

SECTION IX: COMMUNISM IN CULTURE, ART AND MEDIA

Dziga Vertov's "Anniversary of the Revolution" Rediscovered

For a long time, only a 12-minute fragment of Dziga Vertov's 1918 film have been known. In 2018, however, the full film was rediscovered by Russian film scholars Svetlana Ishevskaja and Nikolai Izvolov in the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive at Krasnogorsk near Moscow. The silent film, shot between 1917 and 1918 and encompassing 119 minutes of footage, is not only a treasure trove for the history of the Russian Revolution, but also a milestone in the history of documentary film. The restored full film premiered at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in November 2018. A trailer can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC_eP1Ck87g, and more information is available at <https://www.idfa.nl/en/article/100658/dziga-vertovs-the-anniversary-of-the-revolution-to-premiere-at-idfa-2018>.

Comintern Centenary Exhibition in Moscow: Virtual Tour

In June 2019, the exhibition "Comintern: Drama of Ideas and People's Faiths" was opened at the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), in cooperation with the Federal Archives Agency, the Russian Historical Society, the State Central Museum of Modern Russian History, and the "History of the Motherland" foundation. It marks the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Communist International in 1919, and features numerous exhibits from the Comintern Archives held by RGASPI. Photos from the exhibition can be viewed at <https://historyrussia.org/sobytiya/foto/26-iyunya-2019-goda-otkrylas-vystavka-k-100-letiyu-kominterna.html>. Moreover, there is a virtual tour through the exhibition available at <http://dana13.nichost.ru/Komintern/Eng/index.html>, where the Internet user can walk through the exhibition and observe it from a 360° perspective.

"Tarrafal Never Again": Exhibition in Portugal

From 18 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, the Museu do Aljube – Resistência e Liberdade (Lisbon) showed the exhibition "Tarrafal Never Again", dedicated to the history and legacy of the Tarrafal penal colony on Cape Verde. From 1936 to 1974, the Salazar regime maintained a maximum security prison camp on the island, informally known as "Campo da Morte Lenta" ("camp of the slow death"). It housed opponents of the regime, including labour movement activists, communists, and anti-colonial fighters. More information on the exhibition can be found at <https://www.museudoaljube.pt/en/2018/10/18/tarrafal-never-again/>.

Soviet Yiddish Music from World War II Rediscovered

Already in 1944/45, Soviet Jewish ethnographers and musicologists Moisei Beregovskii (1892–1961) and Ruvim Lerner (1912–1972) undertook an extensive expedition to collect Yiddish war songs that circulated among Jewish soldiers and the population. They planned to publish an anthology after the war, yet Stalin’s anti-semitic campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” got in the way of this undertaking: Both scholars were arrested, their working materials were confiscated and were considered lost – until, in the 1990s, they were recovered in the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine. Historian Anna Shternshis from the University of Toronto and Moscow-based chansonnier Psoy Korolenko, together with a group of well-known singers and jazz musicians, recovered and recorded 17 of these moving songs into an album. Released in February 2018 on the Canadian world music record label Sox Degree Records, this unusual product of the Archival Revolution won several awards and was nominated for a Grammy. More information, along with audio examples, can be found at <https://www.sixdegreesrecords.com/yiddishglory/> and http://danrosenberg.net/press_yiddish_gloriy. A review by INCS editor Gleb J. Albert in the Swiss weekly newspaper WOZ can be read at <https://www.woz.ch/-942f>.

Dark Comedy on the Death of Stalin

Directed by Scottish director Armando Iannucci (“The Thick Of It”), “The Death of Stalin” is a dark comedy based on the events around the death of Stalin in March 1953. Starring, among others, Monty Python’s Michael Palin as Molotov and Steve Buscemi as Khrushchev, the film was released in 2017. It portrays the surreal atmosphere of mistrust and paranoia in Stalinism’s leading circle, depicts the rise and fall of Beria in the direct aftermath of the dictator’s demise, and Khrushchev’s clever maneuvering amidst the critical situation. While the film had a successful run worldwide, its possible success in Russia was halted from above: After a closed screening with Duma deputies, the Ministry of Culture withdrew its distribution certificate. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan followed suit. The trailer of the movie can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukJ5dMYx2no>.