Violence and destruction pervade *Moscow & St. Petersburg 1900–1920*. In the two chapters that frame the book, “A Double-Headed Eagle: Russia, Land of Paradox” and “Apocalypse Now: War, Revolution, and Cultural Centrifuge,” violence takes the forms of terrorism, assassinations, massacre, revolution (1905 and 1917), and war (the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 and the First World War). Doom and devastation also permeated the artistic culture of the period—even as those arts blossomed with renewed vitality and self-confidence. The chapter “Flowers, Flowers to Cover the Tomb: Blooms of Decadence” captures some of this ambivalence on the relatively subdued, Decadent and Symbolist, end of the artistic spectrum. “Aesthetes and Barbarians” and “The Year 1913” describe more aggressive, avant-garde manifestations of destruction and creativity, including the production of *Victory Over the Sun* in Petersburg in December 1913.

*Moscow & St. Petersburg 1900–1920* is generously illustrated—not only with works of art but also with photographs of historical personages, architectural monuments long destroyed, a soup kitchen, the Tatar market, peasants, miners, and casualties of war. The artworks tend to be lush and colorful. The historical photographs, in contrast, are often stark—and even more striking, in part because of their very lack of color, but also by virtue of their subjects. They remind us even better than the art of the differences between Russia in 1900–1920 and our own time. There may have been a few airplanes in the skies, but horses still filled the streets. A scantily clad Isadora Duncan may have heralded feminine liberation, but the majority of women still covered their hair in public. Foot soldiers with no body armor charged machine guns and died in numbers unimaginable today.

This book is so packed with information, images, and ideas about early twentieth-century Russian art and culture that just about anyone who cares about such things should be pleased. Some of Bowlt’s interpretations of particular works can be quirky. I think, for instance, that Bowlt overstates his case considerably when he writes of Repin’s famous painting *They Did Not Expect Him*: “Like the train in *Anna Karenina*, the invader now crosses the threshold of decent deportment as he advances relentlessly toward the mother and the capacious easy chair, symbols of bourgeois order, complacency, and arrival” (p. 100). But the strengths of this beautiful, informative, and engaging book far outweigh any weaknesses.

**Betsy F. Moeller-Sally, Harvard University**


Mari Ristolainen has taken a number of long, crowded bus trips in order to study community narratives in Novorzhev, a small town of roughly four thousand in Pskov province. Focusing primarily on amateur arts, she analyzes a variety of both conventional and innovative sources, including the internet, newspapers, archives, interviews, local monuments, history books, and the odd plastic bag. To some extent, the title is misleading. The study is far broader than a discussion of amateur art. The title choice is unfortunate because the book may not find the readership that it deserves. The work offers a valuable corrective to scholarly assumptions based on large urban areas in the Soviet Union and Russia. Ristolainen argues that “preferred realities” are constructed by community narratives, and amateur photography, theater, and writing have been harnessed in Novorzhev to that purpose since the early Soviet era. Narrative communities are comprised of narrators who create the narrative and intercessors who interpret the narratives and “guide the receivers” (p. 69). She effectively shows how narrators and intercessors work and rework community narratives in order to provide members with an understanding of the collective past, present, and future. Her discussion of receivers, the third component of the community, is less strong, but audiences are notoriously difficult to analyze. Most often, Ristolainen points to the appearance of new narrators and intercessors as evidence that receivers have internalized the narratives, even when they create new narratives. One wonders about the remaining receivers. There is no place for alternative narratives in this universe. Perhaps residents with less conformist views are those who
tend to leave for larger towns and cities with a greater diversity of communities and narratives, but they are not the focus here.

Two narratives have competed for primacy in Novorzhev since 1917: the Soviet national patriotic discourse and the Novorzhev local patriotic discourse. Ristolainen persuasively demonstrates that these discourses share an emphasis on patriotism, and this similarity reveals an important continuity between the discourses of the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. The national narrative dominated until the 1960s, when the local narrative began to appear. The latter prevailed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Ristolainen’s study ends in 2006, when she is already observing a resurgence of the national discourse under the increasingly authoritarian Vladimir Putin.

The work suffers from some of the typical shortcomings of the quickly published dissertation, but the fundamental ideas are sound and engaging. This scholarship is heavily informed by theory, especially work by Michel Foucault, Tzvetan Todorov, and Stuart Hall, but the book effectively utilizes their ideas to illuminate some realities of small town culture. It is also amply sprinkled with photos and images that provide an effective means for readers to enter into the narrative community that Ristolainen has uncovered.

Susan Costanzo, Western Washington University


Only the brave and/or foolhardy person nowadays undertakes the massive task of editing a dictionary. Only the very brave and/or foolhardy undertakes single authorship of such an enterprise, especially a scholarly one, where the pitfalls are ubiquitous. Given the amount of information, admittedly not always reliable, now available on the internet, this will probably be the last dictionary of Russian and Soviet cinema to appear in printed form.

Peter Rollberg has not hitherto been widely known for his publications on cinema, having concentrated his previous output on literary studies, but he has been teaching Russian and Soviet cinema for almost a decade. The dictionary draws on a wide range of sources in Russian, English, and German, with fewer French materials. There are some important omissions from the French sources and this oversight is regrettable. Many French-language works would be more accessible to the English-language reader than the German sources that are more liberally cited, although the German material is, of course, of a consistently and impressively high academic standard. The function of a bibliography is, however, to indicate other materials that might be of use to the reader.

Rollberg has penned an excellent introduction, which in twenty pages tells us more about Russian and Soviet cinema history than several full-length book studies have done. Unfortunately it also contains one monumental howler: the “trophy films” taken by the Red Army from the German studios in 1945 are unforgettably referred to as “the so-called lute films,” which conjures up a truly Socialist Realist image! (p. 13)

The largest minefield that awaits the dictionary compiler is the eternally unanswerable question of what or whom to include and what or whom to leave out. The core content of a reference work like this will be obvious to anybody working in the field. Any reviewer would mercilessly castigate an editor or author who omitted directors of the standing of Sergei Eisenstein or Vsevolod Pudovkin, scriptwriters like Evgenii Gabrilovich or Viktor Shklovskii, cameraman like Andrei Moskvin or Eduard Tisse, actors such as Vera Baranovskaia or Nikolai Cherkasov, composers of the stature of Dmitrii Shostakovich or Isaak Dunaevskii, or films like *The Battleship Potemkin* or *Ballad of a Soldier*. Remarkably, Rollberg has managed to include all these—and many more. It is particularly pleasing to see so many entries associated with the popular cinema that has previously been too frequently overlooked by academic researchers, but that meant so much to the mass audience,