

Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, eds., *The Thaw, Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013). 524 pp. Paperback \$39.95.

If all systems of periodization reflect the politics of the historians who use them, as R.G. Collingwood famously offered (Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 1994), then it is twice as true for the Thaw, a period of Soviet history from 1953 to the mid-1960s. Stalin's death marked the moment when Soviet intelligentsia re-acquired the voice and right to define cultural values in Soviet society, as Soviet writers, film directors, scholars, and many others started questioning the established set of truths, rules, and norms. Before the Thaw became a name for a historical period, it was a metaphor coined by the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg to describe the historical experience of this particular social group. That we still use it as an umbrella term to define a period after Stalin's death to Khrushchev's ousting from power owes to the fact that most people who write about the Thaw are related to this group either genealogically (as former students or family members), or through a shared social position. This preliminary observation aims to emphasise the biggest challenge faced by the editors and contributors of the volume under review. Denis Kozlov, in the Introduction to the volume and with his co-editor, Eleonory Gilburd in Chapter One, discusses at length (and Sheila Fitzpatrick pushes further in the Conclusion with a question "Whose Thaw?") how the understanding of this period as a "thaw" reflects a privileged experience of Soviet intelligentsia. A look at other social groups suggests that Soviet history of the 1950s and 1960s was much more diverse than implied by the framework of liberalization. Consequently, the contributions to the volume address two major themes: one group of contributions explores intellectual reactions to the de-Stalinization, while another examines the Soviet social landscape in its post-Stalinist dynamic, focusing on social re-integration of former Gulag prisoners. Inasmuch as the volume seeks to define what constituted the Thaw as a peculiar phenomenon of Russian history, it also deconstructs and undermines the idea of the Thaw as a coherent and contingent period.

This deconstruction starts from the very beginning of the volume, with Katerina Clark's article that examines how Soviet authors of the "early Thaw" (1953–57) re-appropriated the vocabulary of sincerity and lyricism that was prominent in Soviet literature during the Great Purge. This connection questions the commonplace association between the Thaw and the vibrant 1920s, both in contrast to the repressive 1930s (Pyotr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka*, 1988). Denis Kozlov studies how the readers of Soviet literary periodicals used the epistolary genre (letters to editors) in order to make sense of the Stalinist repressions and their impact on Soviet society. The authors of these letters asked some fundamental questions related to the very understanding of the socialist project—a theme also discussed in the paper by Polly Jones that studies the literary opposition to the Thaw. Jones offers a definition of the Thaw as an "aesthetic liberalization" (232),

and shows how a number of influential Soviet writers—in an almost Benjaminian logic—resisted this process by insisting that literature should remain politicized.

Three contributions explore the repercussions of the post-Stalinist aesthetic liberalization on an international level. Eleanory Gilburd analyzes a new vocabulary and imagery of internationalism introduced by the Soviet leadership for audiences at home and abroad in the mid-1950s. This post-Stalinist marketing of internationalism for mass consumption produced an unexpected effect—namely, a spectacle of Western culture for Soviet audiences that left a lasting influence on the Soviet public, which acquired new tastes for Western cultural products. Larissa Zakharova studies one of these tastes, a taste for Western fashion, in her chapter and argues that the imagery of Western fashion, imports of Western commodities, and the resourcefulness of Soviet consumers who readily resorted to do-it-yourself solutions, determined the failure of the Soviet political and cultural bureaucracy to define consumer demand in the USSR. In turn, Oksana Bulgakowa shows in her article how the reincorporation of Soviet cinema in the international context invoked new techniques and technologies of filmmaking and, through a change in cinematic forms (rather than content), produced new, more individualist subjective positions on the screen and in real life.

The second group of articles explores social history of the 1950s and 1960s, when a changed political climate led to a reassessment of social categories and hierarchies of late Stalinism. Marc Elie studies the marginalization of the Gulag in the Soviet command economy. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Soviet leadership tried to reform it into a more conventional detention system, yet the inertia of this huge institution prevented any fast transformations, and throughout the Khrushchev period it remained a provider of cheap labour in the Soviet fringes. Alan Barenberg's article is a case study of the city of Vorkuta, one of the former Gulag "capitals." Barenberg shows how employment opportunities, suspicion in home communities, and networks established in Vorkuta during imprisonment often led former Gulag prisoners to stay in Vorkuta after the release, rather than return home. Michaela Pohl, in turn, is interested in the Virgin Lands campaign; in particular, in how its rhetoric failed to mention that the allegedly "virgin" lands had an Indigenous Kazakh population. Pohl also acknowledges the fact that the region had been subject to a recent modernization effort which utilized forced labour. Amir Weiner's article examines Soviet western borderlands incorporated in the USSR in the late 1930s. The return of former Gulag prisoners and uprisings in Poland and Hungary created a unique opportunity to publicly express and perform anti-Soviet and anti-Russian identities in local communities. Yet this situation lasted only for a short moment of time, as the Soviet administration mobilized pro-Soviet forces against local nationalists and used force to suppress dissent in the region.

The Thaw is an important contribution to our knowledge about the Soviet 1950s and 1960s, and as such it will be of interest to a broad audience of scholars of Soviet history. It is also symptomatic in its focal points: literature and cinema of

the Thaw, as well as Gulag returnees. The framework of de-Stalinization almost inevitably highlights these particular areas of Soviet historical experience of this period, while many others—such as history of the working class, Indigenous people or the military—remain in the shadows.

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Shawna Ferris, *Street Sex Work and Canadian Cities: Resisting a Dangerous Order*, (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2015). 272pp. Paperback \$34.95.

In the book adaptation of her dissertation research, Shawna Ferris, an Assistant Professor in the Women's and Gender Studies Program at the University of Manitoba, examines "the effects of transnational free-market economics, ongoing urbanization, and growing concerns regarding home and homeland security on contemporary representations of and responses to street-involved sex work in Canada" (xv). Her selected sources for analysis reflect not only her humanities background (e.g., she offers close readings of two autobiographical novels exploring Indigenous women's experiences in street sex-work) but also her sensitization to multidisciplinary approaches (e.g., she examines news media, anti-prostitution activist and policing sources, and sex-worker activist texts). As a result, her book offers compelling insights into the competing discourses about, and reactions to, sex-work in Canadian cities that will appeal to readers across the social sciences and humanities in addition to the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies.

Ferris couches her analyses of Canadian urban street sex-work in a broader critique of the detrimental influence of "globalization's sanitizing neoliberal and neoconservative agendas in Canadian urban centres ... [on] Canada's current reputation as a liberal democracy concerned with the rights of all its citizens" (xx). She argues that global capitalism has compelled Canada to initiate "urban cleanup projects" aimed at attracting businesses to locate in their cities and tourists to visit (xx). As a result, sex-work, once "synecdochic" with the city, has been deemed an "urban menace" to be eradicated as to not deter businesses and consumers from flocking to Canadian cities (3, xxi). Through this theoretical lens, she explores how dominant representations of and reactions to street sex-work serve this end game and concomitantly fuel a "necropolitics, or privatization of the right to secure, police, or take deadly action against private citizens [e.g., street sex-workers] who are considered "disposable" that contradicts the liberal democratic ideology professed to characterize Canadian sociopolitics (xv-xvi). Within this overarching framework grounded in class-structural critiques, she also problematizes the disproportionate number of, and abject violence against, Aboriginal women among street sex-workers. Ferris traces this overrepresentation to the intersecting legacies and continuing