

That the first book-length study of such an important filmmaker should appear in France rather than the UK or the US speaks perhaps to the longstanding relationship between eastern Europe and France, and, perhaps, to that country's greater interest in formally innovative and culturally informed cinema from around the world. Regardless of the reason, however, the volume is bound to become a touchstone for anyone interested in Loznitsa's work, contemporary re-evaluation of Soviet history, documentary and art cinema, and what has come to be termed "revolutionary feeling."

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***Russian TV Series in the Era of Transition: Genres, Technologies, Identities.*** Ed. Alexander Prokhorov, Elena Prokhorova, and Rimgaila Salys. Boston, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2021, 280 pp. Index. Illustrations. \$35.00, paper  
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Renowned scholars of Soviet and Russian television Alexander Prokhorov, Elena Prokhorova, and Rimgaila Salys have edited a multifaceted collection that explores continuities and changes of post-Soviet television since 2000. Based on a genre approach, the introduction and nine articles focus on various formats like quality television drama, low-budget web television mini-series, or the channel *Kul'tura* (Culture). They analyze gender, issues of cultural memory, formats bridging traditional legacy TV and internet-based platforms, as well as the consequences of shifting political and economic power structures. Five short interviews with Russian producers, directors, and screenwriters complement the edition. They may become interesting sources for future research.

In their introduction, the editors highlight structural developments regarding new technologies like streaming or the fact that recent Russian language TV series are now also available on international platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime. Furthermore, several channels offer online services targeting Russophone viewers all over the world (9). Thus, the previous trend of adapting western originals has been compensated by Russian originals that are said to be distributed globally. Considering the Russian aggressions since the annexation of Crimea, the increasing efforts of Russian propaganda wars in the west, and the current war against Ukraine, this claim should have been discussed in a longer perspective as it addresses the transnational adaptability of the post-Soviet TV culture.

The broad range of topics the essays explore are connected by the editors' assumption that Russian TV offers deep insights into pop-cultural trends of the Putin-era and depict current societal negotiations and debates about the glorious Soviet past, as well as about ethnic, sexual, social, and other diversity. Alyssa DeBlasio investigates the programming of *Kul'tura* channel that was in 1997 the first thematic channel in Russian television broadcasting history. She convincingly shows how *Kul'tura*, as "island of good taste" (44), successfully addresses the widespread nostalgia for Soviet culturedness (*kul'turnost'*) among the generation of viewers who came of age before 1991. It thus perpetuates the Soviet intellectual concept of "high" culture and conveys Soviet norms and values in opposition to the influences of western popular culture until today. Stephen M. Norris examines the award-winning serial *Shtrafbat* (Penal Battalion) to show how television let history conflict with contemporary memory and politics. The serial presented challenging interpretations on the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 1945. It initiated public debates by implementing the narrative that Russian soldiers "fought and suffered for the Russian Orthodox spiritual community"

and presenting taboo topics on gender violence and state terror that had totally disappeared from TV by then (73). Rimgaila Salys delves into the distorting representation of two famous stars of Stalinist musical comedy before WWII, Grigory Aleksandrov and Liubov' Orlova, in Vitaly Moskalenko's series *Orlova and Alexandrov*. Salys analyzes how the series mystifies and rewrites history, attributing post-Soviet values to the historical actors that aim to discharge them from any accusations of "ideological servility" to the Stalinist regime (96).

Elena and Alexander Prokhorov examine two Putin-era series on Catherine the Great and work out how they undermine narratives of charismatic power that normally characterize such historical costume dramas. The authors argue that these two series engaged into a transnational scene of historical television productions that relentlessly mix up historical settings and modern language (111). Lilya Kaganovsky intriguingly highlights how Valery Todorovsky's 2013 TV series *Ottepel'* (The Thaw) developed its story line "between pornography and nostalgia." "The Thaw" tells the story of the making of Soviet films by covering the lives of the staffers of the central filmmaking studio, Mosfil'm. The series creates a complex relationship with the Soviet past and intends to respond to international TV series like *Mad Men* that are also popular in Russia. It explicitly draws on Soviet tropes to address nostalgic emotions among its audience.

The four contributions of Tatiana Mikhailova, Alexander Prokhorov, Elena Prokhorova, and Rimgaila Salys, Vlad Strukov and Saara Ratilainen cover different kinds of recent popular TV series like *Izmeny* (The Affairs), *Metod* (The Method), *Ol'ga*, and *Stervochki* (Bitches). They discuss from different perspectives potential tensions and contradictions that TV series could reveal towards the official norms and values the Putin regime propagates. These challenges and the way Putin-era television developed particular genres, what kind of norms and values it conveyed, and how it affected contemporary Russian society are worthy of discussion by future research exploring viewers' reception. Generally, this edition addresses continuities and changes from Soviet to post-Soviet television that may help us to understand how television became the revived mouthpiece of the Putin regime.

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**Countries That Don't Exist: Selected Nonfiction.** By Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky.

Jacob Emery and Alexander Spektor, eds. Russian Library. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022. xi, 328 pp. Notes. \$40.00, hard bound; \$19.95, paper; \$18.99, e-book.

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*Countries That Don't Exist: Selected Nonfiction* continues Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky's belated entry into the Anglophone canon of Russophone literature. If you are unfamiliar with the long-neglected writer, this is not the place to look for a comprehensive introduction, but it offers persuasive evidence of Krzhizhanovsky's erudition, wit, and style. What justifies bringing a writer out of unpublished or barely published obscurity? The response of knowledgeable readers. An unknown author cannot impact peers or heirs. Instead, chapters here show his responses to other writers: Edgar Allan Poe, Vladimir Solov'ev, or George Bernard Shaw.

Obviously Polish, born in Kyiv (Kiev, says the cover), Krzhizhanovsky might well have wound up in Sandarmokh had he remained in the Ukrainian SSR rather than heading to Moscow. Soviet culture's centripetal tendency, though it limited his