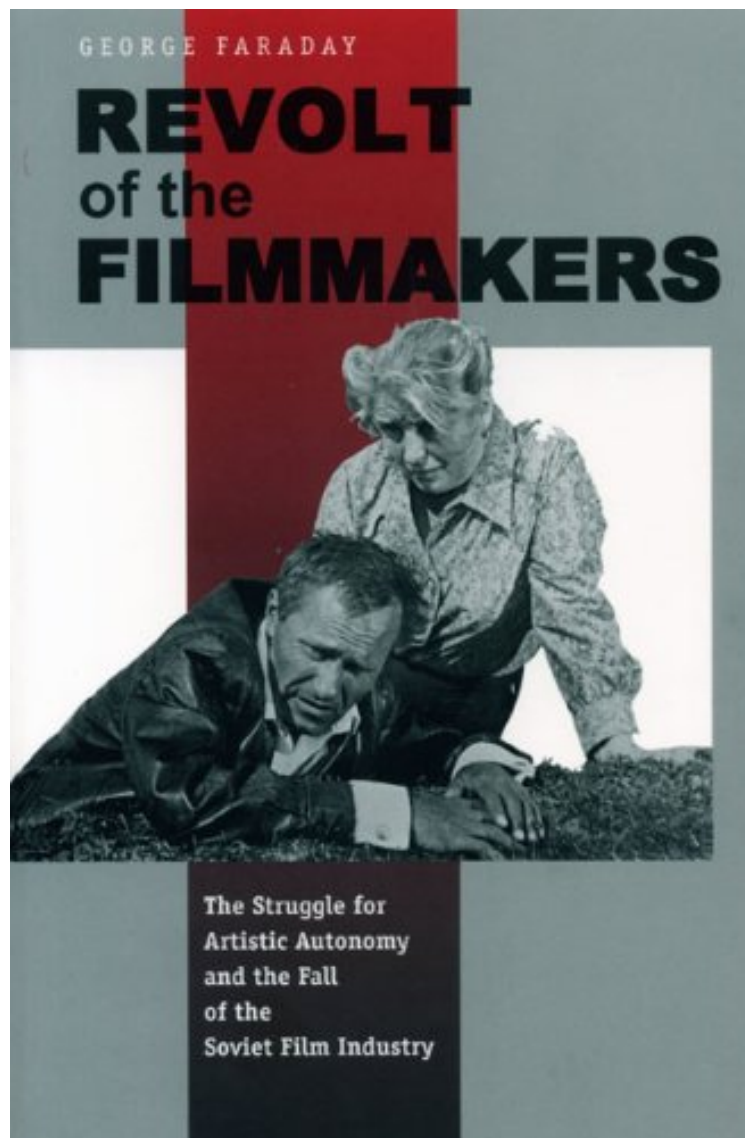


[Ebook pdf] Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the Soviet Film Industry (Post-Communist Cultural Studies)

Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the Soviet Film Industry (Post-Communist Cultural Studies)

George W. Faraday

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George W. Faraday : Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the Soviet Film Industry (Post-Communist Cultural Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the

Soviet Film Industry (Post-Communist Cultural Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Necessary perspective
By J Dole
This is an excellent book that deals with an under-researched topic. The problem with a lot of academic scholarship on Soviet cinema is that it is not self-critical enough to transcend beyond its neoliberal assumptions (Birgit Beumers's work, in particular). The so-called dissident filmmakers of the Soviet times, think German, Muratova, Klimov and the likes, are commonly hailed as heroes by Western critics, while popular auteurs and bureaucrats are dismissed as dupes and slaves to their own dogma. Faraday's book deconstructs many of the facile assumptions that prevail in Western academia. The Soviet system, while problematic in many respects, had its upsides. Meanwhile the very dissidents who embodied liberal aspirations ran out of ideas and financial backing once the very system that stifled them broke apart. These shades of grey are accounted for in the book, which is a refreshing change from the vast majority of scholarship that uncritically derides the Soviet bureaucracy in favor of a vapid concept of artistic individualism. Looking at the state of filmmaking in the West, ask yourself whether such individualism is achievable there either, or whether another kind of powerful and oppressive authority exists to undercut the artist (big business).
6 of 10 people found the following review helpful.
It would have been an interesting article
By Michael Samerdyke
This book is not really a study of the films of the Perestroika and Yeltsin era. It is more of a sociological study of Russian filmmakers as a class. Faraday presents his thesis (over and over) that late Soviet conditions made the filmmakers a privileged class that resented the restrictions placed on it but failed to connect to popular taste in any meaningful way. Thus when the USSR collapsed, Russian filmmakers were unable to make popular films and became marginalized. This would have made an interesting article, but as a book, it goes on for too long. Also, it would have been nice if Faraday had actually discussed some of the movies. The only movie he discusses at any length is "Burnt by the Sun," which he dislikes as trite in theme and overly pretty. Overall, this was a disappointment.

One of the many unforeseen consequences of the fall of the Soviet Union has been the sudden collapse of the domestic film industry, probably the most privileged mass cultural medium of the Soviet Union. By the mid-1980s, some 150 feature films were produced annually for audiences numbering nearly four billion per year. Since 1991, however, cinema attendance has plummeted by a factor of at least one hundred, and the remnants of the once huge audiences now watch an overwhelming number of imported, mostly American, films. *Revolt of the Filmmakers* is the first account of Russia's film industry since this disastrous decline. According to Faraday, who was film correspondent for *The Moscow Times* during the mid-1990s, the turning point came during the years of perestroika, when Russian filmmakers achieved an unprecedented degree of freedom from managerial control. They immediately used their newfound liberty to dismantle the industry's central administrative structures in the name of artistic autonomy. Filmmakers were at last free to follow their own aesthetic criteria, and many began to orient their work entirely toward critical acclaim at festivals. But the unintended result of this revolution in the name of art was the alienation of the mass Russian audience. Today some filmmakers are attempting to regain a mass audience by celebrating and mythologizing national cultural identity, but the Russian film industry has never fully recovered from the revolt of the filmmakers. For this book Faraday has interviewed Russian filmgoers, critics, directors, and other industry insiders. Among those directors whose work he considers are Alexei Balabanov (*The Castle*), Nikita Mikhalkov (*Burnt by the Sun*), Karen Shaknazarov (*American Daughter*), Pyotr Todorovsky (*Moscow Country Nights*), and Marina Tsursumia (*Only Death Comes for Sure*). He also draws upon documentary evidence, including the Russian press and the diaries of Andrei Tarkovsky (*The Sacrifice*, *Solaris*). Few predicted that the loosening of state ideological and institutional controls would threaten the survival of Russia's once-mighty film industry. Even today Lenin's often-quoted, if apocryphal, declaration that cinema is the most important of all the arts remains emblazoned over the gateway to Mosfilm studios but its relevance is in doubt at the start of a new millennium.

This book should appeal to Russian-area specialists and Russian film buffs, and it should appeal as well to sociologists of power, social change, and professions and organization. Faraday's readers will find a good story of an important social event and one more piece for theoretical projects.
Jeffrey K. Hass, *Contemporary Sociology*
In general, this study should be welcome not only in film classes but those on Russian performance arts, culture, history, sociology and even economics. Faraday's extensive endnotes and bibliography will be of help to those who wish to conduct further research.
Melissa J. Sokol, *Slavic and East European Journal*
About the Author
George Faraday received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Duke University in 1997. He is an independent scholar living in Washington, DC.