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Soviet Utopias for Western Audiences: The Unexplored Sovexport Documentary Film Collection at the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam

(Abstract)

The present study aims to contextualize Soviet propaganda films from the middle of the 1960's until the middle of 1980's, based on evidence retrieved during original archival research at the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. The undertaken discovery on the Sovexport Collection brings its content to the scholarly attention by revealing a number of paradoxes in the representation of the Soviet utopia. Pursuing an extensive empirical and theoretical study of the documentary film collection with the aim to throw light at their semi-fictional features, I bring to the fore the visions of space, nature, and technology seen as part of the utopian Communist grand narrative documented in the Sovexport films. The unveiled evidence shows that Soviet ideology is depicted as holding transformative power for the future, as well as serving the goals of Soviet foreign policy. Filling a gap in the study of Soviet cinema, this paper provides a new impetus for making, viewing, and analyzing documentary films in accord with history and its complexities.

Keywords: Soviet cinema, Sovietness, documentary, dreamworld, utopia.

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