# 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

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### **SYNOPSIS**

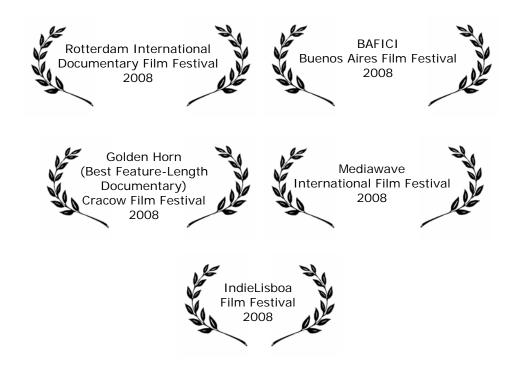
As he did with his critically-acclaimed BLOCKADE, a documentary re-creation of the WWII siege of Leningrad, filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa has once again scoured the Russian film archives for REVUE, selecting excerpts from newsreels, propaganda films, TV shows and feature films that present an evocative portrait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

A Coproduction of ma.ja.de. filmproduktion FGUP "TPO" St. Petersburg Documentary Film Studio MDR

#### Also with the Cooperation of Inspiration Films YLE Teema

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