

Title: Stalinism Depicted from a Distance in Aleksandr Terekhov's Novel *Kamennyi most*
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While post-Soviet cultural revisitations of the Soviet period have assumed various forms and approaches, ranging from nostalgic to critical, recent examples of Russian historical fiction appear to indicate a different turn. They neither seek primarily to establish historical facts in order to work through traumatic experiences, thereby relegating them to the past, nor do they express a nostalgic longing for a lost world, now remembered in a positive light. Rather, these texts focus on individual and collective memory processes, problematizing attempts to understand and come to terms with the past. This paper examines such a problematization with regard to the Stalinist period in the novel *Kamennyi most* by Aleksandr Terekhov (2009), which has received much critical attention as well as second prize in the Bolshaia kniga awards. The narrative is based on an actual event in 1943, when the son of Stalin's Minister of Aviation is believed to have murdered his girlfriend—the daughter of the Soviet ambassador to Mexico—because she refused to remain with him in Moscow. In the novel, this case is reinvestigated by the narrator-detective, whose findings suggest a number of possible alternative interpretations of the event. However, the text, which can be described as faction in that it mixes documentary and fictional narrative modes, ultimately raises more questions than it answers—about the nature of the case itself, as well as the nature of human memory and historical knowledge. Drawing upon Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction as a prominent feature of postmodern texts, I will examine how this novel functions as a site of negotiation between past and present. I will also show how it offers a commentary—not only on the Stalinist period, but, more significantly, on post-Soviet Russia and its relation to the past.

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