program should foster in citizens a readiness to serve the Fatherland, among other aims, in order to strengthen the Russia's international power. The importance of reinforcing Russia militarily and training her citizens to be loyal, effective soldiers, ready to defend it in case of threat, is stressed. The program describes Russia as a political and military power in the world that contributed to world history through her sacrifice and heroic acts during the Great Patriotic War. This is stated in activity number 19 prescribed by the program, 'The Organization of the International Festival of Folk Art "Days of Peace in the Pacific"', dedicated to the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. The Festival is intended to celebrate the Soviet people's victory over Japan at the end of the Second World War in 'an objective assessment of Russia's contribution to world history' (2001: 21). The

expected results suggest that Russia is a fundamental actor in world history and politics that contributed to ending WWII in the Pacific, a victorious country that is organizing peaceful activities to celebrate the defeat of a militaristic enemy. The association of the word peace with war (and militarism) sets up a contrast that suggests the superiority of Russia in terms of spirituality and military power. Furthermore, the program promotes ‘the role of Russia in the fate of the Slavic states’ by organization of a festival of folk art produced during the war by the armed forces.

The implications and aims of the international mission the program imputes to Russia are not explained. The political authorities clearly aim to strengthen the international authority of Russia, as they declare in the program’s description of its proposed activity number 56. The international mission is mentioned again in relation to the contribution the media can make to patriotic propaganda, as if implying that media and films should project an image of Russia as a strong international actor. Words are not used without wanting to obtain a specific effect: ‘Russia’s role in the destiny of the peoples of the world’ (2001) resounds of a messianic role in the world, perhaps in spreading the values and spiritual morality inherent in the Russian character. The activities meant to educate people on the role of Russia ‘in the fate of the world’¹³ are aimed at all generations, but in particular at the younger generation, since they include the use of video games, an interesting and rather controversial educational tool.

The program also mentions the concept of the ‘enemy’ and ‘threats to the national interest’ both internal and external.¹⁴ Reading these elements and those discussed above in the light of Tsygankov’s (2006) and Karaganov’s (2016) works, the words assume a different wider import. It is really possible to see in the program a

¹³ See activity number 75: ‘Creation of Computer Games on Patriotic Themes, Based on Heroism in Russian History’.

¹⁴ The 2003 ‘Concept’ document also mentions this matter, explaining how patriotism should contribute to fighting threats against the country by unifying Russian citizens around their national interest.

suggestion of the mission it desires for Russia in the world. Tsygankov explains that statist, in their vision of Russia's identity, appeal to 'the historical notion of Russia as a *derzhava*, which can be loosely translated as a holder of the international equilibrium of power. A *derzhava* is capable of defending itself by relying on its own individual strength, and its main goal should be the preservation of the status quo' (Tsygankov, 2006: 93). The principle of relying on Russia's own strength in order to defend it is repeatedly stressed in the program by its emphasis on the importance of serving in the Army and raising up well-trained soldiers.

In contrast, civilizationists believe that Russia should not to preserve the status quo entirely. They wish to spread the influence of Russian civilization widely (Tsygankov, 2006: 61). The civilisationist approach challenges Western values by positing the superiority of Russian culture and values. Karaganov's article 'New Ideological Struggle?' explains the challenges Western and European values are facing these days, and the Russian values system is offered as an alternative. Karaganov explains that 'what makes the Russian challenge so strong for European elites is probably that Russia, currently seeking its identity and desiring to regain its own self, might be offering an attractive model of behaviour and set of values to the rest of the world' (Karaganov, 2016: 5).

This dissertation will not assess whether the Kremlin and Russia actually plan to take action to pose an effective alternative to the Western system. However, the analysis of the films will show that Russia places itself in a superior position to its enemies in terms of values, morals and deeds, displaying the country and its heroes as a bastion of high morals and values such as courage, loyalty, honour, patriotism, humanity and religious belief. The analysis of the movies will show whether Russia effectively projects itself as an alternative to the Western system.

Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens (2006-2010)

The second program explains at its very beginning that the updated version for 2006-2010 continues the 2001-2005 program. The approximate total amount of funding budgeted for 2006-2010 was 497.8 million roubles (USD 7.7 million at 2016 exchange rates), including 378.05 million roubles from the federal budget and 119.75 million roubles allocated from other extra-budgetary sources (of an undefined nature) as well as from institutions, groups and various associations and organizations taking part in Patriotic Education. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program is to be based on general performance indicators listed in Annex 3 of the program. These indicators are described by the program as objective criteria based on moral, spiritual and quantitative parameters. Among the indicators that relate to the topic of this dissertation, Annex 3 lists: ‘increase of tolerance, reducing the degree of ideological confrontation of society; manifestation of the willingness of citizens to defend the Fatherland; realization of the creative potential of journalists, writers and film-makers in the field of patriotic education’ (2006: 60). Like the first program, the second relied on media and cinema for patriotic propaganda and focused on the same concepts and principles.

The main objective stated by the 2006-2010 program is improving the path of the Patriotic Education system so as to ensure the development of freedom and democracy in Russia, and the formation of Russian Federation citizens with high patriotic consciousness, loyalty to the Fatherland and readiness to fulfil their constitutional duties. Quoting the document: ‘the end result of the program should be positive dynamics of growth of patriotism and internationalism in the country, providing bases for favourable conditions for spiritual and cultural growth in society, strengthening the economic stability of the State, and raising the international prestige of Russia’ (2006: 9). The program was aimed at all ages and social strata of the

Russian Federation, but like the previous version, it was mainly aimed at the younger generation, which it considers Russia's future and hence a generation that must be properly educated and formed. Anatoli Rapoport explains some important points regarding the 2006-2010 program, demonstrating that the two programs share the same priorities and principles:

Blame for the present state (a usual euphemistic substitute of 'bad' or 'inappropriate') of patriotism and patriotic education is usually attributed to: 1. Deheroisation of Russian history, 2. Humiliation of Russian national dignity, 3. Prioritizing universal human values over national values (Ivanova, 2005), 4. Neglect of military training (Bykov, 2006a; Lesnyak, 2005; Lutovinov, 2006) and 5. Deideologization of the Russian youth (Karpelman, 2002). Those who are familiar with the content of Russian political discourses are very well aware that *these* [...] constructs are metaphors or coded 'stigmas' of a very concrete period of Russian history, namely the end of the 1980s and 1990s or in other words, the post-Soviet period when a liberal-democratic model was being implemented in politics and education.' (Rapoport, 2009: 16)

This dissertation does not discuss or focus on political changes that took place in Russia after the turn of the millennium. It does not question their liberal-democratic nature or seek to compare different political regimes. Nonetheless, Rapoport points out some essential concepts related to what will be observed in the movies under study: the need for a hero and role model, the concept of Fatherland, the importance of the Army and of serving in the armed forces, the need to educate the young generation through patriotism about the glorious national history and the importance of reinforcing the values typical of the Russian character inherent in patriotism and Russian Orthodoxy.

The second program still has a marked military element, even if the adjective 'military' is repeated less frequently than in the first document. A listing of the activities and the core of expected results demonstrates its martial nature. The importance of serving in the armed forces is not diminished and many activities and

measures planned in the program are aimed at fostering desire and willingness to serve in the Army and forming respectful, loyal and devoted soldiers. By targeting the strengthening of the country's defence program, the document reminds us once more of the necessity of considering patriotism as the most important value, the foundation of the spiritual and moral unity of society.

The formation process has two main aspects: physical training in order to shape healthy and strong young citizens ready for military service, and historical-patriotic knowledge to forge in them the right mentality and consciousness. Every activity and task of the program is aimed at contributing to the formation of future Russian soldiers and citizens who are ready to perform their duty to serve in the Army when needed, and to prepare young people for military service.

This second program, differently from the first version, does not directly mention 'state patriotic propaganda' as related to media and the cinema. The contribution and involvement of media in general is planned in Part V, under the title 'Information Provision in the Field of Patriotic Education'. However, it is expected that the media will prioritise the themes of Patriotic Education over other themes, suggesting a different, subtler form of propaganda. 'Patriotism propaganda in the media' is mentioned only once among all the expected results.

The production of movies celebrating anniversaries of military events is one of the activities mentioned in the fifth part of the program, although the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation is never mentioned as an active participant in any of the events planned in the program. This differs from the former version, where the Union of Cinematographers was expected to take an active part in the realization of some of the activities and was mentioned directly in the program (in the end, the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation, whose head is Nikita Mikhalkov, took part in four activities). Some blockbusters and major box

office successes were financed by funds allocated to the first program, including *Turkish Gambit* (2005) by Dzhanik Faiziev and *The Ninth Company* (2005) by Fedor Bondarchuk (Condee, 2006: 89).

The movies requested in the new program were all expected to serve the same purposes: enhancing a sense of pride and love for the Motherland, building respect for the Army and the heroes of the past, deepening interest in the Fatherland's history, reinforcing willingness to serve the Fatherland and fostering patriotism as the cardinal value. The rhetorical basis and the content that was to be displayed did not change, nor did the emphasis placed on the role of media in countering falsification of historical events.

In the introductory part of the program 'the main directions of program implementation' are explained. The media is to defend against 'attempts to discredit the opposition, and the devaluation of patriotic ideas in the media, works of literature and art' (2006: 7). The media and information channels are actively called upon to combat any challenge to Patriotic Education and any attempt to undermine or devalue the values related to it. It was a very direct way to address unorthodox ideas and ideological opposition, and shows how determined the Kremlin was to end them.

It is understood that to achieve lasting and successful results, actions taken under Patriotic Education should continue forward and scientific and methodological bases should be developed for the program. This explains why the political priorities indicated in Patriotic Education 2001-2005 are the same for 2006-2010. These priorities stress the importance of patriotic consciousness, the need to serve in the Army and not avoid military duties, the necessity to serve the Fatherland and to be a devoted citizen ready to perform his or her constitutional and military duties, the concept of Fatherland, the study of history in schools, the production of appropriate textbooks and other educational tools to guide the teaching process, the importance of

remembering the past and the respect for national heroes (mainly, the Russian and Soviet heroes/soldiers who fought the Great Patriotic War and other vital battles for their country). As the political priorities did not change in their essence from the first version, it will not be necessary to describe them a second time. What will be done here is to give a brief overview of the political points in the second program, paying attention to whether something was added or removed, and why.

In terms of the ‘creation of a role model’, the second program aimed to strengthen the features indicated in the first program. The education of the younger generation moves on from the study of history to participation in military sports. The first program stated that the creation of role models to inspire all citizens was needed and precise guidelines for forming them were given. The second program aims to reinforce that task and to strengthen pride in and respect for the Fatherland, the Army and national history. In that regard, it entrusts a central educational role to veterans. Because the program declares that special attention is to be given to the younger generation that is Russia’s future, a strong link and continuity between the glorious military past and Russian youth is to be consolidated. Education in schools is expected to create ‘conditions for effective action to prepare the younger generation for military service’.¹⁵ The ideal model is the loyal citizen, who is prepared and skilled militarily, and who would not hesitate to join the Army to defend his Motherland, even at the cost of his own life. This ideal is to be achieved by producing vast amounts of historical propaganda. Activities meant to perpetuate the memory of the ‘glorious past and heroes’ exceed the number of physical training activities.

The importance of serving in the Army is stressed, just as in the first program. Possibly, it is more preponderant, given that the effectiveness of program implementation is to be measured by ‘the degree of readiness and desire of Russian

¹⁵ See Section III ‘The Development of the Scientific-theoretical and Methodological Bases of Patriotic Education’ in the ‘Program for Patriotic Education for Russian Federation Citizens 2006-2010’.

citizens to fulfil their civic and patriotic duty'¹⁶ 'Patriotic duty' is defined in the first program as serving and defending the Fatherland. Once again soldiers are to be depicted as heroes, liberators and Fatherland-defenders, whose memory must be honoured and respected. The armed forces and soldiers killed doing their duty are sources of deep pride and should be taken as examples. The program stresses how serving the Army is a matter of pride, how it is linked to a sense of duty and is proof of loyalty to the Fatherland. The images of the heroes of the past are called upon as a means of persuading young people to follow in their glorious footsteps by joining the Army and serving the Fatherland. The Great Patriotic War and veterans still play an important educational role, and to evoke patriotic emotions in the people.

Patriotism and the values inherently connected to Russian Orthodoxy are at the core of the program, and its every proposed activity is aimed at increasing each of the qualities embodied in Orthodoxy.

Greater attention is dedicated to the education of young scholars. Because of the role played by school and teachers, the program insisted on developing and implementing new training methods to enhance and deepen patriotism among young students. Eminent veterans are considered educational figures and the political authorities aim to connect their generation with future generations through a series of educational activities that would interconnect the present with history. The triad of 'Fatherland, Army, Church' mentioned in the first program still appears in the second version. The Russian Orthodox Church and the armed forces are active participants in the program. 'Other [religious] confessions' are meant to participate as well, but which confessions is not specified, clearly reserving the priority for the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹⁶ See the 'Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2006-2010', section VII of the Introduction.

The concepts of Fatherland and Motherland are repeated in the same context as in the first program, connecting Fatherland with the duty to serve and defend and the Motherland with love and a sense of belonging to the homeland, a maternal figure that needs to be protected and loved with honest pride. Similarly to the first program, the word 'Fatherland' is repeated more often than 'Motherland': respectively, 42 times versus 8 times. This indicates how revival of the concept of the Fatherland is more important than that of the Motherland, as can be understood from the central role played by military service in the program.

The word 'memory' is repeated more than 30 times in the second program, without counting related concepts, while it was repeated only 16 times in the first one. As already explained, great attention is dedicated to activities and events meant to honour the memory of the past, in particular that of military achievements and victories. There are about 33 different activities connected to expected results that perpetuate the memory of the past and increase pride and respect for past glorious deeds (most of them military-related). The past and the representatives of the older generation are designated as central formational and educational tools. Honouring the past and feeling pride in the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the Fatherland is a real mission in the program, and the number of activities planned in different spheres testifies as such.

The second program still aims to strengthen and raise the international prestige and authority of Russia, insisting on her role in and contributions to world history. This point has already been explained and it is evident in the second program that Russia does not wish to renounce her role and mission in the world, a mission that begins at home by educating the citizens to respect their history, to avoid being misled by wrong and false versions of history and to constitute a loyal, patriotic generation of young people to represent Russia in the future.

What appears to be a new goal is the restoration and use of Russian state symbols in Patriotic Education, in order to increase its efficiency, reinforce feelings of love and respect towards the Fatherland and its symbols, interest the younger generation in those symbols and their importance, and promote interest in history and national heroes. This all relates to two main aims of the programs for Patriotic Education: strengthening respect for the Russian Army that directly contributes to willingness to serve in the armed forces, and raising patriotic feelings in Russian citizens. Special attention is paid to influencing children and young people, who are mentioned in the program's expected results in terms of educating them to be loyal, devoted citizens. Although this new political priority is not for which the movies studied here will be examined, it might be interesting to learn whether films are displaying more Russian state symbols after 2005.

Based on analysis of the second program and comparing it with the first version, it appears that the Russian authorities concentrated on three political priorities that, once implemented, should contribute to meeting the programs' other goals. These three priorities are fostering patriotism and orthodox Christianity as cardinal values, persuading young people to serve in the Army by means of activities that glorify the military and its history, and encouraging study of the approved version of Russian history that exalts the past and serves as a catalyst for formation of loyal young patriots.

It is important to note that these political priorities are not present only in the programs, but also appear in films, as will be easily recognised as the eleven chosen films are analysed. As has already been explained, some political concepts, such as the vertical of power, require a different approach to analysis, having as they do a number of parameters and sub-parameters. They certainly offer challenging topics for further research, but they are not the subject of this dissertation.

The following chapter introduces the methodology used in analysis of the films and explains how the political priorities found in the programs were identified and translated into seven parameters for analysis of the selected movies.

Chapter Two: Methodology applied and Criteria for Selection of Films

Introduction

This dissertation aims to understand which political points are depicted in Russian film and how they are featured, and to determine if there is continuity with the Soviet past in terms of the films' narratives. Chapter One elucidated the chosen approach and offered a descriptive study of the first two programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens from 2001 to 2010. Six political priorities were identified: first, the creation of a role model or prototype of the Russian patriot, serving as an example to be followed by other citizens; second, fostering patriotism as the cardinal value to support the revival of Russia as a great power, in order to bolster the national economy, strengthen civil society and ensure the country's military defence. The third priority is persuading Russian citizens, in particular young people, to perform military service and serve in the Army, so they are prepared to defend the Motherland at any cost and at any moment.

The fourth priority identified is the revival of the concepts of 'Fatherland' and 'Motherland', words that are often repeated in the two programs, although more so Fatherland. Fatherland recalls a strong higher political authority that guides and gives orders which must be respected, while Motherland is connected to the idea of a maternal and loving entity, the land of Russia that takes care of her people. Together they symbolise the ideal family that provides guidance, rule of law, love, and a sense of belonging.

The fifth political priority is perpetuation of the memory of the past, in order to develop and strengthen a sense of pride, respect and devotion to the Fatherland, to understand the importance of the Army's role in Russia's history and to historically

connect past and future generations. The sixth and last political priority identified in the programs is the role and mission of Russia in the world, stressing the difference between the Russian system of values and other systems, all the while implying the superiority of Russia in terms of morals and values. This priority relates to the role and contribution of Russia to world history, implying that the political authorities desire to reinforce Russia's international authority and position.

Even though there are only six main political priorities identified in the Patriotic Education programs, there are seven parameters for analysis of the selected films. One political priority, persuading Russian citizens and young people in particular to serve in the military and join the Army, has been split in two different parameters for analysis, because to study the films it was necessary to work in more details that differentiate the concept of soldier from that of war. These seven parameters will be explained in the next chapter below.

This chapter will now concentrate on the research strategy, and how the six political priorities have been transposed into parameters for film analysis and can be observed in movies. Though analysis and study of these seven common elements of the Patriotic Education programs, this dissertation will show how the filmmakers transmitted the content of the programs to their audiences and what the audience received, revealing whether the political content were modified in the interim.

This chapter is dedicated to the methodology of the research project, clarifying how the analysis of the movies will proceed and how it will be organised in Chapter Three. It will illustrate how the movies were selected, starting with the general criteria that helped to narrow the pool of choices, and then introducing each film and explaining why it was chosen. This dissertation analyses a total of eleven movies (to be precise, there are twelve, but *Burnt by the Sun 2* by Nikita Mikhalkov, as a sequel to the 1994 film of the same name, is not considered separately.) The

analysis is based on seven parameters and proceeds in two ways: first, an individual analysis of each film, where those the seven elements that are present will be identified and described in detail, showing how the film portrayed them through specific scenes, images, characters and dialogue. By studying the parameters it will be possible to understand how films present the content of the political points of Patriotic Education.

The second part will compare the seven parameters horizontally across all the movies, to understand if some are stronger than others in their presentation, if it is possible to identify groups of films related to each parameter, if the way the parameters are displayed has changed over time and if the films actually do reflect the ideology delineated in the programs for Patriotic Education. The second phase of analysis will offer an answer to the second research question, determining whether the parameters show continuity with earlier Soviet films about war. Secondary sources focused on the narrative and contents of Soviet films, especially war movies, will help reveal such continuity with the past, if any.

This chapter will now proceed to introduce the seven parameters that are of cardinal importance for the analysis of the movies. First it will explain how they have been derived from the political priorities found in the programs for Political Education pointed out in Chapter One. Then it will show how to identify the parameters in the film in terms of dialogue, scenes, images and behaviours of the movies' protagonists.

Strategy of Selection of the Eleven Films

This thesis focuses on the analysis of eleven Russian war films produced between 2000 and 2011 in the context of the programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens (2001-2010). It aims to understand whether the films depict some or all of the political priorities identified in the two programs, as elaborated in Chapter

One. The dissertation will then proceed with analysis of the films in order to answer the two research questions. It proceeds in two steps: first, each film is individually analysed on the basis of seven parameters that express the political points and expected results to be achieved through the above-mentioned programs; second, the seven parameters will be compared horizontally across all eleven films, with the intent of understanding how the parameters are depicted in the films and how, if at all, they changed over time. Some elements may be stronger motifs in the stories than others.

Selecting a list of movies for study is never simple or straightforward, because it involves reviewing a considerable number of films and film-directors that are all very interesting in many ways and have the potential for inclusion. Including one film may mean excluding another, for it is not feasible to include every one for analysis. How is it possible to arrive at a final list? What should guide the process and what should be taken into account? Which films should be selected and why? Should TV series and made-for-television films be included or not?

In the beginning it was decided to focus on cinematic movies and on TV series. The serial *Spetsnaz* (2002; 2003), directed by Andrey Malyukov, and similar ones were regarded as good choices, along with *1941* (2009) by Valery Shaliga. After reflecting upon the amount of data generated by analysis of all these episodes, it was decided to include cinematic films only, because analysis of TV series could be left for another research project. The selection process required settling on what this research project is looking for and its aims. Only when both these points were established was it possible to proceed with making a final selection that complied with the established general criteria. The first selection according to that general criterion helped to reduce the spectrum of choice and the number of potential cases for study. However, it was necessary to narrow the process still more and establish specific reasons for making each choice.

Although the decision was made to research only war movies, room for exceptions was made, meaning films that do not strictly belong to the war genre but nevertheless have strong affinity to it, or that have elements giving them the right to be considered along with war stories. This was the reason for including *Brat 2* by Aleksey Balabanov and *12* by Nikita Mikhalkov. The two films are not strictly war movies, but their plotlines and central thematic elements are very interesting, and their directors are icons in the panorama of recent Russian cinema. *Brat 2* is a minor exception, even in terms of Patriotic Education, because it was produced in 2000, outside the time-frame of the first program. However, a comparison with the first *Brat* (1997) makes it possible to see how some of its content changed. It seems that the filmmaker absorbed some of what was starting to change in politics and addressed it in his second film.

At the very beginning several films were viewed and considered, even some films that did not belong to the war genre or relate to war in one way or another. Some works had to be excluded because they were produced outside the 2000-2010 time frame decided upon, including *The Barber of Siberia* (1998) by Nikita Mikhalkov and *Stalingrad* (2013) by Bondarchuk. Selecting those movies would have meant making more exceptions.

The process of selection is never effortless, and it always leaves openings for different opinions and disagreements about the final selection. Dina Iordanova has declared that: ‘one the most daring decisions I made was to include via exclusion: in order to open up space for films I considered important but which remain unknown, I opted to exclude the work of the best-known filmmakers from the Balkans in order to open up place for others’ (Iordanova, 2006: 4). Iordanova obviously had her reasons for doing this, which she explained in ‘The Cinema of the Balkans’. However, in this study it was important to include well-known film directors at the expense of

unknown or less popular ones, due to their position in Russian cinema and also because of their political connections. In addition, famous filmmakers such as Mikhalkov, Khotinenko, Balabanov and Bondarchuk are icons of the national cinema who would be impossible to exclude because of their cultural impact and importance.

The choice of film directors for study is one of the guiding criteria for deciding which works should be taken into account and which not. The 2001-2010 time-frame also dictated choices. The eleven films (counting the one that is in two parts and is considered as one, *Burnt by the Sun 2*) were first selected according to general criteria, and then winnowed again for specific and individual reasons that will be explained as each individual film is introduced.

The first criterion for selection was year of production, in accord with the time frame of the research project, 2001-2010. This covers the time span of the two programs for Patriotic Education analysed in chapter two; these first two programs were selected because they witnessed a change in terms of the political agenda and discourse after the 1990s, something interesting to see in cinema. Secondly, including more programs would have involved handling a large amount of data. Analysis of the later versions of Patriotic Education, to observe further changes and explore the reasons for them, can be left for future research, perhaps even expanding the field of study to TV series, along with or instead of movies. The only exception made here to the time span of the selected films is *Brat 2* by Balabanov, produced in 2000. The reason behind that choice will be explained later.

The second criterion for selection is the genre of each film. As explained in the introduction, that genre is 'war'. The author of this dissertation focused primarily on war films, permitting two exceptions (*Brat 2* and *I2*) because of what those two movies represented. However, both of these films do not stray far from the selected

genre, because war is an essential element in them, a narrative frame and a personal background for their protagonists. This will be elucidated in detail during the analysis.

Sometimes, in fact rather frequently, movies fall into more than one category, even if their main topic (war, in this case) is immediately recognizable as the central and essential part of the film. This is case with *The Admiral* by Kravchuk and *The Priest* by Khotinenko: these films belong to all of the genres of drama, history and war. The decision to choose war movies was dictated by the content of the Patriotic Education programs and their political priorities as described in Chapter One. These priorities made it possible to identify seven elements or parameters that were used for analysis.

Patriotic Education has a predominantly military nature, as already explained, and the content of the political points can best be depicted in war movie, which the analysis of the films will demonstrate. ‘War’ as a criterion for selection has a second level, which war a film represents. Even though Patriotic Education focuses on the Great Patriotic War because of what it means to Russia on an emotional level, it was decided to include some other conflicts as well: World War I and the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Afghan War and the Chechen Wars, conflicts that for one reason or another have had a strong, poignant impact on Russian citizens. Even if the idea at first was to choose an equal number of films portraying each conflict, it was not possible to do so because the central role played by WWII in the context of Patriotic Education could not be ignored. Films portraying the Great Patriotic War are the best choices in order to answer the second research question regarding continuity with the Soviet traditions of the past.

The filmmaker is the third criterion for selection, because of the importance of the role played by film directors. In some cases, for instance, Nikita Mikhalkov, this adds material for analysis and a certain narrative background and curiosity to the

chosen film. This is the case of the internationally known and acclaimed Mikhalkov, as well as Fedor Bondarchuk, Aleksei Balabanov and Vladimir Khotinenko. Mikhalkov won an Academy Award in 1994 for best foreign language film with his *Burnt by the Sun*, and more prizes and nominations for *12*. Balabanov's films *Brat* and *Brat 2* are icons of late 90's and early 2000's crime/war movies that left a mark on Russia's younger generation. Fedor Bondarchuk released two successful blockbusters that were box-office hits. The other film-directors are acclaimed and respected artists in Russia, whose films and TV series received awards and stimulated the interest of the public.

Another important factor is the political ideology of the film maker, with the specific example of Mikhalkov, who directly and openly expresses his support for Putin's politics, desires to promote the vertical of power with cinema and declares his own nationalistic ideas. Bondarchuk as well has openly declared his support for Vladimir Putin and the United Russia party, even though he claims he has no time for active political participation (Hoad, 2014).

The criterion of the film's director is significant for the analysis of the films selected for this dissertation, which examines the educational and propagandistic potential of films. The analysis will reveal how these filmmakers depicted the political priorities laid down in the programs for patriotic education. This will be most interesting in the case of *The Ninth Company*, which features the Soviet-Afghan conflict.

The forth criterion for selection is the country of production. This means that films must have been produced by Russian film studios, with the small exception of *The Brest Fortress*, which was a Russian/Belorussian co-production. Place of production seems a rather obvious criterion given that this dissertation is focused on Patriotic Education programs in Russia. The content and political priorities expressed

in the programs make it necessary to choose films produced by Russian filmmakers and Russian studios. The perspective of a foreign film director might change the way the political ideas and principles of Patriotic Education are perceived, absorbed and reproduced.

The fifth and last criterion for selection is the specific themes and content of the films, in light of Patriotic Education. This dissertation aims to understand which political priorities are depicted and how they are featured in films. Thus it is important to identify films that actually do contain the relevant themes and elements: patriotism, a certain view of and role for war, the figure of the soldier, the presence of a hero who can serve as a role model, the memory of the past, religious values, the concept of Fatherland and Motherland, a specific connotation of the enemy and other values and qualities inherent to patriotism, as explained in Chapter One.

This chapter will now introduce the eleven films, along with the specific and individual reasons for their selection. A brief description of the film's plot and relevant facts about the film and its makers will be given. The list follows a chronological order, beginning with *Brat 2* by Balabanov and concluding with *Burnt by the Sun 2* by Mikhalkov.

Brat 2 (2000), by Alexei Balabanov

This film is the sequel to the famous *Brat* (1997), which created a cult following for the movie and for its main character, Danila. Balabanov's movie can be considered as a transitional film, a bridge-builder between two different eras. This will be explained in detail and made clear in the analysis. This transitional aspect is one thing that justifies the selection of *Brat 2*. A second reason, inherent in the previous one, is found in a comparison with the first film, which shows how the war in Chechnya

assumed two completely different meanings in two movies separated in time and political epoch.

In *Brat*, Danila does not talk about his past in the Army and his experience in the Chechen campaign. He leaves it as something unspoken and hidden. Towards the end of the film, he displays uncommon military skills that could only have been developed by serving in the Army. On the other hand, *Brat 2* opens with Danila going into a national TV studio in Moscow, in the company of some of his former comrades-in-arms, to openly discuss his past and his experiences in the Chechen campaign. The atmosphere, as they narrate some episodes, is completely different from the first film.

Given that *Brat 2* was produced in 2000, it represents a very good case for analysis. Although is outside the time-window of Patriotic Education, it already displays certain elements that characterise the new political discourse under Putin and the programs for Patriotic Education. The third reason for choosing *Brat 2* is the character of Danila, who is a very peculiar hero: not a perfect role model, but already possessing several key qualities, leaving room for further development. The hero's improvement will be an element observed in several of the following films.

Strictly speaking, this movie is not part of the war genre, but the protagonist has a past history as a soldier in the Russian Army and served in the Chechen War, gaining important experience and knowledge that in both movies gives him the power to save people close to him and prove his heroism. The movie shows Danila flying to Chicago in the USA to save his friend's twin brother from a local criminal organization. He will save the brother of his murdered friend, avenge his comrades-in-arms and save Dasha, a prostitute, who thanks to Danila can leave her miserable life and return to the Motherland.

The Star ('Звезда') (2002) by Nikolai Lebedev

This film is a remake of A. Ivanov's 1949 movie with the same title. The story is about a group of Soviet scouts that must retrieve vital war information and operates behind enemy lines. The leader of the group is Lieutenant Travkin, who presents an example of a national war hero, as described in the programs for Patriotic Education. This film was chosen because it represents an excellent example of how the Great Patriotic War is depicted, the emotions it evokes in the audience through the courageous and selfless deeds of the soldiers, and because of its other content. The protagonists in general and Lieutenant Travkin in particular possess all the qualities required by Patriotic Education to be national heroes.

Another reason for choosing this film is that it depicts the political priority of perpetuating the memory of the past using one of the main archetypes of the programs: the war veteran who becomes a history teacher and passes his experiences and memories on to the younger generation. True to the tradition of Russian war movies (Carleton 2013), all the scouts die while doing their duty, but only after having completed their mission. The sole survivor is the young female radio-operator who fell in love with Travkin and who will always remain faithful to his memory. The movie stresses the soldiers' heroism and readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Fatherland, both of which are recurring concepts in Patriotic Education. An extra note regarding Lebedev's work is that the film is one of Vladimir Putin's favourite movies, giving it an interesting position in the context of this dissertation.

Marsh Brosok [The Forced March] (2003) by Nikolai Stambula

This film is set during the second Chechen War and tells the story of Alexander, a young man who grew up in an orphanage and finds his purpose of life and place in Russian society by serving the Army and being a soldier. He desires to enlist in the *Spetsnaz*, a GRU (military intelligence) elite group, to fight in Chechnya and prove

himself a real hero. The reasons for selecting this film are first, because it features the second war in Chechnya, which was conducted under the presidency of Vladimir Putin; and second, because the war is not represented as tragedy, but mostly as an adventure for Sasha, who finds his purpose of life in serving his Fatherland. War represents a way for the protagonist to affirm himself as man and as a hero, being rewarded for his actions and courage with love. A third reason is that the hero, Alexander/Sasha, represents the stereotype of a perfect role model as desired by Patriotic Education. His role represents key values such as patriotism, sense of duty, honour and courage. He is physically strong, well-trained and attractive, exposing both muscles and military symbols (the uniform, the weapons, the *telnyashka* undershirt and the tattoos associated with the Russian military), and he displays military skills in fighting with weapons and with his hands. This protagonist represents a perfect role model in terms of Patriotic Education and it will be interesting to compare him with the ones in the other movies. The film gives a romantic and fearless perspective on war as it is seen through the eyes of Alexander, who has dreamed since he was a child of serving in the Army.

The Ninth Company (9 Poma) (2005), by Fyodor Bondarchuk

This film is set during the Soviet War in Afghanistan, in particular the Battle of Hill 3234. This setting was popular in the 1990s, when most films depicted the war as something devastating to Russian soldiers without any significant positive aspects. The protagonist of *The Muslim* (1995) by Vladimir Khotinenko features a former soldier who is alienated from society, someone who has acquired foreign habits and values not consonant with the Russian character. *The Ninth Company* offers a different view of the Soviet-Afghan conflict, one that does not concentrate on the overall loss of

human life during the war, but on the victory in the featured battle. This is one reason why the film was selected.

The second reason for its selection is its depiction of the hero, his fellow soldiers, and even the sergeant who trains them for war, as a group of human beings with faults and insecurities who nonetheless perform their duty to the Fatherland. Through military training and their experiences at war, their insecurities and doubts are tamed and other admirable qualities surface in each of them. This film, although described as anti-war and anti-militaristic (Beumers, 2008: 213), depicts the heroism and sense of duty of its protagonists, and the fact that they are willing to fight until death, even for a country about to fall apart.

The third reason is that the film was partially financed by state funding allocated for the first program of Patriotic Education (Condee, 2009). The program explicitly planned for production of films to serve as patriotic propaganda. This fact gives the film a peculiar position and makes it a very good example for analysis in the context of Patriotic Education, to see how, if at all, it depicts some of the political priorities. In Russia the film was a box office hit and was enjoyed by President Putin.¹⁷ What seemed to be important to Putin was that the soldiers fought for their ideals and did a good job, even if in the background there was a tragic story for Russia.¹⁸

12 (2007) by Nikita Mikhalkov

This film is an internationally acclaimed movie in which the well-known Russian film director Nikita Mikhalkov both directs and acts. It represents a second exception in terms of choice of film-genre, for it is not a war movie. However, as already explained, war provides an important narrative framework for the movie, and is

¹⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4416774.stm>

¹⁸ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4416774.stm>

constantly recalled in flash-backs by a young Chechen boy accused of murder. The film *12* was a cinematographic success for Mikhalkov and was awarded a ‘Special Lion’ at the 64th Venice International Film Festival and nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. It is a remake of the American movie *Twelve Angry Men* (1957) by Sydney Lumet. The story revolves around a similar set of facts, although in the Russian version the young boy being tried is not Hispanic but Chechen, and the person he allegedly killed is a retired Army officer who served during the conflict in Chechnya.

In brief, the story is about twelve men who must judge a young Chechen boy accused of having killed his adoptive Russian father, the retired officer, with a knife. At first the jurors all agree on his guilt, except for one of the jurors who votes for the boy’s innocence, saying that the facts of the case should be given more careful attention. One by one the jurors change their votes and the real culprits are exposed. Mikhalkov truly gave the movie a Russian touch and characterization, as analysis will show.

The film has been selected because of the role played by Mikhalkov in the movie, a silent hero who reveals himself only at the very end of the movie. It is implied that his character can be the hero and save the young boy because he is a retired intelligence agency officer. As Mikhalkov’s character says, the word of an officer can never be doubted, not even if he is retired, because a real officer never retires from his duties: serving the Fatherland and providing a role model. The fact that Mikhalkov directed the film is the second reason for its selection, because the film and the part he assigned to himself in it affect how he as director translated the political priorities identified in Patriotic Education to the screen,.

The Admiral (2008) by Andrei Kravchuk

This film depicts the deeds and history of Alexander Kolchak, Admiral of the Black Sea Fleet and leader of the White Army in the Bolshevik Revolution. Kolchak represents a rather controversial character and historical figure, due to longstanding Soviet propaganda that completely demolished his reputation and demonised him (MacFadyen, 2009). However, the film creates the image of a national hero out of Kolchak, even though his character might be problematic in the eyes of some people. It gives Kolchak all the necessary qualities and values needed by a real patriotic Russian hero, a role model for people to follow in terms of his integrity, dignity, sense of duty, loyalty to the Russian State (as he professes in a memorable speech he gives in Siberia as leader of the White Army), devotion to the Motherland, and his extreme selflessness and readiness to sacrifice everything for his country.

The character of Kolchak presents a different hero than the ones we have seen up to now: he is fascinating, in the sense that he has a magnetic and authoritative personality who with just a look or gesture is able to establish order and attract followers. The film was also chosen because of the strong patriotism he expresses in his dialogues, and because of the intensity of the sense of duty he feels towards the Fatherland, which is portrayed in emotional images, inspiring dialogue, and spectacular scenes.

The third reason for its selection is that *The Admiral* has a strong religious basis in terms of its values. The iconography in the film is very marked and feelings toward the Fatherland are shown in an authoritative and spiritual way. The character of Kolchak embodies the characteristics of the role model identified in the first program for Patriotic Education and improved upon in the second one. Kolchak is an icon of patriotism and sense of duty to the Fatherland, and as well an archetypical Russian Orthodox believer.

Even though state symbols are not considered in detail in this dissertation, many of them are used and displayed in *The Admiral* in order to enhance the emotional crescendo to which his words and heroic gestures lead. It is interesting to see how the film director shaped such a controversial historical figure into a national hero as promoted in the criteria of Patriotic Education. The role of Kolchak was played by Konstantin Khabensky, a famous Russian actor who played the role of Anton in *Night Watch* and *Day Watch*, and also the Jewish political instructor in *Our Own* (2004) by Meshinkov.

We are from the Future (or The Black Hunters) (2008) by Andrei Malyukov

This film represents a very good case indeed for analysis in the context of Patriotic Education, and could not be left out. Andrei Malyukov is a well-known Russian film director specialising in war dramas for TV and cinema (he directed *Spetsnaz*, a war TV series). *We Are from the Future* has been selected because of the role the Great Patriotic War plays in it. The War is depicted as an educational experience, a necessary rite of passage for young people in dire need of a significant, impossible to forget lesson.

War is a way to grow up into real men and honest Russian patriots. This accords with a point in the programs, the use of the past to instil patriotism and respect for the Fatherland in the younger generation. Moreover, a second reason for selecting this film is that it targets young audiences. It is important to understand how some political messages can be conveyed to that specific audience. The third reason for its selection is that its plot accords very well with another political point, the perpetuation of the memory of the past. In this case, the memory is vivified by throwing the four protagonists back in time, providing them with virtual experiences that are impossible to forget.

The film features four friends, diverse in terms of ideology and behaviour, who have a hobby of hunting for war treasures and relics to sell on the black market. They obviously hold no respect for the Fatherland and its history; in fact, they have no values in general. One of them is a Neo-Nazi, clearly in contrast with the aims of Patriotic Education. During one of their hunting expeditions, they are magically thrown back into the year 1942, in the midst of the Great Patriotic War. They will be allowed to return home to their own time only when they have completed an assigned mission, performed their duties and learned a lesson in terms of patriotism and respect for the Fatherland, its history and the soldiers who died to defend it. These lessons are not learned easily or without pain and suffering, and it is made clear that in this rite of passage and the protagonists' experiences, these lessons cannot be properly absorbed without physical and emotional pain. War becomes a way to be reborn as true Russian patriots and mature men. What also makes the film important to the ends of this dissertation is that it is aimed at a young audience.

The Priest (2009) by Vladimir Khotinenko

This film by Khotinenko balances between war, drama and history, featuring an episode of WWII between 1941 and 1944 that has long remained little-known. The film tells the story of a group of priests sent by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Latvia to the Pskov region to re-open churches that had been closed by the Soviet authorities after the Revolution (Anemone, 2010). The region is under occupation by the Nazi invaders and the priests have to balance their duties as good Christians and good Russian patriots. Father Aleksandr Ionov struggles through some of the realities of the war, but he never loses his identity and his faith in God and his homeland. Baptised in honour of Aleksandr Nevsky, Father Aleksandr is both a patriot and a soldier of God. This film was selected because its hero is a religious figure, a priest who

embodies many of the characteristics of a real patriot. He is another type of hero, gentler than others and displaying only his personality, not his physical prowess. In Aleksandr we have lost the physicality of the archetypical hero, but we have gained in terms of spirituality. The movie portrays WWII and the struggle of common people living in the territories occupied by the Germans, once more underlining the importance the Great Patriotic War has in Russia and how political propaganda can benefit from its themes. A second reason that explains the choice of this film is the appearance of Russian traitors to their homeland and how the film depicts them. In the context of the Patriotic Education programs, this element becomes very important.

The religious element is central and symbolic in Khotinenko's film and takes on a new role in the Russian cinema, similar to *The Admiral*, whose protagonist is blessed in the name of a religious icon and to Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun 2*, where religion and the protagonist's Messianic mission fuse in the character of Kotov. True to his namesake Nevsky, Father Aleksandr fights against the Germans in his own way.

One additional note about the film regarding its premier and why it was produced: *The Priest* premiered in Moscow in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour during the Easter holidays. The late Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Aleksei II, had commissioned a novel about Father Aleksandr, and then this movie (Anemone, 2010).

A third reason for selecting this film is the fact that its director changed the actual story of Father Aleksandr, making him into a real patriot and honest hero. The analysis will explain more about this choice. Because the true story was modified in a certain direction, it makes the film a perfect case for analysis.

The Brest Fortress (брестская Крепост) (2010) by Aleksandr Kott

This film is a war drama presenting the heroic defence of the fortress at Brest after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. It is a perfect example of enemies invading the Motherland and destroying the peaceful paradise in which her people are living. It is also a perfect example of the 'other' breaking a pact and trying to destroy the independence and identity of the Fatherland. The film's four main protagonists and heroes are ready to serve their Fatherland and to protect their Motherland up to the ultimate sacrifice. These three reasons explain the selection of *The Brest Fortress* for analysis, because this film depicts all the political priorities identified in the programs for Patriotic Education.

In particular, it features the element of the memory of the past in a very emotional way, in tune with the path indicated in the programs. The only survivor in the story, a war veteran who became a hero when only a child at the outbreak of the War, begins to narrate events with the significant words: 'I remember, I remember everything'. This is another reason for selecting the film: the emphasis placed on the memory element is very strong and dominant. *The Brest Fortress* is perhaps the one film that depicts all of the political points and makes them all main themes, which is why it had to be analysed.

In the three main zones of resistance, Soviet soldiers bravely fight under the lead of three officers who prove they are real heroes and role models. They fight for nine days in defence of the Fortress until almost no survivors are left. They are examples of ultimate willingness to sacrifice oneself to protect the Fatherland and serve it to the last breath. The main character of the movie, Sasha, fifteen years old at the time of the war, tells us at the end of the movie that he will never forget the heroic people, soldiers and officers who fought those nine long days, and how they will always be alive in his heart. This movie can be compared to *The Star* (2002) by

Lebedev in terms of its content, sharing as it does some very similar elements with that film.

We Are from the Future 2 (2010) by Aleksandr Samokhvalov and Boris Rostov

This film is a sequel to the first one of the same name and features two of the four friends from the earlier movie, who have now become respectable Russian citizens, still true to their values. Bormann now uses his real name of Sergei Filatov and is a university professor of history. Skull is now Oleg Vasiliev, who reunites the descendants of dead Russian soldiers with their belongings scattered by war across the countryside of Russia. The lessons of the first movie have been well learned and have not been forgotten, nor has the love for Nina that Sergei faithfully treasured.

In the sequel, the two protagonists fly to Ukraine for a re-enactment of the Battle of Brody, a famous battle where the Nazi Germans and a group of Ukrainian separatist troops allied with the Nazis tried to break through Soviet lines. During the re-enactment, Sergei and Oleg are thrown back to the year 1944, this time together with two young Ukrainians hired to play the part of the renegade Ukrainians. Needless to say, the two Ukrainians hate everything about Russia and disrespect its history, which according to the movie, means disrespecting common historical ground (Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union until 1991).

This time war plays three different roles: first, it is a rite of passage and an educational experience for the Ukrainians, literally transforming them into real, courageous men ready to fight for a common cause without any more fear. Second, war tests the depth and truth of Oleg and Sergei's values and patriotism on several occasions, and shows how their former experience as soldiers has changed them completely and in the best ways. Third, war is a unifying event that in its tragedy can build sincere friendships and trust between two groups that began their journey as

antagonists. The four do not only become friends, but brothers-in-arms and fight bravely together against the same enemy.

The way war is featured in this film is one of the reasons for choosing *We are from the Future 2*. The second is to observe how the characters grow after the first movie and how they acquire the undeniable status of heroes, true to the principle of Patriotic Education that serving the Fatherland as a soldier is the way to grow into a real man and a hero. The film presents several political points in a particular way in order to attract young audiences. That makes the film a necessary case for analysis, because the programs for Patriotic Education particularly target the young generation of Russians.

Three facts about this film should be stated: first, the movie was successful in terms of box-office because it made \$8.2 million in Russia at its opening. Second, it once more targeted young audiences in its overall approach and in its narrative. Third, *We are from the Future 2* was promptly condemned in Ukraine and did not receive certification for distribution there (McVey, 2010).

Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel (2010 and 2011) by Nikita Mikhalkov

This film is the sequel to the highly acclaimed, well-reviewed *Burnt by the Sun* from 1994, a film that won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. Nikita Mikhalkov is a film director who cannot be ignored in this dissertation. He is the only filmmaker represented here by two films. He is well known for his strong Russian nationalist ideas and Slavophil views. Last but not least, he is an active political supporter of Vladimir Putin. Putin actually visited the set of *Burnt by the Sun 2* when it was in production.

The film is set in the Eastern front of the Great Patriotic War during 1941-1945. It reflects the idealistic view of the conflict found in the programs for Patriotic

Education and strongly supports the Russian Orthodox religion. *Burnt by the Sun 2* offers a second example after *The Priest* where religion is a central element and gives the protagonist a Messianic role and mission. However, it is not religion alone that makes its protagonist Mikhalkov-Kotov a Messianic hero, but his mission and duty to serve the Fatherland and spread Russian values outside the borders of the Motherland.

The film was chosen for this dissertation because it strongly depicts the difference between Russian values, in terms of morals, spirituality, and integrity, and those of the ‘other’, in this case the Nazi Germans. It also depicts well the fate of traitors to Russia, with very peculiar, idiosyncratic nuances. In accord with the aims of this dissertation and the research questions, *Burnt by the Sun 2* was selected in order to observe how a film director like Mikhalkov, with his openly-expressed political views, depicts the Great Patriotic War, in particular in the context of Patriotic Education. We keep in mind his words from 1997 about the necessity of creating heroes and role models for the younger generation and the Russian people in general. The film represents the ideas expressed in the programs about the role of Russia in the fate and history of the world, which this analysis will explain in detail. It is obvious that Mikhalkov’s work could not be avoided. It will prove to be a very peculiar case.

The film consists of two parts: *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus* from 2010 and *Burnt by the Sun 2: Citadel* from 2011. This analysis will treat the film as one case because the parts are interconnected and form one entire story. This makes a separate analysis of each of the two parts unnecessary, which would otherwise result in a repetition of the same content and elements.

Ironically, considering the national and international success of *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), the sequel was a Russian and international box-office flop. It has been estimated that it grossed only \$8.2 million, compared to its budget of around \$55

million. The massive advertising campaign before the premiere and the huge budget invested in production apparently did not serve their purpose.

The film leaves doubt about some plot elements: for instance, we leave a girl no older than ten years in the original *Burnt by the Sun* and we meet her as the young adult Nadia (Kotov's daughter) in the sequel. It is also left unclear how Kotov-Mikhalkov escaped the explosion of a mine on which he stepped toward the end of the first movie. Perhaps, this last uncertainty stresses the Messianic nature of his mission to completely defeat the enemy. It certainly suggests that this Messianic hero is immune to what would be a mortal threat to normal people.

The Seven Parameters and the Analysis of the Films

To analyse the selected films and give answers to the research questions it is necessary to identify a number of parameters that correspond to the political ideas promoted in the programs for Patriotic Education, which can be observed to see how they are represented and how they are depicted. The way they are translated in the movies is the key to understanding whether filmmakers reflected the established political priorities; if they present them in similar tones, following the political lines indicated by the programs and giving the films an educational and propagandistic role.

The system of Patriotic Education is not new in Russia and, as has been explained already, was a program that had previously been developed and fostered in the Soviet Union. Anatoli Rapoport (2009) identified similarities in the programs created in the two different time periods. It will be interesting to see whether similarities are found in the movies in terms of how they represent political points.

Chapter One recognised a number of political priorities through analysis of the two programs for Patriotic Education of Russian Citizens prepared for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010. These priorities are expressed by key words in order to capture their

essential content: Fatherland/Motherland, war, soldier/Army, patriotism/values, role-model, enemy/other, and memory of the past. There are seven key words, because as explained in the introduction to this chapter, for the analysis of the films it was necessary to work in more detail, dividing one political priority into two sub-priorities that translate into two different parameters used in the analysis. For this reason, the political priority ‘persuading Russian citizens and young people in particular to serve in the military and in the Army’ was split using two different key words: war and soldier/army that will be give the parameters of ‘war’ and ‘soldier-figure’.

Preparing Russian citizens for an eventual war and protecting the Motherland from possible threats are aims to be achieved by persuading citizens to serve in the Army. Future threats to the country, coming from outside or inside Russia, are mentioned in the programs and drive the necessity of fulfilling military duties. It is important to the analysis of the films to split this political point into two sub-priorities, in order to observe more closely how the figure of the soldier and war itself are depicted. Each key word contains particular elements that create a wider definition of the word and that allow identification of precise parameters that will be described here.

First, it is necessary to explain how the parameters were identified and why they are linked to particular key words. The overall framework and nature of the programs for Patriotic Education are based on the concept of patriotism, as already elucidated in the previous chapter. Through analysis of the 2003 ‘Concept’ document it was possible to establish an official definition of patriotism and understand what Russian patriotism means in the context of the educational programs. Patriotism is the general key word because it represents the essence of the programs.

The revival of patriotism is equivalent to the revival of Russia (2001). Patriotism, as defined by the programs, carries with it a set of related values and

qualities which the ideal Russian patriot should have: devotion to the Fatherland, loyalty, readiness to serve the Army and serve the Fatherland, readiness for self-sacrifice if necessary, physical strength, military skills, honesty and integrity, a sense of duty in the military and civil senses, and respectful behaviour toward the Army, Russia's glorious past and national heroes/soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their country.

The Orthodox Church of Russia is an active supporter of Patriotic Education and took part in the creation of the programs, casting a religious light upon Russian patriotism (Blum, 2006). For that reason, religious faith and values are important components of Patriotic Education. Religion was persecuted and all but forgotten in Russia, especially during Soviet times, as it apparently now is being forgotten or outgrown outside Russia (Karaganov, 2016). If the West is losing its religious and spiritual basis and its cultural inheritance, Russia is now actually strengthening them, and these two different systems of values, East and West, are now confronting each other.

What is the position of Russia and of the Kremlin? How they perceive their position in the world and their role? Even though that is not the focus of this dissertation, analysis of the films might suggest a possible answer, at least in terms of how Russian values are presented in movies, in comparison to the values of the 'other'. The key words for enemy/other and for patriotic values can be understood in this context. The same applies to 'soldier' and 'role model': these words are often repeated in the content of Patriotic Education and the soldier becomes a figure equivalent to the hero.

The programs often reiterate and use both the word 'Fatherland' and the word 'Motherland'. Fatherland implies a strong, high authority guiding and giving orders from above, which must be loyally obeyed and shown devotion. Motherland means

the land that embraces all Russian citizens and provides them a place to live, and that needs protection and unconditional love. What threatens the Motherland must be protected from is not expressly stated (although the programs do mention the threat posed to Russia by terrorism). Nevertheless, the potential threats and enemies are in any event obvious and can come both from outside and inside the country. The discourse in the programs about ‘protection’ hints of the presence of potential enemies and threats, outside and inside the country, that can only be defeated by patriotic soldiers.

The key word ‘war’ was suggested by the role played by the Great Patriotic War in the educational programs. As a critical historical event, it is given an educational role in the programs. It is also a unifying factor, which can still evoke emotion and nostalgic feelings in the Russian people. While many European states celebrate the day WWII ended and they were liberated from the enemy, Russia celebrates Victory Day on 9 May every year, symbolising how strongly the outcome of the war is felt in Russia. In the programs, the Great Patriotic War is to be celebrated with several planned activities. War is not viewed negatively, if it means to fight for the Fatherland and assure its independence. Not only WWII, but other battles are mentioned in the programs. They are all linked to the same semantic in the numerous activities dedicated to past events and battles, and because of the reiteration of the words ‘memory’ and ‘past’—key words that can be easily identified in the two programs.

This chapter will now proceed to explain the seven parameters, how they were identified from the political priorities indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education and then, it will discuss how they can be identified in the chosen films. Each of the parameters will be presented with a number of questions that will be asked during the analysis of the movies, and it will be shown how the seven elements will

are depicted in the films. The parameters are derived from the political priorities of the programs. Only after having identified some of the priorities it was possible to create the seven common parameters for analysis. The way those elements are depicted will answer the first research question and provide an understanding of how political ideas and points are presented in the movies. As already explained, the political priorities described in Chapter One can be summarised in seven specific key words: Fatherland/Motherland, war, soldier, patriotism, role-model, enemy, and memory of the past.

Protagonist as role model and hero:

The 2003 ‘Concept’ states the need to foster formation of role models for citizens that can inspire them to follow their examples: ‘the subject of patriotic upbringing may be a single person—an ordinary citizen or a representative of the government—who manifests patriotism, loyalty to his civic duty and becomes a motivating example and role model’ (2003: 10). The programs for Patriotic Education explain the qualities a patriotic Russian citizen should possess and over time develop in depth by serving the Fatherland and performing his or her civic and military duties. It is clear from a reading of the programs and the ‘Concept’ that the Russian authorities aim to shape citizens into the quintessential type of man or woman from ages ago, who in turn represents the ideal patriot.

Even if such shaping is not possible, it is still necessary to provide role models that evoke respect and admiration, and thus motivate other people to try to follow their example. A parameter for protagonists arises from this political priority. If the filmmaker and the film reflect the desire outlined in Patriotic Education, the protagonist will be a role model and a hero in most respects. The programs stress the importance of respecting national heroes and taking pride in their courageous and

selfless sacrifice. Thus it is implied that heroes are role models to emulate. Why should they be emulated? Because they love their Motherland, serve and respect their Fatherland and are willing to sacrifice their lives for them. In a word, they are true patriots. The key words hero and role model mentioned in the programs led to the identification and adoption of the first parameter: the protagonist as role model and hero.

However, the programs specify the other characteristics and essential qualities already mentioned, which we find in the psychological, physical and moral aspects of the protagonists of the selected films. If a character in a film represents the qualities indicated in the programs, which ones will be depicted and in which way? Will the protagonist sacrifice his life for the Fatherland? Will he be a real patriot? Will the protagonist exhibit military skills important to the story and his mission, will he have physical strength and a handsome appearance? If the character proves to be a role model and then becomes a hero, will he be rewarded? What kind of audience will the role model be aimed at: young audiences or general/mature audiences? Will the hero prove he is a real man and patriot by serving in the Army? How will the protagonist act in particular situations? Will the values of the protagonist make him serve as an example? Can he be an example and a hero as well? Will the desired values and qualities remain the same in all the analysed movies or will they change according to the message of the film and role of the hero/protagonist?

This list contains some of the questions that are automatically asked when observing and analysing the movies. How can a protagonist serve both as a role model and as a hero? Patriotic Education is very clear in terms of its desired qualities and how to prove to the Fatherland that a one is a patriot and hence deserving of the title of hero. It must be understood that not all role-models are heroes. To become a hero requires more sacrifice and preferably, service in the Army. If a film portrays a

character who does both, it provides the audience with an example of the perfect Russian patriot.

If the protagonist has the values and qualities explained in Chapter One (deep loyalty, dignity, military skills, physical strength, courage, willingness to self-sacrifice in order to protect the Motherland, willingness to serve the Fatherland, honest patriotism and devotion for the country, sense of duty, honour, service in the Army). If he moreover puts duty to the Fatherland before anything else and perhaps is spiritually enlightened, in the sense of being religious, and performs certain acts and expresses certain thoughts in words, he or she can be identified as a role-model and hero. The things the filmmaker uses to depict the protagonist as such a role model and hero show how the related political priority has been translated into film and transmitted to the audience.

Patriotism as the cardinal value

One of the main political aims of Patriotic Education is to foster patriotism as the cardinal value in Russian citizens, as the first step to reviving Russia. Patriotism will then awaken other interconnected values in people, values which are related to the Russian Orthodox religion as well. Patriotism can be displayed and demonstrated by devotion to the Fatherland and serving it willingly, by loving the Motherland and wanting to protect it at the all costs and by fulfilling civic, constitutional and military duties.

Many other values are associated with patriotism, to the point that they could be deeper layers of that concept. The fact that the educational programs gravitate toward patriotism necessarily leads us to formulate a parameter focused on patriotism and values. This is intended to make patriotism as a container for numerous other qualities and values that a protagonist should display through his acts and words. Not

only the protagonist should display such values, but other, more minor characters as well, adding to the overall message and atmosphere of the film. How can this approach be identified in a film? How can values be identified? If a protagonist openly declares his or her love for Russia and his or her desire to protect and serve it, he or she is expressing patriotic values. If the characters die while fulfilling their duty, we encounter another dimension of patriotism as meant by the programs: the willingness to sacrifice everything for the greater good.

The values identified in Patriotic Education can also be depicted in how enemies and traitors to the homeland are treated. If a traitor is punished more severely than an enemy, the film presents a contrast to the desired deep devotion and loyalty to the Fatherland. If a film presents us with religious symbols, icons or religious figures, or if religious values are essential qualities of the hero/role model, then spiritual and religious values are given an important role. The way the hero of the story behaves, the words he or she pronounces and the atmosphere created around his or her actions and words are other indicators of the presence of the parameter of patriotism and its related values. In some cases, a protagonist who discovers and develops sentiments of patriotism and love for the homeland is rewarded in the film, and that is depicted as one of his highest personal achievements.

The figure of the soldier

The analysis of the two programs for Patriotic Education demonstrates how essential it is to persuade Russian citizens in general, and young people in particular, to serve in the Army and not to avoid required military service. The programs often refer to soldiers as heroes, liberators, and Fatherland-defenders, and bestow upon them an important role and position, showing that the armed forces and soldiers and officers should be respected. Serving in the Army is described as a duty to the Fatherland, an

expression of love towards the Motherland, and a profession deserving of honour and pride. Performing the duties of a soldier and serving with honour in the Army is a way to become a hero and a role model.

The figure of the soldier is very important to the context and political discourse of Patriotic Education. It was therefore imperative to set up a parameter based on the figure of the soldier to understand how he or she is depicted in the film: does the soldier have a positive role? Is the soldier the saviour of the Fatherland? Does being a soldier make the protagonist a hero? Does it make him a role model? Are military skills or military experience important to the story of the protagonist? Do they serve any further purpose beyond merely fighting in a battle? Is the figure of the soldier an integrated and respected figure in society and in the overall story of the film? How are soldiers depicted in terms of their physicality and personality? How is the Army depicted in the film? What roles and attitudes do officers and soldiers have in general? Is the Army an extension of the family, as represented by the Fatherland and Motherland? What does being a soldier mean to the protagonist/hero? What values does the soldier possess? Do the values and qualities of the soldier, in terms of personality, morality and physical appearance, remain the same or do they change? Is there a wide gap between Russian soldiers and enemy soldiers in terms of skills, values and behaviours?

These questions help to outline the figure of the soldier as presented in the films and to understand whether the soldier becomes a hero and an example to follow because of his acts and behaviours. If the soldier becomes a role model who sets an example for other people, it means that the goals of Patriotic Education are being respected.

War

The fourth element or parameter for analysis was identified in the same political priority that generated the soldier-figure. This political point, 'persuading Russian citizens, and young people in particular, to perform military service and serve in the Army', contains elements related to the military sphere and aims to use the example of the Great Patriotic War to instil pride and respect for the Army. The purpose is to convince young people to join the Army by elaborating the myth that that War represents in Russia and by stoking the emotions it still evokes in most Russian citizens.

War becomes an important educational tool that can be used in several ways: as a means of educating audiences about respect for the past/history of the Fatherland, as a rite of passage that every generation should experience to prove their loyalty and devotion to the Fatherland, as a way to persuade people to join the Army and become soldiers, as a means of uniting citizens around shared past suffering, and as an adventure and experience to be lived in order to grow as real men and patriots. There are other uses for war, and this political priority had to be split into two different parameters: one that concentrates on how the figure of the soldier is depicted and serves as role model/hero, and another focused on war and the role it is given in the film. How is war represented in the film? Is it depicted as something solely tragic, or as a dramatic event to be faced in order to protect the Motherland and serve the Fatherland? Which war is portrayed and how is it portrayed? What does the war signify to the protagonist/hero? Is the war a way to become a hero? Does the war make the protagonists grow morally and as patriots? How is the war depicted in the film in terms of loss on the Russian side and in terms of how weapons are used? Does war represent a sacred duty that must be performed in order to save the homeland from invaders and enemies?

Fatherland and Motherland

The analysis of the programs for Patriotic Education outlined a priority of reviving the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland, and in particular the Fatherland, which as a word is repeated in the programs more often than Motherland. It has been explained that the concept of Fatherland is associated with a high authority, mainly political and military, which is related to principles of service, by fulfilling duties, following orders, sacrificing if necessary and demonstrating deep devotion and loyalty. The Fatherland can be imagined as an authoritative father-figure who guides his sons and daughters, blessing them and even rewarding them if they behave like honest patriots, but on the other hand punishing them if they betray their homeland, fail to perform their duties or refuse to follow the orders of the father. The concept of Motherland is associated with Russia in terms of land and homeland, the physical country that should be loved, respected and protected at any cost. Motherland suggests the idea of a maternal, welcoming figure that takes care of her children and never abandons them. This concept in the programs is related to love, protection, pride and a sense of belonging.

The Motherland and Fatherland together form a solid family that guarantees one a place in society, a purpose in life, a bright future and a sense of belonging, never letting the people feel alone or deserted. This concept was often expressed negatively in the films of the 1990s, where characters were alienated from society, did not fit into it in any way, were lost souls without purpose or identity, or were trying to escape their dark and empty reality by fleeing (oftentimes abroad, or simply in their imagination).

The parameter of Fatherland and Motherland was adopted on the basis of how often they words were repeated in the programs and their connotations. It is clear from Patriotic Education that the political authorities are aware of the unstable situation that Russia faced at the beginning of year 2000 and want to stabilise it, reviving concepts

of Motherland and Fatherland that were somehow lost in the 1990s. How are these two concepts depicted and translated into movies? They are associated with two particular images that have related semantics: a high, strong authority on the one hand, and on the other a caring, loving and maternal entity. The true patriot follows orders and fulfils duties to the first, and loves and protects the second. These concepts are depicted by strong leading characters that represent the highest authority, who are set above all other figures in the role of symbolic fathers. They are also expressed in a protagonist's actions and words, for instance by his or her frankly declaring willingness to serve the State or Fatherland, and to protect the homeland.

The concepts can be illustrated by showing the audience a character's willingness to fulfil duties and sacrifice everything for the Fatherland. The Motherland is represented by the land of Russia and by the camera's loving embrace of heroes and protagonists as they draw their last breath, should they die to protect her. Motherland is expressed by a sense of belonging to the homeland, by love felt by protagonists and secondary characters. Both the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland are strictly connected to patriotism, therefore a protagonist who behaves in the way indicated by Patriotic Education, as a perfect model of patriot, relates the two concepts.

There are ways to depict the Fatherland and Motherland in more subtle tones in the films. The analysis of the film will show how they are presented: are the protagonists behaving as desired by Patriotic Education? Do the protagonists become role models and heroes because they serve the Fatherland and protect the Motherland? Do Motherland and Fatherland represent a symbolic family for the protagonist?

The enemy and the 'other'

The programs for Patriotic Education and the 2003 'Concept' provide a solid foundation in terms of values, morals and duties. Patriotism is described as 'one of the

most striking features of the Russian national character' (Concept, 2003). Russian patriotism has its own peculiarities: 'a high humanistic orientation of Russian patriotic ideas, tolerance, Christianity and law-abiding' (Concept, 2003). It says that Russians have a strong need for collective life and a special love for Mother Nature, both inherent in the Motherland. Values based on patriotism, especially in its Russian version, are elevated and are considered to be unique qualities of the Russian character.

In connection with this feeling of uniqueness and peculiarity in terms of values, morals and spirituality, the programs reveal how Russia is meant to play an important role in world history and in the fate of the world. The political point identified as 'the role and mission of Russia in the world' explains this idea and shows how the country has made a vital contribution to international history, especially as related to the Great Patriotic War and the sacrifice the country had to make to defeat the common enemy and restore peace. The sixth parameter, relating to how the enemy and the non-Russian 'other' is depicted, was therefore conceived. To understand whether films place Russia and Russian heroes on a higher plane than other, non-Russian characters, it is important to observe how the 'other' is depicted. Is the gap between 'bad guys' and 'good guys' very large in terms of morals, values, skills and everything else? In case the enemy is not a central element, is it because the protagonist/hero is already presented as a super-hero with whom no one can compare? If the enemy is depicted as the 'bad guy', what characteristics does he display? Are the characteristics the complete opposite of Russian values and qualities? Are the enemies or the others shown to have attitudes that by comparison elevate Russian protagonists to superiority on many levels? Are the enemies found and fought only inside the country or outside the country as well? Is there a message in the film that hints about Russia wanting to 'export' her system of values? Do films portray Russian soldiers

going outside the country's borders on an important mission? Is that mission to fight the enemy, to restore a given system of values, and is it spiritually and religiously blessed?

For this analysis, dubbing this element the enemy/the 'other' expresses the difference between what Russia represents and what the enemy (or the other, in terms of its set of values) represents, in order to understand whether Russia is placed in a position of superiority. This is reinforced by the idea that Russia brings a set of values different from Western European values. Faith and religion were officially abolished and forgotten for many long years in Russia. More recently they seem to be meeting the same fate outside of Russia at the same time they are being strengthened inside it (Karaganov, 2016).

This parameter can be observed in how the enemy is presented and how fighting the war is felt: if war is depicted as a duty and a mission to fulfil in order to free the world from evil, even to the extent of chasing enemies outside the Fatherland's borders, it means the filmmaker wants to give Russia an important role in the world and show that Russia makes an important contribution in the international political arena.

Memory of the past

It is clear from the programs that the Russian political authorities want to glorify the country's history and its past in terms of its military victories, its achievements in all spheres (particularly the military), the Great Patriotic War and other 'glorious events' in order to create a myth around the 'glorious and heroic' history of the Fatherland. Using history to foster patriotism and inherent sentiment is logical in the context of Patriotic Education and can serve as tool to stir up emotions. The study and focus on

the past (especially the military past) of Russia is a way to connect old and young, and instil in young people respect, pride and devotion for their Fatherland.

The Kremlin is focused on trying to control and defeat any attempt to falsify the history of the country and related events as it sees them, and control the version of the past that is presented in the media and taught in schools. The phrase ‘perpetuate the memory of...’ is often repeated and led us to identify the parameter of the ‘memory of the past’, to see and understand how this political aim is translated in the films, if at all. It can be depicted in words, and by showing monuments or certain scenes, by having the protagonist remember the past and re-experience it through flash-backs or by the manner in which a character narrates the story.

A filmmaker can state at the beginning of his or her film that it is dedicated to the memory of someone or some particular event. The characters in the film may be history teachers, meaning they teach the history of their Fatherland to young generations and pass on their experience. Is this element a dominant and central theme of the film? What character is the link between the past and the present? Is he or she a war veteran? How is the past remembered? Does the film pass on the experience of war to young people from their elders and veterans of war? What words are used to depict this?

In this chapter, it has been explained how the parameters were identified and how they can be observed in films, associating each of them with a number of questions arising as the films are viewed and studied. The next chapter will be dedicated to analysis of the eleven films introduced in this section of the dissertation and to answering the research questions. Conclusions will follow at the end of Chapter Three, summarising what has been observed and discovered in the dissertation.

Chapter 3: Contextual and Comparative Films

Analysis (2000-2011)

Introduction:

Chapter Three will be focused on contextual analysis of the selected films and is divided into two parts. The first part concentrates on individual analysis of each film, describing its story, providing information and facts related to the work and the filmmaker (for instance, if it won a prize, if there were controversies at its release and more), then proceeding to give a detailed description and analysis of the film in terms of the seven elements explained in Chapter Two. The analysis of the film based on the seven parameters, which reflect the political priorities of the programs for Patriotic Education (2001-2005 and 2006-2010), analysed in Chapter One, will answer the first research question, how movies depict some of those political priorities. Not all elements are depicted or featured as main themes in all the selected films, because some movies focus more on certain aspects than others, as this chapter will demonstrate. The second part of this chapter will offer an overview of the individual analysis and a horizontal comparative description of the elements from film to film, in order to understand how these points have changed, evolved and perhaps grown in importance and intensity, which ones were reinforced and if the patterns shown in the movies responded to the effort put forth in the programs to strengthen certain priorities in order to achieve certain expected results. This comparative analysis and description will be assisted by the use of a matrix that illustrates which elements are present in the movies, and whether the elements depicted elements are strong or weak.

The seven elements have already been explained in depth in Chapter Two in relation to the methodology of research and the decisions made in choosing those particular points. They were the ones observed in the course of watching a number of

Russian war movies produced after the year 2000 that reflected and illustrated the political priorities of the Patriotic Education programs. These were not the only priorities described in the programs, but they were key points often repeated and mentioned in terms of desired results and planned activities, and were the most immediate for analysis. What this means is that these priorities and elements offer straightforward concepts that can be easily transposed in film and observed through textual analysis. It is not difficult to see what war represents in a movie. Whether it is a complete human tragedy or something else, how protagonists act in relation to war, the dialogues exchanged and the differences between the good guys and the bad guys are keys to interpretation that will answer the questions for research. The programs and the 'Concept' describe the official definition of patriotism. If a protagonist embodies those characteristics, it means that he or she serves as patriotic example and expresses patriotism.

Before introducing the first part of this chapter, the seven parameters will be briefly described and listed, to allow faster connection to and observation of them in the analysis of the eleven films:

Hero-protagonist: is a character portrayed as a role model to follow in terms of values, attitudes, and actions? Is he or she a real hero? How is he or she portrayed, which qualities and characteristics does he or she possess?

Soldier (or officer): how is the figure of the soldier/officer represented? Is it portrayed in a positive way and does the experience of military life serve a good purpose? Does the protagonist become a hero through his service as a soldier or officer?

War: how is war depicted and what is its role in the film? Does war symbolise a rite of passage for young generations and a learning experience, memories of which are to be treasured as something of great importance?

Fatherland and Motherland: as explained in Chapter One, by Fatherland is intended political authority that is to be respected, followed and served, that leads and disciplines the family and children as a father would do. The Motherland is the land and a country that welcomes her children and takes care of them and in return is meant to be protected. How are they depicted? Are there characters that symbolise these two concepts?

Patriotism and related values: how is the patriotism expressed in the programs and 'Concept' depicted in the films? Is it a key value for the characters? Other values inherent in the concept of patriotism in the education programs are: spiritual and religious values, courage, selflessness, willingness to sacrifice oneself, sense of duty, physical and mental strength, fighting skills, honour, respect for the past and for the Army, dignity, loyalty and readiness to follow orders.

The enemy and the other: how is the enemy portrayed? Who is the enemy: German invaders during the Great Patriotic War, Chechen rebels or a different enemy? What do they signify in the film? Is the difference between the Russian protagonists and the enemy so marked that it shows superiority on different levels of the Russian characters?

The memory of the past: the importance of remembering the past and respecting the glorious actions and sacrifices of national heroes and soldiers is stressed in the programs, in particular in the second one. Is it depicted in the films, and if so, how? Is what happens to the protagonists taught and passed to younger generations?

This analysis will now proceed in chronological order, beginning with a film from the year 2000, *Brat 2* by Aleksei Balabanov, and concluding with a film produced in 2011, *Burnt by the Sun 2: Citadel* by Nikita Mikhalkov.

Part 1: Contextual Analysis of Films in Relation to the Programs for Patriotic Education

Film 1: *Brat 2* (2000) by Aleksei Balabanov

'Russians don't desert their own in war.'



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These are the words pronounced by Danila Bagrov to a Russian prostitute he meets in Chicago, Illinois, as he tries to save her from that world and her squalid situation. The sentence reveals the nature and real character of Danila: he is a loyal and patriotic soldier who fights and rescues the oppressed, and does not hesitate to put his life in danger when it comes to his own countrymen. Danila is an urban soldier, who fights his own private urban war.

Brat 2 represents an exception in this analysis because it belongs to the war genre, but was produced and released in 2000, outside the time frame of the Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005. The previous chapter explained the reasons for its selection and the present section will not go

¹⁹ <http://st.kp.yandex.net/images/shop/33433.jpg>

further into that, but it is important to understand that even though it was produced outside the chosen time frame, it is a film that has absorbed the change in the political environment and begins to show certain political priorities that become clear in Russia's political discourse after the election of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia (Stojanova, 2005; Beumers, 2009).

One particular element is different between the first movie and its sequel: the place that war and Danila's past as a soldier in the first Chechen campaign is given in the movie. In *Brat* (1997), his experience in the Army is revealed only toward the end of the film, when it has already become evident that Danila possesses skills and a martial mindset that could only have been learned in the Army. His service in the Army however does not guarantee him any real respect or gratitude, as is shown by his mother's attitude toward him, his lack of a job and his precarious, almost marginal, social position. It is true that his military skills give him the chance to save his brother, a surrogate for his lost father and broken family (Beumers, 1999), and affirm him to be a strong character and anti-hero (Beumers, 1999; Condee, 2009).

In *Brat 2* (2000), the film opens with Danila and two former comrades being invited to a TV studio in Moscow to share their past experiences as soldiers in the first Chechen campaign. His role as soldier and the war he fought are not hidden anymore, but actually discussed publicly on a TV show in front of the entire country. This will be further discussed and analysed in detail below, when the war and soldier elements of this film are described. However, before analysing the film using the seven parameters, it is first necessary to introduce Alexei Balabanov, director of the iconic films *Brat* and *Brat 2*, and to offer a short description of the film plot, explaining what these movies represent in Russian cinema and why they became cult films.

Aleksei Balabanov was born in 1959 and died on 18 May 2013. He became very famous in Russia with his crime-action films *Brat* and its sequel *Brat 2*, both of

which were blockbusters and very successful in terms of box-office results and video sales (Condee, 2009). Nancy Condee reflects on Balabanov and his art in *The Imperial Trace. Recent Russian Cinema* (2009), a work in which she investigates six prominent Russian directors who resisted the collapse of the Soviet Union and along with it, the cinema industry in which they worked. (Condee, 2009: 4). Condee describes Balabanov's work as follows:

In these conditions Balabanov's heroes [...] exhibit what Alena Solntseva has called the David complex [...] If the David complex holds true for these figures, it equally holds true for Balabanov himself, whose David complex drives his assault on the privileges and resources of Hollywood cinema. Following this logic for the moment we might insist that Balabanov's work operates in two parallel registers: his politics of Russian domestic conflicts and his politics of global cinema. In the former he functions as a member of the imperial rabble, keen on keeping old superiorities in place. In the latter, global regime Balabanov is the provincial provocateur, the David who would fight for a world in which the elite cinematic indulgences of a Quentin Tarantino, David Lynch, or Sam Peckinpah – with each of whom he is occasionally compared – are not the exclusive prerogatives of American Hollywood director alone. (Condee, 2009: 219)

The first *Brat* movie sees Danila moving to Saint Petersburg to meet his admired older brother Victor and to find a job. Once he arrives in the city, Danila learns that Victor works as gangster and hit-man under the name of 'Tartar'. Danila too is then put to work as a hit-man by his brother. He gets involved in a fight between rival gangsters and has to save his brother, whom he has always considered a father-figure and deeply loved, even though Victor has betrayed him, caused him pain and put him through dramatic experiences.

The situation turns around in *Brat 2*. Danila now lives in Moscow and is interviewed on TV as a war hero. This time it is the older brother who must seek his help. A former comrade asks Danila to help him save his own twin brother, who now is a NHL hockey star living in Chicago, because the brother is the victim of a group of American gangsters. This friend dies when he tries to obtain more information about

his twin, and then Danila and his brother Victor take action to avenge him and save the friend's brother.

The action moves to Chicago, Danila's new realm of urban warfare, where he operates as a professional hit-man with a true soldier's heart and mindset. The film is a preview of what future Russian movies will show on the screen and to their audiences. It is a means of projecting and continuing some of the political priorities indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education. Because of the importance the programs place on citizens being patriots and examples to follow for the younger generation, we will now move on to analysis of the film, starting with the protagonist/role model element, to show whether Danila, despite his limitations and his dark side, can be considered a role model in terms of patriotism and readiness to serve as an ideal soldier.

Danila Bagrov is first introduced as a good-looking, attractive young man with a child-like, kind smile. He lives in Moscow and cares nothing for frivolous pop music that, according to him, sounds fake and is not suitable to be listened to in wartime. He is noticed by the pop-star Irina Saltykova, who thinks he is 'handsome' and asks for his name, showing clear interest as a result of his television interview, where he talks about his experiences during the first war in Chechnya.

Two points are made at the very beginning of the movie: first, Danila is a very handsome man who easily attracts the attention and interest of women, even a nationally famous pop-star like Irina Saltykova, who plays herself in the movie. The audience here meets a young man who exudes real masculinity and 'sexual magnetism', as described by Susan Larsen in 'National Identity, Cultural Authority, and the Post-Soviet Blockbuster: Nikita Mikhalkov and Aleksei Balabanov' (2003). Larsen draws attention to the masculinity of the heroes brought to the public by the film directors cited in her title and describes how this characteristic emerges more and more beginning in the 2000's (Larsen, 2003).

Second, Danila is a soldier who fought in the first war in Chechnya and is described by his comrades as the toughest, smartest and possibly bravest of all, as his friend tells how Danila never feared anything. A picture of the men as soldiers in their military uniforms is shown. They all look very handsome, displaying their muscles and proud smiles, communicating a form of primal power and sense of respect enhanced by their military uniforms and weapons. Danila is proud of his past in the Army and remembers the action in Chechnya with sweet nostalgia. After a few lines of dialogue, it can be seen that the protagonist is a potential role model due to his past in the Army and his being tough, brave and smart, qualities he demonstrates and proves throughout the film.

Even if he is described as a killer-hero by Beumers (2008), Danila is also a romantic, dark knight and a soldier in his heart, fighting a private urban war against gangsters who killed his friend and threaten the friend's twin brother. He accomplishes his mission without losing focus and never falters, showing refined skill in fabricating weapons with his own hands and handling dangerous situations. Danila is always composed and calm, never losing his nerve or compromising his plans and actions. His personality traits were refined and reinforced by the Chechen war and his military experience. He is indeed ruthless in killing people on his way to accomplishing his mission, shooting them without hesitation or a second thought, yet the persons he kills in the movie are all involved with criminal and illegal activities and perpetrate countless devious crimes.

Danila is honest in his heart and, after he realises she is Russian, decides to help a prostitute by taking her off the street. He saves her from her dramatic situation and brings her back to the homeland that he loves so very much. He is revealed to be a true patriot who loves his country and who has no desire to live abroad or follow habits different from his own. Danila sees no real power in America. His honesty is

shown in a speech he gives to the bad guy of the film: truth is the real power and not money, he says. Danila keeps his word and manages to avenge the murdered friend, save his twin brother and take Dasha, the former Russian prostitute, back to Russia, giving her a chance to rebuild her life and existence.

Once he realises that his older brother is spiritually lost and blinded by so-called American power, showing his weakness and lack of any real love for his homeland, Danila leaves him behind in the United States. He is chased by the police and cuts the last ties to his brother, who used to be like a father to him. While Danila saves his brother in the first movie, risking his own life in the process, the sequel shows that he has a different attitude and approach. Danila explains to Irina Saltykova that Viktor *used* to be like a father to him, but the past tense indicates that he is no longer, even though Danila still loves him. Danila also understands his brother's real nature and that nothing can be done for him, because he has been blinded by fake dreams of power and riches.

Condee (2009: 233) and Beumers (1999: 83) point out that 'falsehood and betrayal mark the brothers' relations throughout the two films. [...] Danila abandoning his newly arrested brother to the U.S. system' (Condee, 2009: 233)²⁰. This can, however, be read in different light, as explained above. Danila realises there is no hope left for his brother, who has betrayed him over and over, and therefore decides to leave him alone in the hands of his destiny. Betrayal is punished and the brother, who

²⁰ An interesting and well informed chapter is dedicated to Aleksei Balabanov in *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* by Nancy Condee. In the part entitled 'The Putative Nationalist' Balabanov's nationalistic approach to his movies, in particular to *Brat* (1997) and *Brat 2* (2000), is discussed. At the end of that chapter, Condee discusses an idea derived from 'A la Guerre' by Dolin: 'War is an elemental force, transforming a human being into a cunning and cruel animal. That is the single, unambiguous conclusion that one could draw from the film (*War*, 2002). It would be interesting to know, who would dare to disagree with this conclusion?' (29). Condee's thought process is as follows: 'As far as this filmmaker is concerned, I would be one who would cautiously disagree. First, Balabanov does not necessarily see the cunning and cruel animal as a bad thing. Second, the Balabanov I have watched sees no transformation at all: his human already is a cunning and cruel animal; his films set out to remind us that we are as well.' (Condee, 2009: 236).

has repudiated his Motherland and betrayed the Fatherland, deserves to be left alone to face his own fate.

Even though the concept of Fatherland is not one of the main themes in the movie, the protagonist finds a place in Russian society and this time he keeps the girl he meets in the beginning. He is not alone anymore. He no longer needs the surrogate father-figure represented by his brother, who was always faltering and never solid. Danila himself becomes the brother and father, as can be seen in his saving of the Russian prostitute and taking her back to Russia, her real Motherland. He outgrows the brother, who was never really strong, and assumes the role of the leading man, taking care of oppressed Russians and saving their lives.

The beginning of the film explains that even by being a soldier who fought in a war that many wished to forget (Blum, 2006), Danila is now acceptable to society, as the experience at war is discussed on camera and aired on a national television channel. Russia now welcomes her soldiers and thanks them for the skills they have developed. The country can offer them a position into society, as Danila and his friends demonstrate. The film shows a different side of Russia: the Fatherland now rewards those who courageously fight to protect the homeland, who serve in the army and fulfil their duty.

The elements of war and the soldier-figure can be discussed together, because *Brat 2* does not belong to the war genre. The two elements are strongly connected in the film. First of all, as explained above, there is a difference in how the movie approaches the theme of the first war in Chechnya, and how the figure of the soldier is depicted. War is not the main theme of the film and serves merely as background for the protagonists, to frame their personalities and their roles. Still, in the original *Brat*, the war is not mentioned as explicitly as in its sequel. There, the three brothers-in-arms talk about their mission, for which the sergeant received a medal of honour and

saved the lives of his two friends by carrying them off the battlefield even though he was wounded. They are decorated for the bravery they displayed in the war in Chechnya and that scene illustrates how, even in a highly criticised war (Politovskaya, 2004) there is space for honour and selfless service to the country.

The war in Chechnya is not remembered with shame or hidden, as it seems to be in the first film. It is discussed in front of the television camera with pride and smiles. The three ex-soldiers have found their place in society and are not alienated or forgotten by their homeland. They are attractive young men who do honest work and make use of the skills they learned during their experience in the Army. One of them, the decorated sergeant, is described as a hero who saved other lives, even though wounded, and who received the proper reward from his country, the medal of honour.

Danila makes use of what he learned in the Army to save his friend from an American criminal organization. Dasha, the Russian prostitute in Chicago, gains freedom from the street thanks to the protagonist's good heart and sense of loyalty towards the Russian people. Danila disciplines a couple of thugs he meets in prison when he is interrogated after the death of the friend, showing his physical strength and fighting abilities in hand-to-hand combat. Soldiers (in the film the protagonists are all former soldiers) are loyal to each other and help one another, as illustrated in a scene where Boris, Irina Saltykova's driver and bodyguard, conceals Danila's identity and warns him of potential danger.

The sentence chosen to introduce this movie and open this analysis describes Danila's true nature in a few words, displaying his deep sentiments of patriotism, reliability, loyalty and sense of duty. The protagonist loves his homeland, and he keeps repeating a short patriotic poem he has heard during a school recital, declaiming it to a Russian taxi-driver in Chicago. He is loyal to his country because he does not get corrupted and attracted to false dreams of power and money like his brother. He

keeps his feet on the ground and sees no real power in America. He is loyal to his countrymen, because the moment he discovers Dasha is Russian, he gives her money and decides to help her to cut all ties with her previous life. A sense of pride in Russia is expressed by Irina Saltykova, who tells Danila that even if he has not travelled abroad, he has not missed much, dismissing the United States as nothing special. This attitude of the movie toward what America represents relates to the last element in *Brat 2* to be discussed, how the other/the enemy is depicted.

While in the first *Brat* the enemies were in part Chechen and in part Russian gangsters, here the main enemies are criminals from the United States, even if they are linked to a Russian. When Danila moves abroad he can see with his own eyes what the ‘others’ are like and how they have transformed his countrymen who are living in America. The Russians living in the United States have become sullen, selfish, and insincere, criticizing their own native country but not exactly liking the one where they reside, either. They are not trustworthy and actually betray Danila, as if they are co-opted by the general corruption of their new homeland.

In a dialogue between the protagonist and his friends, on says: ‘I thought Americans were honest’, showing his disappointment at the truth. Dasha explains how a dramatic deterioration in her life took place in New York, as it worsened day by day through her use of drugs and prostitution. Even Danila’s twin brother is blinded by his life outside Russia, showing no sorrow or sadness at the loss of his beloved brother. He refuses to help Danila when he asks for a place to stay and displays interest only in money. By contrast, Danila is honest and kind-hearted, even if he his acts are those of a cold-blooded professional hit-man. Therefore, he wishes Mitya, the NHL hockey star, all the best with his career.

Not all of the seven parameters find a central place in *Brat 2*. This applies to the memory of the past, even though a trace of this element can still be observed in

how the three brothers in arms remember their experiences in war with pleasure and smiles, signifying that even the Chechen campaign should not be forgotten and buried in shame. Dasha, on the other hand, represents how love and attachment for the Motherland never ceases, since the only place she can find salvation is in her own country. At the end of the film, as she sits on a plane to Moscow with Danila, she asks for a drink to celebrate. The flight attendant refuses, explaining that it is not possible before take-off. Dasha removes her wig and with a stern expression tells the flight attendant that he does not understand: she *must* celebrate because she is going back home.

Brat 2 is a unique case because of the nature of its story and because it is part of Russian cinema history, having created a real cult around the figure of Danila Bagrov. The song chosen to end the film as the final scene fades away, recites: ‘Good bye America, where I never was and never will be’.

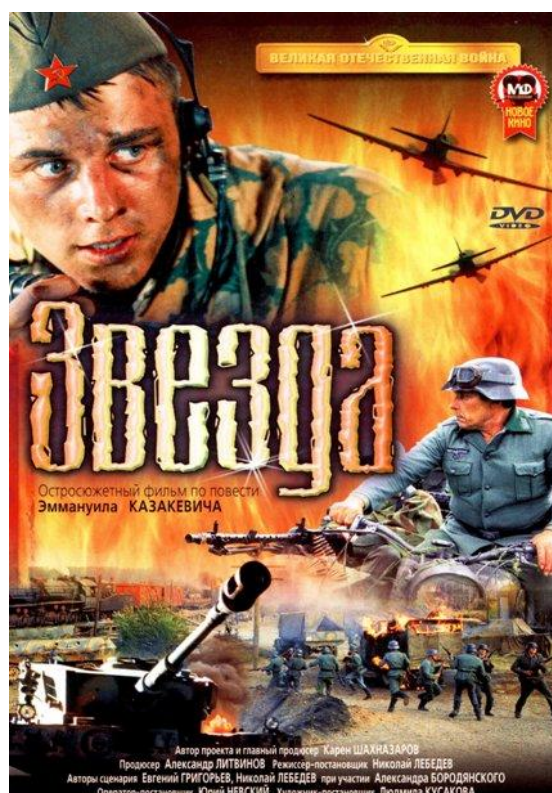


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²¹ Final scene, where Danila and Dasha fly back to Russia. <http://ru5.anyfad.com/items/t1@91af2d38-9a73-4e84-aef9-95c45416c9da/film-Brat-2.jpg>

Film 2: *The Star (Zvezda)* (2002) by Nikolai Lebedev

'Star to Earth, do you copy me? Star to Earth, do you hear me? I am the Star'



The Star by Nikolai Lebedev is a remake of the first version of a film of the same name released in 1949 and directed by Alexander Ivanov²³, which was based upon a story written by Emmanuel Kazakevich (1913-1962). The film narrates the brave deeds of a group of seven Red Army scouts led by Lieutenant Travkin, who operate behind enemy lines in order to accomplish their mission to obtain and pass on vital information about a German counter-offensive during the decisive year of 1944. As the audience learns at the end of the movie, when Captain Andrei Barashkin reveals the fate of each protagonist, the information the scouts gain at the cost of their lives had the effect of a bomb: the German counter-offensive was broken and from that

²² http://kino-war.ru/uploads/posts/2015-02/1422865101_zvezda-2002.jpg

²³ The film directed by Alexander Ivanov had been released only in 1953, after Stalin's death.

point the liberation of Poland followed, in the course of which over half a million officers and soldiers of the Red Army died.

Lebedev's work is portrayed from two different points of view: that of Lieutenant Travkin and that of Katya Simokova, a young radio-operator who falls in love with Travkin at first sight. The above-quoted sentence that introduces this movie is the connecting thread that keeps the group of scouts united to their base, where Katya dutifully spends every possible moment trying to reach them via radio, obviously worried about Travkin and begging him and his group to come back alive.

Beumers describes *The Star* as 'one of the first and most commercial films, which used large-scale battles scenes and pyrotechnics for the first time ever after the collapse of the industry' (Beumers, 2009: 244). The film does contain many spectacular scenes and it constantly keeps the tension palpable, wrapping the protagonists, who are often in great danger behind enemy lines. However, the film is directed in such a way that it is capable of touching the feelings of the audience even in its battle scenes. We are not presented with automatons, but rather human beings with personalities, habits, and emotions.

Lebedev crafted several moments in the film that particularly touched Russian audiences. The last fifteen minutes of the film are a vivid example of this, as the group of scouts is outnumbered, beyond hope and still fighting to their last breaths, in order to allow Lieutenant Travkin to transmit the vital information via radio. The camera hovers above, as if looking down from the sky, while Travkin calls: 'Star to Earth, Star to Earth, do you copy me?', as if he wants to place the brave soldiers in the sky with the stars, as heroes of their country. His voice talks to the base from the forest, always from a higher angle, and finally reaches Katya. Their mission is accomplished at the cost of their lives.

Lieutenant Travkin can be considered a leading example in terms of the hero/role model element. However, each of the scout/protagonists in this film represents a perfect model to follow as well, displaying honest sentiment, a deep sense of duty and devotion to country, demonstrated by how dutifully they follow orders and selflessly sacrifice their lives for the ends of the mission. Travkin and the other scouts possess all the characteristics required to be good, patriotic Russian citizens as outlined in the programs for Patriotic Education. They serve the Army and the Fatherland as soldiers, protecting their country and the Russian people from the enemy. They are skilled and well-prepared, focused on their mission and brave beyond any doubt.

Travkin always knows the best course of action to take and never loses his focus on the mission, even when he is with Katya. He clearly reciprocates Katya's feelings but avoids any contact with her, as if already aware of his fate, not wanting to lose his concentration. He is a devoted officer, who when mortally wounded uses his last breath to pass the message and try to rescue one of his men. Travkin attracts the interest of the young radio-operator immediately upon arriving at the front on a horse, for he is handsome, sharp-looking and fascinating in his military uniform, with a clean face and a shy smile.

All the scouts have a chance to show their abilities. They are skilled shooters, strong fighters, fluent speakers of German, and experienced veterans who are willing to participate in a dangerous mission, one of them even with a wounded leg. The abilities they possess and that they develop through their experiences in the Army are used to serve the Fatherland when they are most needed.

It is hard to separate the parameters of patriotism, the soldier-figure and the hero/role model, for the simple reason that in this movie they are intrinsically connected and are integral parts of one another. As explained in chapter one, in the

programs for Patriotic Education there are three indicators of successful implementation. One of them refers to ‘the field of national defence – the desire of young people to serve in the Armed Forces, the willingness of citizens to defend the Fatherland, the preservation and development of its glorious combat and labour traditions’²⁴. All of these conditions are transported to the screen by the actions of the protagonists of *The Star*. There is no doubt about their devotion to their Fatherland and their willingness to defend and serve it, thereby expressing their sincerity and the depth of their sentiments of patriotism.

Several scenes and moments in the movie prove this. When they reach a hut in the forest, the youngest soldier of the group, Vorobei, is mortally wounded, but even so he finds the strength and will to tell his Lieutenant which switch he should flip to make the radio work. Another scout sacrifices his own life to lure the pursuing German troops away from his comrades, in order to buy them the time necessary to transmit the message to the base. He attracts their attention and fights to his last breath, falling on the ground among the green forest vegetation, as if his Motherland is wrapping her arms around his corpse and easing his glorious death. The scouts embody the typical characteristics of real patriots with their actions and sacrifices.

Soldiers are represented as heroes in *The Star*. It is revealed at the end of the film that in 1965 they were all belatedly and posthumously awarded the Order of the Great Patriotic War. The figure of the soldier here resembles the model to follow in terms of values, morals and devotion to the country and serves as good example for future generations. After the War, Private Katya Simokova, becomes a history teacher and makes sure she passes the lessons of this episode to her young students.

Lieutenant Travkin is focused and prepared, as are all the other members of the group. Even young Vorobei, after first hesitating, proves his mental strength and

²⁴ Taken from The Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Federation Citizens 2001-2005, section VII. ‘Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Program’.

overcomes his initial weakness as he saves a comrade and kills a Nazi officer. The audience learns from the actions of the group that the German troops were alerted to their presence and received orders to eliminate them.

The message the German troops receive recites the following words, making one understand the incredible ability of the seven scouts, which cannot be underestimated: ‘A highly professional team of Russian wreckers has taken possession of top-secret information. I command therefore that all units of the SS, Wehrmacht and other security troops in this location reinforce their personnel until 6 p.m. Operation Trap: all measures should be taken to detect and liquidate the Russian scouts. Ten thousand men of the aforesaid units will be involved in the operation.’ This message gives an idea of how well-prepared, trained and efficient the seven scouts are, because it is necessary to deploy ten thousand men in order to eliminate the seven Russians. The group entirely perishes when trapped and outnumbered in the hut, but not before they accomplish their mission, which leads to freeing their country from the invaders.



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²⁵ Lieutenant Travkin: <http://m.kino-teatr.ru/blog/778/19370.jpg>

The film's opening scenes show the devastation the Great Patriotic War has brought to the lands invaded by the Germans. As Captain Barashkin explains at the end, the war cost a great number of lives, but it had to be fought to protect the beloved country. His voice explains how he died while serving his country and how 'every spring and every May, the souls of Russian soldiers killed in Poland, Czechia and Germany fly to their homes, all in blossom. They want to see the Russia they died for.' These words that communicate a sense of devotion to the Fatherland and make us understand how the protagonists all died for a greater goal.

In the article 'That'll Teach 'Em to Love Their Motherland! Russian Youth Revisit the Battles of World War II' (2011), Olga Kucherenko argues that film and cinema are used for state propaganda to show the idiosyncrasies of the typical Russian character. She believes that the Great Patriotic War and its heroes instil emotions in people even now and serve, in Kucherenko's opinion, as political pawns (Kucherenko, 2011). Movies are 'didactic' and are a powerful formative experience (Kucherenko, 2011). We can understand from them the emotional weight the Great Patriotic War still has in Russia and what it represents to her citizens. The programs for Patriotic Education stress the importance of teaching history to the younger generation, forming a strong bond between the old and young of Russia, who all must never forget the noble sacrifices in their country's glorious past.

The element of the memory of the past, which includes the necessity of commemorating glorious events, perpetuating the memory of the past, instilling in young people a sense of pride in their country, teaching them to respect the heroes that died for their country and learning from their actions, is embodied in Katya and depicted through her story. She survives the war and becomes a history teacher in her own village, thereby passing her war experiences on to the younger generation and

teaching them the lessons of patriotism, perpetuating ‘the memory of the heroic history of the Fatherland.’ Furthermore, we learn that Katya never married, remaining faithful to her love for Lieutenant Travkin and not wanting to betray the memory of her past.

In *The Star* the enemy is represented by the Nazi German invaders of the sacred territory of Russia, who pose a deadly threat to the country’s independence, security and national identity. Defeating this enemy is a matter of vital importance. The film does not particularly focus on the actions of the invaders and the difference between good guys and bad guys is not as starkly on display as it is in other movies. However, it is interesting to point out that it took the deployment of ten thousand German troops to eliminate the group of seven scouts. Moreover, although the Germans finally killed them, they did not succeed in stopping the Soviet scouts from transmitting their important message. The film may not focus on the differences in values and morals between the enemy and the Russian soldiers, but it does show how a very small group of highly skilled men manage to obtain top-secret information and by their actions break the Germans’ counter-offensive.

The Star, directed by Lebedev, is a film that depicts all seven parameters of analysis and, while it focuses on some more than others, it succeeds as a medium for the continuation of the programs’ given political priorities. The film emphasises certain points that are often repeated in the programs for Patriotic Education: willingness to serve the Fatherland, readiness to sacrifice oneself, devotion to the Fatherland, military skills and perpetuation of the glorious history of the country.

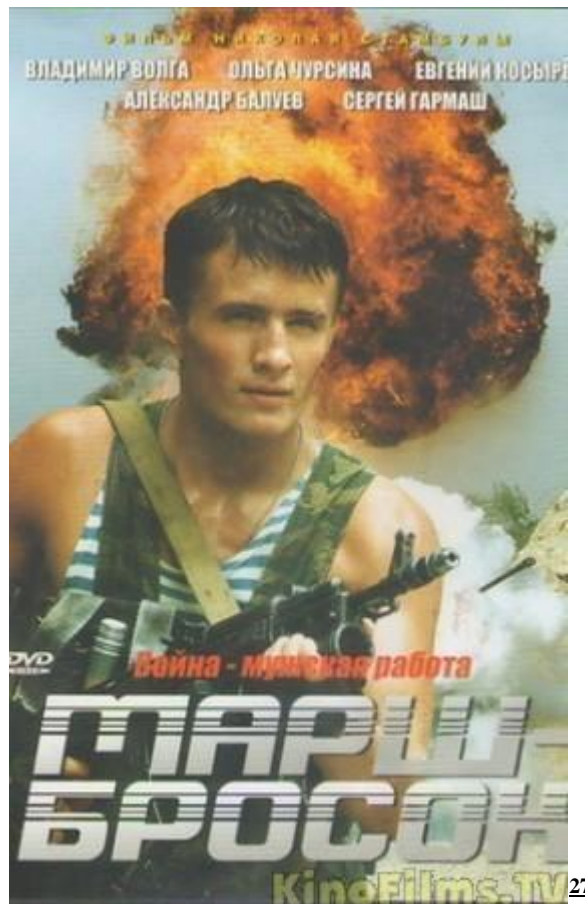


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²⁶ Radio operator, Private Katya Simakova:
<http://v2.cdn.clip.vn/ri2vTgzu4BJRaNMWLnAK/2/uploads/14/03/5331299713c4f30723.jpg>

Film 3: Marsh Brosok (Forced March) (2003) by Nikolai Stambula

'Where is your family? Who is your family? Russia!'



The opening scene of *Marsh Brosok* immediately introduces the audience to its protagonist/hero, the young, good looking, honest Alexander. The first few minutes of the film give quick answers to questions related to the seven parameters, framing the protagonist's personality in a few words and deeds. It introduces what it means to him to become a soldier, in particular a soldier in an elite group. It explains who (or rather what) is represented by Alexander's family. Before studying in depth the elements representing the political priorities described in the programs for Patriotic Education, the plot of *Marsh Brosok* will be described in order to better understand its essential

²⁷ <http://kinofilms.tv/images/films/7/6533/pict/poster.jpg>

themes. The analysis will then proceed in detail from element to element, in an order suggested by the film.

Marsh Brosok or *The Forced March* (2003), by Nikolai Stambula, tells the story of young Alexander, known as Sasha, who grew up in an orphanage and always dreamed of being part of the *Spetsnaz*, in order to become someone important who serves his country and eventually realises his desires for glory and adventure. He fulfils his dream by enlisting in this corps of the GRU military intelligence organization, whose elite status is proclaimed by the tattoos of his comrades.

Sasha is sent to Chechnya to fight the enemies of his Fatherland. During the enlistment process, Sasha becomes friendly with another future soldier, Vladimir. Together they leave for the war and fight side by side. In the middle of an ambush, Vladimir and Sasha are taken hostage by a group of Chechen terrorists. Sasha is eventually able to free himself and escape with his friend, but Vladimir is killed as they run away. Sasha manages to punish the Chechen fighters who killed his comrade and accomplish his mission as a soldier. He then meets Vladimir's family, including his sister, immediately attracting her attention and interest. Their feelings are mutual, and he conquers her heart completely by teaching a hard lesson to a group of wannabe gangsters who have frequently annoyed and all but harassed the beautiful girl. Order and discipline are restored on different levels and Sasha is rewarded for his actions.

Stambula's is the only film analysed that clearly depicts the Chechen conflict. It is based on the second campaign in Chechnya that was pursued under Vladimir Putin. Many war films in Russia concentrate on the Great Patriotic War because of the romantic view of it held by Russian people, however, it is possible to find some movies and TV serials that focus on soldiers fighting Chechen rebels and terrorists in

general²⁸. *12* (2007) by Nikita Mikhalkov, discussed below in more detail, is an exception. Although the conflict in Chechnya constitutes the emotional and historical background of the movie and serves certain purposes in the plot, *12* cannot be considered a war film based strictly on the Chechen campaign, because the fragments of fights between Russian soldiers and Chechen soldiers simply are the memories of a young boy and influence his personal story.

This analysis of *Marsh Brosok* is a rather important new contribution to studies of post-2000 Russian movies, because not many studies mentioning the film could be found. It was reviewed by Gillespie (2005), but the contribution here is that this analysis is contextualised by the Program of Patriotic Education for Russian Federation Citizens (2001-2005). One can begin to understand how some of the political priorities indicated in the program have been translated in the movie and depicted on the screen.

The opening sentence chosen to characterise *Marsh Brosok* is part of the dialogue between Sasha and his new friend Vladimir-Volodya when they first meet and introduce themselves to each other at the Army recruiting centre. Volodya talks about himself and asks Sasha about his family, receiving a very proud, rather bold answer, but not one couched in a negative or arrogant tone. Sasha replies with strong feeling that Russia is his family. Sasha's answer—Russia!—is a single word that conveys deep significance and implies the straight-up patriotic background of the protagonist, and of the entire milieu of the film as well.

This one word—Russia!—is deeper and more evocative than a hundred when it comes to addressing the content and message of the film. It reflects the point about family and Fatherland very well, because even though he has grown up in an orphanage, Alexander, or Sasha, as he introduces himself to his future friend, has no

²⁸ Examples can be found in the famous TV serial *Spetsnaz* (2002) and its sequel in 2003, directed by Andrei Malukov, and in the film *Russkiy Spetsnaz* (2003), directed by Stas Mareev.

doubts or hesitation: Russia is his Fatherland. He respects it and desires to serve it. It is also his Motherland, which he desires to protect and be a part of—together, they are his family. Sasha does not feel lost or abandoned because of the absence of a family and of a physical father-figure, because Russia will provide him a family and a place in the world.

In the films of the 1990s, many characters were orphans, whose situations were reflected in dark, dramatic tones, having lost every hope, because Russia had lost her own identity. Russia then could not offer the strong leading figure of a father whose orders must to be followed, but in Stambula's film, Russia is now strong and reliable, and will gladly stand in as a parent for her children. The Army assumes a central role in terms of family and father-figure in this movie, for it offers a bright future and important career to Sasha. It will even reward him as a hero, with a real family consisting of Vladimir's sister and her parents. The concept of Fatherland, strongly stressed in the programs for Patriotic Education, is here depicted by the way Sasha proudly states that Russia is his family and how Russia takes care of him. It can also be seen in the way Sasha loyally fulfils his military duties, selflessly serving his country.

It is clear that the soldier-figure is an ideal role model, exactly like the hero of the story. However, it is important to separate and distinguish the concept of hero from the concept of soldier. Sasha has his own personality traits that are worthy of praise, but being a member of the *Spetsnaz* surely enhances and increases them. He uses his courage, loyalty, physical strength, discipline, deep sense of duty, and fighting skills to teach some hooligans a lesson despite having an injured arm. This last element is visible not only in the protagonist Sasha. The element of duty also appears in one of the soldiers whom Sasha antagonises at the beginning of the film, by forcing him to give up a cigarette to his friend, using his considerable fighting skills.

Still bearing a grudge against Sasha, this soldier points his rifle at Sasha in a turmoil of cross-fire during an ambush, as if wanting to shoot him. However, driven by his sense of duty and loyalty toward Sasha as a comrade, he shoots an enemy instead.

In *Marsh Brosok*, soldiers display strong patriotic values and are aware of the importance of discipline and following orders in order to accomplish their mission of keeping their country safe. They are all skilled, physically strong, muscular, and attractive, displaying well trained muscles and tattoos of the GRU symbol. They wear the soldier's *telnyashka*, a typical military undershirt. The only exception is Vladimir, who has a different body shape, probably an intentional choice in casting his part, to better emphasise Sasha's exceptional prowess and physical presence.

Officers and soldiers fight together on the same ground and in the same circumstances. While travelling to Chechnya, the soldiers bond by playing guitar and singing songs. In the course of their missions they are ever ready to cover their comrades' backs. The general image of the soldier-figure portrayed in the movie is very positive and easily serves as a role model because of all the qualities it possesses. The soldier is no longer the outcast who haunts the films of the 1990s, as described by Beumers (1999). He is an important and essential part of society who guarantees safety and order. He is a young man who appeals to the public with a clean-shaven face, exposed muscles, good values and feelings, a sense of honour, and the right dose of masculinity. In accordance with Patriotic Education, the protagonist and his comrades enlist because they desire to serve their Fatherland and do their military duty.

Marsh Brosok brings to the screen the second campaign in Chechnya, the one fought under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. There is nothing in the movie that is significantly tragic or that exposes war as cruel and violent. The scenes of fighting between Russians and Chechens leave dead on both sides. The audience naturally feels

sorrow at the loss of the Russian soldiers, but it sees how the conflict was necessary and part of their duty. The most dramatic moment arrives when Sasha and Vladimir are captured. The Chechen fighters ask for a ransom, and the scene culminates in the death of Vladimir, the hero's friend.

Both of the campaigns in Chechnya have been strongly criticised, especially the first one, given the outcome and the cost in human lives. The second Chechen War drew criticism, too, as can be found in Anna Politovskaya's books,²⁹ but in the narrative of *Marsh Brosok*, war was necessary in order to fight dangerous terrorists who threatened the Fatherland and brought disorder to the country with their sudden attacks. The soldiers in *Marsh Brosok* do not have second thoughts or doubts. They fight the enemies of their country as a united, loyal group.

The film takes place during the second war in Chechnya and thus the 'others' here are the Chechen enemies (openly assisted by Muslim terrorists from other countries). The Chechens are greedy for money, without values or honour. In one scene they shoot an elder representing a village who asks them to stop the war and make peace with Russia. The enemy kills the unarmed old man without hesitation and warns the witnesses what will befall them if they dare to side with Russia. This scene alone could clearly depict the general behaviour of the enemy, exposing a deep difference in values, but the film goes on to show other character defects: their greed for money, their cruelty, the danger they pose to the country's safety and at the same time, their inferiority in terms of fighting skills compared to the film's hero-protagonist. The clichéd line between good and bad, which distinguishes Russians from the 'other', is here sharply drawn so as to make a neat distinction between light and dark, and in terms of military skills, morals and values.

²⁹ See for instance *Putin's Russia* (2004).

The last two elements to be analysed are the figure of the hero and the depiction of patriotic values. They can be considered together, given that the figure of Sasha represents the typical patriot, following the guidelines laid down by the programs. Through Sasha, the film depicts patriotism in terms of love, devotion and loyalty to the Fatherland. Without doubt, Sasha is a role model and inspires positive emotions and feelings of attraction and benevolence among the audience.

As a hero, Sasha personifies the archetypical figure and is nearly a stereotype in terms of being good-hearted, courageous, steadfast, physically strong and attractive. He displays the GRU symbol tattoo on his bicep with pride, has excellent military skills, and is filled with a sense of honour and true patriotism. He is an honest person with a handsome face and an almost child-like smile that inspires good feelings. He is reliable, strong and ready to save the lives of his loved ones. When his friend Vladimir dies, he shows real sadness and his human side, crying over the loss. He is devoted to his country and truly loves it, a fact that is shown by his desire to serve in the Army and selflessly risk his life to protect his country.

For such a hero, becoming a soldier means fulfilling his dreams as a child and his desires as a young man to achieve glory and do his duty. There is no doubt that Sasha loves Russia or that he is devoted to his homeland and his behaviour and attitudes throughout the entire movie prove it. However, Sasha is a perfect patriot not only because he loves his country, but because he serves it without hesitation is ready to sacrifice himself if required, and follows orders like every good soldier. Sasha is a brave hero-soldier, with a strong personality and will, a steely sense of justice, and the desire to serve his Fatherland and fight the enemies who threaten its safety and well-being. He is ready to sacrifice himself for his friends, his comrades and his country (as is proved when he is confronted with a bomb in a key scene). As a hero, he understands the importance of discipline, feels great honour as a member of the

Spetsnaz. He does not fear to fight alone against many enemies. Subtle exaggeration in the scenes of combat renders his perceived abilities and skills even more superior, and serves the purpose of enhancing the depiction of some of the elements of Patriotic Education.

Marsh Brosok follows the path of typical patriotic war movies, placing the hero in difficult situations and presenting him with challenges. Sasha is held hostage and suffers physical injuries, but nothing scares him. A reward is waiting for Sasha. He goes to visit his friend Vladimir's family and there he meets Vladimir's sister Masha, with blond hair, a slender body and blue eyes, who has written him a letter. The family welcomes him immediately and after a timid start, Sasha begins a dialogue with Masha that will result in mutual love, because for her part, she already harbours warm feelings and attraction for him.

The final challenge Sasha faces, even though not comparable to what he faced in Chechnya, is posed by a group of village thugs, whose leader has often flirted with Masha. Seeing the girl with the soldier provokes the gang leader, who attacks Sasha along with his entire group. This marks the hooligan's difference from Sasha and depicts him as an arrogant coward. Even though Sasha has an injured arm, he quickly prevails and defeats the gang easily. The abilities and experience he gained as a soldier permit him to demonstrate his valour in front of his 'princess' and completely conquer her heart. The hooligans, who offer nothing useful to their country, learn a lesson. The film's hero is rewarded for his service to Russia with a happy, beautiful future. The film gives the younger generation an example to emulate and an important life-lesson, teaching the values and behaviour they should follow in order to be good patriotic citizens serving their country and society in the best way possible.

The film ends with a dedication, wherein the filmmaker directly encourages his audience to remember the past, urges them to remember it with pride, and

encourages them to respect the soldiers and officers who have dedicated their lives to serve the Fatherland and protect the Motherland. ‘To those who have stood, who stand and will stand in defence of the Motherland’.

There is continuity between the past, the present and future. They are all connected by the same purpose, to protect the homeland. Past and future generations are connected by the same duty to serve their Fatherland. The fact that the dedication is inserted at the end of the film, separated from the action and dialogue shows how Stambula, the film’s director, wants to leave behind a clear message: he glorifies the deeds of the soldiers, and insists that they should be remembered and rewarded because they dedicate their life to the right cause. Although it does not represent the concept of memory of the past in the same way as does *The Star*, Stambula’s dedication still symbolises the desire and the necessity to perpetuate respect for and memory of soldiers, officers and the Army, and to recognise them as heroes. Heroes are important figures in the system of Patriotic Education, who should always be respected and whose memories should always be treasured with pride.

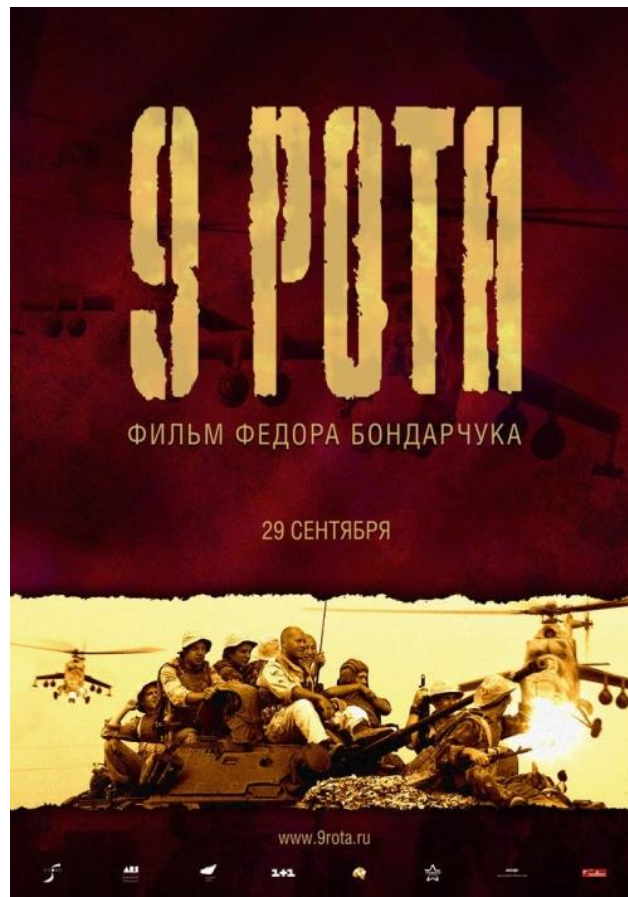


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³⁰ <http://mp3oblako.ru/uploads/thumbs/3/d/6/3d6ee0d962d1cb93b8321cc5e7647944.jpg>

Film 4: *The Ninth Company* by Fedor Bondarchuk (2005)

'We have won. The Ninth Company won.'



The Ninth Company is a very interesting case to analyse through the lens of the Program for Patriotic Education of Russian Citizens and its political points. It presents the war in Afghanistan, a dramatic chapter of Russia's history that evokes the same feelings of tragedy experienced in the USA regarding the war in Vietnam. The end of the film, where the words quoted above resonate in the air, coming from the only survivor of the Ninth Company at war, make us feel as if the soldiers' duty has been done properly and Russia has emerged as victorious. The soldiers, the Army, the tragic fights, the loss and pain; everything is rewarded in those final words: 'we have won.

³¹ <http://iv1.lisimg.com/image/458265/500full-the-9th-company-poster.jpg>

The Ninth Company won'. These words could be transposed into 'Russia won', which will be explained as the element of war in this film is explored. Even though Birgit Beumers describes this film as an 'anti-war and action movie' (Beumers, 2008: 213), we do not share her view. The reasons for that will be clarified and explained through this analysis.

We agree with Beumers that *The Ninth Company* is 'a movie about soldiers with human flaws, but who nevertheless fight for their fatherland. The common denominator of these films is the characteristic of the hero, who is an essentially good person with an inherent human flaw. He does not try to overcome his flaw, but accepts it as part of his personality' (Beumers, 2008: 213). Indeed, the hero is a good person with human flaws, which is characteristic of several of the films analysed here. However, the human side is used to lure the audience into a closer relationship with the protagonists and render their feelings of identification stronger. The hero is not only a good person, but is primarily a good Russian patriot and a good Russian soldier, who overcomes his limitations and small personal problems in order to serve the Fatherland.

The Ninth Company, directed by Fedor Bondarchuk, is the only film selected for this dissertation that features the Soviet war in Afghanistan, a war that impacted Russian society differently than the Great Patriotic War. It evokes different emotions, which hardly correspond to the idealistic role of the Army and war suggested by the Patriotic Education programs. The Soviet-Afghan war is remembered by almost every Russian citizen with strong emotion and many painful memories. It had costs at many levels. Movies in the 1990s depicted it in dark and hopeless tones. The tones and emotions of Bondarchuk's film are different, and even if *The Ninth Company* presents a delicate chapter of Russia's past history, it succeeds in glorifying the sacrifices and

deeds of the soldiers killed in that war, ‘within a Russian tradition of military narratives’ (Carleton 2013: 328), without adopting anti-war attitudes.

The plot follows the events of the battle for Hill 3234, which was successfully fought between 7 and 8 January 1988, and was part of a large-scale offensive, Operation Magistral. The film focuses on a group of young recruits during their military training prior to deployment to Afghanistan. It stages several battle scenes and dramatic moments that lead the audience to love the protagonists more and more. Through the harshness of training and the tragedy of war, they grow into a group of close friends and brothers-in-arms. Only one of them, Private Lyutyy, a paratrooper, who is the leading character, survives. Lyutyy, the only soldier who is an orphan, without any family, is the one who is able to return home.

In reality, out of thirty-nine Soviet soldiers at Hill 3234, six were killed (Carleton, 2013: 328). This not so small discrepancy with reality makes us understand how much the film director wanted to emphasise the soldiers’ heroism and sacrifice. As Carleton explains, ‘for Bondarchuk this number was insufficient – a decisive testament to the strength of symbolic tradition over reality’ (Carleton, 2013: 328). When a fact is modified it can be for several reasons. In this case, it is to enhance the sense of the willing sacrifice by the soldiers, the necessity of serving the Fatherland up to the ultimate self-sacrifice, putting duty to Fatherland above everything else.

The film was acclaimed in Russia and outside the country as well, making over \$25 million at the box-office in a short time. *The Ninth Company* ‘constitutes a landmark of post-Soviet film, both as a box office success and cinematic-cultural achievement’ (Carleton, 2013: 325). President Putin himself praised the movie and invited film-director Fedor Bondarchuk, the crew, and a number of Afghan war veterans to his residence in Novo Ogarevo to watch the film.

Bondarchuk's work is without doubt very spectacular in terms of its special effects and battle scenes, which play an important role in the movie. These scenes immediately draw certain parallels with well-known American cinematographic milestones such as *Full Metal Jacket* by Stanley Kubrick in terms of plot structure, and perhaps *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola, recalling the epic scene where military helicopters fly over the horizon. Carleton explains how the film 'blends signature techniques of Hollywood war movies within a Russian military tradition' (Carleton, 2013: 325). Similar to Hollywood war movies, the deployment of heavy weapons and military devices is prominent in this movie compared to other Russian films, and many scenes concentrate on quick-cut sequences of fighting and spectacular action, as if to illustrate the military strength of the country and how hard military training pays off.

Concerning the figure of the soldier who is the hero of the film, this analysis now moves to explore the element of the war. It is once again important in this dissertation to stress how the Afghan war impacted Russia and its society, and in particular how this specific war is represented in the film. There was nothing glorious about the Afghan war and nothing in it that could bond all Russian citizens, which is even more true now that the atrocities perpetrated by both sides have become public, international knowledge. The Soviet-Afghan war does not inspire any nostalgic emotions, remembered with melancholy, in the old and young generations the way the Great Patriotic War still does. It was not a war that resonates with patriotic effort and sacrifice to protect the Fatherland from an invading army. The enemies were outside the country and far away from the core of Russia and Moscow.

Nonetheless, Bondarchuk stresses a very important side of this war: the courage of the soldiers and the duty they fulfilled for the Fatherland they loved. War is a dramatic experience, but it is as well a duty that cannot be overlooked or dismissed.

War, in *The Ninth Company*, means victory, even if it also means great loss in terms of human lives. The last words of Private Lyutyy, pronounced with strong emotion, are: 'We won. The Ninth Company won'. How can the sense of victory amidst the tragedy and chaos of the war be missed? It cannot be dismissed, and the fact the film-director decided to concentrate on that one event of the war underscores his will to bring the victorious side of the Fatherland to the screen, even in the context of that war.

In the light of Patriotic Education and the priority it places on re-establishing Russia as great power through patriotism, the de-herofication process found in many movies that followed the Afghan war, as described by Rapoport (Rapoport, 2009), is rectified in this film. The way Bondarchuk stages the Soviet-Afghan war in *The Ninth Company* effectively succeeds in producing a movie that glorifies and 'heroifies' the brave, honourable deeds of soldiers who are willing to selflessly sacrifice their lives for a greater ideal and purpose: serving and defending their Fatherland, even from an enemy that does not directly threaten its heartland. Serving as soldiers in itself makes the protagonists heroes of the Motherland.

A parallel with *Full Metal Jacket* by Stanley Kubrick and *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola was mentioned at the beginning. This leads one to see that the war does not render the protagonists monsters, nor does it make them lose their sanity, values and identity. In a scene set in Afghanistan, Private Dzhkonda draws the landscape in front of his eyes, reflecting his artistic and sensitive nature. It is not possible to imagine Private Lyutyy arriving home and becoming an outcast, behaving differently and following different values acquired from another culture, as happens in *The Moslem* (1995) by Khotinenko. He goes home with a deep sense of victory, and he will never forget his brothers in arms and his true identity.

The 'other' in *The Ninth Company* is represented by the enemy the Soviet troops fight in Afghanistan. In a subtler way, the other is also the cinema of the West, with its particular values and realistic way of portraying some situations. One scene in particular exemplifies the concept of the enemy featured in the movie: during a patrol in a village, two soldiers of the Ninth Company are searching houses and streets, alert to every small sound or detail, their rifles at the ready. One of them, Stas, who is the father of a family, is scared by someone and points his rifle, but then realises his target is a young boy. He instinctively lowers his weapon and turns his back to the boy, because as the father of a young child himself, he cannot imagine a threat coming from a child. However, the moment he turns around, the boy shoots him right in the back, letting him die in the street.

The enemy does not fight face to face as these soldiers would do, but strikes from the back. Not even children can be trusted, due to the differences in culture. In the film, the enemy is almost invisible, but he often strikes the Soviet troops and disseminates death and chaos. Nonetheless, it is clear that the heroes of the film have to fight the enemy in order to serve their fatherland, even if they are many miles away from home. There is a difference in the way Soviet soldiers and Afghan soldiers kill: in most of the scenes, the Soviet troops have to defend against sudden attacks led by fighters who are almost death-machines; the Afghans are the ones attacking, even in dishonourable ways. The Soviet soldiers take no civilian lives, although the village that harboured the young boy who killed Stas is destroyed as a base for the rebels.

Love for the Fatherland is strong in every character and they each represent a part of Russia. These elements are depicted in various ways, however, Bondarchuk's character, Khokhol (the field sergeant), personifies the father of the young soldiers under his command in Afghanistan. Once more it can be seen how a figure from the Army, if not the Army or Russia itself, plays the part of the father, of someone who

gives guidance to his young followers with paternal affection, but also provides the necessary discipline. The fact that this part is played by Bondarchuk himself reminds us of the roles usually played by Mikhalkov: both film directors only trust the role of the father and the strong, authoritative guide to their own hands.

Even though the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland are not as strong here as in other films, it must be noticed that a strong bond of friendship is formed, making the five young soldiers real brothers-in-arms. They share every moment and many emotions, from joy to grief, with sincere, deep friendship and genuine brotherhood. This bond, which was created and strengthened through their military training, almost makes the soldiers a family in the middle of the war in Afghanistan, and it surely helps the soldiers find the strength to endure their great difficulties day after day. It is interesting in the context of Patriotic Education to see how a strong, sincere bond is formed through the shared experiences of military training, and grows into a symbol of the strong connection that can be found in a family. Therefore, military service can be seen as a way to create and reinforce relationships between people, as they mature through their shared efforts and duties.

It is possible to appreciate the values and courage of this group of paratroopers and empathise with their personal emotions and dramas. They remain united and faithful to each other, like a real band of brothers. Each of them represents a little part of Russia: the artist, the young father, the orphan, the married man, the brutal but fair drill sergeant who towards the end of training surprisingly exposes his human side.

Although it depicts a tragic chapter in Russian history, in this film Russia itself does not come out damaged, humiliated or defeated. As Lyutyty keeps repeating in the end, 'We, the Ninth Company, have won our own war. We have won'. Therefore, there is no abject defeat, but rather a sense of victory, material or spiritual.

It is not by chance that Lyutyy, the only survivor and bearer of a good luck talisman received from a departing private, brings home a message of victory and sacrifice to pass to younger generations. For a movie that ends with the near total annihilation of its protagonists, the message of the last sequence is strong and eloquent. The box-office gross and the general acclamation the film received testify how it positively impacted the Russian public.

As described above, Lyutyy is the only survivor of the Ninth Company. He brings home a talisman he received from an older soldier and war veteran. In this particular the movie depicts the importance of remembering the past and teaching it to younger generations, never forgetting the noble sacrifice and gestures of the nation's soldiers and heroes. In Bondarchuk's film the audience assists in passing the baton from the older generation to the future generation, with Lyutyy, the Company's sole survivor, representing the veteran. There is a hand-over of roles and duties. Lyutyy receives the talisman from a soldier about to leave Afghanistan, who unfortunately never makes it home because he is killed right after the exchange. As the only survivor, Lyutyy has the duty to narrate the history and deeds of his company and pass the message of pride and spiritual victory to the post-Soviet generation (Carleton, 2013).

The war in Afghanistan has sometimes been compared to the war in Vietnam in terms of what that war meant to the United States of America, in terms of the length of the conflict, its human losses and tragedies, its consequences, the environment in which the soldiers found themselves, and more. In view of that fact, it might be interesting to briefly compare *The Ninth Company* with *Full Metal Jacket* by Stanley Kubrick, a cult film about the war in Vietnam. In the latter movie, the hard, inhumane training of a group of recruits under Sergeant Hartman is shown and then the locale

changes, putting the focus on the war. The protagonist, Joker, a Marine, works as reporter, but wants to go to the front line to see more of the war.

The two movies are different in terms of their message. Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* is a strong, painful film opposed not only to war, but also to violence and the loss of identity that is a consequence of brutal military training. Soldiers are taught to hate the enemy simply because he is the enemy, and not to trust anyone except their own rifle.³² Sergeant Hartman treats the future marines worse than nothing and wants to transform them into a perfect cold-blooded machine of death.³³ Bondarchuk's *The Ninth Company* is similarly divided into two parts: first, the hard training in Uzbekistan under their commander Ensign Aleksandr Dygalo, played by Mikhail Porechenkov, who was also in the cast of *Spetsnaz*. Dygalo is a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war with a visible scar on his face. The second part takes place in Afghanistan, which welcomes the soldiers with an immediate tragedy. A plane of veterans leaving the base is hit by a missile and explodes after an impossible landing; all of them die. It is clear what they must expect from war, but nonetheless they face it, knowing it is their duty. The sentiment of patriotism is personified by this group of soldiers that is ready to fight an enemy of the Motherland in a far-away land.

In the first part of *The Ninth Company*, the recruits put up with their harsh and strict training, as Ensign Dygalo shouts all sorts of insults at them and pushes them hard until they become real soldiers. It shows the hard side of the training and evidence of the recruits' weakness (one recruit does not fill his rucksack with stones as required, but with rags. He receives severe punishment for that, but privately and not in front of the others). Nevertheless, the film also focuses on the bond of friendship and unity that forms among the group. They pick on each other over meaningless

³² See the scenes where the recruits recite the Rifleman's Creed.

³³ See the film *Full Metal Jacket*, by Stanley Kubrick.

things, as is normal in human nature, but they stick together when it is necessary (as in one of the very first moments in the film, when Lyutyty hits a barber).

Towards the end of the training they plan together how to succeed in climbing a hill where more senior recruits are at the top ready to throw them back down. Every time they join together and accomplish something, they always celebrate it with joy. Soldiers here are not merely machines dispensing death, but well trained, brave human beings who believe in the value of friendship and patriotism. Even the severe Ensign Dygalo shows a human side and does not hesitate to defend a conscript in front of others when he has properly done his duty.

Accomplishing one's duty is fundamental to this film and it does not matter if one shows human weakness, because what matters is to overcome fear, demonstrate courage and a sense of honour, and fulfil one's duties. This is what the Patriotic Education programs aim to teach through their numerous activities and events. Heroes are human, but they know what has to be done, no matter if they risk their own life. Heroes are soldiers and officers who dedicate their lives to serving their beloved Fatherland.

Another scene that presents an interesting image of the soldier-figure as role model comes at end of the training when all the soldiers are lined up and asked whether any of them wants to quit. If so, he should take a step forward and show himself in front of everybody else. This clearly demonstrates that those who decide not to fulfil their duties should be exposed and face the emotional consequences. One soldier is tempted to step forward, but he is not completely certain; his comrade shakes his head to persuade him not to withdraw. He closes his eyes and knows what to do: protect his Motherland. In the end, nobody loses his courage or identity,³⁴ all are

³⁴ Here I do not intend to compare *The Ninth Company* with *Full Metal Jacket* in this respect because it would be unfair. Kubrick's film has a different message, but because they are similar in their division of the film between

aware of their duty to serve their Fatherland in Afghanistan, even if the country is about to collapse and even if it might cost them their lives. Private Lyutyy, the sole survivor, goes back home after bravely fighting with his company under enemy fire and losing all his friends, but he does not lose his identity, remaining anchored to his values and his love for his country.

President Putin personally expressed interest in this movie. He watched the film at his residence in Novo Ogarevo outside Moscow, together with Soviet-Afghan war veterans. He appreciated the film, stating it is ‘close to life’ and ‘this is a tragic story from the life of our country and our people. But people who fought there for their ideals did a good job.’³⁵

The Ninth Company is a very good instance of the depiction of the political priorities indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education, because all the elements used in this analysis are present and illustrated. The film was in part financed by the Program for 2001-2005 (Condee, 2009: 8), which surely represents an important example of the patriotic propaganda and educational use of film.



³⁶

training and real war. It is also interesting to see and appreciate the different outcomes of the two different trainings and environments.

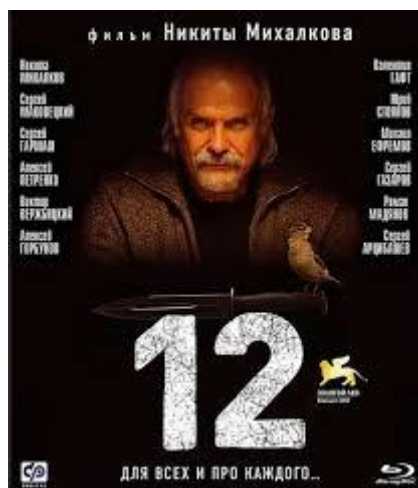
³⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4416774.stm>

³⁶ Private Lyutyy returns home in the final scene, where he repeats that he and the Ninth Company had won.

Film 5: 12 (2007) by Nikita Mikhalkov

'Life is in their hands. Death is on their minds!'

'My word as an officer. As an ex-officer. There is no such thing in Russia as an ex-officer.'



The first sentence above appeared on the poster for *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet, and it expresses the core of that film. If a similar sentence were to be suggested for *12*, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov, the author of this dissertation would choose this: ‘Death is on their minds. Life and the future are in *his* hands’. The reasons for this will be explained during the analysis of the movie, in particular when it focuses on the role played by the film director as protagonist-hero and father-figure. The second sentence above condenses other aspects of the film and particularly the role played by Mikhalkov as an officer, the values that profession brings out and enhances in a person, together with a sense of duty and responsibility. It as well marks the difference between being a Russian officer (Army or Secret Service) and being a common citizen mostly concerned with his or her own business.

Before the analysis of the film begins, a review of Nikita Mikhalkov’s profile as film director and public figure is due. He certainly is one of the best known and internationally famous Russian filmmakers. His *Burnt by the Sun* (1994) earned him an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. He is also well known for his political

views, which are close to those of the Kremlin, and for being a strong supporter of Vladimir Putin. In 2007, Mikhalkov produced a 20 minute video on the occasion of Putin's 55th birthday and wrote a letter signed by other artists (including Fedor Bondarchuk) asking Putin to not step down from his presidency and stay in service longer. In the words of Birgit Beumers in her book, *Nikita Mikhalkov* (2005):

[Mikhalkov] has always been a controversial figure, swivelling between officialdom and the intelligentsia's dissidence, between popular and auteur cinema, between patriotism and nationalism, artist and prophet, storyteller and moralist, director and public figure, aesthete and politician. It is this ambiguity that makes Mikhalkov a figure who is admired and shunned at once, savaged by the critics and loved by audiences, despised by some colleagues and revered by others' (Beumers, 2005: 1-2).

Nikita Mikhalkov's *12* from 2007 is the first case selected and presented in this dissertation that was directed and produced by the renowned Russian filmmaker, who has directed several movies, all of which were well received by Russian and international critics (a recent exception being *Burnt by the Sun 2*, which received very mixed and controversial reviews).³⁷ Mikhalkov has created an image around himself, a way of expressing himself and a lifestyle that, being the film director he is, will always be remembered when the Soviet and Russian cinema is studied. For a few years the film director was silent in terms of film production and direction, but he came back in 2007 with another internationally acclaimed and successful work. In *12*, the character he plays is not a father in the literal meaning of the word, but he provides a family and protection to a young Chechen boy, one of the characters in the movie. Here Mikhalkov is not General Kotov anymore,³⁸ but 'uncle Nikolai', who without hesitation tells the boy to call him that if he wishes. There is no need to impose this role on the boy, because there is no doubt it will be acknowledged and gratefully accepted.

³⁷ See for instance the review of *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus* by Stephen M. Norris, published in Issue 30 of *KinoKultura* (2010): <http://www.kinokultura.com/2010/30r-bbts2.shtml>

³⁸ The role he plays in *Burnt by the Sun* and *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel*.

The film *12* was shown at the 64th Venice International Film Festival and received a special Golden Lion for its ‘consistent brilliancy’. Many critics praised it during the festival. Russian President Putin watched the film in his residence in Novo-Ogarevo together with Mikhalkov, his film-crew, Chechnya’s President Ramzan Kadyrov, and the President of Ingushetia, Murat Zyazikov. Vladimir Putin particularly appreciated the film and commented that it ‘brought a tear to the eye’³⁹.



Mikhalkov’s work was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, an award the film-director won earlier for his *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), evidencing the international success his work has gained. The movie is a remake in a Russian key of *12 Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet, which was an adaptation of Reginald Rose’s play of the same name.

³⁹ <http://www.watchdog.cz/?show=000000-000015-000006-000023&lang=1>

⁴⁰ http://gdb.rferl.org/56376391-0E30-4469-800B-935F8C8E59BA_mw800_s.jpg

The two plots are essentially the same, but in *12* the young accused boy is Chechen, not Puerto Rican, and he is accused of stabbing his Russian stepfather, a military officer who had been stationed in Chechnya and knew his family. The jurors must decide by a unanimous verdict whether the suspect is guilty or not. The decision seems very easy at first sight, because all the jurors consider the accused guilty, except for one who votes not guilty, pointing out that the decision should not be made lightly, without taking time to consider the situation from every possible angle.

A difference from Lumet's film is visible here, because in Lumet's film Henry Fonda, the foreman of the jury who can be considered the main protagonist, is the juror questioning the almost unanimous decision. In *12* Mikhalkov votes 'guilty', but he explains his reasons for doing so at the end of the movie, leading the audience to believe that he has guessed someone would question the verdict. He probably already understood that would happen and thus keeps on playing his role. After doubt about the accused's innocence is instilled in the other ten jurors, every single angle is reconsidered and the case is analysed with more attention. Insignificant-appearing details are reviewed and each of the jurors explains his reasoning, his back-story and comes to a final decision.

The differences with *12 Angry Men* are all meant to enhance the role played by Mikhalkov and the purely Russian elements that characterise the film. In the American film the young boy is found not guilty by the jurors, but his actual innocence is not proved and nothing is discussed about his future fate. Mikhalkov's work is more ambitious in this regard and his character reveals the truth immediately. He then explains it to the rest of the jury, saving the Chechen boy's future. Following these considerations, let us begin analysis of the elements connected to Patriotic Education priorities, starting with the hero-role model element, one of the strongest elements in *12*.

The hero element can be divided between two different characters: Mikhalkov's Uncle Nikolai and the murdered Army officer, Uncle Vanya. The film director is the foreman of the jury because he seems to have more experience than the rest. He calmly observes his colleagues on the jury expressing their opinions, calls them to order when needed and is like an eye that watches over the entire development of the case. He silently directs the scene and all the actions, somehow already foreseeing what will happen. His character does not reveal his own story, his personal drama, or any anecdote justifying the reasons for his initial decision and subsequent change of mind. He simply listens to everyone in silence until every member of the jury agrees on the verdict of innocence.

At that point, he states that he knew from the beginning that the young boy did not stab his stepfather, but still he will not vote in favour of acquittal. The truth about his character is revealed. The juror Mikhalkov is a retired intelligence agency officer and, because of his experience and skills in practical observation, he can immediately understand and grasp the reality of the situation, with no need to involve his private life and family incidents or fall back on personal drama and feelings. He simply makes use of the experience he has gained as an intelligence officer, his natural cleverness and practical reasoning. Mikhalkov then presents a problem of conscience to the eleven jurors: the young boy would probably survive longer in prison than outside as a free man because he has no one left to rely on and above all, because the real killer will eventually look for him. Finding him guilty would be the best option, unless all the jurors decide to take responsibility for their decision to find him innocent and are willing to help the boy and secure his future.

This difference from Lumet's story is a turning point in the entire movie. It proves Mikhalkov's character, the ex-officer (still an officer in his own mind) to be superior to the other jurors. Here it is possible to appreciate the difference between the

one who is content to leave things alone with a clear conscience and does not wish to move further, and the one who is not satisfied with that, knowing his duty and responsibility. The hero, who really is a hero to the young boy, is the only one willing to take responsibility for his decision and take action without hesitation. In the final scene, Mikhalkov's Nikolai speaks in Chechen to the boy and promises him without doubt that he will find out who killed his step-father. He welcomes the boy to his house and permits him to address him as 'Uncle Nikolai', if the boy wishes to do so.

The juror Nikolai, who offers to help and promises everything will be fine, is not the doctor from the Caucasus, the cemetery director or the racist taxi driver, nor is he even the first member of the jury to question its initial, nearly unanimous decision. Those other characters all have something personal that they place above what their duty should actually be. The one who provides help and a solution to the problem is the former intelligence agency officer. Once his word is given and his promise made, he will keep it at any cost. The fact he is retired has no importance, because his sense of duty and responsibility is unchanged. In his heart and mind he is still and always will be an officer, aware of his obligations and duties, of his honour and of the role he plays in society.

The difference between an artist's word and an officer's solemn word is clearly drawn: the latter is something that cannot and should not be questioned or doubted. Action, fighting and self-sacrifice are not part of this movie, although the hero is actually the only character willing to sacrifice his personal and private life for someone else's good. Mikhalkov, the officer-hero, has superior abilities of observation and evaluation, and thus instructs how private feelings should not rule over reasoning.

The second hero-figure is an Army officer who fought in Chechnya and has adopted the young Chechen boy. He is the boy's first hero, because after his family was killed by Chechen rebels, the boy ran away and found himself lost in the

nightmare of the war. He finds temporary shelter in a run-down building, where corpses of Chechen fighters have been left. During one operation, the officer finds the young child by chance and immediately takes him under his protective wing, freeing him from the nightmare. The Army officer, Uncle Vanya, is clearly a person of high principle and possesses a soft human side that makes him appear more appealing to the audience by evoking good will and sympathy toward his character. He is a hero who fought for his Fatherland and risked his life, a man who after retirement decides to take care of the young boy and gives him a second family.

The boy's step-father is not the leading hero and main protagonist of *12*. Mikhalkov's character is, and it can hardly be argued differently. However, the role the step-father plays and the way he is portrayed put him on the same level when it comes to creating a model with which to identify. While Mikhalkov's juror is the hero you admire and wish to encounter, and perhaps to follow in terms of principle, the other officer represents a more human hero with whom the audience will immediately identify and feel an unconscious attraction to his figure, a retired Army officer. He is the object of the love of his ex-wife and of his neighbour as well, who harbours feelings of jealousy towards the boy for having stolen the man of her dreams from her. He is shown throughout the entire movie in his military uniform and is charming and handsome at all times.

This secondary hero is intrinsically connected to the element of the soldier-figure, and he as an Army officer is described by his positive qualities and role. As portrayed in *12*, the soldier is important and superior to the other figures. Mikhalkov's character contributes to this impression as well by asserting to the audience that the only two persons truly willing to take care of the boy are himself and the late Uncle Vanya. The rest of the jury steps back when more sacrifice is required. Sacrifice that is promptly made both by Uncle Vanya and Uncle Nikolai, because they are soldiers at

heart, accustomed to the meaning and necessity of sacrifice for a greater good, and because that is the way a real, respectable soldier should always behave. This is what is learned from the military experience, which anchors a person in higher values, and puts forward a model that should be followed and imitated by other people.



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12 revolves around the war in Chechnya. Scenes of fighting are shown and inserted here and there through the movie to affect the emotions of the audience and to show the background of the Chechen boy. The film reveals the devastation that war left in the country, but as well the necessity of fighting it to protect the Motherland. The Chechen rebels declare that they only want to fight and kill Russians, telling the young boy that books will teach him nothing about how to kill his enemies. Amidst the nightmare that war represents for the young boy, who chillingly takes shelter right where those rebels lie dead, it is the war that somehow brings hope, by leading the Russian officer right to where he is trying to hide.

The movie shows the death of soldiers, and evokes feelings of sadness for their fate. However, no civilians are shown dead aside from the parents of the young boy who were killed by the Chechen rebels at the beginning of the movie. Even though this is not strictly a war movie, it is impossible to miss the centrality of war to *12*,

⁴¹ Uncle Vanya, the officer who saved the young Chechen boy.

because one is constantly reminded of it by scenes skilfully placed throughout the entire film.

This analysis will now move on to how the enemy/other is depicted in *12*. Even though the Chechen rebels are kept in the background, because the film is not about war, the focus in terms of the enemy (or bad guy) is on them. They deliberately killed the family of the boy as punishment for having sympathised with Russian soldiers. The comparison between Russians and the 'other' is clear, and it can be noticed in some monologues, for instance, one by a taxi driver who compares Russian kids to Chechen kids. It can be discerned in the different way the Chechen fighters and the Russian officer approach the boy: the Chechens incite him to use a knife and fight against Russians, while the Russian simply takes care of him, offering him a family and a place in society. This is not the strongest element in the film and does not play a central role as some other elements do, but its depiction does highlight a difference in values.

The figure of the father, embodying the concept of Fatherland, does play an important role in *12*. It is evident in the attachment of all the jurors to their country, which is expressed in various ways (for instance, the cemetery director uses money gained in an unorthodox way to construct schools and facilities in the village where he grew up). What Mikhalkov communicates with his character is not just simple attachment to country, but that there is no need at all to fear for the future, because the Motherland will take care of her people and provide shelter, just as the Fatherland leads them in the right direction. In a way, Mikhalkov's character is in himself a representation of the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland, fusing them in a peculiar way: he welcomes the orphan boy and provides him a roof over his head. He protects him and takes matters into his own hands, like a strong father would do. His

character unifies the role of father and mother in one person and represents what a traditional family provides: guidance, protection and leadership.

It was stated at the beginning of this analysis that the hero, the soldier and the father figure are intrinsically connected and somehow form one many-layered figure containing all three roles. The hero-role model is an ex-officer and a soldier, and as such he acts like a father and provides a family to the accused boy whose parents were killed by Chechen fighters. Perhaps in a film directed in the 1990s the young character would have ended up lost and alone, but not here.

In terms of values and patriotism, there is no doubt that Mikhalkov is a patriot whose vision is clear in his movies, and *12* is no exception. Most of the jurors express their attachment to the Fatherland and feelings of patriotism as well. However, they uncover other values, as they prove to be honest (the doctor never bought his diploma but tried four times before being admitted to university), they oppose corruption, they love art (the actor-juror plays the piano, Mikhalkov's character is a painter), and they display religious values and belief (the first juror to vote for innocence emphasises his decision by placing a sacred icon on a shelf and then taking it back, kissing it with reverence). One is a hard worker who has honestly worked his entire life to provide for his family (the taxi-driver). If he sometimes tricks people in order to earn extra money, it is not done for personal benefit but for a higher cause, such as restoring a chapel or building a school.

As is given to understand from analysis of the Patriotic Education programs, these are all values connected to patriotism. However, the qualities already listed for Mikhalkov's character make us understand how the Army builds solid, honest, rational, duty-driven and selfless men ready to sacrifice their own lives for the greater good, without hesitating with fear or indecision. The soldier is a man of action, who will never go back on his word or do otherwise than he has promised. Because he

became an officer, he remains one in his mind and heart. One of the indicators of the effectiveness of Patriotic Education is based in social and ideological terms, in that implementation of the programs should provide for the spiritual and moral unity of society, reducing ideological confrontation and reviving the true spiritual values held by the Russian people. In the case of Mikhalkov's character, we see a person who contributes to unifying society and reducing divisions caused by selfishness.

The element of memory, of how Russian citizens should perpetuate the memory of soldiers and officers that served their country, is depicted by constant flash-backs in the mind of the Chechen boy, who remembers his adoptive father, Uncle Vanya, who always appears in his military uniform as a Russian officer. Even though Uncle Vanya did not die during the Chechen war, he still served his country dutifully and accomplished his duty, therefore becoming a figure whose memory should always be cherished and treasured with pride and gratitude.

Film 6: ‘The Admiral’ 2008, Andrey Kravchuk

‘Which situation? The only situation now is war – fighting the enemy and doing your duty to the Fatherland’



Andrey Kravchuk’s *The Admiral* features the story of Admiral Aleksandr Vasil’evich Kolchak (1874-1920), a Russian World War I hero and self-styled Supreme Commander of Siberia during the Russian Civil War. In Russia alone, the box office for this film hit over \$33 million (Youngblood, 2009). As Denise J. Youngblood explains in her review of the movie, ‘Kravchuk’s success can be seen in the box office figures [...] and in the spirited debate the film aroused. Liberal Russian critics and historians have taken umbrage at this full-scale rehabilitation of one of the White Army’s most controversial commanders, while conservative critics have praised its message of honour, patriotism, and religious devotion, and the triumph of love over all catastrophe’ (Youngblood, 2009).

This analysis of the movie will explain how the film depicts the character of Admiral Kolchak: as a patriotic hero who performed his duty until his dying day, never betraying his faith and devotion to his country. The film richly illustrates all the

⁴² <http://www.cizgivyzyon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/admiral-2008-222x327.jpg>

parameters used in this analysis. Most of them find their depiction and personification in the character of Kolchak, a character who is portrayed in all of his glory, leaving the dark shadows off of the screen. As Youngblood explains in her review of *Admiral*, the filmmaker decided to leave all the controversial facts out of the story, in order to create a film and a hero that would most appeal to the public:

Kravchuk could, of course, have complicated Kolchak, drawing him not as a paper saint, but as a contradictory figure who personified those difficult times. Showing his flawed character, failed policies, casual attitude toward brutality against civilians (his fellow Russians, after all) would arguably have made for a more interesting film, but an exceedingly melancholy one, without conclusions, which would have destined it for the festival circuit, rather than blockbuster status. By whitewashing Kolchak and ignoring the ugly and uncomfortable truths of the historical record, Kravchuk has wittingly or not made 'Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality,' (the watchwords of Nicholas I's reign) seem very appealing to present-day viewers. (Youngblood, 2009)

Why are most of the elements personified in Kolchak's character? Because he is the Admiral of the Baltic Fleet, personally appointed by Tsar Nicholas II. Hence he wears a military uniform and is an imposing military figure (not a simple soldier, but a high ranking officer). He is a hero and a role model for his conduct, his unwavering faith and patriotism, and his sense of duty. He expresses the important values of patriotism and religious devotion, and heroism. He is a historical figure who actually existed. Through his representation in this story it is possible to understand what war means to a devoted patriot and the importance of remembering the heroic figures who fought and sacrificed their lives for the Fatherland, no matter the complexity and controversy of their situation.

There is more than one enemy here, and they are shown through the experience of Kolchak in the same way that the elements of Fatherland and Motherland are depicted in his story. The memory element is exemplified as well through the character of Anna Timireva, the wife of Kolchak's subordinate officer and friend, who

is his true, eternal love, because she survived captivity in the labour camps and eternally loves the Admiral and is always faithful to his memory.

As already pointed out, the character of Kolchak is depicted as a national hero and a role model to follow in terms of his integrity, loyalty, patriotism and spiritual values. The sentence chosen to introduce the film clearly reflects his sense of duty and strict military discipline. At the very moment Kolchak's subordinate officer discovers that his wife loves the Admiral and asks to be transferred to another fleet, war breaks upon them as the Germans attack. Resisting any suggestion that Anna's husband should leave because of the 'situation' between them, Kolchak helps his subordinate tend a wound made by a German bullet. With resolute voice and determined eyes Kolchak says: 'which situation? The only situation now is war—fighting the enemy and doing your duty to the Fatherland'.

Kolchak does not let other matters cloud his sense of duty toward his country and keeps his focus on his mission, without fear of enemy fire, as the opening scenes of the film testifies. Under heavy attack by the German fleet, the crew of a cannon is all killed except for one who can barely operate it. He allows Kolchak, in spite of the danger, to fire the cannon and destroy the enemy. Kolchak is willing to endanger and possibly sacrifice his life if it means freeing his country from the enemy. Kolchak is not a hero solely because of his numerous good qualities and his fervent devotion to the Fatherland, but also because he possesses a strong, magnetic personality that easily attracts people to him. Women love him at first sight, his men will follow him until he orders them to leave, and even his rebellious adversaries falter under his penetrating, severe gaze, as if feeling the power and determination emanating from his figure.

Kolchak is a fascinating figure in every sense, always displaying strict discipline and a perfect appearance in his impeccably tidy military uniform, which he wears with evident pride and honour, inspiring the soldiers and officers around him.

His character does not need to threaten people or use physical force, because his presence and his speech alone are weapons he can use to make men follow his orders. There is no need to force people to stay with him, because they will follow him under any circumstances whatever.

The words he uses and the choreography created around him in some scenes are a clear depiction of patriotism, as will soon be explained. Kolchak remains anchored in his identity and duty until his last moment, when he faces death with composure and a calm expression, knowing he did everything he could for his country. When asked if he wants to be blind-folded in front of the firing squad, he answers no, inspiring the person beside him to follow his example. He dies in his uniform, as an admiral of the Russian Empire facing the ultimate sacrifice in the course of fulfilling his duty to his country.

Patriotism and related spiritual and moral values described in the programs for Patriotic Education are not only personified in the character of Kolchak and reflected in his words and gestures, but also by the character of Anna Timireva, who is willing to follow him to Siberia. After a symbolic divorce from her husband, she sacrifices herself to his cause, working as nurse with the Red Cross to help wounded soldiers and officers. She does not seek Kolchak out at first, as she does not want to pose any difficulties for him, but she gladly accepts her new mission and rejoices in his victories and successes. She feels proud of him and of all the men fighting beside him and for him, as she explains to the audience while writing letters to Kolchak that she never sends. She exemplifies deep devotion to both the hero and to her country by working as a nurse and helping wounded soldiers. Kolchak's subordinate officer, Mikhail Smirnov, also shows devotion, following the Admiral until the very end, when Kolchak finally orders him to leave and continue his life.

A speech Kolchak gives before his officers and soldiers in 1918 on the Eastern Front in Siberia is another striking depiction of the values described in Patriotic Education and is meant to instil and awaken deep patriotism in Russian citizens. Kolchak's words are enhanced by the scenery, which shows the vast and snow-covered land of Russia in its beauty and silent glory. Russian flags wave in the background, agitated by the cold and freezing Siberian wind. As he pronounces his words, the scene shows the soldiers fall one by one to their knees and remove their hats, so moved are they by Kolchak's inspiring words and his commanding presence. All the officers perform a military salute as he speaks. Kolchak's words embody not only patriotism but also spiritual and religious values, which are personified in Kolchak's character and demonstrated by the presence of an Orthodox priest who blesses him and his mission. Kolchak declares:

I pledge and swear before Almighty God, his Holy Gospel and the Life-Giving Cross to be faithful and ever true to the Russian state and to my Motherland. I pledge and swear to serve it as the Supreme Ruler of Russia, without regard for my life, family or friendship, enmity or gain, and mindful only of the revival and success of the Russian state. Hereby I make the sign of the cross and kiss the words and cross of my Saviour. Amen.

These words do not need further explanation, for they are charged with deep meaning related to Patriotic Education and its expected goals. Kolchak incarnates the military, moral and spiritual side of patriotism, as described in the 'Concept' document from 2003. His words reflect as well the concepts of Motherland and Fatherland: he swears to defend and stay faithful to his Motherland, and he will stay faithful to and serve the Russian State, which is the Fatherland and a synonym for the highest authority that must be followed and served.

Tsar Nicholas II, another symbol of the highest political authority and the supreme leader of the country, personifies the element of Fatherland as he receives Kolchak to promote him to Admiral and Supreme Commander of the Black Sea Fleet,

thus giving him even more duties to fulfil and respect. The Tsar personally commends Kolchak for his bravery and the courage he showed on the Baltic Sea. The Admiral replies that he acted according to the call of duty, once more demonstrating his will to serve his country with honest loyalty and dignity. As the emperor of Russia promotes Kolchak, he bestows upon him an icon of the long-suffered Job, leaving it in his hands and saluting him with the sign of the cross, as if giving the final blessing of a father to a son from a religious and authoritative point of view.

The element and concept of Motherland, as described in the in the Patriotic Education programs, can be perceived in Kolchak's expressed will to protect her and in the symbolic element of water, which is important to Kolchak as the Admiral of the fleet. When rebelling sailors demand that the officers give up their weapons, Kolchak orders his subordinates to comply in order to avoid a bloodbath on board. He himself removes his personal weapon, a polished, shining sword that symbolises his military rank. However, he does not leave it in the revolutionaries' hands, but throws it into the waters of the Baltic Sea, as if returning it to rightful owner, the Motherland that he tried to protect. It is the cold and dark water of Siberia that embraces his dead body after he is executed by the Reds, symbolizing a reunion with his beloved homeland and the weapon that represented the true purpose of his existence.

The Admiral features two different wars: World War I, where the Russian Empire fights Germany, and the war between the Whites and Reds, as the revolution overtook Russia following the abdication of Nicholas II. WWI was fought and was a priority for everyone because it meant fighting against an enemy that threatened the Motherland. In the film, when the officers of the Black Sea fleet are captured by revolutionary sailors, they try to call the sailors back to their duties, asking them to come back to their senses because Russia is at war and they all need to fight the

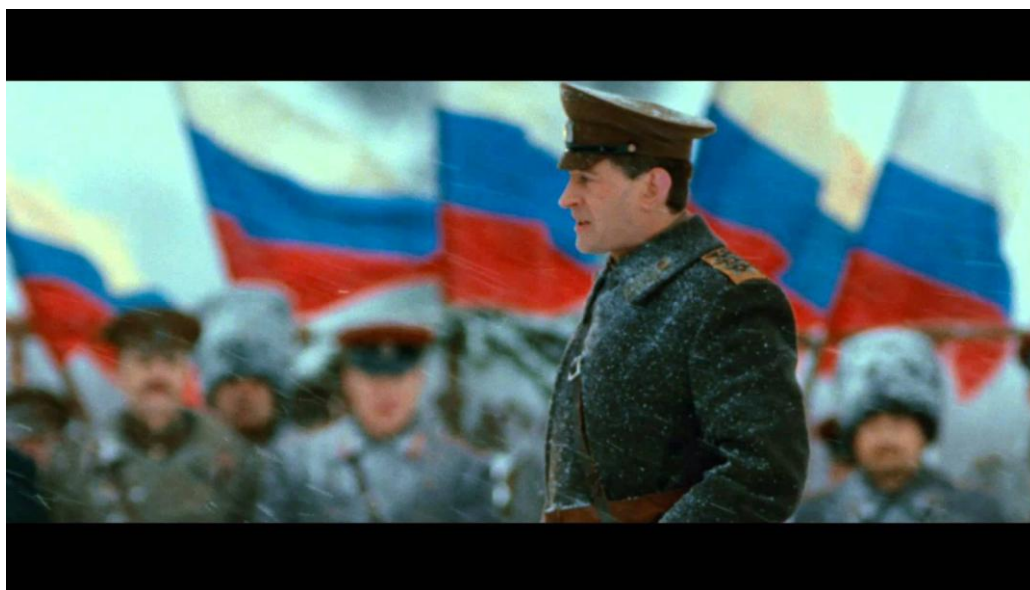
common enemy. This well depicts the military discipline and the sense of duty found in soldiers and officers, especially the officers in this film.

The two wars entail duties that must be fulfilled by the protagonist and are tragic events that will offer him glory and portray him as a hero. An example of the determination and courage of the soldiers, once again indicating the positive role of the soldier-figure, is the last battle featured by the film, which takes place on the Siberian front. The film shows the White soldiers and officers running out of ammunition, but even so, they bravely charge the enemy armed only with bayonets, forcing the Red troops to retreat at the cost of their own lives.

Their first enemy in the film is the German invader, who has to be confronted and defeated in order to protect Russia. That enemy is succeeded by the Bolsheviks, who throw the country in chaos and disorder, deserting their military duties and obligations. The film does not particularly seek to explicate differences between good and bad characters among the enemy, for the simple reason, immediately made clear, that they all represent a threat to the Russian State and must therefore be defeated at all costs. They do not respect their promises. In one example, a Bolshevik commander promises to keep Kolchak's family safe, but later sends troops to capture them (the wife and son manage to escape and flee to Paris), and the Red troops shoot officers in the back without hesitation. On the other hand, the White soldiers are depicted as merciful in a scene where they bury the corpses of Red and White soldiers alike, blessing each of them and saying that God did not create Russians differently or divide them by colours.

The final element described in the film is memory, the element personified and depicted through the character of Anna Timireva. Anna survives several years of prison in the Gulag, and is completely released only in 1969. All the while she remains faithful to her memory and love for Kolchak, preserving her memories of the

past intact in her mind. This allows the audience to encounter Admiral Kolchak once more, along with all who fought alongside him, in the last scene, through her dreamy eyes. Anna is screen-tested as an actress for a possible role in *War and Peace*, but she is refused. As she witnesses a ball scene, her memories return and she imagines the ball she never attended with Kolchak, but which they always dreamed of sharing.



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⁴³ Kolchak speaks to White soldiers and officers, swearing before Almighty God that he will be faithful and ever true to the Russian State and to his Motherland: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/o7JIE5-KUU/maxresdefault.jpg>

Film 7: *We are from the Future* (2008) by Andrey Malyukov



This is the only film selected for analysis that does not have an opening sentence to introduce it. It was hard to find the right words to frame this film, even though one scene at the end of the movie characterises the essence of *We are from the Future*: the moment when Skull, a neo-Nazi with a stylised swastika tattooed on his arm, tries to erase the tattoo with a piece of metal, drawing fresh blood from his skin. This is the perfect scene to represent the movie because Malyukov's work can be considered a good example of an educational film, featuring a 'rite-of-passage teen war drama that re-envisions the War as something that the youth of today can respect' (Dolgopolov, 2008). This is in line with the priorities and aims indicated in the two programs for Patriotic Education, described in the first chapter. However, the filmmaker, in referring to his work, explains that the film should be much more than educational; it should demonstrate what is worth living for:

This is a film fable, therefore there is a moral—at the finale the heroes need to have their perceptions completely transformed. That doesn't mean that we are trying to criticise the current era or to celebrate it. This film shows the connection of two different eras, so that audiences can make sense what is of value now and what we have lost from the past. The essence of the film is not in educating the younger generation but rather in demonstrating what is worth living for, what it means to love, courage and femininity. (Andrushevich, in Dolgoplov, 2008)

It is difficult not to see an educational pattern in the film. The way the protagonists are given to understand what is worth living for is the hard way, without any doubt.

We are from the Future (also known as *The Black Hunters* for the international market) is a mix of fantasy and war-drama created for the young public that brings the concept of memory and respect for the past to the screen in a rather peculiar way. Its lessons are taught by having the four protagonists travel directly into the past and find themselves in the middle of the Great Patriotic War. Could there be a better way to teach respect for the glorious past, the sacrifice of the soldiers who died protecting their Motherland, and remember the history of the country and its heroes? Given the typically modern life-styles of the four protagonists, this is indeed the best method to impress a lesson deep into the minds and hearts of the audience.

The story of the film revolves around four young men: former history student and leader of the group, Borman; Skull, a neo-Nazi who sports the tattoo of a swastika on his arm; a video-games expert, Chukha; and the rapper Spirt—who together constitute a rather diverse group of friends who enjoy discovering war treasures in order to sell them on the black market to get money. This is how the film introduces them to the audience: Borman has a set of medals he is selling illegally to a man. The group then moves to the country outside Saint Petersburg, wanting to find more treasures to sell. Skull in particular hopes to find an Iron Cross or a Nazi dagger for his own sake.

The four friends have nothing that could possibly characterise them as role models: they hold no respect for their Motherland's past and history, they sell precious war relics only to make money, they lack basic values and morals, as their actions and words testify, and they are not patriots at all. Skull in particular is nothing like the ideal patriot outlined in the program for patriotic education: in spite of the past and in spite of how many soldiers died to protect Russia from the enemy during the Great Patriotic War, he has a tattoo of a swastika. Everything about his appearance marks him as a Neo-Nazi. He is the archetype of the lost, selfish youth described in the programs for Patriotic Education and in the 'Concept' document, where the Russian authorities showed their concern about their future and that of their country. Therefore, yes, the protagonists are nothing like models to follow or heroes to look up to—until the end of the movie—when the direct experience of the war will change their personalities, views and ideologies in the deepest ways.

While they dig for treasures, Spirt finds what seems to be a bunker hidden in the depths of the earth, where soldiers and a nurse apparently died during an attack. There are skulls, photos, a letter dated 23rd August 1942 that one soldier never sent to his mother, a pistol, and other treasures. Among them is a case with documents. To celebrate their find, Skull and Spirt place the skull of a soldier on a stick and want to have fun shooting at it with a gun found in the bunker. Borman stops them, and while they argue about that, an old woman walks by and offers them some milk. She says it would be good to properly bury the dead soldiers and asks the youths to find her son who disappeared in 1942, carrying a silver cigarette case. They obviously do not take the old woman seriously and arrogantly mock her, but she keeps calm and with a rather mysterious expression on her face suggests that maybe, due to the very hot day, they should refresh themselves in a nearby lake.

The four friends re-enter the bunker and play around once more, looking at their treasure: to their great surprise they find four identity cards of soldiers that correspond exactly to their own identities. They panic and say it must be an illusion due to the heat and the vodka they drank, so they run to the lake and jump in naked. When they emerge from its clean waters, they find themselves—still naked—in the middle of a battle, bullets and rockets flying. When Borman checks his watch, the date is 19 June 1942. From that point their adventure and the rite of passage from shiftless punks to real men begin. They experience what war really means, who the Nazi-Germans really were and what they really represented to their country: a mortal enemy that had invaded the Fatherland and killed soldiers and the people dear to them. After a while they realise that in order to return to their own time, they will have to find the soldier the old lady was talking about and jump back into the lake on 23 June 1942.

At the end of the film, the four protagonists still have to prove they are real men and examples to follow, but it is clear that they have changed and that they have learned their lesson very well. From the beginning, when they find themselves thrown into the midst of battle, inexperienced, lacking courage and skills, selfish and almost useless, they slowly grow up into men, until the final battle scene. They launch themselves into battle, carrying their weapons even though they are scared. They are assigned a difficult mission and accomplish it, saving one another's lives and fighting German soldiers. Skull personally fights and shoots German soldiers. Spirt saves his friend Chukha, who hesitated a moment in front of a German officer before shooting him.

In *We are from the Future* the enemies are the Nazi German invaders who attacked Russia and killed so many of its soldiers, as the numerous scenes of battle demonstrate. One of the German officers is labelled an animal by a captured soldier—the very soldier who carries the silver cigarette box that will allow the protagonists to

travel back home. The enemy they must confront and fight is not only the German invader, but also Skull's mistaken ideology, Borman's selfishness and arrogance, and for all of them, their emptiness of heart and lack of patriotism. They learn respect in several ways. As if fulfilling the prophesy of the old woman, they are made to bury the corpses of dead soldiers as punishment for having broken the rules.

It is characteristic of Patriotic Education that only the experience of war in the uniform of a soldier will forge new, mature men, and transform the youths' egoism into new, good patriotism. While in battle, the difference between the four youths and real soldiers is rather striking. The soldiers are prepared and focused. They readily attack the enemy in order to serve their Fatherland and promptly follow orders. When they are captured by German officers, one of the Germans declares that all Russian soldiers are patriots, as if establishing an equivalence between the two. However, as he is the enemy and an invader, the German only mocks that characteristic: 'He is a Russian soldier. A patriot! Beautiful...but boring'.

The Great Patriotic War becomes an important, pivotal rite of passage for the four young men. It throws them into its cruel reality, showing them what it means to be soldiers, why their predecessors fought the enemy and what it means to respect and love the people who died doing their duty. Borman is perhaps the one that learns the hardest lesson, by falling in love with the nurse Nina. Although he tries to tell her not to enter the bunker they had found devastated in the present day, she crawls in, dragging the wounded body of an officer. A German bomb hits the bunker and she dies before Borman's eyes, together with other soldiers. Borman is unable to run in and rescue her because he has been shot in the leg. In a way, they all learn what it means to be soldiers, having to face their personal fears and limitations in order to accomplish their mission, follow orders and fulfil their duty.

Many elements are rather mixed up in *We are from the Future* and they all seem to serve the same purpose, which makes it complicated to distinguish one from another. However, it must be pointed out that the element of the memory of the past is rather dominant, even if it is depicted in a unique way. The memory here comes vividly alive and the youths experience the past directly on their own skin, making it impossible for them to forget. The experience leaves scars on their hearts and minds, and even the momentary euphoria following their return to the present time is interrupted by Borman's afflicted expression and fresh memory of Nina's death.

True to their experiences and to the lesson they learn, the film shows Skull taking a piece of metal and trying to remove the tattoo of the swastika from his skin, letting fresh blood spill. His gesture demonstrates how they have learned what is worth living for. It is not an ideology that clashes with their Russian-ness and with the glorious past of their country. Skull's gesture shows that he indeed understands how wrong he was and how, having learned respect for his Fatherland, he needs to delete the mark from his own skin. As the boys drive back to the centre of Saint Petersburg, they meet a group of Neo-Nazis drinking on the street. They stop a moment to contemplate them, as if already feeling their hard-won difference and seeing something wrong. The movie ends there and the audience is left to imagine what happens thereafter.

One last remark to make about *We are from the Future* regards the role of the old lady. She is an old person who witnessed the war and its costs with her own eyes, who somehow sends the four friends toward their destiny. Once more it is possible to witness how the older generation, directly or, as in this case, indirectly, has the task of teaching the young generation about important values and passing on valuable life-experience.



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⁴⁴ The four protagonists back in 1942

Film 8: *We Are from the Future 2* (2010), by Aleksandr Samokhvalov and Boris Rostov

'I am not afraid! Me neither.'



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The analysis of the film does not follow the chronological order of the other movies because it is a sequel to the film discussed previously, *We are from the Future*. Both films are examples of war-dramas aimed at teen-agers and a young audience in general, given the soundtrack used, the presence of putatively ‘young’ humour, and the casting of young actors. Differently from *Burnt by the Sun 2*, which is a single film divided into two parts and hence best analysed as one, *We are from the Future 2* is a film sequel that simply follows the events of the first film in time. Although the actors playing the main protagonists have changed, with Igor Petrenko⁴⁶ in the role of Sergey Filatov (no longer called by his nickname, Borman), the story repeats the pattern of the first movie, throwing a group of four people back into 1944 in the middle of the Great Patriotic War.

⁴⁵ The poster of the film: https://i.ytimg.com/vi/7wWd_iADR0k/maxresdefault.jpg

⁴⁶ Igor Petrenko is the actor interpreting Lieutenant Travkin in ‘*The Star*’ (2002).

The film shows the experience of the war and of being a soldier as a formative experience for young people, in particular if they are growing up spoiled and generally lacking in values. It affirms the traits of masculinity, mental and physical strength and maturity of values. The fact that the film targets a young audience renders the educational element more significant, especially because one of its strongest elements is the memory of the past. Still, our analysis will proceed in order and describe each parameter, while revealing some differences between the two movies in terms of plot. The sentence chosen to capture the nature of the film is taken from a dialogue between Taras and Seryy, two Ukrainian youths who travel back in time with Oleg (who called himself Skull in the first movie) and Sergey (Borman in the first version). It effectively grasps the central aspect of the film: maturing into real, respectful men through the experience of war.

The opening of the film is a clear message about the importance and necessity of remembering the past, in particular the glorious events and actions in which courageous soldiers died for their Fatherland and fulfilled their duties. The opening scenes are a film within a film, a documentary about an episode that occurred in the summer of 1944 called the 'Brody Cauldron', where Soviet forces encircled the 13th German Army Corps that included the SS 'Galizien' Division composed of Ukrainian volunteers. The documentary is shown to a group of students by Sergey Filatov, who is now a history professor at a university.

Filatov explains the importance of this episode and the luck the students have in being able to participate in a re-enactment of the battle, soon to take place in Ukraine. Sergey also takes part in the re-enactment with his friend Oleg, who has grown his hair back and learned his lesson from his experiences in the first movie. He is now occupied with reuniting war-time treasures belonging to dead soldiers with their living descendants. When the protagonists arrive on the scene of the battle, they

are welcomed by a group of nationalist Ukrainians who have strong feelings against anything Russian, and who will play the part of the 'Galizien' division that helped the Germans. The enmity of the Ukrainian group is represented by Taras and Seryy, who immediately provoke Sergey and Oleg and harass a Russian girl during a party held the evening before the re-enactment. At the re-enactment of the battle, Sergey and Oleg linger over the ruins of a house and discover an unexploded bomb. Taras and Seryy follow them and throw a firecracker into the house, triggering an explosion that throws them all back into 1944, a few days before the Brody battle.

The elements of memory and respect for the glorious past permeate the entire movie, from the its beginning with the documentary narrating the events of the Battle of Brody to the re-enactment of the battle itself. Such re-enactments are suggested in the programs for Patriotic Education as a way to instil respect and pride in Russia's history and heroes, a way to connect young and old generations and form a strong bond between them. In reality, they allow the experience of the War to be felt on the participants' skin and bring it up to the present time. After his experiences in the first movie, Sergey has become a history teacher, now feeling the need to lecture young students on what the Great Patriotic War meant for Russia. Exactly as in the first movie, the past and its memory again become real and alive in a film, suggesting that re-enactments are the best way to educate young people in genuine patriotism and respect for the past.

The film has four protagonists and it is important to distinguish between the two Russian friends—who have already proved themselves to be heroes and will again confirm it during the movie, testing the authenticity of their values, respect and sense of duty—and the two Ukrainian friends, who are the ones who must learn to be respectful, honest men. Sergey is tested when he is re-united with Nina, whom we learn did not die

in the explosion of the bunker, as the first movie suggested. However, Nina is now the wife of Major Demin and is expecting a child.

At the beginning of the movie, Taras proves his strong hatred toward Russia and anything related to it, while Seryy demonstrates himself to be a spoiled young man living in the shadow and protection of his rich father. It is their turn now to change and grow into potential role models. Once they land in 1944, they are immediately captured by Ukrainians working for the Germans, who see Sergey's and Oleg's uniforms and sense something is out of place. The Ukrainian SS men test them by bringing them to a ditch, throwing Sergey and Oleg in, and asking the two youths to prove their loyalty by shooting them. Other Russians who have been captured by the SS are in the ditch. Taras and Seryy cannot fire on them, and their weapons are snatched away and used to kill everyone but Oleg and Sergey. They are all saved by a sudden attack by the Soviet Army and manage to escape. Taras and Seryy have had their first experience of brutality, facing Ukrainian SS who kill innocent people.

It is not over for the Ukrainian friends, and the war will teach them a valuable, unforgettable lesson, starting with respect for the past. When the group meets Nina and Demin, they are forced take Nina to a village because she goes into labour in the middle of a German attack. The four men have to protect her and take care of the child, tasks that are assigned to the two Ukrainian friends when the group is forced to separate. Taras and Seryy prove their sense of duty by taking care of the child and safely delivering him into the care of a nurse, telling her the child's Russian family name. Seryy gets separated from Taras and seems to falter. He is spotted by Germans and almost shot; his friend however shows up at the last moment and saves him by killing the enemy. They reunite with Sergey and Oleg exactly when the battle for Brody starts. After all that has happened, spoiled Seryy is not afraid anymore: 'I am not afraid', he says with determination. 'Me neither', answers his friend, showing the same

determination. They throw off their German uniforms and run into the house to meet the Oleg and Sergey, keeping their weapons ready and covering each other's backs. As they run, they face the brutality of war once more, this time fighting with Soviet soldiers against the German enemy.

The two Ukrainian friends have grown into decent persons who now respect the sacrifices of the Soviet soldiers to save the land that is their Fatherland. They learn what war and selfless sacrifice mean and they demonstrate courage and loyalty toward their Russian comrades by fighting at their sides. As the last minutes of the movie approach and it seems that the protagonists can never make it back to the future, they make a silent, common decision: to fight the enemy alongside the Russian soldiers and die honourably while doing their duty. Without fear they step outside the house with their weapons, showing deep courage, face their apparent fate, displaying dignity and loyalty. But, as a Katyusha missile hits the house, they are magically sent back to 2010.

Oleg Vasiliev will prove what he learned in his first experience, this time fighting without reserve and risking his life for his friends and Nina's baby. He is the perfect soldier, who knows how to use different kinds of weapons. He is focused and physically strong, selflessly throwing himself into battle to save Sergey, who is seriously wounded. He does not lose his composure and shows courage and loyalty to his Fatherland. Like everyone else, he shows no fear in the last scenes of the battle of Brody, embracing his rifle and shooting the enemy at the risk of his own life. Sergey will have to sacrifice his love for Nina, who is now married to another man, and fulfil the duties of a good soldier and patriot. He tries to alert Soviet officers to the German attack that is to fall on Brody and then takes part in the battle, fighting together with Oleg, Demin and the other soldiers.

The Great Patriotic War is the event in the movie that unifies the group of four young men, pushing them together to fight side by side against the common enemy of

their Fatherland, watching each other's backs and proving their honour and loyalty. It is a rite of passage for Taras and Seryy, who outgrow their old attitudes of lack of respect, superficiality and emptiness of any value, even the simplest value of friendship. Their bond becomes strong and genuine after their dramatic experience. The bitterness they show in the beginning is cancelled out by the last scene, as they all talk over the phone with broad smiles and serene faces.

In the case of Sergey and Oleg, the war is a test of what they have learned from their past lessons and a way to strengthen their patriotism and sense of duty. War is depicted as a formative experience in many ways: it bonds people together in a common cause to defend the Motherland; it reinforces spiritual and moral values such as loyalty to friends and country, bravery, selflessness, and readiness to sacrifice; and it instils respect for the past and the military uniform. The enemy is once again the Germans, who are invaders and the destroyers of their beloved country. Thus they are an enemy to fight down to the last resource and in desperate conditions, as happened in the Battle of Brody.

However, this second movie also features the Ukrainian SS—separatists who betrayed the Soviet Union and sided with the Germans. They are depicted as ruthless and cruel, killing innocent people—mostly civilians without any weapons—in cold blood and without hesitation. They are an enemy who must be faced down by Taras and Seryy in order to open their eyes to the brutal truth of the past and show them how wrong their previously-held ideas were. The two friends must fight this enemy to understand what the Great Patriotic War meant and to mature as human beings.

The fact the protagonists are wearing military uniforms and behave like real soldiers at war is not without meaning. It shows how serving in the Army and being a soldier are great honours and an experience that forges people into stronger and better human beings. The Red Army soldiers and officers in the film all show the same

willingness to serve their Fatherland in order to defeat the enemy and all fight without showing any fear or doubt. At the moment they face their possible deaths in the last minutes of the film and take their final steps toward behaving like real soldiers and fulfilling their duty, they are rewarded by being sent back to 2010.

As has already been explained in the analysis of the elements of war and the figure of the soldier, *We are from the Future 2* depicts certain values through the actions of the four heroes. The last minutes of the film in particular are a tribute to honest and deep patriotism and all it represents according to Patriotic Education for Russian citizens: loyalty to the Fatherland, readiness for self-sacrifice, willingness to serve in the Army and protect the Motherland, honour and respect for the soldier's uniform. Deep values that touch and are awakened even in two seemingly nationalist young Ukrainians, who had hated everything related to Russia—a demonstration of the educational role of the Great Patriotic War and the experience of being a soldier. The moment Taras and Seryy throw off their German uniforms and turn to fight alongside the Soviet soldiers hints at a symbolic mending of their pasts and rejection of those who sided with Nazi Germany. They do this by fulfilling their duty to fight an enemy who at the time was a common one for both Russia and Ukraine (as two integral parts of the Soviet Union). The experience of war and fighting as soldiers transforms Taras and Seryy into heroes and role models upon their return to their country, and reinforces the two who are already role models, Sergey and Oleg.

Exactly as in the first movie, only when they have done their duty and learned their lesson will the four protagonists, now heroes, be allowed to return home safe and intact. Their effort and sacrifice will be rewarded, as the penultimate scene proves for Sergey. He meets the grand-daughter of Nina—Ms. Demiv as she introduces herself—who resembles her grandmother in all respects. Their meeting might have somehow

been arranged by his three friends, as suggested by the film's final scene, where they are speaking over the telephone, all in smiles.



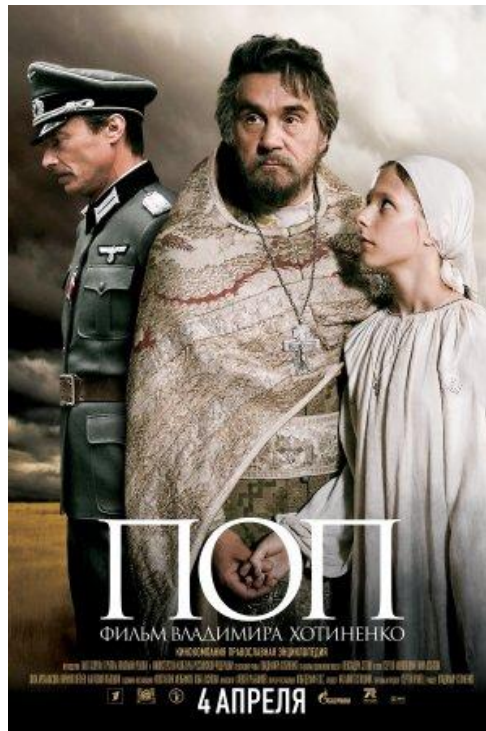
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⁴⁷ The four protagonists during the last minutes of the movie as they bravely fight against the German troops.

Film 9: *The Priest* (Pop) (2009) by Vladimir Khotinenko

'As in war time, I am presenting myself to your command.'

'I never lie, because I am a Priest.'



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Two sentences have been chosen to characterise this film directed by Vladimir Khotinenko, because they capture the nature of the main protagonist, Father Aleksandr Ionin (Father Sasha), an Orthodox priest in a village under German occupation. This analysis will focus on the element of the hero/role model, who in this film is a priest, not a soldier, although in some ways he can be seen as a soldier accomplishing a mission from God. As Anthony Anemone explains in his review of *The Priest*, Father Sasha 'is a paragon of all the Orthodox virtues: wise, kind, generous, resourceful, completely committed to his Orthodox flock, and a Russian patriot' (Anemone, 2010). Indeed, he is a patriot and a true Christian, as all his actions and words testify throughout the entire movie.

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The story of the film focuses on the period between 1941 and 1944 in the Soviet territories occupied by the Germans, when a group of priests had been dispatched by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Latvia on a mission to the Pskov region in order to re-open churches closed by the Soviet Army (Anemone, 2010). In Anemone's review, it is explained that:

Known as the Pskov Orthodox (sometimes 'Spiritual') Mission, the episode was written into Soviet history as a simple case of the Orthodox Church's treasonous collaboration with the Nazis. In recent years, however, the resurgent Russian Orthodox church has put forth a competing version of the episode, one in which the priests of the Mission are depicted as saintly men of God and true Russian patriots. Despite the appearance of supporting the Nazi occupation, the priests of the Pskov Orthodox Mission ministered to the spiritual needs of the Russian orthodox population in a time of national crisis, while actually supporting Soviet prisoners of war, [and] the anti-Nazi partisan forces. (Anemone, 2010)

The film was produced and directed at the request of the late Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Aleksei II, who first commissioned a novel about the episode by the Orthodox writer Alexander Sergen (Anemone, 2010). The novel was then used as the basis for the script of the movie directed by Khotinenko. It tells the story of the real Father Aleksandr Ionov, who participated in the Pskov Mission, but in the film there are some differences from what actually happened, creating a stronger, more patriotic character.

An interesting fact about the film found in Anemone's review regards the official announcement of the film release: 'made with the blessing of the deceased Patriarch of Moscow, Aleksei II, under the patronage of President Dmitri Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, with financial support from the Ministry of Culture of Russia, OAO Gazprom, the 'Renova Media' company and the Federal Space Agency' (Anemone, 2010). The film premiered in Moscow in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour during the Easter holidays, emphasising the importance of its content and values.

The character of Father Aleksandr, as interpreted by Sergei Makovetski, personifies several elements and political points enumerated in the programs for Patriotic Education: he is a hero in the sense that he never betrays his Motherland and works always for her people, and he upholds strong values, a deep sense of duty, unbreakable faith and deep honesty. He is a patriot who loves his Motherland. He is a father in a spiritual way but also is the father of a real family who protects his children, punishes traitors and guides lost souls. In *Father Aleksandr* the film amplifies the concept of Fatherland, while his wife and their family illustrate the concept of Motherland.

As Father Aleksandr reminds a group of children he has rescued from deportation to a German concentration camp, he never lies because he is a priest. From his words it is clear that he lives up to his values and beliefs, never betraying the mission that God has appointed to him and always being sincere. Father Aleksandr is not a soldier, but he is ready to fulfil his duties at any cost and always speaks his mind frankly, even if it exposes him to danger. One other central characteristic of this protagonist makes him a role model to follow: he is not afraid to defend his people, confront their enemies with his words, stand up for what he believes and expose himself to the enemy.

A few scenes can be described as proof of his qualities. First is the fact he does not agree with the other priests about accepting help from the Germans to revive the churches. He thinks that is not good and goes against the Motherland, and says: 'even if sometimes I should know my place and I should be quiet, I will still ask you, however. What is this, Father's dears: does it not mean betraying our country?' It clarifies where he stands and what he thinks about collaboration with the enemy. He then says that he will renovate the church, but only to help the people. He reminds his

parishioners that he was baptised in honour of Aleksandr Nevsky, the protector of Russia who defeated the Germans.

As he reminds his colleagues: 'we are Russians'. Aside from expressing strong attachment to his country, pride in being Russian, and lack of any doubt about his position, Father Aleksandr was baptised in honour of one of the greatest, most famous heroes of Russia. The fact that the episode takes place during the Great Patriotic War and the enemies are Germans, enhances and emphasises the importance of his role in the film, of his mission and of his beliefs. He cannot betray the memory of his hero Nevsky and thus, if he re-opens the churches, he does so solely to help people who are suffering from the war and from oppression by their enemies.

Two other episodes are relevant to Father Aleksandr's personality, demonstrating his right to be perceived as a role model. First, when some policemen collaborating with the Germans are killed by Soviet partisans, who know they were traitors who had killed innocent people (including children and old people) on the orders of the enemy, without feeling any guilt for their crimes, Father Aleksandr refuses to give them his blessing. He says to the people of the village that his blessing would not be sincere and that the policemen do not deserve it because of their crimes and their betrayal of the Russian people. This is an act of open defiance inside territory occupied by the enemy, but he cannot go against certain values or betray his Motherland.

The second episode is when he tries to stop the execution of four Soviet partisans. He speaks out to the people and physically tries to stop the execution before being forcibly removed. Father Aleksandr is not afraid to stand up for his people and does not fear what might happen to him. He is ready to do his duty and selflessly sacrifice himself if necessary. When a soldier, who will later become a partisan, threatens to kill him because he is upset about the killing of his fiancée by a German

soldier, Aleksandr asks God for forgiveness for the partisan's sins and then says he is ready to die if the partisan decides to shoot him. In the end the partisan does not shoot and is actually touched by this gesture and the strong personality of Father Aleksandr. He becomes more of a Christian.

Father Aleksandr personifies the highest values indicated in the programs for Patriotic Education, including patriotism, as demonstrated by the foregoing description of him as role model. He also demonstrates Orthodox faith and beliefs, as promoted by the Orthodox Church, an active partner of the programs. He is courageous, loyal and selfless, because he is ever ready to help people in suffering and in need of help, such as children whose families have been killed, partisans, and Soviet prisoners held in German concentration camps. He expresses a deep sense of duty and willingness to sacrifice himself in order to accomplish his Christian mission, but also to help his country and alleviate its suffering with his prayers and deeds.

In fact, the beginning of the film shows how he includes the soldiers fighting for the Fatherland in his prayers and how he blesses a Soviet tank: 'oh Lord, bless the army of these Russian boys'. The depiction of his loyalty to his country has already been analysed by recounting a couple of important scenes, especially his calling the policemen working for the enemy 'traitors to their Motherland'.

Seth Graham, in a review of *'The Priest'*, describes the patriotism expressed in the movie as 'apolitical Russian patriotism' and lists a number of scenes that prove it. Some of these we have already described, but others are too important not to mention. Father Aleksandr 'refuses to obey a directive from the Reich that all Russian priests in Nazi territory must offer prayers for the victory of Germany. Then, after the Soviets retake the region and begin to interrogate and imprison priests, Father Aleksandr refuses to sign a confession, and goes off to the Gulag with a clear conscience' (Graham, 2010). More proof of his loyalty and devotion to his mission and Motherland appear in a scene

where a German officer offers to let him leave Russia and move to Germany with his family. Aleksandr immediately refuses and says that neither he nor his family will leave their Motherland.

Aleksandr's wife, Mother Alevtina, is another character who must be mentioned in terms of her values: she is severe, but she always supports her husband and never doubts her faith. She too is a patriot and cares for her family, ready even for the most extreme gesture of self-sacrifice. When after a visit to a concentration camp she discovers that she has caught typhus, she leaves her home and wanders alone in the forest in the middle of a blizzard, late at night. She leaves a letter behind explaining that this is not suicide, because she is only leaving alone in order not to pass typhus on to her children and her beloved husband.

The character of Mother Alevtina also well expresses the concept of Motherland. She is severe when it is required, but always welcoming and caring to her children and family. When Father Aleksandr brings children home with him, she welcomes them with a big maternal hug and then prepares food for everyone. She is always at her husband's side, constantly worrying, trying to protect him from his honest straightforwardness. In her ultimate gesture of self-sacrifice, the real Motherland, Russia, with her forests and snow welcomes her and gives her eternal peace.

Another representation of the Motherland is the water in a lake nearby a village, where Father Aleksandr moves in order to restore a Church and support the people living there. The bell of the church was thrown in the lake by the Bolsheviki. It is miraculously found intact, because the water has preserved and protected it. In the same way, the Motherland preserves the important symbols of the cardinal Russian values, avoiding their destruction and loss to memory. The film dedicates a long scene to the restoration of the church, stressing the importance of renewing the faith and polishing it to make it stronger.

On the other hand, Father Aleksandr represents the spiritual side of the Fatherland concept, as a father who welcomes and protects his family and children. He promises a newly adopted girl that nobody will ever take her away again. He demonstrates that he is a severe father by punishing those who have deserted and betrayed the country and its people (as in the case of the policemen working for the enemy). He chases a German officer out of his home who had helped execute Russian partisans and seeks forgiveness. Father Aleksandr is a father who feels responsible and concerned for all Russian people suffering in the war and under Nazi occupation. He helps prisoners in the concentration camps by bringing them food and clothes. He guides his children, and they grow into strong and reliable citizens. One of them follows in his footsteps by becoming a priest. Aleksandr is a figure that remains true to the concept of the Fatherland that gives a future to its children. Again, he refuses a German officer's offer to let him leave the country and move to Germany with his family.

The enemy and the 'other' are represented by German soldiers and Russian traitors who collaborate with the enemy. The traitors are shown to be cruel and ruthless, feeling no guilt or sadness after killing innocent people. The way the leader of the policemen describes his crimes, with a cunning smile and lack of emotion, emphasises his evil nature and lack of values. The film shows the policemen being punished for their crimes as they are killed by partisans and are refused the priest's blessing.

The German soldiers are the enemy and oppressor, therefore their actions are featured as such: one soldier kills an innocent girl after having tried to seduce her and getting slapped. Others kill a cow, leaving a mother without any way to feed her children. They kill the character Eva's family for being Jewish.⁴⁹ They take blood from innocent children, apparently for use by German children, and lock Russian people up in concentration camps, leaving them starving and in terrible condition. The film shows

⁴⁹ Eva is a Jewish-born girl who wishes to be baptised as Orthodox. Father Aleksandr baptises her and she follows the priest to his new village after her entire family is killed by the Germans.

a difference with the Russians in how the Germans celebrate religious festivals; while the peasants and Father Aleksandr hold a solemn ceremony for Orthodox Easter, the Germans and their priest celebrate Christmas by setting a tree on fire, drinking alcohol and shooting aimlessly at the sky. A couple of soldiers ride a motorcycle side-car around the burning tree, almost as if they are celebrating more in a pagan way than a Christian way.

What the Great Patriotic War represented for the Russian people is demonstrated by the treatment of prisoners, the conditions in concentration camps, and the public execution of partisans—as well as the very fact their sacred land is occupied by the enemy. Even if the film has no scenes of battle and the real war is only a framework and context for the story, its presence is never forgotten and is constantly brought to mind by the condition of the prisoners and the presence of children who have lost their families.

The element of memory is represented by the fact that the film features a true story from history, portraying it in a way that renders Father Aleksandr's deeds heroic. The priest is sent to the Gulag at the end of the movie, but he faces his destiny with serenity and a clear conscience. He refuses to sign a confession, explaining that whatever he did, it was to support and help his people, and he prays for the Motherland to be freed from the enemy.

The last minutes of the film show a very old priest walking towards a church, while a group of young people ask him if they can take shelter from the rain in the church. It is 1979 and the sound of bells softly accompanies the scene. The very old priest is Father Aleksandr. When he hears the young people's request, they are listening to foreign music and almost mocking his slow stride. He stops and pierces them with his strong, direct gaze. 'Come children and we will see', he says, and he leaves them dumbstruck and touched by his words and his stare. The film's hero has survived his

sentence in the Gulag to bring his story to the younger generation and, as he did in the old days, he welcomes the young people by addressing them as ‘children’, ready once more to provide the father’s leadership a child might need.

An interesting fact about this movie is that the true story of Father Aleksandr differs from the one featured in *‘The Priest’*. The real Father Aleksandr left Russia toward the end of the war, escaping to Germany never to return. This difference demonstrates the director’s desire to create a real hero for his audience, who never strays from his beliefs and duties: a hero and protagonist who without doubt has an important educational role, even if the true facts must be modified and the past falsified for the sake of proper education.

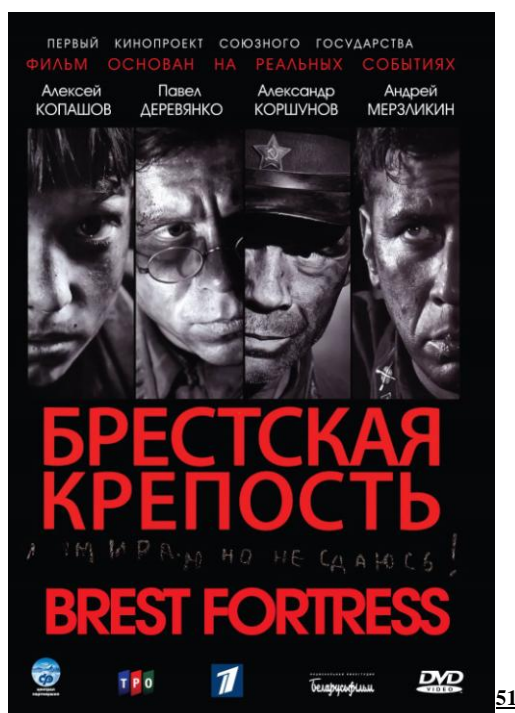


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⁵⁰ Father Aleksandr with his adopted children.

Film 10: *The Brest Fortress (Brestskaya Krepost)* (2010) by Alexander Kott

'I remember. I remember everything.'



The sentence chosen to characterise this film encapsulates the essence of Kott's work. It is pronounced in the aging voice of Sasha Akimov, one of the many heroes/protagonists of this movie who survive the events it depicts. Akimov narrates the story of the people who fought for days, to their last breath, to defend the Brest Fortress from the enemy. Of the films analysed here, *The Brest Fortress* most prominently depicts the element of memory. The film is a symbolic monument to the glorious past that the programs for Patriotic Education stress must be remembered and respected.

The film is very rich in the way it brings to the screen all the program elements and political priorities. It is directed with touching, dramatic flourishes, creating a crescendo of strong emotions. The film presents a rich field for analysis, because we meet four different heroes who play important roles in the movie and, each in his own

⁵¹ The poster of the DVD: http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/81evGwXIXyL._SL1500_.jpg

way, represent role models to follow. In his review of the film, Anton Sidorenko contends that the defence of the Brest Fortress was ‘one of the most resonant episodes of the Great Patriotic War. The legend about the feat of the defenders of the fortress—the Citadel on the Bug, as it is often called—emerged during the Khrushchev Thaw’ (Sidorenko, 2010).

The Brest Fortress, directed by Aleksandr Kott, recounts the first few days of Operation Barbarossa, the attack on the Soviet Union launched by the Germans on 22 June 1941. The attack jettisoned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed less than two years earlier, in which Poland was divided up between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Pact is without doubt still very difficult matter in today’s Russia (Wertsch, 2008).

The Brest Fortress was produced by the Union State of Russia and Belarus, which respectively contributed 60 and 40 percent to its budget. According to Igor Ugolnikov, the head of the Television and Radio Organization (TRO) of the Union State, *The Brest Fortress* has strong ideological and public importance, and the younger generations of Russia and Belarus should learn ‘the truth about the war’ from it (Sidorenko, 2010).

It was premiered near the Kholm Gate of the Brest Fortress at four o’clock in the morning on 22 June 2010, the 69th anniversary of the beginning of the war, on the spot where the tragic events took place on the same night in 1941. The evocative, emotionally charged atmosphere of the premiere created a perfect setting for what the film recounts and enhanced one of its strongest messages: the necessity of perpetuating the memory of Russia’s national heroes and the Great Patriotic War. Although the expected participation by the presidents of Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine was announced, due to tensions between Alexander Lukashenko and the Kremlin the premier took place without any of the leaders present (Sidorenko, 2010).

As is explained at the beginning of the movie, twenty years after WWII Sergey Smirnov wrote a book that revealed the truth about the defenders of the fortress. On 8 May 1965 the Brest Fortress was awarded the honorary title ‘Hero Fortress’ in commemoration of its defence. This honour reveals the deep relationship with the political priorities set out in the programs for Patriotic Education, as this analysis will explain in detail. First, the story of Kott’s film will be presented in order to introduce the main characters. The analysis will then move on to detail each element.

The film begins with the voice of the now elderly Alexander—Sasha Akimov, who narrates the story of those days. The first words he pronounces are: ‘I remember. I remember everything’, words that will return at the end of the film as if to close and complete a circle. The scene opens on a Saturday afternoon in the Fortress, to be precise, Saturday 21 June 1941, a few hours before the tragic German attack. Merry moments of normal life are shown on the screen and all the main protagonists are introduced: the young Sasha Akimov, who at the time was a member of the 333rd Regiment orchestra and was experiencing the first feelings of love for another character, Anya; Lieutenant Andrey Kizhevatov, who is Anya’s father and who during the defence of the fortress takes command of the Ninth Frontier Post; Major Pyotr Gavrilov, who anticipates the sudden attack and breach of the Pact, and shows NKVD Special Department Lieutenant Vanshtein on a map how the Russian troops will be trapped in the fortress, a linchpin of the Eastern Front; and finally, Regimental Commissar Yefim Fomin, defender of the Kholm Gate. The date and time 22 June 1941, 03.58, is displayed on the screen and a watch begins to tick away seconds in the background. It is two minutes before the beginning of the attack that started with a cut-off of power and water, and an attack by German commandos disguised in Soviet military uniforms. As Sasha narrates, war breaks violently upon the Fortress and its defenders: ‘I had imagined war. But I could not have imagined war. Not this war.’

The first element to be introduced here is that of the hero/role model, because the film immediately introduces its four main protagonists, who serve as perfect role models in terms of Patriotic Education. From this element the others to be examined will automatically unravel. Some secondary characters play rather important roles, but to avoid an overly lengthy analysis, the focus will be on the four characters mentioned above, beginning with Alexander Akimov. Alexander, or Sasha, survives the attack on the fortress and the Great Patriotic War. As he is reminded at the end of the film by Commander Kizhevatov, he must tell the true story about those who fought the enemy to defend their Motherland.

Sasha is young but very determined. He demands to stay in the fortress with the soldiers to defend his home, which is what the fortress has become because he has lived there with his brother since his parents were killed in the Spanish Civil War. Sasha is separated from Anya when the German attack breaks through, but he never ceases to search for her until he finds her and brings her back to her family. Sadly, we learn from him that Anya and all the other families living in the Fortress were executed by the Germans in autumn of 1942 even though they had surrendered upon the orders of the fortress's Commander, Kizhevatov.

Sasha's youth, fortitude, courage and sense of duty are to be taken as examples. Because of those qualities he plays a key role in passing the last order to the Eastern Front, for a counterattack in an effort to save some soldiers and die rather than be captured. At his young age, Sasha is a true patriot who shows no fear, is ready to serve his Fatherland, follows the orders he is given and accomplishes his mission, saving his beloved Anya and shooting a German soldier who might have been a threat after he discovers the girl's hiding place. The young Akimov is a key protagonist who passes on the story of the fortress's defence to future generations. Even if he is not given any special reward, he is a true hero who contributes to saving his country.

Regimental Commissar Yefim Fomin defends the fortress's Kholm Gate with strong resolve and sense of honour. His soldiers follow his orders without question, sensing that he is a leader ready to sacrifice himself if needed. Fomin is a role model in terms of his patriotism, loyalty, integrity and high honesty. His readiness for self-sacrifice is shown in a scene where a group of German soldiers advances over a bridge using wounded patients, children, old persons and hospital workers as human shields, all the while calling on the Russian soldiers to surrender. Fomin walks out with his lieutenant, unarmed, and stands up to the Germans. He quickly evaluates the situation and shouts to the people from the hospital to lie down immediately. The soldiers in the fortress shoot over the hospital patients at the German soldiers and Fomin manages to save them.

Commander Fomin gives the order for a counterattack, hoping to join forces with the rest of the Eastern Front. He says, 'with combined forces tonight, on the 24th of June, we are going for a breakthrough, in order to reconnect with the regular units of the Red Army and to continue fighting the Nazi invaders'. His words leave no doubt about his resolve and his sense of duty. He wants to fight the enemy to the bitter end; together with his actions, his words reveal his deep and honest sentiments of patriotism, together with his integrity and pride. Fomin is executed by a German firing squad, but faces his death with serenity and in good conscience, revealing his identity as Commander with no intent to hide it, knowing that it means death. The narrating voice of old Sasha tells us that Commander Fomin was awarded the order of Lenin, *post mortem*, in 1957.

Lieutenant Andrey Kizhevator is another role model in terms of his integrity, sense of duty, readiness for self-sacrifice, morality and honour. He is very attached to his family and loves his older daughter Anya dearly. Once he arrives at the Ninth Frontier Post, and after having guided his family to its basement, he realises that there

is no other commander and the soldiers are in a panic, not knowing what to do. He immediately restores order and pulls the regiment together. He firmly takes command and tells the soldiers to grab every possible weapon they can find, to hold their position and do their best in defending the Fortress from the enemy.

As the German troops advance, Kizhevatov wastes no time and orders his men to attack. He is the first to jump out of the window and open fire on the enemy. The soldiers all fight with whatever they can find, even a chair or just their bare hands. Everyone shows courage and devotion, following the orders of their commander, who is truly their example of bravery. After the failure of the first counterattack and after he hears that the Red Army's air support has been destroyed by the Germans, Kizhevatov decides that the civilians in the Fortress have to surrender in order to save their lives, at least. His wife does not want to leave him, but Kizhevatov reminds her that because she is the wife of the commander, if she goes, everyone will follow her.

Kizhevatov's sense of duty and responsibility toward other people lies very deep in his character, just as it does in all the other protagonists. During his last hours, he orders to his remaining men to go on a final counterattack to break out and save their lives, because it is clear nothing more can be done to completely repel the enemy. He promptly sacrifices himself for his comrades by staying behind and opening fire on the German soldiers, allowing his men a moment to escape. As his ammunition runs out, he sits down, gazing at his family's pictures, and dies with honour. As Commander of the Ninth Frontier Post, Lieutenant Andrey Kizhevatov was posthumously awarded of the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Major Pyotr Gavrilov is an example of a role model in many respects. He is a true, honest patriot due to his devotion to the Fatherland his deep and iron-bound sense of duty, his sense of honour, his strong resolve, and his courage. However, he is not only an example of a true patriot because of his sense of duty, which never falters

throughout the entire film, but also because of his integrity and dignity. He is a strong leader who never breaks down and always commands the respect of his men. He is the one who fears a possible German attack, knowing the dire outcome because of how things are organised in the fortress and his past experience.

The audience immediately learns about his honesty and his mental strength. Even Lieutenant Vanshtein from the NKVD Special Department is persuaded by his words and understands the gravity of the threat. As the German attack breaks through the fortress, throwing the unprepared soldiers into sudden panic and chaos, Gavrilov walks about and with strong authority orders the men to go to their battle stations, grab their weapons and defend the Fortress. Everyone stops running away and follows his orders, thus executing their duty as soldiers. He meets two lieutenants without uniforms who are intending to escape and harshly orders them to don their uniforms and go back into the fortress. Major Gavrilov never shows any doubt about his mission and his duty as a Red Army officer. His deep devotion to his Fatherland is evidenced by the words he pronounces to his soldiers towards the end of the movie: 'the Germans offer us to surrender and live a cowardly life as captives. They are mistaken. We are soldiers of the Red Army and we will defend our Motherland until the last drop of blood. There is no other choice for us'.

Gavrilov's words leave no doubt about his qualities as a perfect patriot and role model to emulate. He is very severe and resolute, but at the end, when a two-ton bomb is launched against the fortress, he can see that the defence cannot be held any longer without new weapons and reinforcements. Thus he salutes all of his men and lets them go on their way, ordering them to stay alive as long as possible and thanking each of them for having fulfilled and respected his duty. He himself, however, stays in the fortress. Old Sasha relates that he was taken prisoner, but survived the war and was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union in 1957.

The four characters embody true Russian heroes and role models who are to be taken as examples by every Russian citizen, and to be emulated in their honest and selfless sense of duty, their willingness to serve their country to the last drop of blood, their willingness to sacrifice themselves, their integrity in terms of their values, and as exemplary human beings. The film shows how they care for their wounded comrades and help them at the cost of their lives, how they cry upon the death of their comrades, and how reverently they bury the corpses of fallen Red Army soldiers. The value of patriotism and all it represents is depicted in the film in their deeds and words. However, not only these four characters show noble values, but also a number of secondary characters, such as Lieutenant Vanshtein, who dies honourably while defending the fortress from the enemy; Kostya, a young man who brought films for the cinema club in the fortress, who finds the courage to explode a bomb in his own hands, taking with him some German soldiers; and other civilians who fight to their last breath. Still another example is Sasha's older brother, who dies after destroying two German tanks with an anti-tank rocket.

The Brest Fortress is an intense film in terms of emotion. The values that Patriotic Education expects to reinforce in Russian citizens are vividly emphasised in almost all of the characters. The three characters of Fomin, Gavrilov and Kizhevatov actually did take part in the battle to defend the Fortress and received decorations as heroes. Fomin and Kizhevatov's medals were awarded posthumously, since Fomin was immediately executed by the Germans as a Jewish-Bolshevik political commissar and Kizhevatov was killed trying to cross the Bug River.

The concepts of Fatherland and Motherland are often discussed by the protagonists, who swear they will die to protect their Motherland and serve their Fatherland without hesitation. The Fatherland is represented by the characters of Gavrilov, Fomin and Kizhevatov, who are strong leading figures, authoritative

commanders and fathers of families. They give orders to their men—and in the case of Kizhevator to his family—which are respected and fulfilled.

The figure of the soldier is identifiable in all the characters described above. These soldiers are ready to sacrifice themselves for the safety of the country, hold on to deep patriotic values and are finally recognised by society as national heroes. After momentary panic and disorder, the soldiers are ready to follow the orders they are given by their commanders. They do their duty and defend their Motherland with all they have. This in particular is often depicted by showing soldiers prepared to fight the enemy without any weapon at all, sometimes armed with only a chair or something they grabbed up off the ground with their own hands. One sentence, scrawled on a wall of the fortress by a soldier under the command of Major Gavrilov, sums up the essence of the soldier-figure: 'I die but I do not surrender'. The soldier depicted in Kott's *The Brest Fortress* is a figure who inspires respect and whose memory must be treasured, who sets a good example to be followed by younger generations and Russian citizens in general.

War is presented in all of its tragedy for the people residing in the Fortress. It impacts them with incredible violence. Despite the tragedy, the film features one of the most famous episodes of the Great Patriotic War and follows the tradition of displaying the Great Patriotic War as the main event of the twentieth century, uniquely capable of consolidating the Russian nation (Kucherenko, 2011). This consolidation actually happens inside the fortress. Its defenders band together in the bitter fight against the enemy, an enemy that here is depicted as a ruthless, inhuman invader, ready and willing to use wounded people and children as shields, to shoot patients in the hospital and to disrespect the dead.

Many scenes in the film illustrate the barbarity of the Germans. The enemy has no specific name or face, but has the collective image of the Nazi invader who shows

no mercy to anyone and eventually executes the families in the Fortress that surrender in the end. In one climactic scene, Commander Fomin, without any weapon, manages to save the staff and patients from the hospital who are held as hostages. One of the German officers uses a very young girl as human shield, showing his indifference to values, integrity and morality. 'The enemy by and large is not endowed with personalized traits and represents instead a hostile, fatally dangerous force that ceaselessly attacks the fortress' (Sidorenko, 2010).

The last element that we shall present is the memory of the past, which is most strongly conveyed in the movie through the character of Sasha Akimov. The sentence chosen to introduce Kott's work expresses the core message of the movie: 'I remember. I remember everything'. These words are spoken by the elderly Sasha as he narrates the story of the men of the fortress, fulfilling a request made to him by commander Kizhevotov, who hands a banner to the young boy and tells him to treasure it. Indeed, Sasha does preserve the banner until the present time, just as he preserves his memories and faith intact. When standing in front of the monument built to honour the Fortress and its people as an old man, he explains to a young child, probably his grandson, how he believes that everyone from that time still lives, not only the people whose story he has told, but also those about whom he did not know much. The film then shows the Fortress's defenders' faces and smiles, as if nothing has ever happened, to demonstrate that they still live in Sasha's memory and heart. It is clear that Sasha wants to pass the memory and experience of the past to the young generation represented by his grandson; this last image reminds us that these people cannot be forgotten because of their heroic deeds and their devotion to their Fatherland.

The programs for Patriotic Education suggest activities where veterans can interact with students and young people in order to teach them about the glorious past

of the country, to instil a sense of respect for the soldiers who died while doing their duty, to awaken certain values through the sharing of past experiences and to connect the past with the future. All this is delivered in the last minutes of the film, in a scene where the elderly Akimov shares his experiences and the story of the Fortress with his grandson, both of them envisioning those faces and smiles.



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⁵² The old Alexander (Sasha) Akimov: <http://img4.hostingpics.net/pics/642316SashaAkimov.jpg>

Film 11: *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel* (2010-2011) by Nikita Mikhalkov

'Daddy, if you only knew how happy I am with you.'

'Really? And I am happy being with you, too.'

'I think the war cannot be won without such people as Kotov.'



The last film for analysis is *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel* (2010-2011) by Nikita Mikhalkov, a colossal war movie in two parts that follows the events of the first *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), where Sergei P. Kotov, protagonist of the story and played by Mikhalkov himself, was left as a prisoner of the NKVD and subsequently executed, along with his entire family. The film is rather controversial in many respects compared to the first one, which earned the director great success and an Academy Award for best foreign picture. What is controversial is the general criticism the movie received and the ingenious and expensive marketing campaign it received prior to its first presentation to the public.

Nikita Mikhalkov at first intended to debut the movie on Red Square as part of Victory Day celebrations in 2010. However, this could not be organised and the film premiered on 17 April 2010 at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses (Norris, 2010). The

⁵³http://lh5.ggpht.com/_THRTfg4DZI/SqAsSGacz7I/AAAAAAAAAE-0/Jq0k3L42ggc/s1600/utomlennyesolncem2_1.jpg

film director orchestrated a grandiose marketing campaign before the release. Posters of the movie were put up in most cities in Russia spreading the message that *Exodus* was ‘a great film about the Great War’. Mikhalkov also bombarded the public with short previews over the five years preceding its premiere and made appearances and gave interviews in all the major Russian media outlets (Norris, 2010). Mikhalkov himself explained that ‘we intentionally showed this film at the beginning of the commemorations of the 65th anniversary of the victory [*because*] we were confident that to understand what this victory cost, we should see what our people went through’ (quoted in Prilepskaya 2010: 1, in Norris 2010).

The massive marketing campaign did not ensure the film’s success and according to Irina Lyubarskaia, it actually worked against it (Norris, 2010). In her review of *Citadel*, the second part of the movie from 2011, Elena Razlogova comments about mistakes and inaccuracy in historical details (Razlogova, 2011). This inaccuracy in detail affects the film’s plot as well, since it is not clear how Kotov’s daughter Nadia is suddenly a young woman instead of the little child she was in the first movie. Even Kotov’s escape from death is ambiguously crafted and leaves doubt behind. However, this analysis of the films will not focus on the inaccuracy in details and the controversial reviews, but on the elements related to the priorities of the programs for Patriotic Education and how Mikhalkov depicted them. The analysis will prove even more interesting if considered in light of Mikhalkov’s political affiliations and open support for Vladimir Putin, a point that can be left open for further research.

Mikhalkov’s film depicts all seven parameters as main themes, as do ‘*The Admiral*’ (2008) and ‘*The Brest Fortress*’ (2010). Andrey Merzlikin, the actor who interpreted one of the heroes of the Brest Fortress, Commander Andrei Kizhevatov, here plays Major Nikolai, who serves in the Penal Battalion with Kotov. He again plays a strong, loyal character who is not afraid to die to protect his Motherland. The

actor who played Private Lyuty in *The Ninth Company*, Artur Smolyaninov, appears again and plays the part of Yuba, a convict-soldier who fights beside Kotov and becomes attached to him, calling him 'Dad'.

The two films are considered as one in this analysis because they can be viewed as one film divided in two parts. The events follow the actions of Kotov during the Great Patriotic War. 'Exodus' takes place during 1941, when the Germans attacked Russia without a declaration of war, and jumps back and forth between 1941 and 1943. In 1943 Stalin orders Mitya, the man who betrayed Kotov in the first *Burnt by the Sun* and delivered him to what seemed to be certain death, to find Kotov and complete his case file. During his research he learns what Kotov did from the beginning of the war until their meeting in the second part of the film, *Citadel*. The scenes set in 1941 show Kotov fighting at the front as a convict in a penal battalion. They also show what happened to his daughter: she is alive by a miracle, and is in a pioneer camp. She has never doubted or renounced her father, even after he was declared a traitor. She loves her father and she never thinks or believes he was a real traitor.

Citadel, the second part of the movie, starts in 1943 when Kotov is on the Eastern Front facing the 'citadel', a German fortress impossible to penetrate. There he meets Mitya once more. In this second part it is revealed that Kotov was not a traitor and that he never signed documents accusing his wife. He was tortured and forced to sign the papers by his captors, who moved his hand with brute force against his will. The true reasons for his imprisonment are revealed and Kotov is restored to the rank of Lieutenant General, but immediately ordered to lead a suicidal attack against the German citadel. The movie ends in 1945, as Kotov, along with his daughter, leads an army of tanks toward Berlin.

Both parts open with a dedication by Mikhalkov to his father: ‘In memory of my father, a combat veteran’, putting the element of memory immediately on display. It is clear how important it is to the films’ director to stress this fact, because it is placed at the very beginning of the film, impossible to be missed. By dedicating his work to the father, he underscores the importance of not forgetting the heroes and people who sacrificed their lives for the Motherland. Mikhalkov also explains how he means to create a film that would remind Russian citizens of how much the victory cost and of the sacrifices of the Russian people. The message of the film is clear in this respect: the past must not be forgotten and the sacrifices made by people should always be treasured with pride and respect.

The epigrammatic sentences chosen for these films are taken from two different dialogues. They represent two of the main elements of *Burnt by the Sun 2*. The first is spoken by Kotov to his beloved daughter Nadia in 1994’s *Burnt by the Sun*, during a peaceful trip on a small boat on a lake by the village where Kotov lives with his family. This memory and the image of him together with his daughter keep returning throughout the entire movie, connecting Nadia and Kotov, who are separated and able to reunite only at the end of the second part. This dialogue expresses the strong bond of affection between father and daughter and the powerful love and devotion that bonds them, in particular Nadia to her father. This is translated into devotion and deep loyalty to the Fatherland, because the character of Kotov embodies the idea of Fatherland, besides being a role model, a hero and a soldier.

The second dialogue is taken from an exchange between Mitya, now a high-ranking NKVD officer and Stalin himself, as the Russian leader asks him what he thinks of Kotov. Mitya’s answer describes Kotov’s importance, depicting him as a hero and a personality who will help to win the war. No little responsibility is placed on Kotov’ shoulders in terms of role model. He takes this parameter to the highest

level, creating a Messianic hero who is imprisoned, tortured and humiliated only to be used as a strategic personality who leads Russia to victory. This hero not only leads Russia to victory by defeating the enemy on the territory of the sacred Motherland, but he also marches out of the country to chase the enemy home and crush him completely, in order to free the world from their threat.

Kotov is a role model and the audience already knows he is a hero, as several times it is repeated that he served in three past wars as a general and his actions are always narrated with respect and admiration. However, Mikhalkov makes sure to reiterate his message throughout the two parts as Kotov grows from a simple convict in a penal battalion (though still an example in terms of patriotism, sense of duty, honour and courage) who does not want to abandon his brothers-in-arms, into a lieutenant general who refuses to send 15,000 unarmed civilians to be massacred by the Germans. Kotov walks alone toward the enemy carrying only a wooden stick.

Kotov-Mikhalkov is a patriot who loves his Motherland and respects the Fatherland, even if the regime has betrayed him. As Mikhalkov himself explained in 1998 at the IV (Extraordinary) Congress of the Film-makers' Union, 'to serve the Fatherland does not necessarily mean to serve the regime'. This idea is clear in *Burnt by the Sun 2*, where the regime betrays Kotov and terrorises its citizens. However, Kotov is a man of honour and steadfast in his duties, who knows that war is one of those duties that must be fulfilled to protect the sacred Motherland. To do his duty as a loyal soldier means to serve the Fatherland and Kotov is ready to sacrifice his life to serve it and to save other people's lives. He is a charismatic figure who attracts respect and admiration by his mere presence. He knows what to do on the battlefield; following his directions is the only way to stay alive and intact. This is proven in the second part as Mitya finds himself on the battlefield by mistake and Kotov runs into him, asking him what he is doing in his 'territory'. Even though Kotov holds strong

feelings against Mitya, he takes care of him during the battle and tells him to follow in his footsteps to stay alive.

The character created by Mikhalkov is a role model in every possible aspect, because he remains faithful to his Fatherland and to his family, never ceasing to love his wife and daughter. His wife however is an unstable figure who too easily believes in Kotov's alleged betrayal and too easily forgets her love for him, replacing it with love for Mitya. Once they are reunited, Kotov confronts her and succeeds in making her see the truth. However, he realises that he can never hold on to her and selflessly lets her leave with another man. At the same time, the love and attachment he has for his daughter is the strongest and deepest of all, marking the important bond between the Fatherland and its 'children'.

Kotov is revealed to be the winning card Stalin can play to win the war, as Stalin himself explains: 'So you were imprisoned, Kotov, with the purpose of releasing you in good time'. It is not clear whether Stalin foresees the war and already decides to imprison him in 1939, nor is it clear whether he was behind changing Kotov's charge from political to criminal when he is in the gulag. It is evident, however, that Kotov is an essential figure to Russia and a hero to be used to win the war and inspire people to follow in his footsteps.

Toward the end of *Citadel*, Kotov is ordered to send 15,000 civilians armed only with wooden sticks against the Nazi citadel, in order to make the Germans expend their bullets on them instead of the Red Army soldiers. He takes the task into his hands because he realises nothing else can be done and because he is the only one able to save the innocent people. As they endure the minutes before this suicidal attack, he jumps out of the trenches and orders everyone not to follow him; otherwise he will shoot himself. He cannot let 15,000 innocent people be deliberately massacred and thus he decides to make the sacrifice for everyone and for his beloved Motherland.

He removes his weapons and marches alone toward the enemy with a wooden stick. Shortly thereafter his first officer follows, then Major Nikolai, now reinstated as an officer thanks to Kotov, then Yura, the soldier who called him Dad and followed him everywhere, and then finally by all his officers and everyone else.

He sets an example with his conscious willingness to sacrifice and his integrity as a human being, and everyone walks behind him as if filled with new courage and patriotism. Their willingness to sacrifice their lives for the Motherland and face the enemy armed with nothing but sticks is rewarded by the unexpected explosion of the entire citadel as the result of a lucky shot by a Soviet sniper, who kills a German at a machine-gun. The soldiers' and civilians' lives are spared even as they have all demonstrated their patriotic natures. As he leads the march against the citadel, Kotov finally encounters his daughter, who has run through a mine field to at last be with her father. She steps on a mine and Kotov takes her place. The audience is left to think for a moment that he has been killed, but he survives and leads an army toward Berlin, along with his daughter Yura, Major Nikolai and everyone else.

It must be explained that all the seven parameters gravitate to the character of Kotov, and that he as protagonist is the strongest role model and hero, who depicts all the other elements and conveys the strongest message throughout the entire film. Even if all the parameters are observable in other characters in the film, it cannot be denied that the role of Kotov as protagonist expresses each of them and takes them to the highest level observed in all the eleven movies we analyse.

Nadia is another very important character who embodies devotion to the Fatherland, love for the Motherland and the will to serve them at the risk of her own life. She decides to work in the Red Cross and often proves her courage, her mental strength and resolve, her loyalty, her strong sense of duty, and her superior morality. She also represents religious values by being baptised by an Orthodox priest after a

German plane attacks the Red Cross ship they are on. Through the characters of Nadia and the priest, as well as some others, it is possible to observe strong patriotism and all the values related to it.

Religious faith, in particular Russian Orthodox Christianity, is very strong and recalled for us by the way some soldiers prepare themselves to protect the Motherland by praying. Also, as Kotov runs into a church turned into a hospital, he sees many sacred icons. It is there that he finds the first clue that his daughter may be alive. When a German bomb is dropped on the church, he manages to escape at the last moment and the entire structure is blown apart. However, one sacred icon of the Holy Mary holding Jesus is not destroyed, but stands untouched and shining in a golden light, leaving Kotov to contemplate it with adoration. This symbolises that Russian religious values cannot be destroyed by mere weapons or by any enemy, because they will survive any attack and never perish.

There is no doubt that Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun 2* places Russia and her system of values on a superior level compared to those of the 'other', the enemy. The Nazi Germans who are the primary enemy in the movie are depicted as merciless, cruel, without values or morals, like evil demons or beasts that show no respect or honour, killing innocent, unarmed people, and attacking Russian girls. Nadia is attacked sexually by a German soldier, but she is saved by a girl who was not so lucky as to escape such a dramatic experience. The soldier is killed and the village that did nothing to save Nadia and the other girl is completely burnt down, as if in punishment for betraying its own people.

The enemy is not only cruel and shows no mercy towards wounded adults and children, but is also vulgar and disrespectful, as a scene of a plane flying over a Red Cross boat holding Nadia and the priest testifies. One of the German pilots wants to defecate on the boat and after that, ruthlessly fires on the wounded people and kills

almost everyone. In a village, a group of Nazi soldiers encounters a family of gypsies and kills them all without reason. At the end of the second part, when the citizens march against the citadel holding only sticks, one of the Nazi officers says that he cannot fire at them, but then is reminded of his orders. He tells his troops to let them advance another five hundred meters and then to fire, but he refuses to watch. Even though the Nazi officer realises the immorality and wrongness of shooting unarmed people, he does nothing to stop it and simply decides to ignore it.

By contrast, Kotov takes blame in his own hands by accepting his order and facing his men one by one in the trenches. He knows he cannot commit such a cruel and inhuman act and takes the burden of it onto his shoulders. He does not close his eyes to the coming massacre, but takes action to stop it and save innocent lives.

The hero of Mikhalkov's film leads Russian troops out of the Motherland to free the world from the ferocious enemy that has dared to attack the Fatherland without a declaration of war, breaking a solemn treaty. He acts not only to crush the enemy completely, but also to bring the Russian system of values out of his country and illuminate others. Kotov is a Messianic hero who has more than one purpose: he must lead the country to victory, he must protect the Motherland and he must serve as an example and role model. He is as well a hero who has been tortured, humiliated and escaped death by a miracle, and he must accomplish his mission to show the world the superiority of Russian values and morality.

The superiority of the Russian people is also depicted in the last scene, as the Soviet tanks stop at a point on the street where a mentally unstable German soldier runs out to stop them. An old Russian woman also runs out and explains how she found the German wounded and crazy, left behind by his comrades. She could not abandon him and has decided to take care of him, because the war had taken her husband and sons away. Nadia steps out of the tank and walks up to the soldier. The

old lady thinks Nadia wants to shoot him, and so she decides to be killed along with him, demonstrating great courage and her humanity as well. However, Nadia simply tells him where the army column is going and shows him how to use a stick to direct the traffic. As the tanks move along, headed up by Kotov, the German soldier salutes them as if feeling one with them. The old lady did not abandon the physically and mentally wounded German soldier, but took pity on him and decided to act like a true Christian.

Kotov explains to Mitya that war has become his territory, and also his salvation, once he has escaped death at the hands of the Germans who attacked the Gulag camp where he was held prisoner. However, war is not only Kotov's salvation, but a duty to accomplish as well, to protect his Motherland and serve his Fatherland as loyal patriot. War is depicted in very tragic and violent tones, showing how the Russian people and their soldiers suffered great pain when they were attacked by such an evil enemy. The film shows the sacrifice the Russian soldiers were willing to make in order to protect their beloved country.

War and the profession of soldier become a way to atone for sins and misdeeds, as one of the Commanders explains to the convicts turned soldiers in the first part of the film. He tells them the blood they spill in doing their duty will wash away their crimes. Even though most of the soldiers shown in the film are part of the penal battalion, nobody behaves like a coward and every one of them knows what he has to do to protect his Motherland. They never hesitate to fight and never try to run away, even when their own people try to force them. They do not complain and simply perform their duties.

Burnt by the Sun 2 does not spare criticism for the political leadership during the war and for the NKVD officers who terrorised people and forced soldiers to fight in hopeless, desperate situations. However, Kotov serves his Fatherland and so does

everyone else beside him. Their devotion to the Fatherland is echoed by the blind loyalty, love and strong faith Nadia has for her father, whom she never repudiates and whose surname she wears with pride and respect. Kotov personifies the concept of the Fatherland, as the strong character he is, who takes people under his protective wing. Yura, a convict-soldier Kotov meets in the first part of the film, becomes attached to Kotov and follows him everywhere, calling him 'Dad'. His reward is the march to Berlin. Kotov is also a father to his nation, a hero who motivates people to follow in his footsteps, willing to sacrifice their lives. He inspires respect and infuses courage in the people around him, taking dire situations into his competent hands.



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The relationship in this film between father and daughter is based on their mutual devotion, love and loyalty. It serves to explain that there is nothing stronger and more sacred than the relationship between a father and his children. Nadia's mother betrayed Kotov and ran off with another man, showing the instability and weakness of her shallow love. The film shows how strong and deep love for the Motherland can be with symbolic snow, which covers the land and the weapons of the soldiers who are ready to protect the Motherland, peacefully falling on the dead bodies of soldiers as if

⁵⁴ Kotov and his daughter Nadia finally meet toward the end of *'Burnt by the Sun 2: Citadel'*.

to give them a final, maternal salute. Nadia in her own way represents the concept of Motherland by becoming a nurse and dedicating her life to taking care of wounded soldiers and trying to relieve their pain.

Burnt by the Sun 2 is a rather controversial film in many respects, as already explained, and it presents a very significant case for analysis, given its content and the way it is portrayed; Nikita Mikhalkov succeeded in producing a propagandistic work that features all the main political priorities of Patriotic Education, and in creating a role-mode and hero who serves as an extreme example of what is described in the programs. An interesting fact about the film is that Vladimir Putin personally visited the set during production and received an explanation from Mikhalkov of how it was intended to work.



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Brat 2 by Balabanov opened the analysis of the eleven films and offered a not entirely perfect hero who left Russia to pursue his personal mission. The confrontation between Russian and Western values is shown in that film, but in more subtle tones,

⁵⁵ Vladimir Putin visits the set of *Burnt by the Sun 2* by Mikhalkov.

and there is no intent to export Russian values. In *Burnt by the Sun 2*, Kotov is a messianic hero of the nation and of war who must save not only the Motherland but the rest of the world as well from the ferocious enemy. He takes the superior values and morality of Russia outside its borders to free the world from impoverished values, ruthless violence and lack of faith and patriotism. In the context of the Patriotic Education programs analysed in this dissertation, Mikhalkov's *Burnt by the Sun 2* has achieved the peak in terms of how their content has been displayed.

Part 2: Comparative Analysis of the Films

The seven common parameters analysed in the first part will now be compared horizontally from film to film to discuss variances among them and whether some elements are more often or more intricately depicted than others. First, a matrix will be introduced, correlating the films and the seven points and indicating in which films they are present, if at all, and whether they are strong or marginal elements of the films. This matrix offers a visual and schematic view of the parameters used for analysis of the films, in order to understand which elements are the main themes of the selected movies. It is interesting to observe that, even if some parameters are only marginal in some films or mostly create a narrative framework, they can all be found in each film.

| | Protagonist as role model and hero | Soldier figure | War | Fatherland and Motherland | Patriotism as main value | The enemy / The Other | Memory of the past |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------|-----|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Brat 2</i> (2000) | O | O | □ | O | O | O | □ |
| <i>The Star</i> (2002) | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | O | O |
| <i>Marsh Brosok</i> (2003) | OO | OO | O | OO | OO | O | □ |
| <i>The Ninth Company</i> (2005) | O | OO | O | O | OO | O | O |
| <i>I2</i> (2007) | OO | OO | □ | OO | O | O | O |
| <i>The Admiral</i> (2008) | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | O | OO |
| <i>We are from the Future</i> (2008) | O | OO | OO | O | OO | O | OO |
| <i>The Priest</i> (2009) | OO | O | □ | OO | OO | OO | O |
| <i>The Brest Fortress</i> (2010) | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO |
| <i>We are from the Future 2</i> (2010) | OO | OO | OO | O | OO | O | OO |
| <i>Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel</i> (2010-2011) | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO | OO |

Table 1 legend:

X= parameter not depicted

□ = marginal parameter

O = depicted parameter

OO = main parameter and/or very strong

Hero/Role Model

This dissertation began its analysis with the character of Danila Bagrov and ended with the Messiah-like character of Kotov-Mikhalkov. Distinguishing between character and film director/actor is very difficult when it comes to an artist like Nikita Mikhalkov, because he clearly cut the character of Kotov to fit his personality. He assumed the role in the Russian cinematographic industry perfectly.

The hero/role model element has grown and developed at a steady pace over time, while maintaining certain characteristics intact from the beginning. The character of Danila Bagrov represents quite an exception in the context of this analysis, because *Brat 2* is outside the timeframe of Patriotic Education programs (2001-2010), yet it finds a new political context as political discourse and the plans for Patriotic Education have changed since the 1990s (Stojanova, 2005; Beumers, 2008). Beumers explains how the heroes from Yeltsin's era and Putin's era are different, reflecting the change in politics, a change that has deepened with the introduction of Patriotic Education. 'The hero of the Yeltsin years, [is] the killer-knight who operates within the criminal world and reinforces social justice in the absence of a competent and powerful police force' (Beumers, 2008: 223). Danila Bagrov of *Brat 2* is a hero who shows qualities consistent with this description, but also other, new qualities, stepping into a different realm. 'The hero of the Putin era [is] the killer-policeman, who has an inherent flaw in the past' (Beumers, 2008: 223).

This dissertation does not focus on defining the kind of hero that was created during the Putin era, nor does it aim to understand whether his political persona and his agenda have influenced how protagonists/heroes are shaped in films. It aims to understand which of the political priorities outlined in the programs for Patriotic Education have been depicted in film, and how they have been depicted. The programs clearly delineate a prototypical citizen, a person who should serve as an example to

other people and who possesses the characteristics typical of a patriot—a Russian patriot, as explained in the 2003 ‘Concept’ document. That citizen is devoted to his or her Fatherland, willing to protect the Motherland, selfless, morally and spiritually enlightened, physically strong and capable, respectful of the past and Russia’s national history, and willing to serve as soldier and fulfil a soldier’s duties.

Danila Bagrov displays some of these characteristics, and in *Brat 2* he describes his service in the first Chechen war with pride. Still, he is not completely the heroic citizen foreseen by Patriotic Education. His character makes us better appreciate the shift in the qualities depicted in the protagonists of movies that feature the concepts and points expressed in Patriotic Education. The Danila Bagrov of *Brat 2* cannot be an absolute role model. He is a potential role model who already embodies important qualities but nevertheless needs to be polished. He is a transitional hero who has built a bridge ready to be crossed by future heroes. Those who are shaped according to the model of Patriotic Education are examples to follow, because even if they are human beings with common flaws, they still overcome their flaws to do their duty.

In *The Star*, directed by Lebedev, the protagonist becomes a war hero through his heroic deeds and his sacrifice, which lead to success for the homeland, and as well furnishes a role model in terms of Patriotic Education. The protagonists of *The Ninth Company* are a group of young men who display common, human flaws, but it is significant how they manage to overcome those flaws once they are called upon to do their duty, showing inner strength and awareness of what should be their first priority. Most of the heroes analysed here are soldiers and officers, other than the cases of *The Priest* by Khotinenko and *I2* by Mikhalkov. In any case, Mikhalkov’s character in *I2* is a retired intelligence service agent. Even in *We are from the Future* (2008 and 2010) the protagonists become heroes through their magical experience of war and life as a soldier, even if only for a few days.

In terms of his characteristics, the protagonist-hero holds steady as a role model from 2002 to 2011—from the romantic and willing to self-sacrifice hero personified by Lieutenant Travkin in *The Star* (2002), to the brave, physically strong, handsome Sasha of *Marsh Brosok* (2003), and on to the strict, die-hard patriot represented by Major Gavrilov in *The Brest Fortress* (2010). Sasha perfects the stereotypical role model and soldier/hero: handsome, masculine, physically skilled, strong, loyal, courageous, honest and devoted to his Fatherland. In him it is possible to note the depiction of military skills, physical strength and a handsome appearance intended to enhance the image of the soldiers who served during the Chechen war. The other heroes are mostly handsome men. They are as well magnetic characters who command obedience and respect with simply a word or glance.

It seems that the movies after year 2006 focus more on inner characteristics than on physical characteristics, however, the characters are never without a certain dose of fascination and appeal. The protagonists of *12*, *The Admiral*, *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2* are mature men who do not need to display their physical strength or prowess (a small exception being the case of Kotov-Mikhalkov, who needs to re-assess the masculinity of his character, which he has apparently hidden, when he meets his wife). They are men who inspire deep respect and admiration. They are men who without hesitation or difficulty restore complete order in the midst of chaos and tragedy. Thus they lead their men in the right direction, never faltering and never deviating from their role. Even Father Aleksandr, although he does not wear the military uniform, acts like a soldier of God, representing a strong, enlightened figure who serves his Fatherland with deep faith and honest patriotism. He is a gentle figure, yet he is severe and punishing when necessary.

If some physical and moral characteristics, together with patriotic values, were emphasised in the movies produced before 2005/2006, they are thereafter reinforced by

displays of stronger determination, unbreakable inner strength and touching dignity. Achieving patriotism-related values and characteristics is the way to become real men and heroes in *We are from the Future*, in a rite of passage and transformation for the four friends, whose achievements are tested and reinforced in the 2010 sequel, *We are from the Future 2*.

The character of Kotov in *Burnt by the Sun 2* brings the hero onto an entirely different, higher level, elevating him to a Messianic role and mission, enhancing his moral and spiritual superiority far beyond the characters in the other films. Mikhalkov's Kotov sacrifices himself several times over and his faith, loyalty and devotion to the Fatherland are tested even more, even if, as he Mikhalkov once explained, 'to serve the Fatherland does not necessarily mean to the serve the regime' (Mikhalkov, 1999: 50). Serving the Fatherland means serving a higher entity and having the exalted purpose of saving the country, like Kotov, who survives a mine explosion to lead the final stage of the war into Berlin. It seems that the character of Kotov depicts the final stage of the hero developed in these movies and possibly, of the role model described in Patriotic Education as well. Kotov is a vessel of Russian patriotism that saves Russia by leading it into a glorious and successful future. Mikhalkov's words quoted just above were pronounced in 1999 and it would be interesting to investigate whether he would say something different in more recent times.

How were the hero/protagonists portrayed in Soviet times, in particular in the war movies produced from the end of the 1930s to the beginning of the 1950s? Nancy Condee in *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (2009) lists some of the Soviet notions of a proper film protagonist that were completely turned around in the 1990s: 'the dignity of man, the nobility of womanhood, the integrity of the family, the redemptive function of suffering, the refuge of domestic life, the righteous purposefulness of the mission' (Condee, 2009: 62). In this list, the dignity, integrity,

sense of duty and willingness of sacrifice described in the eleven chosen films can immediately be recognised. The hero/protagonist of the films of the Soviet period had to be a positive hero who served as role model for other people and especially for the audience that watched the film and was meant to be inspired. ‘The positive hero had to reveal his growing consciousness of the socialist cause, which led him to identify with the collective and thus achieve great feats in the name of the socialism. [...] Contemporary man could prove his commitment to socialism through superhuman acts in the name of the Party’, (Beumers, 2009: 78).

What Beumers describes can be observed in many of the movies analysed here and one would only need to remove (or change) the words ‘socialism’, ‘Party’ and ‘socialist’, concepts which are no longer applicable to recent Russian political discourse. The heroes described in the first part of this chapter are aware of the importance of their mission and duties, and they in fact do achieve ‘great feats’ in service to the Fatherland. Superhuman acts, or at least a touch of exaggeration in terms of skill and fate, are displayed in the selected movies—for instance, in *The Star* (seven Soviet scouts against ten thousand German soldiers), in *Marsh Brosok* (Sasha teaches a lesson to a group of delinquents while nursing an injured arm), in *We are from the Future 2* (Oleg reveals incredible fighting skills) and finally in *Burnt by the Sun 2*, where Kotov by a miracle survives stepping on a mine, and leads the way to the capitulation of Berlin on a Russian tank.

Kenez describes the Soviet heroes of the war films of that time as ‘knights in shining armour’ (Kenez, 1992: 236). He explains how they are depicted as handsome, attractive, and proud of belonging to Russia, loving their Motherland to the extent they feel homesick when far away from it, and always ready to fulfil their duties and perform heroic acts (Kenez, 1992). Once more common traits are portrayed in the hero. The hero

becomes a role model through his courageous acts, by following his duties and by struggling for the right cause. The role model becomes a hero in the same way, too.

Patriotism as a value

The values, morals and qualities of the heroes of the studied films increased and developed from *Brat 2* (2000) through *Burnt by the Sun 2*. The films display these values, in particular patriotism, in different ways. It can be said that from Mikhalkov's *12*, with the small exception of *We are from the Future*, the films all espouse a mixture of religious values, spiritual morality and solid patriotism. In other words, the films produced during the second program of Patriotic Education depict religious values and symbols more frequently than the ones before. However, it is first important to understand which qualities related to patriotism have been depicted and how they have been represented on the screen.

A film can communicate ideas and principles through words and dialogue, through specific scenes and images that emphasise a concept and attract the audience's attention to it, and through its protagonists, which means how they behave, what they do, and what they are like. In films like *Brat 2* (even if in lighter tones), *Marsh Brosok*, *The Admiral*, *The Priest*, *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*, patriotism and its associated qualities are expressed through dialogue, dramatic and emotional scenes and also through the development of the characters. The dialogue must contain a message that is openly expressed by the hero in a context that increases the emotional impact the words have on the audience. Admiral Kolchak swears to serve his Fatherland and protect his Motherland before his soldiers and followers, right in the middle of frozen Siberia, a symbolic landscape for Russians that suggests the homeland/Motherland. Russian flags wave in the background and a priest from the Russian Orthodox Church

supervises the scene. Here is the triad of the main powers and values of Russia: Fatherland, Army and Church.

Burnt by the Sun 2 and *The Priest* proceed in the same way, even though the theme in those films is more about Fatherland and Church, while *The Brest Fortress* is entirely focused on elevating patriotism and its connected qualities to the highest place on the scale of values. The latter film concentrates on Fatherland and the Army. In *Marsh Brosok*, Sasha proudly speaks about his country and his devotion to it as he meets his future brother-in-arms and friend, Vladimir, but he also displays impossible to mistake behaviours and characteristics that represent patriotism in all the aspects described in the programs for Patriotic Education.

The Star, *The Ninth Company* and both *We are from the Future* films rely more on the staging of scenes and the roles of the protagonists to transmit values and feelings to the audience. The selfless sacrifice made by the soldiers in the first two films, as they serve and defend their Fatherland, is the ultimate demonstration of patriotism described in the programs for Patriotic Education. In *We are from the Future* (1 and 2), patriotism redeems a group of young Russians who have no morals or sense of respect. Through hard experience suffered on their skin they are rewarded with deep and fulfilling sentiments of patriotism. This leads one of the friends, Oleg/Skull, to remove the tattoo of a swastika from his skin with a knife, drawing blood. It is a symbolic scene: the young Russian who spills his blood out of love of his Fatherland, demonstrating it in the most intense way, as if making a vow of eternal devotion in his own blood. Moreover, through his gesture the filmmaker depicts Oleg-Skull as a reformed sinner.

All the qualities enumerated several times throughout this dissertation are depicted in every film, each of which puts particular stress on loyalty, sense of duty, selflessness and integrity. Among the films it is possible to distinguish a crescendo in

the qualities of the protagonists, moving from purely secular patriotism to a spiritual and religiously inspired patriotism. This noble value of patriotism, as it is described both in the movies and in the programs for Patriotic Education, indeed serves a purpose in the selected films. The characters grow into role models as they discover and develop their new values and improve as human beings. Moreover, the values unify the people and make them brothers and sisters—as can be clearly seen in *We are from the Future 2*, where the two Ukrainians and the two Russian friends, who were at first mutually antagonistic become friends and fight together against a common enemy.

Patriotism serves to inspire people to defend their Fatherland and protect their Motherland. The heroes of the films can perform extremely brave and selfless deeds because they are driven by patriotism, and because in their purity and depth of values they become role models. Even the very controversial Danila Bagrov of *Brat 2*, who shoots people without thinking twice, declares his love for Russia and demonstrates how rooted he is in his Russian origins by not being blinded or corrupted by American power. He is not lured by that power, which seems very superficial and materialistic to him. He explains that real power—Russian power—is generated by the truth. Does that imply that these characters define the truth in terms of values and morals? It is not easy to answer this question, but it surely leads us to distinguish a difference between the American system and the Russian system, the latter of which appears from the films to be more lasting and incorruptible.

Danila Bagrov is the dark hero who saves his murdered friend's brother and the Russian prostitute Dasha, bringing her, at least, back home. Patriotism moves the protagonists of the movies to accomplish their missions and duties, giving them the necessary strength and determination to endure every possible challenge and suffering. This can be observed in *The Priest*, *The Star*, *The Brest Fortress* and *The Ninth Company*. In the latter film, one of the protagonists hesitates during the ceremony of

taking his oath to serve as a soldier in Afghanistan but chases away his doubts, aware of his duty. In *The Priest*, Father Aleksandr endures the harsh conditions in his village occupied by the Germans because he is a patriot and because he loves his people and wants to help them in every possible way. The heroes of *The Star* and *The Brest Fortress* sacrifice themselves to save their country, and Kotov-Mikhalkov of *Burnt by the Sun 2: Citadel* is ready to sacrifice himself in order to spare the soldiers under his authority from certain death and to fulfil his duty to serve the Fatherland. In all the analysed movies, patriotism is the cardinal value and the principal quality and characteristic of their protagonists. It brings out and shows the best side of each of the heroes. Even the empty and disrespectful protagonists of *We are from the Future* (both the 2008 and 2010 versions) can show their good sides by letting patriotism deepen into their hearts and minds.

Rapoport pointed out the parallels and similarities between the programs of Patriotic Education elaborated by the Kremlin under Putin and the similar programs in the Soviet Union, explaining how in both cases it was not simply patriotic education, but *military*-patriotic education (Rapoport, 2009). Patriotism was an essential quality of the protagonists of the Soviet war movies of the 1940s and early 1950's (Kenez, 1992; Gillespie, 2005; Beumers, 2008, 2009; Dobrenko, 2008; Liñán, 2010; Kucherenko, 2011; Norris, 2012). Birgit Beumers explains in *A History of Russian Cinema* how in the late 1930s Russian films showed 'readiness for sacrifice for the political cause' (Beumers, 2009: 93), praiseworthy loyalty, and heroes and heroines who always fulfil their duties despite their personal feelings and interests (Beumers, 2009).

In her book Beumers gives two examples of films glorifying loyalty, an essential element of patriotism according to the 2003 'Concept' and the two programs for Patriotic Education: *Mashenka* (1942) by Yuli Raizman and *Wait for Me* (1943) by Alexander Stolper. The latter film in particular shows the task set before Soviet women:

‘believe in victory and thus assist its realization’ (Beumers, 2009: 102). Even if this particular element is not part of this analysis, assistance and support from a female counterpart is in fact often seen in the eleven analysed movies: for example, *The Star*, *The Admiral*, *We are from the Future*, *The Priest* and, in the more active role played by Kotov’s daughter, in *Burnt by the Sun 2. Serving the Fatherland*, protecting the Motherland and the sacrificing oneself for their salvation are cardinal duties for a real patriot, and are as well a trait the movies studied here share with Soviet war movies, such as *She Defends the Motherland* (1943) by Ermeler and *Zoya* (1944) by Lev Arnshtam.

War:

Upon reading the two programs for Patriotic Education it can immediately be understood that the Great Patriotic War plays a central role in them, for various reasons. However, it is not only WWII that awakens certain feelings in Russians (Kucherenko, 2011), but war in general as an experience to be honoured, respected and remembered in order to educate young people. As explained by Olga Kucherenko (2011) and David Gillespie (2005), war movies after 2000 commonly have elements typical of the Soviet war movies, in particular the ones produced during and just after the war: mythologizing the War for educational and political purposes; the war as a ritual of ‘self-discovery’ and ‘rite of passage’ (Kucherenko, 2011); and ‘the affirmation of the War as a just cause in the defence of Holy Russia’ (Gillespie, 2005: 1). What it is interesting is that the mythology of war in the selected films has been extended to conflicts other than the Great Patriotic War.

Among them, the eleven movies portray World War I, the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet-Afghan War and the Wars in Chechnya. It is significant that every war, even the most controversial ones such as the campaigns in Chechnya and the war in

Afghanistan, leaves the audience with a sense of victory and of duty fulfilled in the correct way. Even where it costs the lives of all the protagonists—as in *The Star*—or almost all of them—as in *The Ninth Company* and *The Brest Fortress*—the film leaves behind a sense of victory and pride in the sacrifice of the heroes.

The element of war is not central to *12* by Mikhalkov, although it is often recalled as a narrative frame for the story in the Chechen boy's flashbacks. Nor is it in *Brat 2*, even if Danila openly speaks about his experiences in Chechnya and his brothers-in-arms describe them as a rather amusing experience, in contrast to 1997's *Brat*. In almost all the films, war requires great sacrifice from the protagonists, but it is not depicted as human tragedy *per se*, which brings horror and chaos only. The tragedies, losses and sacrifices are all meant to describe war as something necessary if an enemy threatens the Fatherland. *The Star* inaugurates a series of war films that amply portray battles in scenes directed with expensive special effects.

It is hard to trace a stable path over time for this element and observe significant differences related to the year of a film's production. The differences that can be detected relate to the role of war in the lives of the protagonists/heroes. War can be a past experience that gave the protagonist a set of skills and qualities that allow him to help his friends (the case of Danila Bagrov in *Brat 2*). It can be a constant threat to a group of scouts that must fulfil their duty, accomplish their mission, and assure military success by serving the Fatherland (*The Star*). It can be a formative experience (*We are from the Future*), or a tragic experience, a fight to the last drop of blood to defend the Motherland (*The Brest Fortress*). It culminates in the ultimate mission and ultimate effort for Mikhalkov's Messianic hero in *Burnt by the Sun 2*. War offers a chance for the Chechen boy in *12* to start a new life in Moscow with his adoptive father, a retired Russian Army officer. It can be an adventure that provides a child the opportunity to

fulfil his dream to become a hero and serve his Fatherland, as it does Sasha in *Marsh Brosok*.

What should be noted is that war never receives a negative connotation, with people transforming themselves from human beings into ruthless monsters. Even in the highest moments of tragedy reached in *The Ninth Company* and *The Brest Fortress*, the protagonists remain true to themselves and do not lose their minds or their integrity. War in fact becomes an event to be experienced in order to grow and mature into real, patriotic men, and a further test to pass in order to demonstrate that one really has become a true patriot.

Such is the case in *We are from the Future* (1 and 2), where conflict assumes an educational and formative role, transforming four superficial, disrespectful youths into respectful, patriotic, mature men. Only by experiencing on his own skin what it means for his country to fight against the Nazi enemy, by seeing Russian soldiers killed and his friends gravely wounded, can Skull/Oleg repudiate his attachment to Nazi ideology, as he does in the scene where he scratches off his swastika tattoo. The rite of passage seen in the Soviet war movies of the 1940s, as explained by Kucherenko (2011), is still clearly present in *We are from the Future*. In the same way that Fedor Talanov in *The Invasion* (1944) must prove his loyalty and devotion, the four friends in *We are from the Future* must rise to the same challenge and demonstrate their patriotism through the experience of war.

The experience of war rewards the heroes and protagonists, even when they die. If they die, they are remembered as heroes and posthumously rewarded, as in *The Star* and *The Brest Fortress*, or their sacrifice brings about a victory that will never be forgotten by a sole survivor, as in *The Ninth Company*. If they survive, they are materially rewarded, as is Sasha from *Marsh Brosok*, who conquers Masha's heart and love. *The Priest's* Father Aleksandr is blessed by returning to his beloved place, as an

Orthodox priest guiding young people (even if only in the film version and not in real life). Even the controversial figure of Admiral Kolchak is rewarded with the faithful love of Anna and a heroic aura.

In one way or another, the films follow the pattern indicated for war in the Patriotic Education programs, giving it an educative and formative role. War becomes a tragic event always to be remembered and something that instils respect, pride, and willingness to serve in the Army. It builds men who are resourceful in many ways, spiritually, morally and physically speaking. It creates role models and good soldiers, bestowing them heroic status.

Besides portraying war as a necessary duty in order to protect the Motherland and serve the Fatherland, and as a rite of passage for (all) generations to prove their values and devotion, the movies here analysed are similar to the Soviet war movies produced in the 1940s, in that they display cruel acts performed by the enemy, such as the killing of innocent women and children. In the earlier films, however, ideology prevailed over special effects (Gillespie; 2005). The later films do indeed show atrocities committed by the enemy (see, for instance *The Star*, *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2* for stark Nazi cruelty), but they invest more in special effects to make the violence on the screen much stronger than in the past.

Soldier-figure

The figure of the soldier is an important parameter in all the movies under analysis and it is possible to understand that being a soldier, serving the Fatherland in the armed forces, is a way (if not simply ‘the’ way) to become a hero. We have seen how all the main protagonists of the movies start out as role models or become role models in time, but becoming a hero is not something immediate. It means that a person has to suffer personal sacrifices, act according to deep patriotism and loyalty for the Fatherland, and

perform courageous deeds with an extreme sense of duty. The films show that being a soldier and participating in war, which involves doing one's duty to protect the Motherland and serve the Fatherland, are prerequisites for transforming a role model into a hero. Therefore, serving in the Army is the ultimate step toward recognition as a hero.

There is, however, a difference between 'becoming a hero by being a soldier' and 'being a hero because of being a soldier'. The first principle implies a rite of passage in terms of war or a fight in which the protagonist must prove himself a patriot who is devoted to wearing the uniform. This means that after behaving in a certain way, the protagonist rises to the status of hero. He was not a hero before, but he becomes one as consequence of his actions. This is exemplified in *The Star*, *Marsh Brosok*, *The Ninth Company* and of course, in the two '*We are from the Future*' films, the 2010 sequel expressing this idea most fully.

On the other hand, in films such as *The Admiral*, *The Brest Fortress*, and *12*, the officers who are the films' protagonists are already heroes from the beginning. In Kravchuk's and Kott's works they are immediately so presented as action and war break upon them, showing their heroic side. In *12* the hero status is a surprise, but still an existing status, one which is revealed near the end of the movie in the way the filmmaker makes the retired intelligence officer a hero because of his past occupation. The difference is subtle, but it can be seen in the fact that all the other characters in *12* are civilians who never served in the Army, and in the fact that Mikhalkov's character appoints himself to a last mission: saving the young Chechen boy. He takes up the mission because he knows he is the only one who can provide for the boy.

Kolchak, in *The Admiral*, is depicted as a hero from the very first battle scene that opens the film. There is no doubt raised about his status as a hero throughout the entire movie. He reinforces that status and proves it time and again, until he makes the

final sacrifice for his Fatherland and receives a final embrace from his beloved Motherland. In *The Brest Fortress*, the characters of Fomin, Gavrilov and Kizhevaton are presented at the War's outbreak as examples of integrity, dignity, and a strict sense of duty and honour. They accept the mission of commanding the three sides of the Fortress because they are charismatic leaders and heroes who inspire soldiers to follow their orders without the slightest doubt or hesitation. Major Gavrilov in particular is immediately depicted as a disciplined officer who not only serves as a role model, but as a hero as well, having already served in other conflicts. He restores order in the midst of chaos as the German offensive overwhelms the Fortress. He gives two curt orders and the soldiers are organised and the line of defence is set.

The eleven movies analysed in this chapter depict different types of soldiers and illustrate how serving in the armed forces or going to war hold a different meaning for each of the protagonists. There is no doubt that the figure of the soldier is pictured in glorious and prideful colours, bestowing it with many high qualities, such as physical and mental strength, a wide set of skills, dignity, loyalty, honour, honesty, selflessness, readiness to sacrifice oneself for the greater good, handsome physical appearance, attractiveness—especially to the other gender—reliability, charisma, a strong and magnetic personality, a sense of duty and many other positive qualities. In some films, in particular *12* by Mikhalkov and *The Brest Fortress* by Kott, there is a wide gap in terms of values and morals between the common civilian and the man in uniform.

In *12*, the ones who make the sacrifices to protect the young Chechen boy and give him a bright, safe future are the Russian officer who adopts him and Mikhalkov's character, who has served as an intelligence officer and is therefore connected to the military world. Once the truth about the accused is revealed, it is clear that he cannot be left alone outside, because he would be targeted and killed. No one else is ready to take the risk and make the ultimate sacrifice to protect and save him. As explained in the

analysis of the film, it is not the doctor, nor the taxi-driver, nor the programmer. It is a retired intelligence officer who understands his duty and would never back away from it.

There is also a hint of a difference between the validity of a promise made by a civilian and that of an officer. It is quite obvious that an officer's promise, even that of one who is retired but never ceases to be an officer in his heart and soul, can never be broken. There is almost a sense of religiosity in this, as if an officer's promise is a religious vow. In *The Brest Fortress* the three officers, young Sasha, who serves in the regiment, and all the other secondary characters who serve in the Army, never hesitate in doing their duty or think of saving themselves first.

The difference in the behaviour of a civilian and of a soldier is represented by the character who brings films to the Fortress. His fiancé is trapped in the cinema, but for days he does nothing to save her. Only at the end of the film, when he sees that she has been killed, does he finally find courage and explode a grenade, killing himself and some German soldiers. While the officers, or Sasha's older brother who is serving as soldier, never hesitate in putting themselves in danger to perform their duties, those who are not soldiers cannot understand how important a sense of duty and loyalty must be. A civilian may sacrifice his life in the end, but only after seeing what the enemy has taken from him.

In *Brat 2*, the soldier-figure demonstrates how serving in the Army gives one the right skills to become a hero, even a controversial one like Danila. Because of what Danila learned as a soldier, he developed a number of skills and a mind-set that allows him to bring some form of justice and save the oppressed. The soldier Sasha in *Marsh Brosok* becomes a hero because of his deeds at war. He is rewarded for what he did as soldier and for his sentimental speaking style, with which he conquers Masha's heart.

Being a soldier is also a way for the four protagonists of *We are from the Future* to grow into real men and learn a harsh lesson in patriotism as it is outlined in Patriotic Education. They do not become heroes immediately, but they are role models by the end of the film and are ready to be examples for other young people. In the sequel, we understand that two of the protagonists actually did follow the right path and become patriotic citizens, one of them teaching history at the university. However, they must pass a final test, and only after having done their duty as soldiers can they be considered real heroes. They are rewarded with a happy ending, especially Sergey Filatov, who somehow reunites with the spirit of Nina in the form of her granddaughter.

The common trait of the soldier-figure in all the movies is that he or she is a very positive figure, who commands respect and is viewed with pride and admiration. He or she is rewarded in one way or another, and rises as a hero. The young soldiers of *The Ninth Company*, despite their common human faults, become reliable figures, real patriots ready to serve their Fatherland, even outside its borders. Their military training and war experience make them the heroes of the story, heroes who win their fateful battle by the sacrifice of their lives.

We start with the soldier-figure of Danila Bagrov, who is controversial because of his *modus operandi*, even though he is honest and patriotic. We conclude with the figure of Kotov, the soldier/officer character played by Mikhalkov in *Burnt by the Sun 2*, who assumes a Messianic mission to free the rest of the world from enemies that he has helped to defeat in the territory of his Fatherland. It is interesting to see how the two characters travel abroad to accomplish their missions. Danila's mission is very personal, and does not require him to free the United States from anything at all, while Kotov has a more universal mission: freeing the West from the enemy and spreading the Russian system of values and faith. There is a fervid crescendo that grows between the two movies, in terms of how the importance and duties of the soldier are depicted.

There is no doubt that the figure of the soldier depicted in these films embodies the characteristics outlined in the programs for Patriotic Education. There is no negative representation among them, nor any suggestion that a soldier is an outcast or an unimportant figure in Russian society. On the contrary, it is a given that the soldier is the one who defends and protects Russia from her enemies, internal and external. As David Gillespie explains, a common trait of the soldier-figure is that ‘the ordinary Russian soldier [is] a symbol of the honesty and integrity of the Russian soul’ (Gillespie, 2005: 1). Lieutenant Travkin of *The Star* exemplifies this, as do Sasha in *Marsh Brosok*, Nikolai-Mikhalkov in *I2* and the protagonists of *The Brest Fortress*.

Another common element noticeable in depictions of the soldier-figure is his heroism (Kenez, 1992; Dobrenko, 2008; Beumers, 2009). Evgeny Dobrenko describes how ‘Soviet cinema depicted the Russian Army as monumental, strengthened by the courage of soldiers and officers, by mass heroism, patriotism, consciousness and discipline’ (Dobrenko, 2008: 98). These characteristics are all present in the films discussed here, in particular courage, patriotism and heroism, and how together they reinforce the spirit of the Army and defeat the enemy.

Peter Kenez points out some other elements that are commonly encountered in the Soviet war movies of the 1940s and early 1950s, qualities that we have also observed in the eleven cases at hand: ‘Soviet soldiers are ready to help in all good causes. [...] The soldiers and officers are heroic, physically attractive, and immensely proud of their nation’, (Kenez, 1992: 236). This dissertation’s analysis points out the same characteristics, even in physical terms, as many of the heroes are portrayed as handsome and attract the interest and love of their female counterparts. They are charming and have strong, magnetic personalities. One difference is that the soldiers in the movies of the Soviet era did not express any religious values, for obvious reasons,

while in the movies presented in this dissertation some of the heroes have a deep connection with Russian Orthodox Christianity.

Fatherland and Motherland:

‘The next step for film-makers was to dismantle the myth of the Fatherland’ (Beumers, 1999: 81). These words were written in a chapter of the book *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (1999), wherein Birgit Beumers explains how the ideal of the Soviet conformist/hero was changed and transformed into three different kinds of heroes after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These heroes challenged the ideal of the Fatherland and the films show their protagonists as lacking any interest in it (Beumers, 1999: 82).

The films analysed here head in the opposite direction. The filmmakers actually rebuild the ‘myth of the Fatherland’ through the hero/characters they depict. The concept of Soviet Fatherland was depicted in films of the 1940’s and 1950’s in the form of a protagonist/hero who sacrificed himself for the greater good and for the political cause (Beumers, 1999). The concept of the Fatherland was associated with high political authority. The principles of service to and self-sacrifice for the Fatherland, and dying to protect the Motherland, were recurrent themes in Soviet-era war movies (Beumers, 1999, 2009; Gillespie, 2005; Condee, 2009; Liñán, 2010; Kucherenko, 2011). They are common aspects of the films chosen for this dissertation, as the analysis has demonstrated. Strong leading figures and maternal entities also illustrate these elements.

The concepts of Fatherland and Motherland are presented in the eleven films in different ways. This begins in *Brat 2*, where the two concepts are not main themes, and reaches its zenith in *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*. This parameter is present in all the films, in one way or another, showing the revival of the concept of

Fatherland and Motherland (in particular the Fatherland) by the film directors in their works. It is interesting to see how some films focus primarily on the concept of Fatherland and others more even-handedly on both concepts. Many times the Motherland is expressed through images of the land or by a strong, maternal female character, as in the case of *The Priest*. In that film the idea of Motherland is identified with the wife of Father Aleksandr, a severe woman who always supports her husband in every situation and is always ready to welcome a homeless, abandoned child in need of a family. The priest is of course a role-model and hero thanks to how the filmmaker changed the true story of the real Father Aleksandr, but he also represents the concept of Fatherland, with marked religious overtones.

The same religious and spiritual touch can be observed in *The Admiral*, where Tsar Nicholas II is unsurprisingly the maximum expression of the concept of Fatherland, combined with the Russian Orthodox Church, which blesses the protagonist/hero after he is appointed to his fateful mission. The Tsar not only sends his blessings with Kolchak, but also praises his courageous actions, demonstrating how pleased he is to see such devotion and loyalty. As reward for his conduct, Kolchak is embraced and welcomed into his natural element, the water, by the Motherland as a result of his sacrificing his life in order to protect her.

As explained in the previous chapters, the concept of Fatherland is associated with strong, high authority and with the ideas of serving the Fatherland, performing one's duty, self-sacrifice, respect, loyalty and devotion. Most of the films depict the concept in that vein, but some others, like *Brat 2*, *Marsh Brosok*, *The Ninth Company*, and *I2*, add to the concept of the Fatherland the strong figure who provides a fatherless or orphaned protagonist with a family and meaning in life. This theme was present in Soviet war films produced after WWII (Beumers, 2009), for instance, the movie *Tale of a Real Man* (1948) by Alexander Stolper, which features a gravely injured protagonist,

who might have lost his purpose of life because of his injuries, but who can return to being a pilot and find a useful place in society despite his dramatic physical limitations.

The concept of reward is of course paired with the need to follow orders and serve the Fatherland, by being a soldier and fulfilling one's duties. A strong sense of duty and the need to fulfil it, even to the last drop of blood and one's dying breath is expressed in *The Star*, *The Admiral*, *The Brest Fortress* and *We are from the Future 2*. The protagonists of *We are from the Future* (2008 and 2010) need to prove their love and devotion to the Fatherland in order to be rewarded, another theme found in the war movies produced in the 1940s and 1950s, as *The Invasion* (1944) by Abram Room testifies.

In that film the protagonist has to prove his devotion for the Fatherland by shooting a German officer. Only after that he can be 'trusted' as a proper patriotic son of the Fatherland. The theme of the defence and protection of the Motherland is clearly expressed and depicted in *She Defends the Motherland* (1943) by Ermler, where the heroine organises resistance against the Nazis and inspires the people to fight against them (Beumers, 2009: 102). Because the protagonist acts like a real heroine, the Fatherland rewards her—after she is captured by the Germans, she is rescued and liberated by partisans. This is another example of how the Fatherland rewards its heroes and heroines if they follow orders and demonstrate their love and devotion to their country.

The 'other' and the enemy

The themes of the enemies of and traitors to the Fatherland appeared in Soviet war movies, especially in the films made during the Great Patriotic War and at the beginning of the 1950s (Gillespie, 2005; Dobrenko, 2008; Beumers, 2009; Norris, 2012). The difference between the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys' is clear in the films

illustrating the Great Patriotic War. They show the brutality and merciless of the German invaders, who kill women and children (Gillespie, 2005). The obvious moral difference between the two wartime antagonists, Russia and Germany, elevates the qualities of the Russian hero even more, showing the enemy by comparison in all his stupidity and venality (Dobrenko, 2008).

The Germans were often depicted as inherently evil, beastly and without personality (Kenez, 1992; Norris, 2012), which are also traits they display in most of the films analysed in this dissertation (see for instance, *Marsh Brosok*, *The Priest*, *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*). In the films of the 1940s and 1950s they were presented without distinguishable faces—‘a faceless and amorphous mass’ (Beumers, 2009: 94). The films ‘vilified the enemy in bleak and evil colours, while the Russians suffered but were victorious in the end’ (Beumers, 2009: 101).

The enemy is a faceless and all but heartless automaton as well in *The Ninth Company*, where the enemies form an ‘amorphous mass’ that rolls over the Russian soldiers without emotion or human feeling. The soldiers of the Ninth Company suffer a great loss, as only one survives, but here also a sense of victory is expressed through Private Lyutyy’ words as he returns home. He repeats over and over that they had won, the Ninth company had won.

Another element used in the Soviet war movies and now displayed in most of the chosen films is the fact that the hero always wins against the enemy (Kenez, 1992) in a way or another, by effectively defeating it during battle or by demonstrating superiority in terms of values and moral: by being courageous and having sense of honour, portraying strong sense of duty, deep loyalty, and moral integrity, never betraying the right cause.

The way the enemy is depicted in films and the importance given to its role change over time through the selected cases. Leaving aside *Brat 2* due to its

peculiarities, if we begin with *The Star* by Lebedev and move on through *Burnt by the Sun 2*, we encounter a remarkable escalation in terms of negative connotations and characteristics applied to the Germans. The enemy represents a great threat to the country and has to be defeated and eliminated to guarantee Russia's safety and freedom. In that regard, nothing changes from film to film. The enemy in some of the films is not only an entity to fight to ensure freedom of the country, but also an obstacle that must be defeated in order to grow and become a better man. This is exemplified in *We are from the Future* (1 and 2), in particular by Skull/Oleg and the two Ukrainian friends, Taras and Seryy. Misled by wrong ideals, as the film suggests, they need to face up to their mistaken beliefs and the physical representation of those beliefs in the enemy. Once these flaws have been faced and overcome, the protagonists can become real patriots and role models.

In *The Star* and *The Ninth Company*, however, the enemy is a threat to Russia, but is not depicted as cruel and inhuman, prone to committing atrocities and lacking in morals. The Germans are either faceless or somehow victims as well, even if they have invaded the Fatherland. In *Marsh Brosok* they are terrorists who kill Sasha's friend and an old village chief for challenging their authority, but they still are not portrayed in such a harsh light as the enemy in *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*.

These last two films in particular feature Nazi German invaders who lack morals, mercy, honour and respect. Their presence and the way they are depicted in those films enhance the perceived superiority of the Russian protagonists/heroes of the story in every possible way: their dignity, spiritual and moral values, and sense of duty. The German soldiers in *The Brest Fortress* shoot wounded people in a hospital, and then use them as hostages and shields to persuade the Russian soldiers under Fomin's command to leave the Fortress. They mercilessly drive their tanks over the

dead bodies of Russian civilians. In *Burnt by the Sun 2* the Germans are depicted in even worse light, disrespecting the Red Cross and mocking it in a very offensive and vulgar way. They ruthlessly shoot a family of musicians simply for being gypsies and violate their women.

The enemy in the later movies is not only the foreign invader, but also an internal enemy who betrays his own people and his Fatherland. Treason is a high crime, especially when committed during wartime against the homeland, and as such must be severely punished. The first form of punishment for traitors who kill innocent Soviet people without remorse or guilt is meted out in *The Priest*. When the Soviet policemen working for the Germans are killed by partisan, Father Aleksandr refuses to bury them and to give them a religious funeral, saying they do not deserve it. Aleksandr knows that they deliberately perpetrated their crimes without regret or shame, and therefore believes they must be punished by being denied a religious blessing after death.

In *The Brest Fortress* some Soviet soldiers surrender to the Germans. Although Commander Kizhevatov tells his men not to shoot them as deserters and traitors, he nevertheless shuns them, saying ‘to each his own’. His words reflect his disappointment and his decision that they do not deserve to be killed, but simply left to associate with their own kind—the enemy, who lacks any shred of Russian dignity, morals and values.

In *Burnt by the Sun 2* the punishment reaches an extreme level, when an entire village is destroyed after having left a Russian girl at the mercy of the enemy, offering her no shelter and refusing to lift a finger to rescue her for fear of retaliation from the Germans. In Soviet war movies, especially the ones produced during the Great Patriotic War, harsh punishment was often reserved for people who betray the Fatherland and its righteous cause, and who lack faith and loyalty. Those who betray

their country and collaborate with the invaders were considered to be even worse than the enemy himself (Gillespie, 2005). In *The Rainbow* (1943) by Mark Donskoy, the ‘despicable character of Pusia, the wife of a partisan that betrays her husband with a German officer’ is shot to death by her own husband once he returns to his native village (Beumers, 2009: 102).

Perpetuate the memory of the past

The two programs for patriotic education analysed in chapter one dedicate several activities and events to the perpetuation of the memory of the past and instilling respect for Russia’s history, its heroes and the soldiers and officers who dedicate their lives to serving the Fatherland. The program is meant as well to make young people aware of the importance of serving in the Army and taking pride in it. Re-enacting events of the past, activities where veterans are teachers, renovation of museums and reinforcement of the study of history in school are all activities that aim not only to create a bond between past, present and future generations, between old and young people, but also to restore respect for the achievements of Russia, her victories, her Army and her soldiers and increase the sense of pride and patriotism. It is also a way to induce young people to serve in the Army and avoid shirking their compulsory military service obligations.

Key elements of this particular point are the study of history, the role of teachers, the educating/learning experience, veterans passing their story and experiences on to the younger generation and the preservation of war memorials. These elements can easily be identified from reading the two programs and they are indeed used and depicted in the movies. In comparing the films, we notice that this element was more prominently featured in films produced after 2005. While it is possible to identify the element of memory in *The Star*, where it is expressed through

the character of Katya, the young radio-operator who falls in love with Lieutenant Travkin, in the other movies it is rather a marginal element used to complete the narrative frame, or is not central to the plot.

At the same time, we must admit that traces of this parameter are present, strongly or weakly, in all the movies. Katya exemplifies the importance of perpetuating the memory of the past by becoming a history teacher at the end of *The Star*. She remains faithful to the memory of her love for Travkin, who in 1965, years after his death, is posthumously awarded the Order of the Great Patriotic War. Katya thus remains faithful to her hero of her Fatherland and never betrays her love for him, making sure to teach to young students the events of the Great Patriotic War. The symbolism of her work as a history teacher after the war is very strong when viewed through the optic of Patriotic Education.

It is suggested in *The Ninth Company* that the memory of the war in Afghanistan and the deeds of the Ninth Company will be remembered forever by Lyuty, and narrated to people around him. The young Chechen protagonist of *12* will always treasure the memory of the Russian officer who saved him. The portrayal of the element of memory is stronger still in *The Admiral* and *The Priest*. Father Aleksandr survives his deportation to the Gulag and achieves old age, still leading young people towards faith in God. Even if Kolchak dies, his memory will always be preserved by Anna Timireva. Remembering the past and teaching it to younger generations is a central theme in *The Brest Fortress*, where Sasha survived the Battle of the Brest Fortress. He is shown to the audience as an old man, narrating those tragic events to his grandson and repeating over and over that he will never forget that the memory of the people who died in the Fortress is always alive in him. As he speaks those words, he is shown as he visits the monument built to honour the Fortress.

Mikhalkov directly and clearly dedicates his *'Burnt by the Sun 2* to his grandfather, a veteran of the Great Patriotic War, giving us a strong message about how much he values his grandfather's experience. The film ends as Kotov, together with his beloved daughter and other soldiers, moves on toward Berlin in a Soviet tank. This scene recalls one of the greatest moments of glory and victory in the Great Patriotic War, which still can inspire pride and evoke patriotic feelings among Russians. Stambula dedicates his *Marsh Brosok* to the memory of the deeds of the soldiers and officers who fight for Russia.

The past is painted in vivid colours in *We are from the Future* and its sequel, where Sergey Filatov has become a history teacher, a fact which is immediately introduced when he shows a documentary about the Battle of Brody to his students and then attends the re-enactment of that battle, together with his students and his friend Oleg. The second movie contains even more such elements than the first one. Re-enacting the experience of the War is an ingenious way to impress its memory into the characters. It is interesting to note that these two movies mostly targeted a young audience, while the others are for a general—perhaps more mature—audience, like *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*.

What the analysis of the selected films shows is that after 2005, the depiction of the memory element becomes more prominent and more central, and is the cardinal element in three movies. Another fact to be noted is that apart from *The Star*, two of those movies (*The Admiral* and *The Brest Fortress*) show their deceased protagonists and heroes once more alive and smiling at the end of the film, transported back to life in the narrator's treasured memories. This can be interpreted as a desire to demonstrate that the heroes and courageous deeds of the past never really die.

Most of the films celebrate and feature battles which took place in reality and feature heroes who were rewarded with decorations and titles. Such is the case of *The*

Star, *The Ninth Company*, *The Admiral*, and *The Priest* (although admittedly the true story of Father Aleksandr was modified by Khotinenko), *The Brest Fortress* and *Burnt by the Sun 2*. Even if they are not entirely accurate in all details, as is the case in Bondarchuk's and Mikhalkov's films, they still recall and bring to life emotional episodes of the Great Patriotic War or other conflicts that resulted in military success and heroic reward.

The second part of the film analysis illustrated how the parameters changed in the film. Although they all appear in some way in each, some are not dominant features of the movie. The studied films are nonetheless excellent tools for education and propaganda, given the way they present their content and transmit it to the audience. The following chapter is the last part of this dissertation, and will draw some conclusions and summarize some of the foregoing observations.

Conclusions

This dissertation presented two questions for research. First, which of the political priorities indicated in the programs for Patriotic Educations for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010 are featured in the films chosen for study, and how are they depicted? Second, what conclusions can be drawn from an exploration of a possible continuity between Soviet-era war movies and recent Russian war movies? The time period of the Soviet films taken into consideration is from the end of the 1930s to the very beginning of the 1950s. During this span of time, Russia fought WWII, also known as the Great Patriotic War, which is an event that still evokes strong emotions in the Russian people. As explained in the introduction, under Stalin's regime patriotism was used in political campaigns to mobilise Soviet citizens, to recruit volunteers for projects of industrialization and to condemn political opponents (Rapoport, 2009).

During WWII Soviet patriotism played an important political and propagandistic role in unifying the Soviet Union against the enemy and in supporting the Party in the fight for the Motherland. Anatoli Rapoport explains how 'party leaders created and used Soviet patriotism for the purpose of ideological, political and social changes to maintain the status quo by conducting various well-planned propagandistic campaigns under the motto of patriotism that solely served their short—or long—term needs' (2009: 10). Soviet patriotism was challenged by changes in Russian society and politics that occurred over time. It would be interesting in a few years to understand whether this will also apply to Russian patriotism as envisaged by the programs for Patriotic Education.

Eleven war films produced from 2000 to 2011 were analysed with the intent of answering the research questions. The approach of this dissertation is to consider films as a double-sided mirror, on one side of which the filmmaker absorbs certain political

ideas and on the other, what the director has filtered and elaborated is transmitted through the film to the audience. Between the two surfaces of the mirror there is a space where political priorities are filtered and translated into film. The filmmaker's approach to the story and the way he or she understands and transposes those political ideas and priorities to the screen give an understanding of the director's own relationship to the political agenda and the usefulness of the film as an educational and/or propagandistic tool for transmitting the political message.

What generated the idea for this research was watching several Russian war movies produced from 2000 onward, which made us realise that certain ideas important to recent political discourse in Russia were being presented. The theme of patriotism was predominant. Many authors have written about the cinema of the new millennium in Putin's Russia and about Putin's new political agenda in the light of patriotism (Stojanova, 2005; Blum, 2005, 2006; Beumers, 2008; Rapoport, 2009; Liñán, 2010; Kucherenko, 2011; Norris, 2012). This dissertation aims to understand whether the priorities and political ideas of the programs for Patriotic Education were well portrayed in movies. Thus it analyses the first two programs for Patriotic Education, which attempted to address the problematic situation in Russia at the end of the 1980s and the 1990s. The programs marked a new political approach and suggested tools for facing economic, social and cultural problems.

Similar tentative steps in this direction were taken in the last years of Boris Yeltsin's presidency, but were never really implemented (Blum, 2006; Rapoport, 2009). The question arises, is Putin's new approach for real and has it been implemented? According to two articles Anatoli Rapoport,⁵⁶ similar policies and programs were created and fostered in the era of the Soviet Union. Therefore, a second

⁵⁶ Rapoport's articles are 'Patriotic Education in Russia: Stylistic Move or a Sign of Substantive Counter-Reform', *The Educational Forum*, (73): 141-152 and 'The Role and Place of Patriotism in Citizenship Education in Russia', Purdue University (West Lafayette, Indiana), 1-31

research question followed, which aimed to understand whether there was continuity between the Soviet war films of the 1930s, 1940's and early 1950s and the Russian war films produced after 2000 in terms of their cinematic narrative and display of political ideas.

This dissertation contributes to the field of research by analysing eleven war films, a significant part of a very important genre in Russian cinema (Norris, 2012). Not many studies have been dedicated to this topic in the context of Patriotic Education for Russian Federation citizens and those that were so dedicated did not offer deep insight into the programs and then analyse the movies in their light. Many authors concentrated on the figure of Vladimir Putin, associating him with the development of a new era in Russian cinema.

This dissertation explores the political priorities expressed under the umbrella of Patriotic Education rather than concentrating on the political role and figure of Putin. It also contributes by showing the continuity in content and film-narrative between a specific Soviet period and contemporary Russia, again in the context of Patriotic Education. It finds common points between the two periods and in the way the old and new films are used as patriotic educational tools.

An interesting remark can be made in terms of the difference between Soviet and Russian war movies. In the eleven analysed films, Communism is not depicted at all, and appears solely in a few images and symbols that are very marginal to the story. In some films the word 'Russian' replaces 'Soviet' and the films concentrate on the Russian nation rather than the whole Soviet Union. In fact, recent WWII films suggest the idea that the Soviet Union consisted of Russia only. Even when the films present events that happened under Communism, they do not evoke a feeling for that regime. It seems that the Soviet past is extracted from Russian history because the films mostly focus on Russian heroes and the heroic role of Russia.

This analysis of the films also represents a contribution to the research because it was done on the basis of seven parameters that were identified as the political priorities of Patriotic Education and were observable in all the selected films, then discussed them individually and compared them horizontally. Such an analysis offers a significant insight into movies that have not heretofore been studied in depth, except in a few cases.

The eleven movies were analysed using seven common parameters that identify the political priorities indicated in the two programs for patriotic education. We discovered that the priorities are indeed depicted in the selected films, that the filmmakers did not change the content of the prescribed political message, and that they transmit that message to the audience in tones similar to those with which the priorities are described in the programs. The filmmakers never take a critical stance as they narrate the films. War never results in utter defeat or unalloyed tragedy in terms of human lives and behaviour. War is featured and re-created in a way that always echoes victory. It provides duties that must be fulfilled with pride and honour and tragedy that must be faced as a united people in order to defeat the enemy and protect the Motherland. War is never criticised so as to expose error or wrongdoing on the part of the Russians, or to present the audience with a mutual tragedy for both sides of the conflict. It is depicted as unprovoked aggression toward the Motherland, perpetrated by an evil adversary.

In the films, there is no choice but war, and all violence used to eliminate the enemy is allowed in order to protect the homeland. Even conflicts like the Soviet-Afghan war and the Chechen campaigns are not presented in a negative light and the films do not offer any critical narrative in featuring those events. On the contrary, war is shown to be a duty to be performed and at the same time an adventure that allows the protagonist to become a hero. The characters are never punished for their deeds

during war. They kill, but are rewarded for fighting loyally and demonstrating they are true patriots. The same content has been observed in Soviet war films, in particular films featuring the Great Patriotic War, where it is used in the framework of Soviet patriotic education.

This dissertation considers two different aspects of Russian films: the propagandistic and the educational, which are different ways to use films. Both approaches are involved in the programs of Patriotic Education in Russia, rendering the distinction between them very subtle. There is continuity with the Soviet past in terms of content and its translation to the screen. This dissertation contributes to understanding how recent Russian filmmakers accepted Patriotic Education and whether or not they produced films that hew to the lines indicated in the programs.

The two Patriotic Education documents studied here clearly reflect an aim to involve cinema and media in general in fostering patriotic propaganda, using books, TV programs, documentaries, public events, art expositions and conventions. The programs do not name any of the films analysed here. Since there is no direct commissioning of the films in the programs, it becomes important to see whether they have a didactic as well as entertainment purpose. The purposes of fostering patriotic feelings in line with Patriotic Education and supporting state propaganda are obvious in all eleven films discussed in this dissertation.

Patriotic Education espouses a role model for Russian citizens that can serve as an example for other people to follow. That role model is deeply patriotic, devoted to the Fatherland and always ready to serve and defend it. He or she loves the Motherland, serves willingly in the Armed forces, respects the glorious past and seeks to preserve it with pride, passing the memory of the past on to future generations. He or she embodies any number of the qualities delineated in the documents, all of which

relate to the official definition of (Russian) patriotism elucidated in the 2003 'Concept', as blessed by the current Russian political authorities.

In this scheme of things, a proper role model can be elevated into an even higher type of role model, the hero—a legendary figure to be remembered with pride and reverence—from whom the ordinary Russian should learn important lessons of patriotism and civic duty, which can transform him or her into the ideal citizen/role model desired by the programs for Patriotic Education. The role of each protagonist in the films is of primary importance, because it is through his behaviour, actions, choices, words and the values these things all express that the process of education begins and deepens.

The hero of a film can be seen as a catalyst for Patriotic Education. For this reason the parameter of the role model/hero stands in the first position of our analysis and is the centre of attention in the films. This means that the filmmakers portray their heroes with appropriate attention to detail in terms of personality, physical appearance, and visibility on the screen. We do not encounter bland, insignificant protagonists who have nothing to communicate to the audience. Rather, we meet strong personalities that attract the immediate attention of other characters in the film and audiences in the cinema merely by their presence, even a silent presence.

The other six parameters are all connected to this one and somehow orbit around it, because they increase or decrease according to which political idea is the main theme of a particular movie. All seven parameters are depicted in films in one way or another, be they strong or weak elements. However, there is no doubt that the role-model/hero parameter is always dominant. Each of the eleven films characterises and emphasises some elements more than others. All of the elements which appear as main parameters in a film are articulated through the protagonist/hero. An introductory

key line of dialogue was chosen for each film to highlight the political priority that predominates in it, on which the analysis focuses.

Patriotism as a value is of course another dominant parameter, considering that it colours the overall approach and basis of Patriotic Education. It is mainly expressed through the hero and then through the narrative and scene development of the films. As an example, consider the case of Kolchak in *The Admiral*: Kolchak is the perfect, ideal role model who is introduced as a hero from the outset. There is no questioning his heroic demeanour. His words, actions, facial expressions, silent glares, his presence on the screen, and everything else about him exudes patriotism. He states at the very beginning of the film that nothing is more important than doing one's duty to protect the Motherland. However, when he speaks to the soldiers of the White Army, swearing to fulfil his duty to serve the Russian State, the scene adds emotional symbols to emphasise the import of his words and his display of patriotism. Russian flags wave in the freezing wind of snow-covered Siberia, soldiers remove their hats and fall to their knees on hearing Kolchak's words, officers salute him in the finest military way and an Orthodox priest blesses him.

The hero is like a prism that refracts the content of Patriotic Education into different colours. The scenes and the narrative add brightness and intensity, perhaps casting different shades of each colour. This last part of the dissertation offers a brief overview of the eleven analysed films in conjunction with the parameter(s) that are their main themes. The order is the same as used in the analysis, beginning with *Brat 2* and ending with *Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel*. This overview will serve to summarise what has been discovered and how the political priorities of Patriotic Education are depicted in each film. We will see how every film showcases role model/hero parameter as its main theme, and of course, it is evident that the overall story and narrative approach have their basis in patriotism.

Brat 2 by Balabanov is a transitional film that was produced outside the time frame of the program for Patriotic Education, but nevertheless shows how film directors can change the depiction of some elements in their film. As explained, *Brat 2* was chosen because although the first *Brat* was produced in 1997, only three years before its sequel, some content is portrayed in a different light in the second film. The most striking differences are to be observed in terms of the depiction of war, the soldier-figure, patriotism and the concepts of Fatherland and Motherland. The analysis already expounded on this in depth. However, it can briefly be said that in this film the controversial war in Chechnya is calmly and openly discussed on national TV from a Moscow studio. The three brothers-in-arms talk about their experiences as soldiers and discuss it with actual nostalgia and reassuring smiles. They describe the war as an adventure, something to be remembered with pride.

The figure of the soldier is legitimised in this film where before it was vilified. Danila is presented from the beginning as an ex-soldier. Throughout the entire film he makes military references, not bothering to hide his past anymore. He is a patriot who loves his country, as he declares to a taxi driver in Chicago. He assumes the role of the strong father. Danila in himself represents the concept of Fatherland and demonstrates this by saving a Russian prostitute from her ignominious fate in the United States. The prostitute's route to salvation is to follow Danila and return to her Motherland.

Danila is a father who does not desert his own people and who punishes those who betray the Motherland. This is the reason he leaves his older brother in the United States without trying to save him from the American police. Danila begins as the brother, but becomes the father and the (controversial) hero, who proves that serving as a soldier provides one with solid principles. His message is that Russians stranded outside the Motherland lose their true identity, becoming corrupted and sullen, and that the real power lies in Russian patriotism and not in money. What made this film

interesting and a good case for analysis was that it depicted some content already in 2000 that reappears and is amplified in *Burnt by the Sun 2*.

Danila leaves Russia to engage in his personal mission, but he still demonstrates the superiority of the Russian system of ideas and values, even if he cannot be considered a perfect role model and hero. He saves a woman from her corrupt life in America and guides her back home. The mission is accomplished by the soldier, Danila.

By contrast, in *Burnt by the Sun 2*, Kotov-Mikhalkov leaves Russia on a tank headed to Berlin with the intent to completely free the world from Nazism. His mission is a universal one, not personal. It is Messianic in his suffering and in his escape from death by a miracle. It demands that he is a larger than life, ideal role-model and hero. It seems that a circle is completed, but also enlarged as well. From Danila to Kotov it is possible to discover a real evolution and improvement in the hero and in how the political priorities of Patriotic Education are depicted in film. Evolution, because the hero grows from imperfect to perfect in every way, and improvement, because Mikhalkov's film exports the Russian system of values outside the country, using them to free the world from the evil entity that haunts it.

The Star by Lebedev has a protagonist, Lieutenant Travkin, and secondary characters, his fellow scouts, who are ideal role models. Because of their sacrifices and brave deeds in their last fight against ten thousand German soldiers, they are heroes. The other main elements present are the soldier-figure, the concept of Fatherland and the memory of the past. The soldiers are portrayed as heroes and sacrifice their lives in order to protect their Motherland, never faltering and receiving a posthumous award.

They are the very image of the soldier described in Patriotic Education and their total sacrifice renders their deeds all the more significant in terms of their service

to the Fatherland, and their demonstrated willingness to sacrifice themselves for their country and to follow orders. The fact that they are devoted soldiers following the orders given to them by a higher authority is demonstrated by the last scene, where they all die one by one, but only after they transmit the necessary vital information about the enemy. Following orders and doing their duty become more important than saving their own lives.

Katya, the young radio-operator, falls in love with Travkin and will always treasure his memory and their love with respect and pride, perpetuating the memory of Travkin as hero and of his sacrifice. Katya becomes a history teacher and educates young pupils about the past and about the Great Patriotic War.

The War is an event to face bravely and fighting it is the soldiers' duty. The enemies are the Germans, who personify invaders of the Motherland, but they are not depicted as evil or cruel. There is no need to denigrate them completely, because the protagonists are portrayed in a way that leaves no doubt about who should win the war. The gap in the skills displayed by the good guys and the bad guys is made clear by the way that ten thousand German soldiers must be deployed to find and eliminate a mere seven Russian scouts.

Marsh Brosok or *Forced March* by Nikolai Stambula concentrates on the militaristic aspects of Patriotic Education, displaying a strong protagonist/role model in Aleksandr-Sasha, who becomes a hero through his experiences as soldier in the *Spetsnaz* division of the GRU military intelligence. In the optic of Patriotic Education, this film is a very good example of how serving Russia as a soldier is rewarded with respect, pride and even a family. In Sasha's case, war is portrayed as an adventure for him, but also a duty, and serving in the *Spetsnaz* fulfils his childhood dream, suggesting that military service is maximum achievement for Sasha as the hero of the film.

Sasha's war experiences reinforce his already very good personality and shall give us a chance once more to discover new qualities in him. He personifies the honest Russian patriot as he serves his Fatherland, protects his Motherland, is loyal and brave, ready to sacrifice himself for his brothers-in-arms and for his country, and is ready as well to teach a lesson to a group of troublesome boys who 'dared' to harass the girl he loves. The film certainly serves up a rather romantic and adventurous image of the soldier-figure and his mission at war. It also shows war's harsh and violent side, but all is rewarded and compensated, thus minimising its tragic aspects. Sasha can be viewed as a role model who can inspire young people to follow in his footsteps.

The Ninth Company by Fedor Bondarchuk focuses on patriotism, on the soldier-figure and the related experience of war. The fact that the film features the war in Afghanistan, a rather painful chapter for Russian's history, succeeding in imbuing it with a feeling of victory rather than utter defeat, means that Bondarchuk managed to produce a propagandistic film. First, because war is a duty to fulfil in the movie, no matter how far one is from the Motherland, how incompletely the enemy is understood and how unthreatening the enemy is to Russia inside its own borders. Second, because the film follows the policy line laid down in Patriotic Education and renders victorious a conflict that actually involved great losses for Russia in terms of lives and the ultimate political outcome.

Also, the overall atmosphere around the group of soldiers, who slowly become friends, is vibrant with a sense of victory in their small conquests and achievements. The film's protagonist, Lyuty, does not talk about the loss of the entire company and their dramatic experience in the war. He only repeats over and over that 'they won' and that 'the Ninth Company won'. Russia is not left on her knees in a dark and dramatic chapter of her history, but is uplifted by the successful battle for that hill and lives in victory through her soldiers, who did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for

their Fatherland. The soldier-figure is a positive figure here who does his duty and shows readiness to sacrifice, honest feeling and patriotism. The film shows how military training bonds a group of heterogeneous people and makes them a band of brothers, forging them into stronger men who overcome their faults and limitations. In these respects, the film can be seen as an educational one.

I2 by Nikita Mikhalkov is entirely focused on Mikhalkov's character, the jury foreman who embodies both role model and hero, the military intelligence operative and the concept of the Fatherland. Starting with *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), the film director decided at that time to fill the empty place of the father-figure and the lack of the strong Fatherland by portraying himself as the Father of his nation (Beumers, 1999; 2005). In *I2*, it is no different and the concept of Fatherland and high authority is depicted through the character he plays, along with the sense of duty, self-sacrifice for a good cause, honour, integrity, and strength of personality. Mikhalkov the juror does not need to tell us his story. He remains mostly silent and aloof, as if he is a high authority (both moral and political) who observes everything from above. Mikhalkov's Uncle Nikolai sits at the head of the jury because he has experience; he grasps the truth first because of his experience gained in his former profession. He reveals himself to be a former FSB agent, one who will save the day by helping a young Chechen boy find out who actually killed the adoptive father and by giving him a new family to replace his loss.

The secondary character in the film who most exemplifies the soldier-figure and the Fatherland is the Russian officer, Uncle Vanya, who has fought in the Chechen campaign and adopted the young boy after his family was killed by Chechen fighters. The film depicts the memory of the past through the character of this officer, and through the young Chechen boy, in repeated scenes where the officer is in uniform and fighting for his country. After his murder, this Russian officer is remembered as a

good person and a hero to the young boy, because he found and rescued him in the midst of war. The enemies are the Chechen fighters, who show no mercy or any real values, and who also serve to enhance the good qualities of the Russian Army officer personified by Uncle Vanya. The Chechens show how ruthless they are by killing innocent Chechen people only for having befriended Russian soldiers. Hence they are extremely dangerous.

Nikita Mikhalkov is a peculiar film director in many respects and his political views makes him even more interesting to discuss here at the end of this dissertation. There is no doubt that his films fulfil the propagandistic aims of Patriotic Education. In *12*, there are two heroes: a Russian Army officer and a retired FSB officer, whose promises may never be broken or modified because they are the word of an officer. There is no need to explain the reasons his word deserves to be trusted. Once he reveals that he is an officer and will always be one in his heart and mind even after he retires, the answer is given. It should also be noted that no ordinary civilian welcomes the young Chechen boy and gives him a new family, but a military figure does.

The Admiral by Kravchuk is a film that depicts all the elements of Patriotic Education as central themes, perhaps putting the memory of the past slightly behind the rest, but not so far behind as to be considered a weak or inconsequential element. The character of Kolchak, the perfect role-model who enters the film as a hero, is what Russian citizens should aspire to become and emulate according to Patriotic Education. He is driven by his sincere and strong patriotism, his deep faith in God, his integrity and honesty, his sense of duty and honour and his respect for the orders given by him from the highest authority. Kolchak is not a hero simply because he dies for his Fatherland and his Motherland, who reaches out for his dead body in a last maternal embrace, but because his mission is religiously blessed and spiritually

charged. Patriotism, Fatherland and the Russian Orthodox Church converge and blend together in the character of Kolchak.

Considering the year of the film's production and the way the events it portrays are related to Russian politics, it is interesting how this historical and controversial figure is revisited so as to make him appear to be a saint and martyr for the cause of the Fatherland. His character casts a dark light on the Bolshevik revolutionaries who disrupted the system created under the Tsar. Kolchak is the perfect personification of deep, nearly blind patriotism, a strict sense of duty toward the Fatherland and a sense of protectiveness for the Motherland. The war is his mission and his duty is to win it. His enemy is first the Germans and then the Red Army, but neither is depicted in ostentatiously negative tones, because there is no need here to create a very bad enemy to provide contrast. Kolchak shines with an intense and almost blinding light already and there is no doubt that this film successfully manages to transmit a strong patriotic message that the Fatherland's priorities come before personal priorities.

We are from the Future (2008) by Malyukov focuses on war and military service as educational experiences that rehabilitate rather empty and disreputable young Russians into real, honest patriots, ready to serve as examples and role models for other young people. In perfect line with what is expressed in Patriotic Education, war is a rite of passage and a memory felt directly on the four protagonists' skin. This didactic experience is the best possible one for the group of friends. *We are from the Future* is possibly the one film chosen for this dissertation where the protagonists are not role models or heroes at the beginning of the film or even by the middle of it, but become role models and war heroes only at the end, after having proved their devotion to the Fatherland.

This is expressed in particular in one of the last scenes of the film, where Skull/Oleg finally removes the tattoo of the swastika from his skin and pays with his blood. The film is mainly directed to a young audience, given its general tone and the casting of four very young actors. It is a perfect representation of one of the main principles indicated in Patriotic Education, the need to grow into real, decent men who are honest, devoted patriots, through the experience of war and serving as soldiers. However, the film does not limit itself only to serving as soldiers, but goes further, having its characters make amends for their earlier lack of respect and accomplishing a mission before they return home. The moral is that you do not deserve a reward from the Fatherland simply by serving as soldier, because you must also prove your sincerity of purpose and your devotion.

The Priest by Khotinenko focuses on a protagonist who is a role model and hero in terms of his patriotism, spirituality, and his exemplification of dedication to the Fatherland and Motherland and other values related to Patriotic Education. Father Aleksandr was baptised in honour of Aleksandr Nevsky, and hence needs to behave like a hero by serving his Fatherland and supporting the people living in the villages occupied by the Nazis. Father Aleksandr is a symbol of patriotism and Russian Orthodox Christianity. He blends within himself the political and spiritual authority of the Fatherland.

It is significant that Khotinenko felt the need to change his portrayal of the real events and give a different version of Father Aleksandr's story. The real priest, who lived and worked in the German occupied territories left the Motherland and sought shelter with his family in Germany when things were too tough in the Soviet Union. The Father Aleksandr of the film refuses to leave his Motherland in its moment of greatest need, because he loves her and feels he must do his duty to her until the end. He has no fear of the Gulag. In the film, Father Aleksandr survives many years in

prison, clearly due to his deep, sincere faith and patriotism. He is rewarded with freedom and returns to serve as priest, once more inspiring people with his gentle but strong regard and guiding Russian children onto the right path. To shape the ideal hero and role model described in Patriotic Education and to move the audience by touching their inner emotions, it was necessary to manipulate and change the real story of the priest. His leaving the country at its greatest moment of need obviously would not serve as an example for true patriots to follow. Nor it would instil respect and reverence for a figure so intimately associated with the Russian Orthodox Church, who should therefore represent the highest ideals of patriotism.

The Brest Fortress by Kott, similarly to *The Admiral*, captures all seven parameters as main themes. The role model/hero is without doubt a stereotype of the perfect patriot and Russian war hero. Among the other main themes, three are dominant: the concept of the Fatherland (here more so than the Motherland), patriotism and the memory of the past. These traits are all displayed by the four heroes of the movie.

Young Sasha is the only survivor of the Fortress and therefore has the duty never to forget what happened and preserve the history of the defenders who resisted the enemy. Sasha survives and not only remembers, but also passes his experiences on to his nephew, connecting the younger generation with his own and forming a bridge between past and future founded upon the history of the Great Patriotic War.

The earlier analysis fully described all the elements which appear in this movie and there is no need to go further into the roles of the three officers in *The Brest Fortress* who perform as perfect patriotic heroes and stereotypical examples of what is desired by Patriotic Education. Kott created a film that is both educational and propagandistic, because all the main political priorities are depicted in a way to create in the audience's mind a glorious image of Russia and her history, showing how

important it is to serve and respect the Fatherland, the highest political authority. It is educational because the examples of the main heroes are perfect role-models to follow, with whom the audience can and should identify. Through their sacrifice, behaviour, words and choices they teach what it means to be a real patriot and how people must behave in order to become one. The film educates about the sacrifices Soviet soldiers made in order to protect their Motherland and about the importance of serving as a soldier in order to deter future menaces. It also shows how necessary it is to fulfil one's duties and serve the Fatherland. Kott's film teaches the importance of respecting the memory of the past and treasuring it with pride and love. As already mentioned several times, this film captures all the political priorities of Patriotic Education that were identified and explained in Chapter One, fully transposing them to the screen and transmitting a clear message to the audience.

We are from the Future 2 by Aleksandr Samokhvalov and Boris Rostov is the sequel to the movie of the same name, where the main theme of war is both an educational tool and a rite of passage. War is also a bonding experience for its two Russian and two Ukrainian protagonists, who are at first bitter foes and then become friends and allies in the course of demonstrating their patriotism and devotion for the Fatherland. What Sergey and Oleg learned in the first film is now put to the test and used to show how their life-style has changed and that they are now respectable citizens. Sergey (Borman in the first movie) has become a history teacher, clearly a reference to the need to educate students about the Fatherland's past. Oleg (formerly Skull) works to reunite relatives of deceased soldiers with relics he finds on the battlefield. The two men are model citizens who now are doing their duty. Still, they need to be tested once more as soldiers, to see if they really are ready to fight for their Fatherland. They do, of course, selflessly deciding to take up weapons and stand up

proudly against the enemy, in spite of the obvious risk of death and inability to return home.

Considering this film's content and its date of production, 2010, it is no surprise that it triggered a strong reaction in Ukraine, where the film was banned. The film shows two Ukrainian nationalists abandon their nationalist feelings because of their experience of the Great Patriotic War. They overcome their personal fears and the dissonance caused by the independence of Ukraine from Russia in order to fight alongside their new-found Russian brothers and friends. The two Ukrainian protagonists must show repentance for the betrayal (as viewed through the lens of Russian Patriotic Education) of Russia by their fellow Ukrainians, who in the last year of WWII collaborated with the Nazis. This message is very clear and the choices the protagonists make in battle are the final touch.

The Patriotic Education programs, in particular the second one for 2006-2010, stress the necessity and importance of creating a strong bond of friendship, a bond that here is indeed created between the four protagonists, one that celebrates the superiority of Russians in terms of morals, values and skills. The enemy, defeated by the sacrifice of Russian soldiers in a desperate battle, is not only the German invader, but also the internal dissidents and wreckers who are crushed in their intent to break the Soviet line. Patriotism, Fatherland, Motherland, and memory of the past are all depicted in the four protagonists, showing their military skills, their willingness to do their duty and defend the Motherland, and their patriotism and love for their (true) homeland. The unforgettable experience of the Great Patriotic War is once more felt on their skin and then taught to students by Sergey. This time, being soldiers makes the protagonists heroes. It is clear that their actions are rewarded when Sergey finds true love. Watching both this film and the first *We are from the Future*, and keeping Patriotic Education in mind, one can see many connections between them in terms of

how the main points of the programs for Patriotic Education are translated to film, down to the prescribed activities for young people.

Burnt by the Sun 2: Exodus and Citadel by Nikita Mikhalkov concludes the selection of films for this dissertation and closes the circle that was begun with *Brat 2* by Balabanov. This dissertation has already presented this film and its film director in detail, in part in terms of the ideas found in Karaganov's article and Tsygankov's explanation of Civilizationism. It is important to repeat again how in Mikhalkov's movie the political priorities indicated in Patriotic Education programs are taken a step further, moving outside the borders of Russia.

Mikhalkov does not end the film at the defeat of the enemy and the hero's return home. Rather he ends with the hero (now a Messianic hero because he has an important mission to accomplish and has suffered and miraculously escaped death several times) riding on a tank toward Berlin to achieve the complete defeat of the Germans in their own country. He moves on to Berlin to free the world from the evil Nazis, bringing the Russian system of values with him, in the merry company of his beloved daughter and the young soldier, a sort of adopted son, who has followed him everywhere he goes.

All this reinforces the image of the Fatherland that unites its children and celebrates victory together. *Burnt by the Sun 2*, even if criticised in some reviews, is a successful propaganda film, as desired by the Patriotic Education programs. It is as well a strong educational tool, as is also indicated in the programs. It celebrates the political content of the programs and features it in a glorious light, severely punishing the traitors who appear. It teaches the audience a lesson about Russia's mission in the world, and about her superiority in terms of values, morals, spirituality and heroism.

Through this analysis it has been possible to understand films as both educational and propagandistic tools. The difference between those two concepts in

the context of Patriotic Education for Russian Federation citizens is very subtle. The films selected serve as educational tools because they follow the lines laid down by Patriotic Education, teaching the importance of several points. Patriotism is used as a didactic framework, and the films' purpose is to educate the audience to walk in the protagonist/hero's footsteps and become ideal patriotic citizens. They do not simply feature some content, but offer examples to follow, personified by their protagonist-heroes, who are the educational linchpin of each movie. The teaching process takes place via a character portrayed as role model, exactly as indicated in Patriotic Education and in the 2003 'Concept'.

The films are propagandistic because the film directors never criticise the political ideas of Patriotic Education by showing them in a controversial light. They never question its political principles and feature only what they believe is important for the audience to see. They always depict the identified priorities in a positive way, and in all the circumstances Russia and her system of values, politics and ideology are victorious, in some cases even shown to be superior to all others. If the protagonist does his duty, he becomes a hero and he is rewarded in one way or another.

These eleven films are propagandistic as well because they serve another purpose of the Patriotic Education programs, which is to foster a campaign for state patriotism. They serve as educational tools to project the contents of the program onto the audience. Filmmakers and their films become 'protruding objects of patriotic education', as indicated in the 'Concept' (2003). The manipulation of historical fact in some of them (for instance in the story of Father Alexander in *The Priest* by Khotinenko) also demonstrates the propagandistic role of the movies. In their didactic role they become propagandistic, and by being tools of propaganda they serve as a means of educating in the context of Patriotic Education. For this reason, the distinction between the concepts is very subtle.

Continuity with Soviet war movies produced in the 1930s, 1940's and 1950s has been identified in the following content that matches the intent of the programs Patriotic Education that is, the use of the Great Patriotic War for political, educational and ideological purposes, fostering an officially created form of patriotism. The Soviet patriotism that developed toward the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s was reinforced by Stalin's policies. The ideal of Russian patriotism described in the 2003 'Concept' creates a framework for the Patriotic Education programs and guides those programs by establishing an official view of Russian patriotism to be followed in the implementation of the programs and their suggested activities.

Both the Soviet and later Russian concepts of patriotism were elaborated to serve political purposes and achieve desired results. During the two periods of war movies under study the importance of serving the Fatherland and protecting the Motherland was stressed. The films always show an ultimate reward for the protagonist who sacrifices his life or at least something important to him for a greater cause, and who shows no mercy in punishing traitors to Russia. As indicated by Gillespie (2005), there is a difference in the way recent films criticise Stalin and some aspects of his politics. In some cases, they show NKVD characters in a negative light.

Nevertheless, the basic concept of serving the Fatherland (implicitly understood to be political authority) is never criticised or questioned. Loyalty, devotion and readiness for self-sacrifice are cardinal values represented by each of the role models in the analysed films. All the qualities they embody fall under the umbrella of Patriotic Education. The superiority of the Russian system of values and lifestyle is represented in all the films, rendering enemies as negative, very evil entities, or simply refusing them any distinct depiction, showing them grey and insignificant, a method often used in Soviet war movies. Like the Soviet patriotic education developed under the leadership of Stalin, the new Patriotic Education

programs have a dominant military theme, which is why the genre of war movies is most suitable to further their aims.

Appendix:

Table 1, p. 221: The eleven Russian war films and the seven parameters of analysis.

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