Burke: This is a deed of gift for the transcript of the interview. If you sign this you will give us the right to use the interview in our research. This document also protects your rights in how we use your interview.

Sorkina: Yes

Burke: We will be conducting an interview with you for a film project that is studying the social, political, and cultural history of Russia through film. We would like it if you could talk with us about your memories of going to the movies. We are especially interested in the details. In accordance with your answers we will write an essay, in which we will analyze the results of the questionnaire and write about the **experience of going** to the movies in Russia. The goal of this interview for us is to discover more about concrete people and the place of the movies in their lives. Thank you very much for your help and for your readiness to share your memories with us. This interview will be included for future listening on the film project’s website. If you’re not against it, let’s get started.

Sorkina: Let’s.

Burke: For the project, please tell us your first name, patronymic, and last name, and the year you were born.

Sorkina: My name is Victoria Mikhailovna Sorkina. I was born in 1975.

Burke: Thank you. Tell me about your first memories at the movies.

Sorkina: Do you mean the movie theater itself, or just the movies in general?

Burke: Either.

Sorkina: Either. (A black cat enters the room.) We don’t have any food. That’s interesting. Ok, a black cat.

Burke: Well, anything you’d like. The buildings or the films.

Sorkina: My very first memories. I think that…my very first memories about the movies are connected of course with my childhood. But as a child, when I was really very little, my family wasn’t used to it, there wasn’t a tradition of going to the movies…and therefore I usually watched cartoons at home. And in Russia there’s also that popular show “Good night!” that little ones, **that is** kids watch. And it’s still on even now, this show. And my first memory about the movies, as you say, were of course cartoons. But what kinds were there earlier in Russia…we didn’t watch American cartoons or any other kind. Therefore we watched those typical Soviet, really good cartoons, which I love even to this day. That is, **they** were my first memory. And then, then, for sure, the movie theater started already in my school-age years. That is, when I was a student, my parents took me to the movies, and we also went to the movies with school. **I may have** when I was on vacation with my grandmother and grandfather, that is, in Sverdlovsk, but now that city is called Ekaterinburg. There was also a movie theater there. And I went to see only children’s films. This was my absolute first memory about the movies. And the first film I probably saw was *A First Grade Student*. Then it was really well known, and the book was also really well known. That’s what it’s called, *A First Grade Student*. And this was, let’s say, probably in my first years at school. Then, maybe I’ve already said, then I remember already another such big impression from the movies, when I went to the movie theater and saw the film *Roman Holiday*. You’ve probably seen this movie too?

Burke: I haven’t seen it, but I know it.

Sorkina: Yes, with the famous and magnificent Gregory Peck, right? And Audrey Hepburn. And this was a big impression on me, the big screen and a wonderful film, right, which I also saw on vacation. It was somehow fitting. That sounds about right. In school I didn’t go to the movies very often. But it’s possible this only strikes me because the other children went more often. I don’t know. What else?

Burke: Well, when did you go to the movies? Was it with your parents or your friends?

Sorkina: **When I was in school**? Well of course I went with my parents. There were also some sort of these school events, trips…trips to the movies with everyone from school together. But this…this I don’t remember very well. Then when I was already in high school, in the upper grades at school, when I was almost finishing school, I went to the movies with my friends. Yes. Well, it was probably just like that for everyone. I don’t know. I also remember a really big impact from the film...*Gone with the Wind*. Do you know that film or not? “Gone with the Wind?” *Gone with the Wind*? It was a really, really big impression. I’m sorry. It’s not important.

Burke: Excellent!

Sorkina: (phone rings) Yes? Yes. Can I call you back later? Yes. Sorry.

Burke: Did you watch many Soviet movies or only cartoons?

Sorkina: As a child, as a child…I just watched cartoons. Because all kids love ‘kids films,’ as we call them, cartoons. And there were also some sort of kids films that I remember, they were **great**. Yes, but what I watched as a child, these children’s movies, I don’t remember them well. I remember that I saw the film *The Adventures of Captain Grant* by Jules Verne. Yes, that I remember well. There was also something. **Yes, well now I can’t recall that other thing**. Practically everything’s gone. Yes. I watched Soviet movies too. But for these at any rate, I think, I didn’t go to the movie theater. I saw them on television. But I know that, for example, my parents often went to the movies. They watched those movies that came out every time. Yes, a new film. For example those movies by Eldar Ryazanov and all other Soviet directors, which did something then, **put something out there.** But in order to watch Soviet films I don’t think I went to the movies. In any case, I don’t remember it. I remember when the movie *Moscow does not Believe in Tears* came out. I was just a young girl. And my parents went to the late showing of the film. When they came back, I was really interested in what it was about. And my mom told me the plot of the movie, just as well as she was able, because in general it’s hard for a little girl to understand what the movie’s about. As I understood it, there was a prince, as my mom explained to me then, and that the film’s about a princess. How a woman can become a princess. Right? Well, it was something like that. Later I watched that film when I was already a university student, I think.

Burke: When you saw that film was it on television?

Sorkina: I watched it on television, yes.

Burke: Well then, do you remember the movie theater buildings?

Sorkina: The buildings? Of course **I remember** the buildings. I don’t think that those movie theaters were really comfortable, like today. They were those really typical ones, all of them just like to others. But then I didn’t think about that. I remember that then there was a tradition, when I went to the movie theater I always ate ice cream. Yes, in America it’s popcorn, right? For example, now they also sell popcorn in the movie theater. But I remember, that then they sold ice cream. It was, as we say, part of the show. That is, a part of the whole experience. And it’s possible that for me, when I was young, it was actually even in general the main part. Because I don’t know what was more interesting, the ice cream or the movies. But in any case, of course, when you go and see the big screen, for you it’s like a miracle, magic. **And in general you forget them both.** I remember, that yes there is still another memory. I remembered, that we went to the movies once with school, once a month. It was a that subscription, children’s film. I really loved that. But what precisely we watched, I remember that they were some sort of fairy tales. Maybe it was a film about Vasily the Wise. Yes? Well anyway, I don’t remember. That is, then there was just the impression, that it was the movies. But for some reason no one film has stuck in my memory…from that time.

Burke: In your youth, when you went to the movies with your friends and didn’t watch cartoons? What types of movies do you like?

Sorkina: Well, I liked and still like dramas, I like a good romantic comedy, I like thrillers. But for a thriller I don’t go the movies. I like alternative cinema. What is that? Well done artistic cinema with an alterative outlook, with the director’s own outlook on things. There, just like that. That is in my taste the films of Ingmar Bergman, and Woody Allen, and something of the type, I don’t know, of that Forman, Milos Forman. Yes? That is I like that classic, untraditional, good cinema.

Burke: Woody Allen and Ingmar Bergman that’s foreign art cinema. Did you also watch Russian art cinema?

Sorkina: Do you mean some Russian art cinema? Yes, of course, naturally, of course I’ve seen it. Or do you have in mind that I prefer to watch Russian cinema?

Burke: Do you remember?

Sorkina: Of course. I like Tarkovsky. Well, and went to see him at the movies. And now I also like to just watch Tarkovsky’s films wherever, even on my own laptop. Yes? **That is, it’s still from the Russian classics**. Even now I can’t say. Probably I’m more engrossed by foreign cinema. But that’s me. Maybe other Russians would say something completely different. That is, I prefer, probably, as it turned out, that my tastes congealed more around foreign directors. It seems that way to me. But there’s still one more name I can’t at all remember. Maybe you can kindle my memory – the taste of a pomegranate.

Burke: “Pomegranate”

Sorkina: Yes. The taste of a pomegranate.

Burke: I don’t know.

Sorkina: It’s also a Russian director, but he, as we say, is of Armenian descent. If I remember I’ll tell you a bit later. Yeah…there’s no way, now way it’ll come to me. Of course I love Fellini’s films, and everything, for example, written by Tonino Guerra. There, probably something like that. I also like Chinese cinema. Now, this last time the very famous director Vong Kar Vai almost mesmerized me. And I’ve seen almost everything that he’s done. And that’s how it is.

Burke: And now, have you seen international art films like at Cannes, or festivals?

Sorkina: I follow them. I follow the festivals, and let’s say, those they invite there. And once not long ago I saw how the festival in Cannes was, and a director from Vietnam won there. And it was the first time for Vietnam, and the film is called *Uncle Boonmee.* There’s a long name for the film. **As I recall** it’s something like *Uncle Boonmee* *and who he was in a Previous Life*. Something like that. I don’t exactly remember the title. But of course I really wanted to see this film, but it still hasn’t gone into Russian distribution. Let’s say. Also, of course I follow the festival in Berlin, at Cannes, I often watch the Oscar ceremonies. And I remember, that last time at Cannes, I think Pedro Almondovar won. Well, I don’t remember exactly. The time before…yes, I think it was the time before. I’m also interested in what happens, what the outcomes are at the Moscow festivals, but I can’t say that now Russian cinema is very successful. One can name very few directors, whom they would actually like to see. That’s how it is.

Burke: Do you know in St. Petersburg or, maybe, do you know movie theaters in which they, in which one can see international art films?

Sorkina: Actually international films about art, right? Yes, there are, do you have in mind art, like something, that there is, wasn’t let’s say like a blockbuster, right?

Burke: Not a blockbuster, like…

Sorkina: That is cinema like art.

Burke: Yes.