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**Tony Shaw, Denise J. Youngblood.** *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. 301 pp. $34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-1743-2.

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In *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds*, Tony Shaw and Denise Youngblood offer an ambitious survey of Soviet and American film during the Cold War. The authors situate their work within âthe new Cold War historyâ (p. 5), aiming to understand the Cold War from the bottom up by using popular culture. While acknowledging the vast body of scholarship focused on American propaganda film during World War II, the authors identify historiansâ sparse consideration of cinema between 1945 and 1989. Shaw and Youngblood contend that *Cinematic Cold War* is not only the first comparative study of American and Soviet film, but also the first work to seriously treat film between 1945 and 1989 (pp. 4-5). The authors clearly identify their main argument in the introduction: âCulture, interpreted both as a way of life and a range of products (including paintings, television programs, and films), was a critical determinant of the Cold War, not an adjunct to diplomacy and military affairs, but a factor that shaped the meaning and nature of the conflict for millions of people from beginning to endâ (p. 6).

The authors organize the work into two sections. Part 1, âIndustry , State, and Cold War Controversy,â traces the development of a distinct Cold War film culture in the United States and Soviet Union. Part 2, âSites of Conflict,â explores the contours of Cold War ideology by using specific film pairs (e.g., *Incident at Map Grid 36-80* [1983] and *Rambo: First Blood Part II* [1985]) to detail each of the ideological themes traced in part 1 of the work. Each pairing of films ârelates either directly to a key propaganda theme or a seminal Cold War issueâ (p. 9). It is in this section that the authors marshal unpublished scripts, censorsâ reports, government records, reviews, and box office returns to situate the films in their broader context. One should also note that Shaw and Youngblood use these specific films (ten in all) to draw conclusions about the larger corpus of films produced during the Cold War. This allows them to avoid simply cataloging films.

The authors divide the American film industry into a number of thematic periods. One argument is that between 1947 and 1953–a time when McCarthyism eclipsed many domestic issues–Hollywood openly declared war on communism. Intense pressures from above drove Hollywoodâs bellicosity toward communism more than an internal desire by producers, directors, and actors to fight Reds. Thus, the influence of the House Un-American Activities Committee, the American Legion, and the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, gave impetus to a strong anticommunist spate of Hollywood films.

However, as the influence of McCarthy politics waned in the later 1950s, the character of Hollywood films began to change. Daniel Taradashâs *Storm Center* (1956) and *The Communist Dream* (1956) implicitly questioned âAmerican Cold War orthodoxyâ (p. 25). This trend was further elaborated between 1962 and 1980, when films used comedy, drama, and the Vietnam War to âde-communizeâ the Russians, Chinese, and Koreans (p. 30). The election of Ronald Reagan, though, placed the Cold War in high relief and the presidentâs attacks on the film industry gave rise to more anticommunist cinema. Finally, between 1986 and 1990, American films presaged the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the United States by commending Mikhail Gorbachevâs *glasnost* and *perestroika* initiatives in the Soviet Union. Late 1980s film harkened back to the early 1960s, when in both cases American filmmakers highlighted the similarities between Americans and Russians.

The authors also delineate four âperiodsâ of filmmaking in the Soviet Union between 1946 and 1988 (p. 40). During the early Cold War (1946-53) the Soviet government established the Ministry of Cinematography, âgiving film a considerably elevated status among the arts, but also drawing cinema even closer to the bosom of the stateâ (p. 40). Soviet films adhered to three specific political goals during this time: the accurate portrayal of Americans as warmongers, contrasting the âtwo worldsâ of an aggressive, capitalist America and the peace-loving Soviet Union, and the need to portray the Soviet state as âfundamentally peacefulâ (p. 47). Like its American counterpart, Soviet film during this period lacked nuance and catered to specific geopolitical Cold War aims.

During what the authorâs label the âEra of âPositive Legitimation,ââ the Soviet government abolished the Ministry of Cinematography, replacing it with the Main Administration of Cinema Affairs. This restructuring placed filmmakers further away from the direct supervision of Communist Party officials. Whereas in the previous period filmmakers adopted âhardâ propaganda–the overt denunciation of America, and the extolling of Soviet virtue vis-Ã -vis its enemies–this era is defined by âsoftâ propaganda. Soft propaganda comprised films that obscured the nationality of foreign spies and saboteurs, centered on internal weaknesses, and mainly took place within the Soviet Union. These films also placed romantic love, individualism, and familial relationships at the fore while limiting their critique of Western society. The authors argue that âSoviet life, modest though it may be compared with material life in the West, was still preferableâ (p. 49).

Anti-American sentiment in Soviet films ratcheted up during the 1980s, primarily because Jimmy Carter, and especially Ronald Reagan, adopted aggressive stances on communism. Soviet films lambasted Hollywood as anti-democratic, ignorant, and uncultured. However, during Mikael Gorbachevâs *glasnost* film producers rushed to produce critical commentaries on the Soviet past. In these two detailed case studies of American and Russian filmmaking, the authors find that political, diplomatic, and cultural tones marched in lockstep. An eruption of Soviet-American hostilities typically led to a concomitant rise in anti-American/-Soviet propaganda film in each country.

One limitation of this work is that Shaw and Youngblood are unable to capture the âaudienceâ of Soviet and American films. This is unfortunate, considering the workâs thesis hinges on the authorsâ ability to showcase how film constructed meaning during the Cold War for the average American and Russian. To successfully describe a history of the Cold War from the bottom up also requires some measure of audience reception and response to popular culture. For example, when discussing early Soviet film (1946-53), the authors contend that anti-Americanism failed to take hold in the moviegoing population. âIndeed,â continues Shaw and Youngblood, âgiven the popularity of American trophy films, it might be argued that moviegoers were the segment of the population most likely to admire Americans and American cultureâ (p. 47). This is an intriguing claim, but one that is unsupported by evidence in the work. The authorsâ incorporation of box office records, government files, and behind-the-scenes materials from Hollywood and the Ministry of Cinematography is laudable. However, these sources do not lend themselves to an authoritative description of audience reaction to film in either country. In the end, the authors are far more persuasive when describing the political attitudes of filmmakers, producers, directors, and government officials than when attempting to interpret the audienceâs perception of film.

This work intersects nicely with other studies of film and comic books during the Cold War. For example, William R. Savageâs *Comic Books and America* (1984) and Bradford Wrightâs *Comic Book Nation* (2001) analyze comic books during the postwar era and both suggest that *Front-Line Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales*, Korean War comics published by Entertainment Comics (EC) between 1952 and 1954, emphasized the similarities between Reds and American soldiers. Similarly, in chapter 1, Shaw and Youngblood argue that American filmmakers during the

1960s and 1970s attempted to de-communize Russians, Chinese, and Koreans by making them appear more human. While Russian filmmakers did not laud Americans, the era of âpositive legitimationâ witnessed the softening of anti-American caricatures and rhetoric in film.

On the whole, both scholars of the Cold War and twentieth-century film will appreciate this work. Those interested in comparative histories of the USSR and the United States will find this workâs methodology and organization useful.