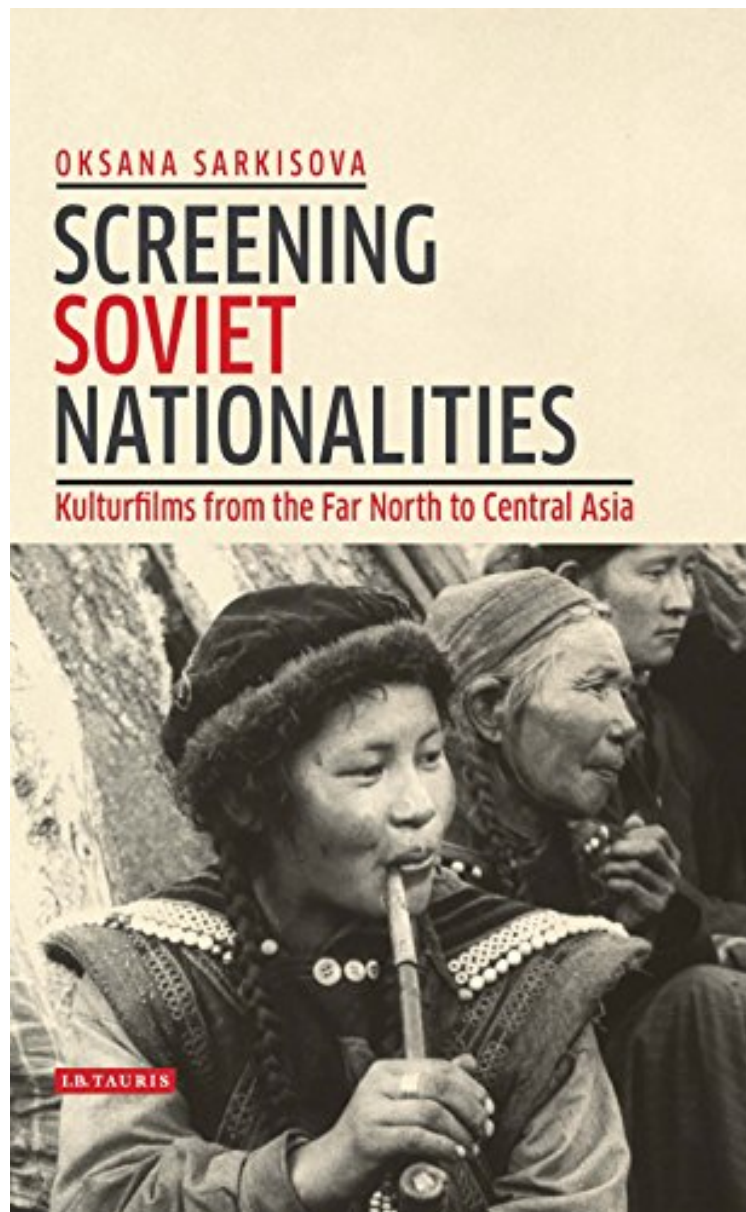


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Screening Soviet Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia (Kino)

Oksana Sarkisova

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Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia (Kino):

Filmmakers in the early decades of the Soviet Union sought to create a cinematic map of the new state by portraying its land and peoples on screen. These films created blueprints of the Soviet domain's scenic, cultural, and ethnographic perimeters and brought together – in many ways – disparate nations under one umbrella. Categorised as kulturfilms, they served as experimental grounds for developing the cinematic formulae of a multiethnic, multinational Soviet identity. *Screening Soviet Nationalities* examines the non-fictional representations of Soviet borderlands from the Far North, to the Northern Caucasus, and to Central Asia between 1925 and 1940. Beginning with Dziga Vertov and his vision of the Soviet space as a unified, multinational mosaic, Oksana Sarkisova rediscovers films by Vladimir Erofeev, Vladimir Shneiderov, Alexander Litvinov, Mikhail Slutskii, Amo Bek-Nazarov, Mikhail Kalatozov, Roman Karmen, and other filmmakers who helped construct an image of Soviet ethnic diversity and left behind a lasting visual legacy. The book contributes to our understanding of changing ethnographic conventions of representation. It also looks at studies of diversity despite the homogenising ambitions of the Soviet project, and reexamines methods of blending reality and fiction as part of both ideological and educational agendas. Using a wealth of unexplored archival evidence from the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive (RGAKFD) as well as the Gosfilmofond state film archive, Sarkisova examines constructions of exoticism, backwardness and Soviet-driven modernity through these remarkable and underexplored historical travelogues.

'Sarkisova has written an altogether original book in which her expertise in Soviet documentary films and nationality policies is unparalleled. By placing her topic within the wider international and theoretical context she has succeeded in creating something very valuable.' (– Peter Kenez, University of California Santa Cruz, USA) 'This superb book compellingly makes the case for the importance of early documentary films in the Soviet cultural project. Sarkisova demonstrates how Soviet ethnographers struggled to navigate unstable political terrain in order to capture people and culture at the margins, as well as the state's efforts to "sovietize" them. Thoroughly researched, engagingly written and including insightful analyses of myriad films, I urge anyone interested in Soviet cinema, Soviet cultural politics, and Soviet nationalities policy to read this book.' (– Denise Youngblood, University of Vermont, USA) About the Author Dr. Oksana Sarkisova is a research fellow at the Vera Donald Blinken Open Society Archives of the Central European University, and Director of the Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival (Budapest), Hungary.