

Hicks's emphasis on Kremlin-controlled images and narratives leaves less space for remediations that subvert the banner's validated meanings or challenge its pre-eminence in official memory. Recall the "historical" footage from Raizman's *Berlin* inserted at the end of the twelve-part television series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (dir. Tatiana Lioznova, 1973). Raizman's climactic scenes of fast-moving, heroic flag-raisers appear strangely inappropriate given the contrast with *Seventeen Moments*' slow pace, inconclusive ending, and melancholy protagonist.

Nonetheless, Hicks's understandable focus on state-sanctioned symbolism now seems acutely relevant. Russian soldiers in Vladimir Putin's unprovoked 2022 war against Ukraine adorned their tanks with facsimiles of the Soviet banner, signaling commitment to the Russian leadership's ludicrous historical parallels and deluded myths of Soviet/Russian triumphalism. Hicks's book is essential for understanding how World War II symbolism could accumulate the self-righteous emotive and political authority that is being cynically, and literally, weaponized today.

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The Cinema of Soviet Kazakhstan (1925–1991): An Uneasy Legacy. By Peter Rollberg. Contemporary Central Asia. Lexington Books, 2021. xvi, 449 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Photographs. \$135.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.299

Western scholars of Soviet culture predominantly associate achievements of Soviet Kazakh cinema with the Kazakh New Wave, a late-Perestroika boom of innovative aesthetics and novel perspectives originating from Vladimir Solov'ev's 1984–89 "Kazakh workshop" at the All-Union Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. Critics examining this cinematic sensation often lament the otherwise "obscure" output of Kazakhfilm Studios that apparently lacked both native talent and national masterpieces (1997 Gonul Donmez-Colin, quoted in Rollberg, xiii). Josephine Woll's classic analysis of Soviet cinema and the Thaw in *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (2000) mentions one Kazakhstani film, Aleksandr Karpov's 1963 *Tale of a Mother*, only in passing. Soviet Kazakh cinema started emerging from obscurity in the last two decades with a series of scholarly explorations, most notably in special issues of *KinoKultura* (2004) and *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* (2011), an edited volume on *Cinema in Central Asia: Rewriting Cultural Histories* (2011) by Gulnara Abikeeva, Birgit Beumers, and Michael Rouland, and Rico Isaacs' *Film and Identity in Kazakhstan: Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture in Central Asia* (2018) examining the constructed and contested nature of Kazakhstani national identity.

With his remarkably comprehensive study of Soviet Kazakh cinema, Peter Rollberg makes an invaluable contribution to this growing body of scholarship, further interrogating the common assumption that central Soviet institutions and policies, such as Goskino and the dictum of "national in form, socialist in content," resulted in a "catastrophic loss of the republics' individual cultural heritage, traditions, diversity, imagination and creativity" (Ludmila Pruner, 1992, quoted in Rollberg, xvi). To be sure, throughout his monograph, Rollberg carefully delineates the "profoundly centralist" Soviet film industry's harmful impact on the development of authentically Kazakh cinema (31). At the same time, he meticulously reconstructs Kazakhstan's gradual path to a genuinely national cinematograph starting with films on Kazakh themes made by non-Kazakh filmmakers in Moscow or Leningrad (Moisei Levin's *Amangeldy*, 1938), followed by the emergence of a full-fledged national studio in Alma-Ata during the

Soviet film industry's war-time evacuation to Kazakhstan, and ultimately the appearance of films directed by ethnic Kazakhs at their native studio, with Shaken Aimanov's directorial debut, *A Poem About Love* (1953) initiating the way.

In charting this path, Rollberg treasures every Kazakh-themed film, including shelved works, regardless of its aesthetic value or critical reception at the time of release or following the Soviet collapse, revealing the gradual but consistent progress toward gaining directorial, acting, and technical expertise, as well as seeking more agency and control over visual representations of Kazakh culture, land, and society on screen. To this effect, Rollberg teases out even the finest shoots of innovation and/or expression of Kazakh distinctiveness that consistently build on each other, leading to ever more significant advances in shaping uniquely Kazakhstani cinema. In this inclusive account, the Kazakh New Wave appears not as an isolated breakthrough enabled by mentorship from the center, but as an integral part of a wider late-Soviet Kazakh cinema's search for authentic values and liberation from Soviet cinematic norms. During perestroika, both older and new generations of Soviet Kazakh filmmakers produced a "harvest of masterpieces" (Rollberg, 400) questioning the Soviet status quo, including, but not limited to, processing traumas of Stalinism in Kalybek Salykov's *The Balcony* (1988), breaking the taboos of collectivization and famine in Damir Manabaev's *Surzhekei, the Angel of Death* (1991), and questioning the impact of Soviet modernization in Bolat Kalymbetov's *My Darling* (1990). Rollberg demonstrates the dynamism and complexity of Kazakhstan's cinematic landscape in the late 1980s by showcasing these and other less-known films alongside the more critically acclaimed gems coming out of the Solov'ev masterclass, including Rashid Nugmanov's *The Needle* (1988), Serik Aprymov's *The Last Stop* (1989), and Abai Karpykov's *Little Fish in Love* (1989).

Rollberg's detailed filmography combined with enlightening film analyses examining sociopolitical factors, aesthetic and genre experimentation, and strivings for the expression of national identity is a veritable goldmine for researchers looking for a deeper understanding of not only specific themes within Kazakh cinema, but also Soviet cinematograph's wider thematic and generic patterns, such as Kazakhfilm's unique contributions to the historical-revolutionary and WWII genres, children and youth films, and sports dramas. Particularly illuminating are the five chapters (4–8) documenting the gradual maturation and flourishing of Kazakh cinema during the Thaw under the creative leadership of such native masters of direction as Shaken Aimanov, Mazhit Begalin, Sultan-Akhmad Khodzhikov, and Abdulla Karsarbaev. Rollberg devotes a separate chapter to Aimanov as "the foundational figure of Kazakh cinema" (191), in honor of whom the Kazakh Studio was named in 1984. In addition to serving scholars of Soviet and Central Asian film, *Cinema of Soviet Kazakhstan* will be the primary reference for anyone exploring Kazakh cinema, as well as a great teaching resource.

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The Symphonies. By Andrei Bely. Trans. Jonathan Stone. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xxxii, 512 pp. Notes. \$24.95, paper.
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Published in the first decade of the twentieth century, Andrei Bely's four *Symphonies* mark the emergence of one of the major prose stylists of Russian literature and demonstrate the habits of polarization and juxtaposition that fueled Russian symbolist thinking. Symbolism strove to see the unseeable, to say what words cannot capture, to touch