

# REVUE

**A Film by Sergei Loznitsa**



72 minutes / b&w / 35mm / 2008  
Germany / Russia / Ukraine

**produced by ma.ja.de. filmproduktion**  
**in co-production with St. Petersburg Documentary Film Studio and MDR**  
**in association with YLE TEEMA and Inspiration Films**

An **Icarus Films** Release  
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## SYNOPSIS

As he did with his critically-acclaimed *BLOCKADE*, a documentary re-creation of the WWII siege of Leningrad, filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa has once again scoured the Russian film archives for *REVUE*, selecting excerpts from newsreels, propaganda films, TV shows and feature films that present an evocative portrait of Soviet life during the 1950s and 1960s.

With scenes taken from the length and breadth of the Soviet Motherland, *REVUE* illustrates industry and agriculture (dam construction, steel plants, Stakhanovite labor competitions, farmland seeded by hand and plowed with horse), political life (local elections, abundant Lenin iconography, speeches by Khrushchev, the threat of capitalist spies), popular culture (a village choir, a dance troupe, a travelling cinema, poetry readings for workers, a propagandistic stage play), and technology (space exploration, astronaut Yuri Gagarin, new industrial development).

The film's fascinating flow of disparate scenes representing typical Soviet life of the period is, seen from today's perspective, alternately poignant, funny, and tragic. The cumulative impact reveals a life of hardship, deprivation and seemingly absurd social rituals, but one always inspired by the vision, or illusion, of a communist future.

Seen from these dual historical and contemporary perspectives, *REVUE* is both a nostalgic and instructive look back at a communist past that represents social engineering on a grand, and frightening, scale.

## FESTIVALS AND AWARDS



## REVIEW EXCERPT

"Loznitsa's narration-free compilation of documentary scenes from the Soviet way of life is a must for anyone interested in glimpsing the disappeared Soviet experience. An unorthodox iconography of society, culture and politics in the old U.S.S.R."

—Louis Menashe, Polytechnic Institute of New York University



# ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Sergei Loznitsa was born on September 5th, 1964 in Baranovitchi, in Belarus, which at that time was part of the Soviet Union. His family later moved to Kiev, Ukraine, where Loznitsa attended high school and later graduated with a degree in engineering and mathematics from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute.

It was while employed as a scientist at the Institute of Cybernetics, from 1987 to 1991, that Loznitsa developed an interest in cinema and in 1991 he applied to the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow. He passed a rigorous selection process and in 1997 Loznitsa graduated with a major in film production and direction.

His first documentaries, including *Today We Are Going to Build a House* (1996) and *Life, Autumn* (1998), won awards at film festivals in Leipzig, Tel Aviv, St. Petersburg, and Vila do Conde, Portugal. In 2000, he began producing documentaries at the Documentary Films Studio in St. Petersburg, including *The Train Stop* (2000), *The Settlement* (2001), *Portrait* (2002), *Landscape* (2003), and *Factory* (2004).

Loznitsa's most recent documentary films, *BLOCKADE* (2005) and *REVUE* (2008), are compilation historical documentaries that utilize archival footage from Soviet archives, much of it made available to filmmakers for the first time.

*BLOCKADE* is comprised entirely of silent footage of the Siege of Leningrad during WWII, to which Loznitsa has added an evocative soundtrack of natural sound effects, bringing the footage vividly to life. With *BLOCKADE*, writes Denise Youngblood in *The Russian Review*, "Loznitsa has taken a different and imaginative approach to the compilation documentary," calling it "One of the most important Russian movies of the last decade."

In a similar manner, *REVUE* is made up entirely of excerpts from newsreels, propaganda films, TV shows and feature films that present an evocative portrait of Soviet life during the 1950s and 1960s.

Both films are distinguished by their lack of a conventional narration or voice-over. As Loznitsa explains his approach, "If I put in a voice-over, I offer my view, and that means I exclude the possibility of the viewer having his own view. He has either to agree with me or not agree with me."

## Filmography

"Today We Are Going to Build a House" ("Сегодня мы построим дом"), 1996, together with Marat Magambetow

"Life, Autumn" ("Жизнь, осень"), 1998, together with Marat Magambetow

"The Train Stop" ("Полустанок"), 2000

"The Settlement" ("Поселение"), 2001

"Portrait" ("Портрет"), 2002

"Landscape" ("Пейзаж"), 2003

"Factory" ("Фабрика"), 2004

"Blockade" ("Блокада"), 2005

"Artel" ("Артель"), 2006

"Revue" ("Представление"), 2008

# CREDITS

Written and Directed by  
SERGEI LOZNITSA

Producer  
Heino Deckert

Sound  
Vladimir Golovnitsky

Archive Researchers  
Sergei Gelfer  
Vladimir Kuchinsky

Editor  
SERGEI LOZNITSA

Foley  
Vytautas Leistrumas  
Giedrius Kiela

Sound Mixing  
Ivo Heger

Production Manager  
Sebastian Gassner  
Meike Martens  
Vladimir Kuchinsky

Line producer  
Svetlana Zinovieva  
Nelli Levitskaya

Co-Producers  
Heino Deckert  
Viacheslav Telnov

Archival Footage  
Material aus den Wochenschauen "Unser Land" des Dokumentarfilmstudios Leningrad

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MDR

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YLE Teema

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