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Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2025. 21(1): 22-32

DOI: 10.13187/me.2025.1.22
<https://me.cherkasgu.press>



Hermeneutic Analysis of Feature Films about Family and Family Education in the 1930–1950s

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Abstract

The article presents a hermeneutic analysis of Soviet feature films on the theme of family and family education in the 1930s-1950s which allows the author to identify the qualitative evolution of family images on the Soviet screen of the period under consideration. The author presents a characteristic of the socio-cultural and ideological contexts, analyzes the content of Stalinist films, considers the main genre modifications, and examines the dominant stereotypical images of family and family education. The conducted analysis of films of different genres enabled us to state that at this stage, Soviet feature cinematography was solving the problems of strengthening the Soviet family and building an ideal image of family relations, where adults and children were included in social and industrial events. Moreover, the family images that the viewer saw on the Soviet screen in those years were very far from the real picture of the Soviet society and represented an idealized reality, where each person was happy, could achieve success, find a family both in the traditional sense of the word, and become a member of the large family of the USSR peoples. With the strengthening of ideological control and the establishment of a totalitarian regime in the country, in cinematography, and in the real life of Soviet people, the focus was on new values, which consisted in selfless devotion to the party, the people, labour feats and a ruthless attitude towards enemies. Family and family upbringing were no exception and were under the close attention of the state. Creating a family and raising children in accordance with those values was an important condition for well-being and prosperity in the society of that period.

Keywords: family, family upbringing, media, media text, media education, feature films, Soviet cinema, socialist realism, Stalinism, USSR.

1. Introduction

The interest of the young Soviet state in feature films in the 1930–1950s was consistently high. The main objective of releasing feature films during that period was “the creation of a new type of person – disciplined, capable of working in complex production sectors. In the USSR, less than a decade was allotted for the fulfilment of this task. Cinematography played a special role here as a special educational tool” (Aniskin, 2016: 155).

Before a new film was released on the country’s screens, films were viewed and discussed at the highest level. The so-called “Kremlin screenings” were held, where party leaders took part in the film’s assessment. The important criteria for a film were its ideological compliance with the state ideology and policy, and its educational value. Along with its propaganda and agitation functions, cinema in that period was seen as “an opportunity to temporarily immerse a person in a

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rainbow world, where one could relax the soul and be inspired for new labour exploits” (Aniskin, 2016: 155).

The history of Russian feature cinema of the 1930s was marked by the arrival of sound on screens. This event allowed the viewer not only to watch visual moving images, accompanied by music and captions, but to hear what the characters were talking about. The arrival of sound in cinema marked an even closer attention of the state authorities to what and how was shown on the Soviet screen.

As the conducted analysis shows, the disclosure of the family theme in Soviet feature films of 1935-1954 has its own specifics. In the period under review, when “family and marital relations went from experimentation and defamiliarization to the return and strengthening of traditional relations in the family. The Soviet family was being formed, it became the basis of the new society of the country of victorious socialism” (Yantsen, Koroleva, 2019: 131).

At the same time, rigid ideological control set strict limits on the display of the family based on social and collective values, work for the Motherland, and physical self-improvement. Therefore, “within the framework of edifying art, which includes films built on the principles of socialist realism, we see a demonstration of the image of “new people” and normative reality (as it should be in Soviet society), an integral part of which was physical education and sports” (Fisheva, 2020: 152).

An important component of the ideological factor, that all feature films released on the Soviet screen during the period had, was irreconcilability towards enemies. Vigilance and political maturity were seen in the ability to recognize obvious and hidden enemies of Soviet society, even if they were family members. “Denunciations of relatives were commonplace. Not only was this not considered a negative phenomenon, but it was also welcomed if the denunciation reported an illegal act. People practically did not ask themselves about the morality of the actions they were committing. After all, if loyalty to family conflicted with loyalty to the state, a true Soviet citizen and patriot should not have to face the problem of choice – they should definitely prefer the interests of the state” (Volodina, 2013).

During the period under study, the model of a happy Soviet family was born and actively positioned in the mass consciousness, which was also reflected in later periods of Soviet cinema. “The aesthetics of socialist realism, which triumphed in Soviet “mass” culture at the beginning of the 1930s, powerfully oriented art towards agitational and propaganda tasks. However, despite all the tendentiousness of socialist art (Mayakovsky even proposed using the term “tendentious realism” in his time), it always retained the ideological requirement of “realism”. True, the concept of realism itself, of course, is not unambiguous” (Ponomareva, 2004: 474).

Based on the principles of socialist realism, the propaganda goals of building a new society continued to occupy key positions in the Soviet film production. However, unlike the first films of the 1920s, where the family theme was not central, feature films about the family of the Stalinist era presented a happy Soviet family with strong foundations, faith in a bright future, an understanding of the correct path in life, closely connected with communist morality.

At this stage, the educational and ideological objectives of media education came to the fore. They were connected with teaching the younger generation about Soviet family models and the main educators were the Soviet people and the Communist Party. According to the Marxist theory, the actively promoted theme of a happy childhood and, accordingly, the theme of a happy Soviet family, were reflected in feature films about the family and became one of the central ones in media education based on films.

Along with the Marxist approach, the role of the practical theory associated with amateur filmmaking was increasing. Media education based on films carried out in clubs and electives was subject to strict regulation and control.

2. Materials and methods

The research material is Soviet feature films released in the 1930–1950s. The research methods are hermeneutic analysis, generalization and classification, induction and deduction, content analysis of audiovisual material in the context of examining the screen images of family and family education of this period. The hermeneutic analysis of feature films, anthropological and gender analyses of the period under consideration are based on the basic principles developed by A.V. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2008).

In our study, we analysed both Russian (Aniskin, 2016; Apostolov, 2018; Belodubrovskaya, 2011; Bolshakov, 1948; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022; Chelysheva, Sapozhnikova, 2024; Eliseeva,

2020; Fedorov, 2013; Fedorov, 2016; Groshev, 1952; Lubashova, Lukhtan, 2015; Mazur, 2017; Mikhailin, Belyaeva, 2020; Mikhaleva, 2017; Minenko, Zhilyanina, 2020; Neminuschiy, 2016; Nusinova, 2006; Salny, Katrich, 2023; Ponomareva, 2004; Toropova, 2020; Volodina, 2013) and foreign scientific findings (Anemone, 2015; Davies, 1998; Mohammadi, Akhavan, 2022; Smith, 1997; Spring, Taylor, 1993; Tanis, 2024; Taylor, 1984; Waterlow, 2023) devoted to the analysis of family and family education in the mirror of Soviet feature films of Stalin-era cinema.

3. Discussion

As the conducted analysis shows, the concept of family in Soviet feature films of the period under analysis acquired a new meaning. The tendencies of the inseparability of family and society, which originated in the 1920s, continued to develop. At the same time, “it was during this period that the Communist Party appropriated the function of governing the state and society, essentially turning into an administrative-punitive body. Repression became the main method of party leadership. At the same time, the 1930s saw high rates of cultural development. The school provided education in unity with the family. In 1936, the Constitution of the USSR proclaimed “state socialism”, legislatively enshrined the dominance of public ownership of production means, the equality of all nations and nationalities. However, party guidelines led the country away from the democratization of state and public life. By the mid-1930s, the totalitarian system had strengthened, giving rise to the personality cult of I.V. Stalin. The upbringing of the younger generation by official pedagogy was defined as the preparation of people devoted to the dictate, capable of obeying and fulfilling the will of the leadership” (Grankin, 2003: 23). All these tendencies were reflected in feature films about family and family education.

The concept of “family” was understood during the years of Stalin’s rule as the entire society of Soviet people brought up under the guidance of wise and fair fathers – representatives of the leading political party. Any person who shared the ideals and aspirations of the builders of socialism – loyal fighters for a bright future – could join this family. “At that time, public education was the priority of the state policy in Russia, and with the help of the educational and upbringing system, ideological influence was exerted on society. The education of a new type of personality – comprehensively developed builders of a communist society as a pedagogical ideal of Soviet Russia was considered an important link in the cultural revolution and a necessary condition for the construction of communism” (Novikova, Pristupa, 2021: 113).

These provisions could not but influence the creation of films during the Stalinist period, and were quite in tune with the principles of socialist realism, which served as the main principle for promoting any literary or cinematographic work to the masses. N.I. Nusinova emphasizes that feature films of the 1930s were distinguished, first of all, by the established idea of primitive, socially engaged and dogmatic cinema of “socialist realism”, which replaced the revolutionary, avant-garde art of the 1920s (Nusinova, 2006).

It is no coincidence that during this period cinema was considered by the state as an important factor in raising a new type of person – one who could work valiantly, repel attacks from enemies and build a happy family. It was these trends that were reflected in the first sound Soviet films. And although *Putyovka v zhizn’/Road to Life* (1931) directed by N. Ekk, *Vesyolye rebyata/Jolly Fellows* (1934) directed by G. Aleksandrov, *Deti kapitana Granta/The Children of Captain Grant* (1936) directed by V. Vaynshtok, *Volga-Volga* (1938) directed by G. Aleksandrov, “unfortunately, did not yet have a very wide palette of sound, they still characterized the heroes and antiheroes, emphasized the peculiarities of social processes in the young Soviet country, created sound images and showed the sound worldview of the authors of the film, tried to awaken in the viewer a new worldview and perception of Soviet reality and its happy future” (Lubashova, Lukhtan, 2015: 96).

During this period, “the idea of the “great family” was actively promoted, which marked the Stalinist period of development of the Soviet state, when “the leaders of Soviet society became “fathers” (headed by patriarch Stalin); national heroes became “sons”, and the state – a “family” or “tribe”. The new, fundamental metaphor offered to society gave rise to a standard set of symbols presenting a false picture of organization, in order to consolidate a strictly hierarchical state structure. The metaphor also met the needs of the Stalinist fraction in its “struggle”: it represented a formula for the symbolic legitimization of real power (the succession of generations in the “family” symbolized the succession of political myths, and in particular Stalin’s rise to power after

Lenin's death), as well as the further political course (the evolution of the views of previously loyal "sons") and the uncomplaining humility of citizens" (Klark, 1992: 73).

As for family education in the period under consideration, this problem was also taken under absolute control of the state. Children's living conditions were strictly regulated. The upbringing of children in families was given great importance, and the state played the leading role in raising and taking care of the growing person.

4. Results

Analysing Russian feature films on the theme of family and family education is impossible without referring to the historical context and defining the features of the Stalinist era that determined the influence of the events of that time on audiovisual media texts. We will attempt to present their brief characteristics.

The 1930s marked a "time of a clear turning point in the Soviet Union's policy. The Stalinist group, having gained the upper hand in the inter-party struggle, took a course towards the national-state survival of the country, within the framework of which broad social and political reforms were carried out. Disappointed by the failure of the propaganda campaigns of the 1920s, the pragmatically minded I.V. Stalin and his supporters rejected utopian idealistic slogans and, relying on symbols from the Russian national past for help, turned into statist. Too complex and abstract to occupy the imagination of the masses, socialist ideals were forced to give way to a Russian national system of images, heroes and myths that was more recognizable to the people" (Zolotarev, 2015: 29).

In 1936, "the Constitution actually enshrined the construction of socialism in a single country – the USSR" (Bredikhin, Gonchar, 2022: 18). Under these conditions, "the family begins to be thought of as monogamous and long-lasting. Abstinence, chastity and modesty are promoted. The image of a loose woman among several generations of Soviet people is associated exclusively with Western bourgeois society. The next stage of legislative consolidation of marriage norms of the new era took place after 1936, although abortions were criminalized as early as 1926. Now the government is taking a completely different direction in regulating family relations. State control over the payment of alimony is being tightened" (Minenko, Zhilyanina, 2020: 175).

One of the important state tasks was to strengthen the new type of family – the socialist family. Thus, "by 'mainly built by socialism' the cinema mythology of the 1930s implies a new model of the socialist family, the symbol of which is the cinema of the Stalin era" (Nusinova, 2006: 389).

During these years, the idea of family ties between all Soviet people living by common ideals and values was actively promoted. The idea of interethnic families was gaining strength, personifying the symbol that a person of any nationality in the Soviet country could find family happiness. An example of this is the popular musical film *Tsirk/The Circus* by G. Alexandrov, which became a kind of anthem of the true freedom found for all people who wanted to find family happiness. The popularity of the film is evidenced by the following figures: by the end of the 1930s, "40 million people had watched it, and the "Song of the Motherland" quickly became the second national anthem, like "America the Beautiful" in the USA. The film established the ideal of *femina sovietica* and made Orlova the main superstar of Soviet cinema. *The Circus* became one of the first films to embody the Grand Style of high Stalinism – through myth and circus spectacle" (Dushenko, 2013: 203).

Considering the socio-cultural, ideological, worldview, and religious contexts of feature films about family and family education, it can be stated that their content was fully consistent with the ideology of those years, which implied full compliance with the principles of socialist realism. The dominant idea of nationality, the accessibility of cinematic stories to the masses, the closeness of screen characters and their stories to ordinary people living and working for the benefit of society, the ideological content corresponding to the ruling ideology, were integral components that had to be present in feature films of those years.

The years of Stalinism became a period when "the social began to prevail over the personal, the interests of the collective, the state – over family interests. The collective, in essence, becomes an object of worship, opposed to the individual. There were virtually no areas of life left that were not under the state control. The state determined the norms of behaviour not only in society, but also in the family" (Volodina, 2013). These norms were actively positioned on the screen and were a key factor in allowing a film to be released.

The ideological accents characteristic of the cinema of the Stalinist period were enthusiastically supported in the Soviet press. For example, “the central newspapers *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, determined the vector of development of cinematography and recorded the features of the production of a particular film. Individual details of the film process were covered by the industry newspapers *Kino*, *Kadr*, *Sovetskoye Iskusstvo* and the journals *Iskusstvo Kino*, *Teatr*, etc. Their pages published excerpts from scripts, conversations with representatives of film crews, interviews with directors and screenwriters. The extent of propaganda and the involvement of the population in the mythological space is evidenced by articles published during the release of a film in industry and departmental regional small-circulation newspapers” (Chernova, 2007: 14).

With the gradual strengthening of totalitarian control over the life of society, the state began to view the family as a stronghold and foundation for the performance of strictly regulated social roles by Soviet people, “directed efforts to strengthen the institution of the family. But now it was a different family, in which a new generation grew up, the majority did not know any values other than Soviet ones. The desire of the authorities to control the sphere of family relations is based on the desire to combine the efforts of official structures and the family to educate the younger generation within the framework of the indoctrinated system of values. Families, where everyone was ready to live and work for the benefit of the state, served as a support for the state system, was adapted to the goals of the totalitarian state” (Volodina, 2013).

The hierarchy of values of the characters in feature films of the period under consideration was associated with labour exploits and establishing new ties, including family ones, based on the unity of goals, ideology, and aspirations. The screen actively promoted “the myth of the romance of Komsomol construction projects, the normality of self-sacrifice, the reward for sacrifice in the name of the socialist ideal, and the interchangeability of the personal and the social – the displacement of biological family ties by the ties of the social family. Gradually, this leads to the denial of the basic commandments of Christianity and their replacement with Soviet analogues” (Nusinova, 2006: 401).

It was during these years that the theme of the sacrifice of patriotic heroes was peddled, who, in the name of public interests, were ready for labour and military exploits, were always on the alert and knew how to see any, even invisible, enemy and resist them, achieving an unconditional victory.

Family happiness became a consequence of film characters’ merits. They overcame difficulties in studying, working, merciless fighting with enemies. This, as it seems to us, is the main stereotype of the success of movie heroes in those years.

Historical events taking place in the country, changes in ideology and politics, had a significant impact on Stalinist-era film production, when “new moral norms and values were actively developed and introduced, replacing the previous “bourgeois” ones. “In fact, there was a devaluation of moral and ethical norms, universal human values, which could be ignored in relation to “enemies”, “strangers”, even if it concerned family members. The family, in essence, was adapted to the tasks of a totalitarian state” (Volodina, 2013).

Cinematography became a mouthpiece for ideological work related to irreconcilability towards enemies and selfless service to socialist construction. Accordingly, the structure and narrative techniques in feature films of the Stalinist era also underwent changes compared to the first films of the Soviet period. “The authorities, having clearly outlined the turn of Soviet ideology, returned to national-state construction and, from the mid-1930s, tried to restore the patriotic component of propaganda. Thus, from 1934 onwards, many Russian historical figures were spoken of in a completely different tone. Propaganda films began to be made about them, which the entire country watched with delight (*Peter I*, 1937; *Alexander Nevsky*, 1938; *Suvorov*, 1940, etc.)” (Zolotarev, 2015: 30).

Fostering patriotism and love for the Motherland, also in family education, became one of the central themes of film production in that period. The famous Soviet film historian A. N. Groshev wrote about this in 1952: “In the 1930s, Soviet film artists turned to Russian history, reinterpreting it in a new way, creating images of historical figures on the screen. The resolution of the party and government on the teaching of civil history in schools, adopted in 1934, and the instructions of Comrade Stalin on history issues gave the right direction to creative film workers in their solution of the historical theme. A special and significant place among historical films was occupied by films dedicated to the civil war” (Groshev, 1952: 13-14). Later, already in the 1940s, a number of films

were devoted to the theme of fostering patriotism: F. Ermler's drama *Ona zashchishchayet Rodinu /She Defends the Motherland* (1943), A. Ivanov's film *Synov'ya/The Sons* (1946), etc.

The difficult times of industrialization of the country, recovery from famine and devastation of the civil war determined the ascetic atmosphere of life of Soviet families, which we can see in feature films. Moreover, "until the mid-1940s, the demonstration of ascetic life was perceived as a positive characteristic of the character: the meagreness of the home environment, "snacks" instead of normal food, the arrival of the "hero" to a new place of life and work with one suitcase were interpreted as "revolutionary consciousness", "non-acquisitiveness" and "anti-bourgeoisness". On the contrary, increased attention to clothing, food, furnishing the apartment was marked as "forgetting ideals", or even as "moral decay". Therefore, the depiction of everyday life is reduced to a minimum: the main characters have work, study, active leisure, but routine everyday concerns are either absent altogether (as symbolically insignificant), or fall on the shoulders of secondary characters, and more often – are only indicated" (Dushenko, 2014: 169).

In most films of the first years of the Stalinist period, the depiction of everyday, mundane issues of family life was not given much importance. But already by the end of the 1930s, one can increasingly see a new aesthetic of Soviet life, a departure from the former asceticism and poverty. In the society of victorious socialism, both furnishings and the characters' clothing demonstrated the growing well-being of Soviet people.

Light clothes, elegant dresses, beautiful hairstyles of characters, and sumptuously laid tables personified the victory of the working man over the former devastation. And although "the illusory world that existed in most Soviet films, an important detail of which were luxurious outfits, was far from reality, this did not irritate the viewer. The technological equipment of everyday life even in large cities of the USSR was, in comparison with the West, low, and cinema continued to seem like a miracle from which no one demanded the truth" (Lebina, Terekhova, 2016: 96).

In accordance with the main themes that were touched upon in feature films of the Stalinist era (stories about revolutionaries and the party, heroes of labour, the fight against the enemies of socialism, funny adventures of ordinary workers from musical films, etc.), a significant number of dramatic, comedic, and adventure films were shot during this period (Mikhaleva, Chelysheva, 2024).

Comedy films played a special role. This was due to the fact that "in the era of Stalinism, cinema was considered the main visual mediator, within the framework of which the presented images of ideal "new people", inscribed in the spaces of ideal cities, villages, parks, factories, but incredibly far from reality, created a sense of integrity, harmony, optimism – a sense of the embodied future. In this regard, it was the "light genre" – comedy – that was the priority direction in the development of cinema in the 1930s and was considered the main transmitter of dominant values" (Fisheva, 2020: 146).

Idealized models of life, including family life, left their mark on stereotypical methods of depicting reality in Soviet feature films. Viewers saw ideal images of a bright future that was about to arrive. And this future depended only on the person alone, their will, firmness and devotion to ideas.

The images of family education in most Stalin-era feature films were inextricably linked with the theme of socialist construction, in which all family members were involved. As a rule, everyone – both adults and children – were engaged in public affairs and were closely connected with society. Positive adult family members worked for the benefit of society with labour achievements and records (*Chuk i Gek/Chuk and Gek*, director I. Lukinsky, 1954; *Zhenshchina/The Woman*, directors Ye. Dzigan and B. Shreyber, 1932; *Svetlyy put'/The Bright Path*, director E. Aleksandrov, 1940). Children's groups, even in informal settings, were also often distinguished by strict discipline, responsibility, and independence beyond their years (*Timur i ego komanda/Timur and His Team*, director A. Razumny, 1940).

The prosperous life of the Soviet family depends on society, where "love is considered only as a way to build a family, as love for marriage. All this is evidence of the increased "institutionality" of love, as well as its "non-erotic" and "non-corporeal" nature. The "public" nature of love is also indicated by the lack of privacy in love scenes. Love relationships arise and proceed in public: they are discussed, they are facilitated or hindered, advice is given, etc. In plots of this kind, the role of mentors is great – serious and adult people, bearers and keepers of values (ideological, labour, everyday)" (Dushenko, 2014: 168). One can see examples of such plot lines in some musical comedies: *Svinarka i pastukh/The Swineherd and the Shepherd* (1941), *Kubanskiye kazaki/The Kuban Cossacks* (1950), *Svetlyy put'/The Bright Path* (1940) and others.

During the Stalinist period, “Soviet women were assigned only two possible roles: workers and mothers. Men, on the other hand, played their traditional roles as breadwinners, protectors, and heads of families” (Yantsen, Koroleva, 2019: 130). These visualized models on the Soviet screen played an important role in shaping public opinion about the family and the role of women and men in socialist construction during the period in question.

Soviet viewers saw women working on the screen on an equal footing with men, walking hand in hand along the path to a happy life in socialist construction. Moreover, female images also had male features: in feature films of Stalin’s time, women jumped with a parachute, drove tractors, and marched in sports parades to a bravura melody glorifying their country (Nusinova, 2006). In other words, the idea of gender equality between men and women continued to develop in feature films of the period under study.

However, the family social roles of men and women gradually began to be differentiated. More and more often, men were shown as family protectors and breadwinners. Women were valued not only for their ability to work equally with men, but also for being caring mothers. But if in real life “this led to a double burden on women: work and home. The image of a woman – mother and worker became an important component of Soviet ideology, merging with the image of the Soviet family” (Eliseeva, 2020: 11), then on the movie screen the viewer was presented with an optimistically created image of a woman-worker who managed to do everything, practically never got tired, since her children were under the close attention of the state and the community, that took on all the functions of caring for and raising the younger generation. Bright examples here can be the heroines of such feature films as *Zhenshchina/The Woman* (1932) directed by E. Dzigan and B. Schreyber, *Svetlyy put’/The Bright Path* (1940) directed by E. Aleksandrov, *Chlen pravitel’sтва /Member of the Government* (1939) directed by A. Zarkhi and I. Kheifits where women worked tirelessly on a collective farm, mastered agricultural machinery, were shock workers in production, learned to manage collective farms, etc.

Positive male characters were endowed with strength, will, and optimism. They were ardent communists and builders of the new world, and at the same time, caring fathers who taught their children independence and responsibility for their own destiny. The male screen image had a certain set of moral and ethical qualities. This topic was raised in the feature film *Strogiy yunoshka / A Severe Young Man* (1935), where the main character was developing the third GTO (Ready for Labour and Defence) complex – a complex of moral qualities that a Komsomol member must possess. In addition to the usual points such as clarity of purpose, perseverance, strength of character, humanity, this code included generosity, sentimentality and even chastity. “The requirement of chastity was not proclaimed by the state, but was actually implemented in art as an obligatory feature of a new type of person” (Fisheva, 2020: 150). We see such male images, personifying the heroes of socialist society, in the films *Chuk i Gek/Chuk and Gek* (director I. Lukinsky, 1954) and *Komsomolsk* (director S. Gerasimov, 1938).

The typical male image had clear features of masculinity. Positive male images represented “new heroes” who were always ready to defend the interests of socialist society. “A warrior-defender, a worker, an athlete – these are three hypostases of the “new man”, the representation of which is carried out in feature films” (Fishina, 2020: 153).

Children’s characters in feature films of the period demonstrated greater independence and purposefulness. Many children’s characters in films, despite their young age, performed feats and helped other people. Images of independent and responsible children were presented, for example, in the adventure film *Timur i ego komanda/Timur and His Team* (1940) directed by A. Razumny, where the pioneers did not only demonstrate independence and discipline in their families, but also provided assistance to families left without male support, voluntarily taking on labour functions.

In the films of the period under consideration, one can meet characters of different ages. If we talk about the birth of a family, then the most typical are very young people. “It should be noted that “he” and “she”, as a rule, are not adults and “innocent”. Young women in the films of this period are usually “homewreckers”, and love for a married woman is found only in “marginal” works, as is the situation of adultery. The heroes still have everything ahead, i.e. the prospect of not only “personal”, but also working, “social” development is set” (Dushenko, 2014: 167).

Often in films there were people of the older generation, for example, grandparents. They, as a rule, lived together with children and grandchildren and took on the educational functions of caring for children while the parents were at work.

In the films of the Stalinist period, the viewer could see adult characters of different professions and levels of education. Moreover, acquiring new knowledge, mastering a profession or professional self-improvement became one of the characteristic features of both male and female characters. Purposefulness was one of the important factors of family and public education. The vast majority of films on family themes featured complete families, as well as young people who got married during the course of the film.

As a rule, films about the family are considered in the period of the 1930s-1950s in close connection with labour and social activities. Mutual feelings of young people arise in accordance with the achieved goals. This was typical for both films about urban and rural families. Analysing the images of rural families in the era of the Stalinist regime, L.N. Mazur states that “the most popular in Stalinist cinema were wedding stories related to the marriage stories of the main characters. Moreover, the images of shock workers for whom a happy family life was a reward for shock work were especially popular” (Mazur, 2017: 379-380).

5. Conclusion

Thus, the concept of “family” on the Soviet screen in the 1930–1950s goes beyond traditional ideas. During the years of Stalin’s rule, this concept became one of the main pillars of building a happy Soviet society. A model of a strong and friendly family was being actively formed, both in the traditional sense and in the sense of uniting all peoples, representatives of different professions. Moreover, unlike a real family, understood as a union of two people that could fall apart, a family of peoples (colleagues, team members) was regarded as an unshakable union of like-minded people striving for the victory of communism and irreconcilable towards the enemy.

The ideas of building a strong Soviet family were based on creating models of the desired future. In other words, the Stalin-era feature films created images that were far from reality, but were perceived by the mass audience as a model, an ideal that every Soviet person should and must strive for through selfless service to the ideals of socialism, shock labour, and collectivism.

In accordance with these goals, the family images are presented from the earliest years, children are brought up in a community, they become participants in work events, are actively engaged in technical creativity, and demonstrate independence and purposefulness. Also, the educational and ideological tasks of media education, associated with teaching the younger generation to pursue correct ideas about family models of behaviour, where parents are actively and consciously involved in work and public assignments, come to the fore.

The educational role of cinematography is seen at this stage in showing clear and distinct goals to the audience, related to the institution of the Soviet family, which was to become a role model for the mass audience. The theme of a happy childhood, actively promoted in Soviet society, is also reflected in feature films about the family.

The strengthening of ideological control over all spheres of Soviet life had a significant impact on the image of family education presented in feature films.

Along with Marxist approaches to media education, the role of the practical approach associated with amateur filmmaking was strengthened. Accordingly, little attention was paid to the artistic and aesthetic component of amateur films at that time, and the emphasis in media education was on studying the technical possibilities of using cinematography. Media education based on films, which was carried out in clubs was subject to strict regulation and control.

6. Acknowledgements

This research is funded by the grant of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, project No. 24-28-00032) at the Rostov State University of Economics. Project theme: “The image of family and family upbringing in Russian feature films and prospects for media education (1920-2020)”. Head of the project is I.V. Chelysheva.

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