

Narratives about Israel in Soviet Cinema

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to the analysis of representations of Israel and Israel-related themes in Soviet cinema from the late 1940s to the 1980s. Despite the central role of the State of Israel in post-war Jewish history and Holocaust memory, in Soviet cinema Israel as a direct object of depiction is almost entirely absent. Instead, a system of indirect, fragmentary, and ideologically charged narratives is formed, in which Israel appears either as an aggressor state or as a topos associated with the possibility of betraying one's homeland. Drawing on methods from film studies, memory studies and ideological analysis, the study shows that Soviet cinema constructs a specific "negative image of absence", in which Israel exists not as a geographic or cultural reality, but as an ideological sign. This approach makes it possible to consider Soviet cinema not only as an instrument of propaganda, but also as an important space for studying transformations of Jewish identity, memory, and political imagination under the conditions of late socialism.