

**RAISING YOUTH DURING THE SOVIET ERA ON ATHEISTIC
AND MARXIST-LENINIST PRINCIPLES: THE ROLE OF
CINEMA AND CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Abduvohid Bobobkhonovich Khatamov

Independent Researcher,
Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

Abstract: *This article analyzes the role of cinema and cultural-educational activities in raising youth on Marxist-Leninist principles during the Soviet era. Documentary and feature films, film festivals, and popular science programs served as effective tools for shaping young people's atheistic worldview, developing their scientific thinking, and deepening their understanding of communist ideas. Additionally, through museums and cultural-educational events, young people systematically absorbed historical, scientific, and social processes. The article highlights the central role of cinema and cultural-educational activities in youth upbringing, as well as the effectiveness of documentary and feature films in promoting atheistic education.*

Keywords: youth education, Marxist-Leninist worldview, atheistic upbringing, cinema art, cultural-educational activities, documentary film, feature film.

Аннотация: *В статье анализируется роль кино и культурно-просветительской деятельности в воспитании молодежи на основе марксистско-ленинской идеологии в советский период. Документальные и художественные фильмы, кинофестивали и популярные научные программы служили эффективными средствами формирования атеистического мировоззрения у молодежи, развития их научного мышления и углубления понимания коммунистических идей. Кроме того,*

через музеи и культурно-просветительские мероприятия молодежь систематически усваивала исторические, научные и общественные процессы. В статье подчеркивается центральная роль киноискусства и культурно-просветительской деятельности в воспитании молодежи, а также эффективность документальных и художественных фильмов в атеистическом воспитании.

Ключевые слова: *воспитание молодежи, марксистско-ленинское мировоззрение, атеистическое воспитание, киноискусство, культурно-просветительская деятельность, документальный фильм, художественный фильм.*

Introduction.

Educating youth is one of the most complex and multifaceted tasks of society. During the Soviet era, this task was carried out based on the Marxist-Leninist worldview, which was grounded in the study of the general laws of nature and society, the development of human thinking, and the acquisition of knowledge tested through the creative labor of generations. Cultural and educational activities, particularly the art of cinema, served as an important tool in shaping the worldview of young people. Cinema enriched young minds by portraying reality on a broad scale, artistically expressing communist ideas, and promoting a scientific outlook.

Soviet documentary and feature films were aimed at developing atheistic thinking in youth, introducing them to scientifically grounded perspectives, and teaching them to critically evaluate religious beliefs. At the same time, cultural-educational activities, film festivals, and museum excursions played a significant role in expanding young people's knowledge and worldview.

Results and discussion.

Raising a new generation and guiding them to maturity is one of the most complex and multifaceted tasks of society. In order to address this challenge,



forming a Marxist-Leninist worldview among all Soviet citizens was of primary importance. The Marxist-Leninist worldview was based on a system of views, concepts, and representations aimed at studying the most general laws of the development of nature and society, as well as the development of human thought—essentially, knowledge tested through the creative labor of many generations.

Cinema, one of the most important tools of cultural and educational work, played a key role in shaping the Marxist-Leninist worldview, particularly among youth. Infused with the spirit of life-giving communist ideas, Soviet cinema was widely used to portray reality objectively, artistically express noble communist ideals, and help people understand the phenomena of nature and society, as well as the meaning of human life. V.I. Lenin referred to documentary films as “figurative journalism.” Indeed, the best examples of cinematic journalism, through their accuracy, socialist humanism, and revolutionary passion, refuted religious belief and led viewers to atheistic conclusions.

For example, the film *The Russian Miracle* convincingly depicted on screen the age-old dream of the working people—the creation of a socialist society—not as the will of God, but as the heroic struggle and creative labor of the people under the leadership of the Communist Party. Dozens of documentary films narrating the conquest of space and the achievements of science and technology emphasized the work of great scientists while firmly condemning superstition and religious dogma. These documentaries instilled in viewers a strong confidence in the boundless potential of science to understand the world and the power of human genius [4].

Numerous popular documentaries with explicitly atheistic themes were released, such as *The Origin of Religion*, *Shadows of the Past*, *Corpses Among the Living*, *Day and Night*, *Words Heal*, and *Museum of Religion and Atheism*.



The exhibition of such popular science and documentary films enhanced their emotional impact on audiences.

Systematic and planned use of documentary and popular science films in atheistic education was exemplified by cultural and educational institutions in the Yangiyol district and city. The atheistic cinema lecture series there operated according to a strict plan approved by the “Young Atheists Club” council. The content of lectures, discussions, and films was aligned with concrete educational and pedagogical objectives, serving to expand and deepen young people’s atheistic knowledge.

One effective form of using cinema in atheistic education was anti-religious film festivals. These festivals provided a comprehensive understanding of specific themes. For instance, at the Yangiyol House of Culture, a film festival on the theme The Struggle of Great Scientists Against Religion featured films such as Giordano Bruno, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Mikhail Lomonosov, Academician Ivan Pavlov, and Michurin. Prior to the festival, an introductory lecture connected the films under a common theme, and brief discussions before each film focused young viewers’ attention on the films’ atheistic message.

Feature films also played a crucial role in atheistic education. In subsequent years, following party directives to strengthen scientific-atheistic upbringing, a number of feature films with atheistic themes were produced, including The Deceived, So‘na, The Mysterious Priests, and Everything Belongs to the People. These films convincingly depicted the reactionary and class-based nature of Christianity and Catholicism, the direct service of religion to imperialism and fascism, and the spiritual and physical harm experienced by people trapped and deceived by religious institutions. Of particular note is the film Everything Belongs to the People produced by Lenfilm, which engages viewers in philosophical discussions on the meaning of life, including a debate between the prominent Soviet scientist Academician Dronov and the priest

Arafim. Other feature films produced by Uzbekfilm, such as *Fidoyi*, *The Star of Ulugbek*, *Hamza*, *The Rich and the Servant*, *Avicenna (Ibn Sina)*, and *Natasha Khanum*, also played an important role in promoting atheistic education [5].

Before each screening, meetings were often organized with veterans of the October Revolution, the Civil War, and the Great Patriotic War, as well as Heroes of Socialist Labor from the Soviet Union, which significantly enhanced the quality of educational lectures and discussions.

Significant work was also carried out in history and local lore museums. Many museums featured exhibits on space, life on Earth, and the origins of humanity. For example, the museum in Chirchiq had a planetarium, while the local history museum in Andijan hosted an “Atheistic Knowledge University.” Members of women’s soviets and local committees regularly attended these university sessions, and staff from the Uzbekistan SSR Museum of the Peoples, the Republican Museum of Nature, and the Art Museum conducted extensive educational work [6].

Conclusion.

During the Soviet era, cinema and cultural-educational activities played a central role in raising youth according to Marxist-Leninist and atheistic principles. Documentary and feature films served as effective tools for developing young people’s scientific thinking, deepening their understanding of communist ideas, and teaching them to critically evaluate religious beliefs. The emotional and artistic impact of films encouraged youth to reflect, reinforce their scientific and cultural knowledge, and engage with ideological content. Moreover, film screenings, museum excursions, cultural-educational events, and film festivals were systematically and strategically employed in youth education. As a result, Soviet cultural and educational initiatives played a significant role in shaping young people’s worldview and fostering scientific and atheistic thinking.

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