

Deborah Pearl demonstrates the limits of our traditional approaches to the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. Historians usually take selected political groups and political parties as the privileged objects of their research, and these approaches do not allow us to explore different processes of workers' politicization. Protest movements have been depicted according to party and ideological lines. Such simplistic taxonomy ignored complicated socio-political reality: the Marxists often used Populist texts, and Populist propaganda was strongly influenced by Marxism. The common frame of the revolutionary political culture influenced tactics and polemics; it created opportunities for the united actions of different political groups. The reconstruction of the radical circles' curriculums demonstrates that their organizers used similar texts—in spite of their ideological differences.

Deborah Pearl's research reminds us of Antonio Gramsci's thesis on cultural hegemony, but her book raises new research questions. The reader can feel the extraordinary creativity of the young and ambitious authors who composed important texts in 1870s and 1880s; can see that they offered an important political resource to the next generations of revolutionaries. What were the reasons and causes for this explosion of creativity? We can guess that the situation of cultural interactions, multiple dialogs and conflicts of different social, estate, and ethnic groups stimulated authors and translators. The dialogue with the Russian "big culture" texts (Nekrasov, Ivan Turgenev), the impact of the French and Polish revolutionary traditions, the influence of popular European fiction—all affected the revolutionary Populists in their writings, in their publishing projects, and therefore had an impact upon Russian radical political culture. Simultaneously, Russian popular texts were translated into other languages—Yiddish, Ukrainian, Polish.

The culture of the intelligentsia was created at that very time, and had great impact over the "advanced" workers, some of whom described themselves as the working class intelligentsia. The role of this cultural group was extremely important, its members acted as authoritative "interpreters" of the radical texts in the working class milieu. The production and circulation of this literature, its readings and quotations were crucial for dominating the "discourse of socialism" that—as Steve Smith correctly argues—dominated in 1917.

There are some small errors in the book. The Provisional Government never declared the "Workers Marseillaise" to be an anthem of the new Russia (169), even though in practice different versions of this melody was used as an anthem. In actuality, there were no official decisions concerning the anthem, national flag, and coats of arms at that time.

The revolutions of the 21st century have shown us that political culture is an important resource for political mobilization, and Deborah Pearl's book helps us to understand this important dimension of the Russian Revolution.

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A Companion to Russian Cinema. Ed. Birgit Beumers. Malden, Mass.: John Wiley & Sons, 2016. xvi, 656 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Photographs. Tables. \$195.00, hardcover. \$156.99, e-book.

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In her introduction to *A Companion to Russian Cinema*, editor Birgit Beumers explains that this volume aspires not to "the impossible—a comprehensive account of Russian

cinema,” but rather “to provide different histories of Russian and Soviet cinema” (1), “to fill some of [the] gaps” in the scholarship, and to “open new areas for investigation” (4). To do this, the authors employ “a range of lenses or prisms through which films, filmmakers, and film history/histories are viewed” (1). Although not designed as a sweeping chronological narrative, the volume manages to touch on the entire span of Russian cinema history, with each section organized in a roughly chronological fashion, and is distinguished by the excellence of the individual contributions. Each essay is a model of clear exposition, starting with a concise statement of the topic and summary of the argument and ending with a brief summary and conclusion.

The book reflects a particular interest in the possibility of understanding Russian cinematic history as part of institutional histories that include ideology, but aren't centered on ideology. What takes shape in these chapters is a sense of the formation and evolution of cinema culture, aesthetics, and imagination in dialogue with the invention of tradition, the disposition of everyday life, and the history of modernity in Russia. This evolution is grounded in a specific set of historical conditions that can and should be compared to other cinema histories, as is done in a great number of these chapters.

Beumers has organized the volume into five parts. The first is specifically devoted to institutional histories—that is, to different aspects of production and exhibition, including the training of filmmakers, the aesthetic of particular studios (Lenfilm and the Gor'kii Children's Film Studio), and the earliest screening venues. The second section considers genre, and examines the evolution of particular conventions (musicals, comedies, “auteur” cinema, and blockbusters), as shaped by filmmakers, studios, critics, and audiences. The third section explores particular facets of film production (script, sound, set design, costume, cinematography, and color) as part of processes that involve state institutions and technology—whether the training of cadres, ever-shifting functions of various aspects of production, appeal to audiences, or censorship. The fourth section, on “time and space, history and place,” includes two chapters on cities (Riga and Moscow) as both shooting locations and as touchstones in “the Soviet filmic imagination,” as Kevin Platt puts it (447), and two chapters on the genre of war cinema. The final section, devoted to director portraits, shows how each director's individual style evolved over time, and was shaped by institutions, technologies, and conventions, starting with the early Soviet period (Boris Barnet), stretching through the Stalin era (Iulii Raizman and Leonid Gaidai), and in the final two essays, from the late Soviet period to the post-Soviet Russian cinema scene and finally to the Russian film industry today (Aleksei Gherman and Andrei Zviagintsev).

The comparative approach advances the understanding of the specific Soviet and post-Soviet conditions and informs, for example, the reading of Stalin-era cinema by considering the classical Hollywood studio system as an object of Soviet striving for a streamlined and censorable film production that could never quite be emulated, in Maria Belodubrovskaya's chapter on screenwriting. French postwar cinema becomes a model for Soviet cinema of the Thaw and Stagnation, as explored in Eugénie Zvonkine's chapter on “auteur” cinema as “a mode of individual expression” (179). And, as Oksana Sarkisova shows, German non-fiction cinema, specifically the “*Kulturfilm*,” serves, in the early Soviet cinema of the mid-1920s–1930s, as a model for educational cinema that sought to shape the Soviet viewer's identity and understanding of the world (96–97). At the same time, an understanding of international cinema history helps bring out the distinctiveness of Soviet cinema: as Masha Salazkina argues in her short history of VGIK, Soviet film education became by the early 1930s “not only the oldest but by far the most advanced film education institution in the world with regards to developing film studies as an academic discipline”

(58). Similarly, Robert Bird's examination of Lenfilm reveals an "unusual example of an institutional aesthetic" (66), subject to its own evolution over the years.

A comparative approach is also taken in essays that explore technological innovations, such as Phil Cavendish's chapter on the shifting relations between technology, ideology, and aesthetics in the evolution of Soviet color processes, or Lilya Kaganovsky's exploration of the coming of sound and the shift from a concern with representing the noise of industry to intelligible and accessible (Russian) speech. In chapters on aspects of filmmaking not directly related to techniques of mechanical reproduction, the volume's comparative methodology leads to other cultural realms—such as textiles, architecture, interior design, and the history of everyday life, in Emma Widdis's essay on set design as part of the Soviet quest for an art that would authentically reflect and ultimately shape the lived everyday (314); and fine art, female stardom, and the everyday life of the Soviet audience (especially women) in Djurdja Bartlett's discussion of costume at the intersection of fashion and movies.

What this volume avoids is conforming to the expectations of any audience outside of the orbit of Soviet studies: Dziga Vertov, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Oleksandr Dovzhenko, Lev Kuleshov, Sergei Eisenstein, and Andrei Tarkovsky hover over the text as touchstones, but never become the focus. (It is perhaps worth noting that this may stem in part from a question that is not addressed explicitly, that of the relationship between Russian cinema and Soviet cinema.) In fact, eschewing the usual suspects and narratives helps to confirm Soviet cinema as a popular art in which "high" and "low" meet and intersect, comparable to other cinema cultures. Essays on popular genres—such as Seth Graham's discussion of the comedies of the 1950s–60s as a battleground between elite and popular modern tendencies—serve to reinforce this impression. As state support gives way to private investment in contemporary Russia, the balance shifts towards the box office, as shown in Dawn Seckler and Stephen Norris's chapter on the contemporary "blockbuster" as a product of audience desires, funding necessities, and imported Hollywood fantasies. At the same time, key issues of elite culture remain in play, as in Nancy Condee's portrait of director Andrei Zviagintsev, whose engagement with literary, religious, and philosophical questions situates him within a long tradition of Russian aesthetics.

The overall effect of the volume is of a kaleidoscopic view of the scholarly field rather than of an encyclopedic view of the material being analyzed. After all, many other resources have appeared recently, including the excellent volume of short essays on individual films for the "24 frames" series on *The Cinema of Russia and the Former Soviet Union* (Wallflower/Columbia University Press, 2007) and the two volumes of the *Directory of World Cinema* series, a more straightforwardly encyclopedic project—all of which are edited by Beumers (intellect/University of Chicago Press, 2011 and 2015)—and Peter Rollberg's single-authored tour de force, the *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema* (Scarecrow Press, 2009). The volume under review, then, serves quite a different function: its achievement is, along the lines suggested by Beumers in her introduction, to indicate some possible—even necessary—directions for further research. It also serves to introduce the reader to the key scholars working in the field, which in turn, one hopes, will lead the reader to those authors' other publications. This volume could work very well in a "methods" course at the advanced undergraduate or early graduate level. But the broad view it provides of the field as a whole would benefit any scholar of Russian or Soviet cinema.

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