Jarosław Grzechowiak (University of Lodz)

Cinema of Polish 'party film units' in 1977-1991

Research on the film productions during Polish People's Republic, which offer a monographic view on the functioning of film units, are reduced to institutions, whose films have become the classics of Polish cinema. The articles on "X" or "Kadr" Film Units, institutions that produced the most notable films of Polish Film School and Cinema of Moral Concern, prove this thesis.

In my project I would like to explore the activities of film teams whose artistic managers stood "on the other side of the barricade" – they were influential Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) activists, enjoyed the trust of the party leadership, and directed films that were in line with cultural and historic policy of communist party. The aim of monography about "Iluzjon" Film Unit (managed by Czesław Petelski), "Profil" Film Unit (managed by Bohdan Poręba) and "Kraków" Film Unit (managed by Ryszard Filipski) is to fill the gap in research on the culture of film production in the Polish People's Republic.

The project aims to answer the following research questions: What was the thematic content policy of the analysed film units? What were the themes developed by films produced by these units? Did the film production units in question produce only films that were in line with the hitherto cultural and historic policy? Were films produced by "Iluzjon", "Profil" and "Kraków" subject to censorship and, if so, what were the authors of these films accused of? How did the political situation (particularly during the period of the Carnival of Solidarity) influence the functioning of these film companies? Who — within the analysed time framework — cooperated with these film companies and what films were produced then? What was the film community's approach to the "party film units"? How were the films produced by them received by film critics? Answers to all these questions, provided thanks to film analysis, archival research and in-depth interviews with filmmakers, will allow closer to more complete knowledge of the Polish film of the end of the Polish People's Republic.