



Snapshot from the film *Kolyma* by Yuri Dud, 2019

Snapshot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo1Woul38rQ>

## A Pop-Cultural Reappraisal of State Terror? The YouTube Film 'Kolyma – Birthplace of Our Fear' and Its Viewers

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A year ago, the documentary film 'Kolyma – Birthplace of Our Fear' was uploaded to YouTube. Made by the blogger Yuri Dud, it has received over 20 million views today, despite the fact that it addresses one of the darkest chapters of recent history in Russia - the Gulag. The article analyses the film and its popular appeal, not least among young audiences. It identifies three key phenomena of present-day Russia that the documentary addresses: fear, ambivalent attitudes towards Stalin and an ahistorical form of patriotism.

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## A Pop-Cultural Reappraisal of State Terror? The YouTube Film 'Kolyma – Birthplace of Our Fear' and Its Viewers

The documentary [Kolyma – Birthplace of Our Fear](#) is likely the first example of a 'pop-cultural' attempt at dealing with Russia's difficult Soviet past. Produced by Yury Dud (in collaboration with Yevgeny Statsenko), the film was released on YouTube on 23 April 2019, where it garnered over 5 million views within a week.<sup>[1]</sup> Since then, the video has been viewed nearly 21 million times. This is, of course, not the first documentary about this historically bleak region in north-eastern Russia: Kolyma has been a byword for the Gulag – especially during the period under dictator Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) – at least since the publication of the short story collections by Soviet prisoner and writer Varlam Shalamov (1907-1982). Other writers, as well as journalists and filmmakers, have also taken up the historical term 'Kolyma,' separate from its application as a geographical designation. Most notable about Dud's work, however, is the incredible popularity that it achieved within a very short period of time: usually, artistic and academic works on this subject rarely reach a wider public – or are even summarily ignored. From a scholarly perspective, Dud's film is thus of interest for two different reasons: To what does the film owe its success? And what exactly does it convey to the general public?

Born in 1986, the former sports reporter and now much-discussed fashion-conscious YouTuber Dud is often referred to as a 'hipster'. He not only emphasizes his independence from state-run – and thus de facto controlled by the Presidential Executive Office of Vladimir Putin – Russian media, but also skilfully stage manages his own media presence and the information hype that surrounds him. For several years now, Dud has posted interviews with well-known personalities to his [YouTube channel](#). He soon became infamous for the 'uncomfortable' to openly provocative questions he asked, which triggered a wide-ranging public response. In 2019, he also began to produce documentaries devoted primarily to urgent social problems in Russia. Dud's work represents, on the one hand, a remarkable mix of depictions geared towards sparking the strongest possible impact and emotional response, and, on the other, a well-researched journalistic exercise committed to a truthful representation of the facts. It thus needs to be underlined that as much as Dud pushes the rules of 'showbusiness,' sometimes deploying shocking effects and breaking taboos, he also avoids any acts of deception. To entice as many followers and subscribers as possible to his blog, he engages in solid research about topics unconnected to current (political) trends. His YouTube channel currently has more than 7 million subscribers and purportedly brings in revenues of more than 60,000 euros per month.<sup>[2]</sup> Dud has also been awarded several journalism prizes.

An increasing number of Russian journalists and activists (including well-known figures such as [Aleksey Navalny](#), Ekaterina Gordeeva and [Leonid Parfyonov](#)) have discovered the possibilities of the Internet for themselves – above all, the political freedoms it allows in today's authoritarian Russia. On their YouTube channels, they engage with urgent political and social issues and address those problems of the Russian populace often ignored or distorted in official political discourses. That being said, these discussions mostly contend with current issues. Conversely, Dud's documentary Kolyma - the Birthplace of Our Fear is an exception insofar as it connects the Russian present with a specific reflection on the nature of Russia's Soviet past.

### What is Kolyma?

Dud's film documents a nine-day journey by car along the 'Kolyma,' the most important federal highway

in Russia's Far East, which runs through the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and the Magadan oblast (province) and connects the cities of Yakutsk and Magadan. The 'Kolyma' is considered one of the most impassable and dangerous highways in all of Russia; Dud's film crew covered over 2000 kilometres of it. The roadway is named after the Kolyma river ('Khalima' in the Yakut language) that crosses it and which flows into the East Siberian Sea, a section of the Arctic Ocean. The huge territory in the northeast of Russia that surrounds this river is also included under the designation of 'Kolyma', although it is not a separate administrative unit. Here, numerous labour camps were built under Stalin. It can be said that the infrastructural development of the region was first completed by prisoners, who were the first to build the Kolyma Highway. Russia's geography and political history are thus intimately intertwined in the term 'Kolyma'.

Just as the Auschwitz concentration camp is able to stand in for the Holocaust as a whole, so Kolyma also stands in for the Gulag in Russia's political history. This collective term in turn represents not only the entirety of the facilities (prisons, labour camps, etc.), but also those mechanisms (such as extrajudicial or 'pseudo-judicial' convictions, executions, forced deportations, etc.) identified as components of state terror in the Soviet Union. Depending on the periodization and the definition of 'political persecution' chosen (what, for example, of the executioners who themselves were swallowed by the mill of death?) the number of Gulag victims can fluctuate widely. In his film, Dud references an estimate that, between 1930 and 1958, over 20 million people transited through the Gulag and over two million perished there.<sup>[3]</sup>

## The Film: Structure and Form

The 'plot', which develops similarly to a road movie, opens with a reference to the temperature: Dud stands in the middle of the Kolyma Highway and excitedly announces to the audience: "It's minus 55 degrees outside!" Such freezing temperatures, which are almost exotic from a Central European perspective, run like a thread through the entire two hour and 17-minute film: in various thematic contexts, reference is made to how cold it is at that moment and what hardships such temperatures entail. One gets the impression that the repeated mention of the freezing cold is meant to underline how out of the ordinary the region – and a trip there – might be. But it also creates a 'bridge to the past': what were the working conditions like for the prisoners in the camps, how could they survive in such temperatures? What clothes did they wear, what did they get to eat, how were they housed? Dud provides the expected information while also making use of striking individual details: for example, the temperature in barely heated barracks was often so far below zero Celsius, that when a prisoner awoke in the morning, their hair was sometimes frozen to the surface on which they were lying.

Past and present merge in this film; the plot constantly oscillates between then and now. For Dud, 'Kolyma' is not only a historical term, but also a region in contemporary Russia where many people facing enormous hardship live. He thus not only tells the story of 'the' Gulag, but also of individuals who live in Kolyma today: What do they do for a living? How much do they earn? What do they hope for from life? Kolyma is portrayed as an area that remains problematic to this day. The harsh living conditions continually demand an answer to the question of whether to stay or move away. In addition, communities in this remote region often do not perceive themselves as being part of the same country as its distant capital Moscow. People in Kolyma claim that they feel disconnected from Moscow and that the Russian government has forsaken them and their problems. This critique of the government, however, is expressed very quietly and cautiously; no specific politicians are named. Better safe than sorry.

Dud takes on the dual role of moderator and interviewer. He is constantly in the frame, often against a backdrop of a breathtakingly beautiful landscape. He conducts all the interviews – with eyewitnesses of the Gulag as with Kolyma’s current residents. The travel report is repeatedly interrupted by interviews with the relatives of Gulag victims and eyewitnesses (such as the well-known actor Yefim Shifrin, son of a Gulag prisoner born in Kolyma, and the daughter of the famous Soviet aerospace engineer and prisoner Sergey Korolev). Dud also provides information about Soviet history and the Gulag, kept at a rudimentary level – as if for people who have never heard of such things before. The multimedia style of his presentation suggests that this context is primarily intended for a younger audience: the viewer is simultaneously confronted with a striking image, the spoken word and finally, just like in a power point presentation, a superimposed text (or bullet list with short theses and diagrams). The film engages a constant and fairly successful attempt to sustain the viewer’s attention; its almost pedagogical rigour ensures that the material is easy to absorb and retain. Dud also addresses his audience in a rather infantile way and – surprisingly, considering the subject matter – uses jargon, sometimes speaking in slang and using expressions that one usually only hears from less educated people. Likely because of this, Dud’s tone remains the same throughout the film: it is anything but sad or tragic, but rather stimulating and determined to spark the viewer’s interest. The film obviously wants to captivate the viewer and – one is inclined to say – make it fun. Dud’s expedition through Kolyma almost looks like an extreme-sports competition, giving the impression of a curiosity-awakening challenge. The film constantly conveys exciting and ‘nerve-tingling’ details about the travel conditions. It is hard to shake the impression that one of the aims of the film is to appeal to enthusiasts of extreme experiences and possibly convince possible investors of untapped business opportunities in the region.

### Three Points of Emphasis in the Film, and its Critique: 1. Fear

Dud explicitly emphasizes that his film is primarily about the present, not the past. The film’s detour into the past serves only to illuminate a phenomenon of the present: fear, by which he means a very specific kind of fear, namely the fear of expressing one’s own opinion and thereby attracting too much attention. Why does this particular fear dominate the lives of so many people in Russia? Those who are afraid to form their own opinion, Dud argues, do not develop further, nor are they able to participate in the development of their country. If one is not allowed to express one’s opinion without fear of possible detriment, one is also unable to gain any self-respect. Thus, according to this laconic diagnosis of the present, this fear is the main enemy of not only mutual respect, but also freedom in Russia. And the roots of this fear stem from the Soviet past, specifically in the experience of the Gulag.

As appealing as this argument may be, it is a rather curtailed hypothesis: Neither the current political conditions in Russia nor other historical experiences (namely those outside of the historical experience of the Gulag) are discussed here. It must be noted here that Dud has previously gained notoriety for his openly critical statements against the government; he is thus far from being politically abstinent. The political distance in his film, which at first glance looks naive, might also be a deliberate choice. Most likely, Dud’s goal was to show the existence and history of the Gulag as something that remains relevant today, thereby justifying this simplification and compression of the film’s political analysis. Although the film reveals certain continuities between then and now (not only through the eyewitness interviews and images of the imposing ruins of the former labour camps still spread across Kolyma today, but also through the conversations with people who live there today as they discuss the region with the film crew), these are not explicitly addressed or analysed. They remain subliminally constructed by cinematic means (pauses, images, editing, questions asked in the interviews, and the like). The question remains whether such a message, packaged in this way, about the political relevance of the past is actually

absorbed by the audience.

## 2. The Stalin Cult and the Justification of the Gulag

A certain continuity is most evident when it comes to the figure of Stalin and the attempt to make any sense of the Gulag. Over the course of the film, Dud – consciously or unconsciously – asks many direct and almost naive questions, including about his interlocutors' attitudes towards Stalin. Their responses are on the whole positive, which may be surprising considering the subject at hand. Even more astonishingly, even among initiates – historians who research the history of the Gulag or the descendants of Gulag victims – express positive opinions, a fact which deserves closer attention.

### Attitudes towards Stalin

Numerous studies have documented a benevolent attitude to the Soviet past over the course of the entire three decades of post-Soviet Russia's existence. In this context, the [Levada Centre](#) (a renowned independent polling institute in Moscow) has determined that approximately 60 per cent of the population "romanticizes" the Soviet past, albeit without necessarily wishing for the restoration of that era's living conditions.<sup>[4]</sup> Nonetheless, this "romanticization" is (also) dependent upon a broad repression of any knowledge about the history of the Gulag. In a survey conducted in April 2017, about 20 per cent of respondents noted that they knew virtually nothing of Stalin's political persecutions; conversely, 13 per cent claimed to know either a great deal or specific details; the largest group admitted to knowing something or at least the general outlines of the subject.<sup>[5]</sup>

Overall, the positive attitude towards Stalin has steadily increased in recent years, reaching its (provisional) peak in March 2019: one of two respondents claimed that they felt positive feelings for Stalin (above all, respondents mentioned their respect for Stalin, followed by sympathy and enthusiasm).<sup>[6]</sup> By comparison, in 2008, a total of 31 per cent had reported a positive attitude. When asked "What role did Stalin play in the life of our country?," 18 per cent of those polled in March 2019 responded with "positive", while a further 52 per cent claimed he played a "rather positive" role. Less than 20 per cent of those surveyed thought he played a negative role. In 2008, that number was 37 per cent.

This combination of 'romanticization' and partial or total ignorance of the political crimes committed by the Soviet state reveals certain paradoxical attitudes and interpretive patterns: one in four respondents justified the political persecutions under Stalin, considering them "politically necessary" or "historically justified"; almost 40 per cent condemned them and considered them a "crime". It is also notable that the subject of Soviet state terrorism unto itself was deemed nearly irrelevant: Almost half of those questioned claimed that one should "speak as little as possible" about this past history and instead "let it rest". According to the results of [another national survey in 2017](#), almost half of the respondents condemned the Stalinist "purges", while 43 per cent consider them "justified" (for whichever reason). Whether one considers this percentage high or low is less important than a different statistic: Even among the descendants of those arrested or murdered during that time, only 57 per cent condemned the reprisals, whereas 33 per cent of the victims' descendants claimed they were a "necessary measure" to "guarantee law and order in the country."<sup>[7]</sup> Thus every third person considered the suffering in their own family to be politically justified, even necessary.

This attitude is also reflected in the film, although the selection of Dud's interview partners does not

necessarily meet the statistical requirements for opinion polls. It is likely not an accident that Dud waits until the end of the film about the Kolyma region and the labour camps there to shock his viewers with statements from people inclined to justify the political regime responsible for the suffering of members of their own families. In line with Dud's filmic style, the viewer is forced to confront a very simple, direct question: How is that possible? Several explanations can be posited.

### Possible Explanations

The winner of the [2015 Nobel Prize in Literature](#), Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich, whose books are anchored in the numerous interviews and conversations she conducted in the former USSR and are thus imbued with a considerable sociological relevance, makes a similar observation:

In recent years, I have visited about ten Russian cities, interviewed hundreds of people. They do not negate the cruelty of Stalin, the cruelty of the reprisals under him, but they also say that the Soviet state was fairer to ordinary people and that people with money were not as brazen as they are today, and that corruption did not proliferate in the same way.<sup>[8]</sup>

Authors have also pointed out that looking back at one's own family history in the twentieth century can be fraught with dramatic ambivalences and contradictions, and that information about victims in one's own family can be accompanied by remarkable justifications, which always begin with a "but".<sup>[9]</sup> The most well-founded explanation for this stance is a still deeply rooted, irrational attitude towards those in power, confirmed by various surveys over the years, which Gudkov calls a "sacralization of state power" that allows people to excuse, relativize and whitewash even those state crimes committed against members of their own families.

Similarly, the Russian cultural scholar Alexander Etkind<sup>[10]</sup> illuminates a specific combination of nostalgia and grief in today's post-utopian Russian society – a quasi-schizophrenic situation that engenders much suffering.<sup>[11]</sup> He portrays a utopian dialectic that tolerates a great deal of ambivalence: From the start, the ideas and ideals on which the Soviet experiment was based and the mourning for its victims went intertwined; this entanglement likely only intensified in the ensuing decades. Post-Soviet cultural memory thus attests, according to Etkind, to a deep connection between alienation and return, between distance and longing for closeness – both processes based on an experience of loss: the loss of individual lives and the loss of ideas, or more specifically, the fading of the attraction of those ideas.

It is worth noting here that, even among the victims themselves, the allure of communist ideas and ideals can engender remarkably ambivalent attitudes towards one's own destiny. Thus, even after barely surviving in Soviet prisons and camps, prominent Soviet authors Yevgenia Ginzburg and Shalamov – representatives of many other Gulag prisoners – remained more or less convinced of the value of the communist, specifically Soviet, social model. Conversely, this peculiar phenomenon of a deep 'utopian loyalty' of victims and survivors (not to mention their relatives) to precisely the regime responsible for their humiliation and dehumanization is unthinkable in the case of the Shoah. In old age, Shalamov wrote: "I was a participant in an enormous, [but] lost battle for a true renewal of humanity."<sup>[12]</sup>

The American scholar of Eastern Europe, Kevin M. F. Platt, has also considered the continued ambivalences within one's own (cultural) memory produced by the Soviet past – almost three decades after the dissolution of the USSR.<sup>[13]</sup> He argues that a unified historical narrative regarding the experiences of the Soviet era is no more possible than a definitive break with this past and a completely

new beginning. Over the course of seven decades of Soviet power, a *joie de vivre*, utopian optimism and a vibrant cultural and scientific life were inexorably linked to oppression and state terror (the intensity of which, of course, decreased drastically after Stalin's death in 1953). Additionally, one must contend with those major shifts in Soviet history that have become imbued with an exclusively positive sheen, despite the innumerable – often ignored – victims, such as industrialization in the 1930s, the victory over Hitler's Germany in 1945, successes in outer space travel from 1957 and the like. And thus, even proud or nostalgically-coloured memories are overshadowed by the traumatic experiences of violence and suffering caused by the Soviet state.

As part of my own research on the historical memory among Russian youth today, I was again and again able to see how much the young people in my interviews are troubled by the ambivalent character of Soviet history and memory, especially since their reflections receive little support from the adults in their lives.<sup>[14]</sup> As much as the Soviet past is an ambivalent experience in and of itself, clear statements are needed: what exactly were the crimes of the state? Furthermore, as much as the entire Soviet past cannot be labelled as "definitively negative", the crimes committed by the state during the period must be demarcated historically (on the basis of solid scholarship), legally, politically and culturally as "clearly negative". To date, however, Russian society has completed neither the necessary cultural nor political work, leaving attitudes toward state terror, and to the Gulag and its victims, to remain in a state of ambivalence. It is thus also an open question whether a film, as important as Dud's undoubtedly is, can change this, as it continues to reproduce this ambivalence in many ways.

### 3. An Ahistorical 'Love of the Homeland'?

Although Dud describes himself as a "patriot of Russia" who wants to live only there, he does not hide his Ukrainian origin, often repeating that he is "not a Russian". Yet Russia is the country that he loves and which he wants to actively support. The love of the homeland is thus also an important motif in his film about the Kolyma region. His enthusiasm is not only reflected in the landscape he films, but also in his conversations with residents of the settlements and cities of the Kolyma, during which Dud addresses the question of what home means and what one should be willing to do for it. According to the central message of the film, even a homeland built on the bones of thousands of people deserves to be loved. In this context, the positive attitudes towards Stalin reappear: a historian who lives in the Kolyma region today argues for the legitimacy of the Gulag in the name of the homeland, which he equates with the state and its dominant power. The heroic labour of millions of prisoners, so Dud's interlocutor argues, was necessary to sufficiently strengthen the Soviet Union to win the Second World War.

Although this line of argumentation contradicts all historical realities, it is anything but rare in Putin's Russia: the Gulag is imbued a peculiar meaning. But how else does one explain to oneself and others that millions of innocent citizens were murdered by their own government, locked up in camps, forced to labour under inhuman conditions? The complicated search for meaning of the Gulag is by no means a new phenomenon but has paralleled Soviet and then post-Soviet Russian culture since the 1930s. Dud is not particularly convinced by his interlocutor's argument, but nonetheless continually supports a rhetoric of the homeland throughout the film.

At this juncture, the main weakness of this undoubtedly interesting film becomes abundantly clear, especially since it also highlights a striking feature of the culture of remembrance in today's Russia, especially among young people – by which I mean a specific cluelessness and lack of historical knowledge, which often manifests itself when one tries to understand the issues in one's own country. In

this film, Dud turns to a phenomenon that has been researched for decades – albeit by a rather small, but therefore all the more dedicated, group of people. Just as a litany of writers (the above-mentioned Shalamov and Ginzburg, but also Lydia Chukovskaya, Veniamin Kaverin, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Yuri Dombrovsky among others) produced valuable works, literary reports and analyses, so numerous scholars (especially historians, of course) and NGOs (above all, Memorial) have gathered solid expertise, published many books and carried out extensive archival research in recent decades – almost none of which is mentioned in this film. The Gulag, as Dud ‘discovers’ it for himself and his audience, appears completely disconnected from the last 100 years of Russian culture. Thus the history of the Gulag appears paradoxical, or more concretely: entirely without culture and history. Furthermore, the much-vaunted ‘love of the homeland’ reflects a similar paradox: How can one speak of such a love, when one has so little knowledge of the history and culture of that homeland?

## Concluding Remarks

Yury Dud’s film is a characteristic example of post-Soviet history-telling: it is the work of a person without history for other people without history. That being said, the possibility remains that this was a trick or a deliberate method deployed by the filmmaker: Dud positioned himself on the same level as his potential audience – and thus scored an unexpected success. It is nevertheless questionable whether historical knowledge conveyed in this fashion can be repurposed as a source for current political insights. It is all the more likely that, considering the film’s structure and content, it will contribute little to any fundamental criticism of power or of the regime. At a bare minimum, Dud provides an introduction to this taboo subject, arousing an initial curiosity in his audience. So is the film just a pop-cultural flash in the pan? Or a realistic representation of the situation in today’s Russia? Ultimately, it is both, as Dud is anything but a poor journalist; but he, too, was socialized in a country about which another well-known Russian journalist, Anna Narinskaya, so aptly said: “Not only are we [i.e. the Russian people] not ready yet to condemn the repression [state terror] as evil, but we are not even ready to agree that it existed at all!”<sup>[15]</sup> In that sense, Dud’s film might contribute to sparking such an acknowledgement – at least among younger audiences. A rather modest goal, especially when measured against the enormous success of the film.

Translated from German by Julia Sittmann



## Footnotes

1. [Yury Dud oproverg dannye o dokhodakh svoego YouTube-kanala](#) [Yury Dud Denies Information about the Revenues of His YouTube Channel, Yugopolis (6 April 2018); Yekaterina Simikyan, [Yury Dud vozglavil reyting rossiiskikh blogerov s samoy dorogoy reklamoy v 2018 godu](#) [Yury Dud Leads the Ranking of Russian Bloggers with the Most Expensive Advertising], Rusbase (2 April 2018), both retrieved on 24 April 2020.
2. A highly recommended overview of the various categories of “victims of political persecution,” the types of state terror or, rather the various ways to define it, and the difficulties in giving a more or less exact number can be found in Yelena Zhemkova and Arseniy Roginskiy, [Mezhdru sochuvstviem i ravnodushiem – reabilitatsiya zhertv sovetskikh repressiy](#) [Between Sympathy and Indifference – The Rehabilitation of the Victims of Soviet Repression], Memorial (2013/2016), retrieved 23 April 2020.
3. [Struktura i vosproizvodstvo pamyati o Sovetskom Soyuze](#) [The Structure and Reproduction of Memories of the Soviet Union], Levada-Tsentr (24 March 2020), retrieved 24 April 2020.
4. [Stalinskie repressii](#) [Stalinist Repression], Levada-Tsentr (23 May 2017), retrieved 23 April 2020.
5. Karina Pipiya, [Dinamika otnosheniya k Stalinu](#) [Dynamics of Change in the Attitudes Towards Stalin], Levada-Zentr (16 April 2019), retrieved 23 April 2020.
6. Ibid.
7. [Stalinskie repressii: prestuplenie ili nakazanie? Muzey istorii GULAGa and Fond Pamyati](#) [Repression under Stalin: Crime or Punishment? The Gulag Museum and the Fund for Remembrance], Moscow 2017, retrieved 23 April 2020.
8. Svetlana Aleksievich, *Vremya sekond-chend* [Secondhand Time]. Moscow 2013, p. 498.
9. See, for example, Lev Gudkov, *Derealizacija prošlogo: funkcii stalinskogo mifa* [The Derealization of the Past: Functions of the Stalinist Myth], *Pro & Contra*, no. 6 (2012), 108-135.
10. Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.
11. For more about post-utopian tendencies in post-Soviet Russia, see Anna Schor-Tschudnowskaja, *Das schwierige Erbe von Utopie, Illusion und Betrug in der postsowjetischen russländischen Gesellschaft*, in «So ist er ein Weder-Noch, ein Sowohl-als-Auch...». Beiträge zur Literatur und Kultur, edited by Joanna Flinik et al., Berlin: Peter Lang, pp. 205-219.
12. Cited in: [O proigrannoy bitve. Nobelevskaya leksiya Svetlany Aleksievich](#) [About the Lost Battle: The Nobel Prize Lecture of Svetlana Alexievich], The Nobel Prize (7 December 2015), retrieved 23 April 2020.
13. See Kevin M. F. Platt, *Affektivnaya politika 1991 goda: nostalgija i travma na Lyubanskoj ploščadi* [The Affective Politics of the Year 1991: Nostalgia and Trauma on Lyubanskaya Square], *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 116, no. 4 (2012): 199-215.
14. See: Anna Shor-Chudnovskaya, *Young Russians’ View of Their Family’s Soviet Past: Nostalgic, Post-Utopian or Retrotopian?* *Mir Rossii*, 27, no. 4 (2018): 102–119.
15. Cited in: Sergey Medvedev, [Voyny za pamjat](#) [The Wars for Remembrance], Radio Svoboda (7 November 2018), retrieved 23 April 2020.



Goldmine at Kolyma Gulag, Siberia, ca. 1934

Author: unknown; Source: Public domain



Snapshot from the film Kolyma, former barracks

Snapshot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo1WouI38rQ>



The Youtuber Yury Dud in 2017

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