

ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ФОРМЫ И КОММУНИКАТИВНЫЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВА СОВЕТСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

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SOVIET CITY CINEMA: APPROACHES TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH¹

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The article is devoted to the methodology of studying the Soviet era city cinema as a social space. It presents a historiographic review of research in this direction, which shows that the city cinema, as the central link in the practice of “going to the cinema”, was an important independent element of everyday life, and its social space was historically changeable and shaped by several stakeholders (government, administration of the cinema network, and viewers). For a full-fledged historical analysis of a cinema, additional specific sources are required. As the main concept for studying the cinema, the authors propose to use the theory of the philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, formulated in his book “The production of space” (1974). According to the French thinker, space in a broad sense can be physical (material component), mental (rational principle) and social (social practices and relationships). As a result of their social activity, people influence all types of spaces, with the process of production of space, physical, mental, and social, taking place within society. If we apply Lefebvre's theory to study the cinema as a cultural phenomenon, it should be investigated at three levels: “representation of space” (material forms), “spatial practices” (management and functioning), “space of representation” (experience and interpretation of “going to the cinema”). For each level of studying the cinema as a social space, different types of historical sources are utilized, the characteristics of which are presented in the article. In this context, along with other sources, attention is paid to sources of personal origin (ego-documents).

Key words: cinema, Soviet society, social space, Henri Lefebvre, historical sources.

My good old cinema,
Where I used to be as a boy...
The Ichthyander was swimming on the screen,
And someone was jumping from a parachute tower...

The orchestra was playing “Chelita” in the lobby,
With double-bass and accordion,
And a singer forgotten by the stage
Was signing with an elderly baritone...

The crispy waffle cups
Were filled with a substance higher than the ancient Pamir! –
White ice cream! At those times
I would eat a box of this plombiere!

And also - the cart - my friend of the heart!
With a gas siphon and syrup!
This is the real joy of a boy! And of course,
Pies with cabbage and dill!

After eating and drinking enough,
After watching a movie for the tenth time,
We were walking home with a friend,
Sharing everything that impressed us...

Ah, if someone knew how much I want to return
To that cinema! Just for a minute!
To touch everything it was there...

It's a pity, shuttle buses don't go back in time... (*Spasibenko*, 2011).

These simple rhymes of an amateur poet can serve as a kind of synopsis for our further contemplations. First, they clearly demonstrate the indisputable fact that “going to the cinema (theater)”² was not a banal act of watching a film, but a social action filled with some specific meaning, in which the cinema was the central link. Secondly, the nostalgic shadows at the end of the opus indicate the evolutionary dynamics of the described practice, i.e. on the opportunity to study its history. Thirdly, the personal experience of the writer brought to us in an emotionally colored poetic form, can (and should) be one of the most important sources in such studies. Summarizing the aforesaid, it is appropriate to raise the question of the theoretical and methodological foundations of studying the cinema as a special cultural space.

From the historiographic point of view, the cinema as an object of close attention of the Humanities – as opposed to cinema in the broadest sense – cannot boast of an abundance of profound academic research. From the very beginning of its appearance, cinema has been (and remains) an object of reflection of primarily art critics. When it began to turn into “the most important of the arts” and acquired its own history, philosophers, sociologists, historians, psychologists joined its study. The researchers focused on the main product of the film industry – the film: its artistic features, genre, ideological and semantic content, perception (reception) by critics and viewers, etc. Over time, all these topics were thickly flavored with theoretical studies about “what to watch (not to watch)”, “how to watch (not to watch)”, “with what to watch (not to watch)”, and “what for to watch (not to watch)”. The question “Where to watch” has always been on the sidelines of film research³. In most cases, the cinema, in film terms, played small parts, being an object of mainly statistical and sometimes architectural analysis. The situation began to change in the 1990s, when the practice of “going to the cinema (theater)” gradually began to turn into a subject for more serious and independent consideration.

Perhaps the first domestic researcher who paid attention to the specific function of the cinema in the film industry system was Yuri G. Tsivyan. In 1991, his monograph “Historical Reception of Cinema” was published in Riga. It can still be considered an encyclopedia of Russian (Soviet) silent cinema. [*Tsivyan*, 1991]

Having postulated that the perception models of films are historically conditioned, Tsivyan consistently and methodically considers various “receptive dominant” factors (i.e., everything that affects the viewer). The first section of the book is devoted to the extra-textual (“external as related to the film, but essential for its perception”) structures of cinema – a performance in the broadest sense of the word, starting from the architectural appearance of the cinema and ending with its contents (the latter means absolutely everything a visitor of the “house of moving pictures” faces: the decoration of the lobby and the additional services provided here, “social issues of the audience space”, regulation of the audience behavior, the role of the projectionist, and even the sound of the camera).

The image of the cinematography of the early 20th century recreated by Tsivyan in this section of the work is so voluminous that an imaginative reader can easily physically feel like a viewer of pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg, Moscow, or Riga⁴. This is largely explained by the nature of the involved sources. In the overwhelming majority, they represent the impressions from attending a cinema performance on “hot scents” recorded in ego-documents: notes and pictorial caricatures in the press, poems of the “Silver Age” poets, diary entries, etc. Finishing the first section, Tsivyan summarizes: “The film industry includes infrastructures serving the film production, film distribution infrastructures, and infrastructures supporting consumption, in other words, the reception of the finished product. The latter includes cinema networks. Throughout history, the cinema undergoes morphological changes. Its architecture, the style of names, the nature of the musical accompaniment, the film projection manner, the performance formula, and the reputation of the cinema as an urban life topos are changing. These changes have not gone unnoticed since the appearance of the very concept of “cinema”. The reception infrastructure is that the cinema becomes a receptive object. The impression made by a film cannot be fully removed from the sum of the properties of the film itself. One should always carry the one – “the screening factor” to this sum (the italics are ours – *E.V., M.S.*) [Tsivyan, 1991, p. 150-151].

Notably, Tsivyan considered the cinema of the early 20th century and the era of silent cinema in his work⁵, but the main theoretical and methodological message of this author can be deemed relevant for the entire history of cinematography in general, as evidenced by the following historiography.

Historian E.A. Zhdankova devoted several articles to the city cinema of Petrograd/Leningrad during the NEP period [Zhdankova, 2013 a, 2013 b]. She defines cinema as “a space that became a complex phenomenon of urban life in the 1920s” [Zhdankova, 2013 b, p. 136]. Fairly noting that “cinemas have been traditionally considered only in the context of delivering a film from a cinema factory to a viewer, actually bypassing the organizational aspect of cinema performances” and that “the place of cinemas in the city culture has been covered in few studies” [Zhdankova, 2013 a, p. 212], this author postulates several theses important for our further presentation. First, she notes the permanent opposition of the ideologically tinged regulations of the authorities, commercially focused interests of the cinema administration, and the expectations of the audience. The conclusions sound very interesting: “the general guidelines and decisions on the organization of the cinema business and regulating the work of cinemas taken at the highest level were often ignored locally throughout the 1920s” [p. 214], but “the demand of the audience was also in conflict with the pragmatic interest of the administration of the cinema itself” [Zhdankova, 2013 b, p. 136]. Thus, the researcher identifies three sides of the formation of the social space of a city cinema – the authorities, the cinema administration, and the viewing audience. The second important note made by Zhdankova concerns the sources for studying this space: “It would be wrong to judge on the work of cinemas only by bravura reports in the specialized press or official resolutions; it gives only a one-sided vision of the process” [Zhdankova, 2013a, p. 214]. Indeed, if the three participants were responsible for the creation of the cinema space, it is logical to assume that each party concerned has some information on this process. The researcher finds such information in cinema rental contracts (they most clearly reflect the interests of film distributors) and in audience questionnaires and surveys, which reflect the demands of the main film product consumers. As a result, Zhdankova managed to provide the reader with a “voluminous” (in her own words) image of a city cinema in the “revolutionary capital” of the 1920s.

Researcher D.N. Ryapusova, when studying the Ural film industry of the war and post-war period, devoted a special place in her research to the practice of “going to the cinema” in extraordinary conditions [Ryapusova, 2015, 2017]. Having set a goal to see “going to the cinema (theater)” with the eyes of a “little” man, the researcher resorted to documents of personal origin: memoirs, diaries, letters, and interviews. As a result, she managed to show that the wartime cinema exercised not only, and not so much mobilization and agitation-propaganda functions, but above all “acted as a specific tool for relieving anxiety and social tension, immersion into a different, more attractive reality, which was natural, vital and saving for the human psychic setup during the fight against the enemy” [Ryapusova, 2015, p.106]. Thus, the one-sided judgments on the cinema as a place of the exclusive action of the authorities’ ideological attitudes – even in a force majeure – can be considered outdated and not quite correct. It should be about a multidimensional social space created by several participants with different perceptions and ideas about its best arrangement.

In recent years, several articles have been published dealing with the cinematography of the Thaw period, which, together with standard subjects (statistics on the film industry, the content of the repertoire, etc.), also pay attention to the practice of “going to the cinema” in the post-Stalin era [Kosinova, Arakelyan, 2015; Chistikov, Yarmolich, 2018; Chistikov, 2018].

The authors of these studies note that rather transparent and tough requirements of the authorities for the organization of film screenings were significantly adjusted from below, on the part of both local Soviet and party bodies, and the viewers themselves. This can be exemplified by the ratio of Soviet and foreign films in the repertoire of cinemas. One figure came from above (domestic films and products of the people’s democracies should prevail), but, in practice, everything was exactly the opposite at the local level: “Foreign action films used to be on parade for weeks, they were given the prime time, but in official reports, these films were given the minimum number of screen-hours. And the number of viewers who watched them was re-written to Soviet films. The cinematography administration was perfectly aware of it, but hypocritically closed their eyes” [Kosinova, Arakelyan, 2015, p. 21]. Such “chemistry” (in the words of M.I. Kosinova and A.M. Arakelyan) once again confirms the need to study the cinema as a multidimensional constructed social space.

Researcher A.N. Chistikov in his works refers to the most varied details of the Thaw practices of going to the cinema: ticket prices, speculation and the fight against it, methods of ticketless entry to a cinema performance, organization of preview leisure of viewers, the reaction of the latter to certain films. Subjects dedicated to film advertising are of particular interest. For example, 60-70 years ago, the information on films could be found “on the labels of matchboxes, tram and trolleybus tickets, Lenspravka information service forms, on mail correspondence... on shopping bags”, but “the recommendation of friends, relatives or acquaintances was also crucial for going to the cinema” [Chistikov, Yarmolich, 2018, p. 87].

Among the sources used by the above authors, a special place is occupied not only by specific archival documents (for example, minutes of meetings of the corresponding labor collectives), memoirs and reminiscences, but also by oral interviews with contemporaries of the Thaw period.

It is particularly worth noting that the above researchers paid their attention to the robust discussion unfolded in the 1960s at different levels on the issues of converging the interests of all the cinematographic process participants – film studios, distributors, and viewers. One of the authors of these lines raised this issue in his small work [Volkov, 2020].

“Going to the cinema” during the late Soviet era as a cultural phenomenon was studied by A.S. Vartanov and E.V. Salnikova [Vartanov, Salnikova, 2019]. Noting that “the problematics of public film screening is on the periphery of attention,” the authors further declare: “it is time to recognize the Soviet regimes of going to the cinema and watching films in general as a significant cultural phenomenon, which is interesting in itself, being an integral part of the cultural process, and not only the final stage of the film process”. To achieve the set objective – “to reconstruct the specifics of ‘going to the cinema’ and understand its role in the socio-cultural context of the decline of the Soviet era” – they attract (apart from classical and not so traditional sources) a type of information resource, which is yet specific for the Humanities – “personal cultural experience”, “personal testimonies of the authors” [p. 119–121]. Based on their own memories and experiences, Vartanov and Salnikova describe the practice of the late Soviet “going to the cinema” literally step by step, starting with searching for the information on the current repertoire, purchasing tickets, and ending with leaving the cinema hall. At the same time, each step is accompanied by cultural background information richly flavored with reflection, metaphors, and analogies⁶. The personal experience of the authors of this article, who were growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, fully correlates with the practice of going to the cinema described in this work, which again allows us to consider “going to the cinema” as a kind of a sacred action, and the cinema – as a special social space endowed with its own meanings.

We should mention a large-scale project on the history of the Russian cinematography implemented under the auspices and with the support of high structures (the All-Russian State Institute of Cinematography, the Union of Cinematographers of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation). According to the project executives, this is “the first attempt in the Russian film studies to investigate systematically the Russian cinema from the standpoint of the history of the film industry,” where the latter “is considered in the complex interaction of all its main components—management, repertoire policy, film production, film equipment and film industry, adaptation for the

cinema and film distribution...”. To date, there are two published volumes devoted to the Russian cinema in 1895–1968, in which the authors pay attention to the specifics of film distribution in each period, including plots about the practice of going to the cinema [*Grashchenkova, Fomin, 2016; Fomin, 2019*].

Although the image of the cinema in these plots is not presented as voluminously as in the previously considered works (the claim for the encyclopedic nature of the publication affects), the statement of the very fact of the need to study “going to the cinema” as an integral part of the history of “the most important of the arts” is essential.

The city cinema was an important independent element of everyday life as the central link in the practice of “going to the cinema”; its social space is historically changeable and was formed by several parties concerned (authorities, cinema administration, viewers). Additional specific sources are needed for a comprehensive historical representation of the cinema. Let us discuss the methodological foundations of such a study.

The concept of social space as a phenomenon which appears and develops in any society in various spheres of human activity has unclaimed theoretical potential. The field of sociology has several lines and interpretations in this area, which, in our opinion, could contribute to a historical study fruitful in results and convincing in conclusions.

To study the cinema in the context of historical research, for example, we could incorporate one of the concepts of social space. By now, the concept of “(social) space” has long ago and securely entered the theoretical field of several human sciences – mainly, sociology and philosophy. But until now, there is no consensus on many components of this concept. Experts complain of the shapelessness of the special discipline studying space [*Filippov, 2008, 2009*], a wide range of terminology and multiple definitions of “social space” [*Barkovskaya, 2013; Chernyavskaya, 2008 a, 2008 b*], and offer their own variants of the composition and structure of this category [*Ivanov, 2015*]. We believe that in the described situation it is appropriate to use ad hoc certain developments of the social space concept to solve specific problems.

In our opinion, the concept of social space of the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre presented in 1974 as a separate book is most acceptable to study the cinema as a cultural phenomenon [*Lefebvre, 1974; Lefevr, 2015*]. His work primarily offers provisions and reflections in the field of urban studies. However, in terms of the content and findings, this work also influenced other areas of the humanities knowledge. In fact, Lefebvre is trying to unite two radical and opposite views on the social space: either it is a physical entity, or an imaginary structure created by people [*Marrifield, 2006; Bedash, 2012*].

According to the French thinker, space in a broad sense can be physical (material component), mental (rational origin) and social (social practices and relations). As a result of social activities, people influence all types of spaces, i.e., the process of producing the space, both physical, mental, and social, is running in the society [*Lefevr, 2015, p. 26–27, 30*]. The basis for Lefebvre’s reflections and findings is that space is a social product and a complex social structure (based on the values and social generation of meanings) affecting spatial practices and human perception. From the standpoint of this concept, social space includes the following components. First, it is “representation of space”, which is based on its understanding by competent subjects and includes the process of its creation and management according to certain patterns. Secondly, these are “spatial practices”, i.e., the process of perceiving social space and its functioning. And the third component is “spaces of representation”, which represent the processes of experiencing the given space by the subjects and its symbolic coding. As a result, Lefebvre affirms that social space is conceptualized (representation of space), perceived (spatial practice) and experienced (spaces of representation). A subject, being within its limits, can freely move, without getting confused, into different fields (comprehension, perception, experience). Each social space has its own structures and codes. Thus, the code of space allows one to exist in it, understand and produce it [p. 47, 53-54, 61].

For illustration purposes, these provisions can be presented in the form of the following table:

Components of social space according to H. Lefebvre

Representation of space	Spatial practice	Spaces of representation
How space is planned and interpreted by the authorities and professionals	How space functions in real, everyday life	How space is experienced and interpreted by its users
Comprehension/understanding	Perception	Experiencing/interiorization
System of verbal signs	Competence and performance	Non-verbal symbols and signs

Lefebvre's concept works well when applied to the study of cinema [Petrov, 2015, 2016]. Representation of space is the understanding of what a cinema should be like, its planning and creation as an architectural object and an institution with its own attributes (lobby, cinema hall, control room, etc.). This component also includes the arrangement of the film distribution system and cinema administration. Spatial practices imply a set of social actions forming the operation of a cinema at the level of its personnel activities and interaction with the audience. Spaces of representation imply how, first of all, the viewers, as well as the cinema personnel, experienced their immersion into this social space and how they imagined it.

In the early 1990s, German economist D. Läßle, largely relying on Lefebvre's concept, formulated his vision of social spaces. In his opinion, social spaces are constructed from four components (dimensions). First, these are material forms of manifestation, which are created as a result of cultural activities and the very "physicality" of a person. Secondly, the institutional component: forms of ownership, relations of power and control, legal and social orders. The third component is a social practice associated with the production, use and appropriation of a spatial substrate. The fourth component is the sign and symbolic system, which also includes the representation of social space [Läßle, 1991, p. 194–197]. If we apply this judgment to the social space of a cinema, it will include such components as architectural forms; film distribution rules and regulations; the area of communication of the viewers with the screen and among themselves; the sphere of images and symbols of the cinema as a space for film advertising and film products.

We believe that the concept proposed by Lefebvre is simpler and more convenient to study the cinema as a social space in the context of historical research. Let us turn to specific examples of how it can work in this thematic research field, and what historical sources may be in demand on any occasion.

Representation of space of Soviet cinemas is a history with sharp turns and different stages, from functioning as private institutions to being nationalized and leased during the NEP period to later being completely nationalized. At the end of the late socialism period, cinemas were steadily denationalized, first being leased to collectives, and then again owned by separate joint-stock companies as in the pre-revolutionary period. The focus in studying this field should be the cultural policy of the authorities concerning cinemas as entertainment and leisure institutions and as places where ideological attitudes justifying the existing order could be broadcast from the screen to the public.

In 1930, a small book was published by M. S. Boitler, former athlete and director of Malaya Dmitrovka Cinema in Moscow (this building today houses the aforementioned Lenkom Theater), known for his innovations in film advertising. The author described the ideal cinema of the Soviet era. In his opinion, an exemplary cultural life should be organized in such a leisure institution. This implied that the viewer coming to the cinema could visit exhibitions in the lobby and the reading room or play areas for children and adults (tabletop towns, ping-pong, funfair mirrors), shoot at a shooting gallery, play chess or checkers, listen to music and, if necessary, send their children to the nursery [Boitler, 1930]. This text brightly characterizes the idea of a cinema as a place of leisure and entertainment within the Soviet cultural revolution.

The most important, in terms of this level of studying the cinema, are the regulatory legal instruments and records management documentation. A certain part of this set of sources was published.

The study of this kind of documents sometimes allows one to discover new facts or specify some interpretations.

On the other hand, architectural design documentation and other construction materials stored in archival funds can provide valuable information on the ideas of the authorities and specialists of what a cinema should be. There are also several special works published by Soviet authors on the construction and equipment of cinemas.

Various reference books and city guides from the time are also valuable sources for our study. These books and guides provide information, including visual information, on the appearance and operational capability of cinemas.

The archival funds also contain information on the staffing table of Soviet city cinemas at different times. For example, studying the documents, you can discover that in Soviet cinemas of the 1930s and 1940s, there were such positions as heater, porter, librarian, organizer of popular recreational activities, which later disappeared.

In general, the Soviet cinema management documentation from about the mid-1930s demonstrates an increase in bureaucracy, the number of institutions, establishment, control and reporting forms. Such a tendency remained until the second half of the 1980s, up to the beginning of the *perestroika* (reformation) policy.

Soviet periodicals certainly also broadcast official guidelines on the issues of the development of cinematography and what a cinema should be like as a place of leisure for working people.

According to Lefebvre's concept, spatial practices are associated with the activities of cinema personnel and the presence of viewers as consumers in the field of leisure. Here, the "above-planned" image of the social space of a cinema generally looks quite different, there arise problems to be solved in the current order, and the process of servicing the viewers is built somewhat differently than intended. Apart from records management documentation in the form of reports and other documents, publications in periodicals may be useful for our study. These publications generally concern the problems of film distribution, the influence of cinema, and its role in the life of the society. Periodicals often contain letters from viewers about the work of cinemas, as well as various satirical articles.

Another interesting and, at the same time, dangerous (in terms of reliability) source for studying the work of Soviet cinemas is various brochures, which appeared since the Thaw period and describe the advanced experience of working with viewers [*Romanov*, 1957; *Garifulin*, 1961; *Bulov*, 1961; *Valner*, 1963; *Rusetskaya*, 1968; *Kuznetsov*, 1968].

Oral testimonies of cinema employees, if we are talking about the recent Soviet times, will certainly be in demand in this case. Such memories will allow us to see the cinema and its operation from the inside, from the standpoint of those people for whom this social space was a place of work. When conducting interviews with respondents, potential carriers of such information, one should ask questions focused on the behind-the-scenes of the cinema, about the organizational, technical, psychological, and other problems which arose in the work collective and while working with viewers.

From our point of view, it will be effective to use an approach aimed at studying the behavior of viewers in the cinema in different periods of the Soviet era, i.e., a trend associated with the "process of civilization." In other words, it is necessary to answer the questions of how the interiors of cinemas have changed, and how the actions and communication of viewers in this social space were changing alongside with that.

Analysis of the film schedule is an important component of this level of research. This information was reflected in advertisements published in the press and depicted directly on film posters with the addition of images. Studying the film schedule and compiling a relative database will allow us to visualize and make conclusions about a certain policy in the field of film distribution during a specific period. In the 1920s, the Soviet power fought against the dominance of foreign and pre-revolutionary Russian films in cinemas. The fight was crowned with success, and in the 1930s, mainly domestic films were screened. The war changed the situation, and already in autumn 1941, "allied films" of American and British production appeared in Soviet cinemas. During the Cold War, only the so-called trophy films remained from foreign films. Starting from the Thaw period, the Soviet cinema-goer could watch ideologically sustained or purely entertaining films of both socialist (they were preferred) and capitalist countries in addition to domestic films. During the last years of the existence of the USSR, cinemas, experiencing tough competition with video salons, largely switched to showing

foreign films, mainly of American production. Thus, it should be noted that the content of the film schedule can say a lot about the authorities, the society, and the film industry in general.

According to Lefebvre's concept, spaces of representation are the subjective states and experiences of cinemagoers and employees in a given space when staying there and even after leaving it. Watching what was happening on the screen and plunging into the "world of dreams", the viewers seemed to find themselves simultaneously in two modes. First, they were immersed into the screen story and experienced it mentally and sensually. Secondly, they, being bodily subjects, remained in their place in the dark space of the cinema, here and now. Such a position of the viewer, as an observer, allows him/her to perceive everything happening on the screen even more acutely.

In the opinion of the famous director A. Tarkovsky and his concept of "captured time", the main reasons why people go to the cinema are their need to master and understand the world. People go to the cinema "to get time" – whether lost or not found yet. A person goes there for life experience because cinema, like no other art, expands, enriches and concentrates the actual experience of a person, but at the same time, it does not just enrich it, but makes it longer..." [Tarkovsky, 1967, p. 70]. We would add for ourselves that the acquisition of life experience while watching films generally took place within the entertainment context, although films themselves could be far from easy to perceive and comprehend by their content.

Based on the concept of B. Rosenwein, the audience, as a social group, can be studied as an "emotional community". Such a community is distinguished in the following aspects: what is considered valuable and harmful for its members expressing their attitude emotionally; what emotions they value, criticize, or ignore; the nature of the affective connections between them; modes of expressing the emotions, which are used, encouraged, tolerated and condemned. [Rosenwein, 2017, p. 34–35]. The emotional community of viewers, which prefers the same cinematic genres and equally experiences what is happening on the screen, can be classified as a kind of "a text community" if we consider a film as a cultural text with its own symbolic codes. Studying this group, we should pay attention to the conduct standards of its members, the ways they express emotions, and what social role these emotions play.

Sources of personal origin, first of all, diaries, memoirs, letters and, of course, oral reminiscences, as well as publicistic writing as a type of ego document, can be of great help to study the life experience of cinemagoers and their emotional state from what they see on the screen. Analyzing these sources, it should be borne in mind that the viewers will be focused on the images of films they remembered for one reason or another.

The questionnaires of viewers are of great value in this context. For example, the aforementioned researcher Zhdankova, based on the questionnaires of viewers, carried out an interesting and convincing research covering cinemas of Petrograd during the NEP period [Zhdankova, 2013b]. Sociological research was also carried out in the 1920s in several Moscow cinemas. Studying the Soviet cinemagoer began to resume in the 1960s, and in 1978 the Institute of Theory and History of Cinema published two collections of articles on the sociology of cinema dealing with the perception of some Soviet and foreign films by the Soviet audience [Erofeev, Lifshits, 1978; Kutorga, 1978]. However, unfortunately, this line of research did not receive a further large-scale continuation.

Thus, the Soviet-era city cinema can be considered a special social space constructed through a peculiar consensus of three parties concerned: the state, distributors, and consumers. Just as the interests of each of the parties changed depending on the specific socio-political and economic situation, so the discourse on the content of this social space was transformed. For a relevant representation of the latter, we should use a set of sources reflecting the information on the demands and expectations of each of the discourse participants.

As a result, we should summarize that, unfortunately, the author of the poem quoted at the beginning of the article was right – "shuttle buses don't go back in time." Those who lived in the "bright Soviet past" and those who grew up and live in modern Russia will not be able to find themselves in a city cinema of the USSR period. Nevertheless, history exists to recreate the vision of the past for the contemporaries. We hope that the methodological tools proposed here will help both the authors and potential researchers to reconstruct the social space of the Soviet city cinema at different stages of its existence and to provide its verbal representation.

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² The set expression “to go to the cinema” is an abbreviated version of “to go to the cinema theater”, which, even at the semantic level, captures the everyday idea of this cultural and leisure practice: not to watch a specific film (“go to a film”), but primarily to find oneself in a special place (space) where the film will be screened.

³ The authors of a large-scale project on the history of Russian cinematography had to acknowledge such a state of affairs: “In Soviet and Russian cinematography, there was a long-standing tradition to investigate and interpret the history of national cinema *only as the history of the cinematic art*. Such an approach is more than right-ful but one-sided. Cinematography is a much more complex and multi-component phenomenon... (our italics - E.V., M.S.)” [Grashchenkova, Fomin, 2016, p. 3].

⁴ This impression about Yu. Tsivyan’s book was very precisely expressed by R. Timanchik in his review: “... we are facing complete cinematography, that is, from leaving home to cinematic travel, when, having changed the darkness of the cinema hall with the darkness of the street, the leaving viewers measuredly exchanged oral documentary evidence of the historical reception of the cinema” [Timenchik, 1993, p. 278]. In 2011, Yu.G. Tsivyan together with A.O. Kovalova published a work on the cinematography of pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg, which included the materials of the cited section, and which immerses the reader even deeper into the atmosphere of the first 20 years of the history of Russian cinema [Kovalova, Tsivyan, 2011].

⁵ Cinema of the era of silent films as an object of close attention was much more fortunate than its later “brothers”. In Western historiography, much attention is given to it [Lefcourt, 2003]. The researcher of early English cinematography Nicholas Hiley proposed to reorient from the history of films to the history of practices of going to the cinema: “Film history is not the history of a medium, it is the story of how that medium was transformed by the intervention of a mass audience with its own desires and demands” [Hiley, 1998, p. 103].

⁶ That is how, for example, the image of a cinema cashier is presented: “If Vysotsky sang about the “telephone operator-Madonna” as the only link able to provide the complicated communication of loving men and women, the Soviet “cashier” was a kind of such a “Madonna”... *a magical guide to the world of cinema*... The cinema often functioned as a territory of scarce art products, a sacred hard-to-reach zone. The “Cashier” could simplify the legal entrance to the lobby of the cinema, from where you will surely enter the hall. She could also make getting into the cinema an agonizing torture and adventure, with searching for an “extra ticket” or attempts to make a bargain with the ticket collectors, lull their vigilance, etc. *Being a modest employee, she turned out to be a bearer of almost sacred functions - turning an ordinary person into a viewer and providing a potential viewer with a magical object which guaranteed getting into the zone of perceiving the screen reality*” (our italics - E. V., M. S.)” [Vartanov, Salnikova, 2019, p. 129–130].

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ГОРОДСКОЙ КИНОТЕАТР СОВЕТСКОЙ ЭПОХИ: ПОДХОДЫ К ИСТОРИЧЕСКОМУ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЮ

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Статья посвящена методологии изучения городского кинотеатра советской эпохи как социального пространства. В ней представлен историографический обзор исследований в данном направлении, который показывает, что городской кинотеатр как центральное звено практики «похода в кино» являлся важным самостоятельным элементом повседневности, его социальное пространство исторически изменчиво и формировалось несколькими заинтересованными сторонами (властью, администрацией киносети, зрителями). Для полноценной исторической репрезентации кинотеатра требуются дополнительные специфические источники. В качестве основного концепта для изучения кинотеатра авторы предлагают взять на вооружение теорию философа и социолога Анри Лефевра, сформулированную им в книге «Производство пространства» (1974). По мнению французского мыслителя, пространство в широком смысле может быть физическим (материальный компонент), ментальным (разумное начало) и социальным (общественные практики и отношения). В результате своей социальной деятельности люди влияют на все типы пространств, т.е. в обществе идет процесс производства пространства – и физического, и ментального, и социального. Если применить теорию Лефевра для изучения кинотеатра как культурного феномена, то его следует исследовать на трех уровнях: «репрезентация пространства» (материальные формы), «пространственные практики» (управление и функционирование), «пространства репрезентации» (переживание и интерпретация «похода в кино»). Для каждого уровня изучения кинотеатра как социального пространства предполагаются разные виды исторических

источников, характеристика которых представлена в данной статье. В этом контексте, наряду с другими источниками, особое внимание уделяется источникам личного происхождения (эго-документам).

Ключевые слова: кинотеатр, советское общество, социальное пространство, Анри Лефевр, исторические источники.

Примечания

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