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Diese #vatniksoup stellt die russische Filmemacherin Anastasia Trofimowa vor. Sie ist vor allem für ihren jüngsten kontroversen Dokumentarfilm „Russians at War“ und ihre Arbeit als Produzentin für den staatlichen russischen Fernsehsender RT bekannt.

1/19



Soft Power ist schon lange Teil der hybriden Kriegsführung des Kremls. Der Begriff bezeichnet die „Fähigkeit, Gewünschtes eher durch Anziehung als Zwang zu erreichen“ & kann „durch Beziehungen zu Verbündeten, wirtschaftliche Hilfe & kulturellen Austausch kultiviert werden.“

2/19

## THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair



### How Russia employs 'hard soft power' to influence overseas media and sow dissent and fear among foreign populations

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Inside the studio during an RT broadcast. Misha Friedman/Getty Images



politics

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## Understanding Russia's Soft Power Strategy

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This article examines the specifics of Moscow's soft power strategy. The sources of the Kremlin's interest in the soft power concept are explained. The article discusses how the soft power concept fits in the current Russian foreign policy philosophy. Russia's soft power resources, institutions and instruments are described. Special attention is given to the limitations and constraints of Moscow's soft power strategies. The reasons why these strategies are often being inefficient are explained. The Kremlin's inclination to the combination of the soft and hard power strategies is identified.

**Keywords:** Russia; soft power; Kremlin; foreign policy

Russland nutzt Soft Power seit Jahrzehnten, um im Westen Spaltung & Misstrauen zu säen. Dokumentarfilme wie Ukraine on Fire bieten eine revisionistische & pro-Kreml Sicht auf die Ereignisse in Kiew & der Ukraine 2014. Regie führte der russische Meister-Propagandist...



...LA-Bewohner Igor Lopatonok mit Oliver Stone als ausführender Produzent. Der Film wurde auf dem Taormina Film Festival in Italien uraufgeführt. Die GRU-nahe niederländische Bonanza Media hat auch Doku-filme produziert die  Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit verharmlosen.

4/19



Der neueste Beitrag zu  Soft-Power-Propaganda ist Anastasia Trofimowas Dokumentarfilm „Russen im Krieg“. Die Premiere des Films fand bei den Internationalen Filmfestspielen von Venedig statt, was im Westen & besonders in der  Gesellschaft zu heftigen Reaktionen führte.

5/19

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## Sympathetic view of Russian soldiers creates controversy at Venice Film Festival



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By [Jonny Walfisz](#)

Published on 06/09/2024 - 13:45 GMT+2

Trofimowa ist eine erfahrene Filmemacherin. Sie arbeitete 7 Jahre lang als Produzentin für den staatlich kontrollierten  Sender RT.

„Russians at War“ wurde sowohl mit öffentlichen als auch mit privaten kanadischen Geldern finanziert & erhielt min. 230.000 EUR Finanzierung.

6/19



**RT DOCUMENTARY DIRECTOR:**  
**"VOLUNTEERS SAY WAR AGAINST ISIL IS THEIR WAR"**



**SWEDEN CONDUCTS LARGEST MILITARY DRILL IN OVER 20 YEARS**

ANASTASIA TROFIMOVA

HOME FILMS COLLABORATIONS ABOUT

From WWII to the Olympic podium:  
 the champions of the first Team USSR.

## CHAMPIONS OF THE SPIRIT

The Soviet Union made its first Olympic appearance in the 1952 Summer Games in Helsinki after decades of political antagonism. Many expected the USSR to fail miserably. WWII ended only 7 years prior. The country was in ruins. 27 million people perished in the war, more than in any other country. Soviet athletes had never before participated in international sporting events, with the last Olympic Games attended under the flag of the Russian Empire.

But Team USSR shocked the world, coming in second in medal count only to the USA in its first Olympic Games. Yet very few knew the stories of the champions from behind the Iron Curtain.

Team USSR included frontline soldiers, survivors of the 900-day Siege of Leningrad, and prisoners of multiple Nazi concentration camps. Against all odds and through sheer enthusiasm - a motto applicable not only to sport - Team USSR took 20 Gold, 30 Silver and 19 Bronze medals, establishing its leadership in sport competitions to come. Featuring first-hand accounts of the few remaining gold medalists, Galina Zyбина and Yuri Tukałov, we get a feel for a disappearing "old school" unlike any other - the Soviet school.



Champions of the Spirit (documentary)  
 Anastasia Trofimova



Archival photos were gathered from personal archives of Galina Zyбина and Yuri Tukałov.

ROLE: Director, producer, director of photography, co-editor

DURATION: 27 minutes

BROADCASTER: RT Documentary

AVAILABLE IN: English, Russian, Arabic



Im Film dringt Trofimowa illegal in die Ostukraine ein und interviewt russische Soldaten 180km hinter der Frontlinie. Der Moscow Times zufolge waren die russischen Soldaten durch „vagen Patriotismus“, „Rache für gefallene Freunde“ und natürlich durch Geld motiviert.

7/19

Trofimova takes the audience from 180 km behind the front lines where ranks are "replenished" to the trenches of the front line where the men die. The soldiers depicted are often volunteers who say they went to the front for various personal reasons: vague patriotism, avenging fallen friends, protecting loved ones, preventing their children from going to war in the future, or, more commonly, for money.

Die meisten der von Trofimowa interviewten Soldaten schickte man zum Fleischwolf von Bakhmut, aber irgendwie hat sie all die Kriminellen & zwangsrekrutierten Ausländer aus Ländern wie Nepal übersehen, die von geübten  Einheiten wie Wagner als Fleischwände benutzt wurden.

8/19

# Russian convicts released to fight with Wagner accused of new crimes

10 August



JOINT PRESS SERVICE OF KRASNODAR REGIONAL COURTS

By Arsenii Sokolov, Tim Whewell & Nina Nazarova

BBC World Service

**A prisoner believed to have been released early to fight with Wagner mercenaries in Ukraine has been accused of committing a double murder in Russia after returning home from the war.**



Die Filmemacherin gab lokalen russischen Medien ein Interview, das einige Einblicke in den Prozess des Filmemachens und ihre Weltanschauung gibt. Diese Auszüge wurden von @TriggerLRSSG übersetzt & publiziert. Ihr Thread dazu kann hier gefunden werden:

9/19

 **Trigger**  
@TriggerLRSSG · Follow

Since @TIFF\_NET still decided to premiere russians at War and think it's not propaganda, I will highlight a few things the film's creator Anastasia Trofimova said during an interview with russian media ([baikal-journal.ru/2024/09/05/esl...](https://baikal-journal.ru/2024/09/05/esl...)). See 📖 below 📌

1/n Show more



2:57 AM · Sep 12, 2024

3.9K Reply Copy link

Read 74 replies

Zunächst einmal sind die russischen Behörden & Geheimdienste hart gegen jegliche Video- oder Audioaufnahmen in den vorübergehend besetzten Gebieten vorgegangen. In jüngster Zeit sind sie mit dramatischen Gesten & Aktionen gegen die Benutzung von Handys vorgegangen.

10/19





Zweitens ist es praktisch unmöglich, in die vorübergehend besetzten Gebiete in der Ostukraine zu reisen, um dort 7 Monate lang nah an der Frontlinie zu verbringen & russische Soldaten frei über den Krieg zu befragen, ohne dass die  Geheimdienste davon wissen.

11/19



News | Freedom of the Press

# Russia jails journalist for spreading 'fake news' about army in Ukraine war

*Sergei Mikhailov was arrested in 2022 after publishing reports about civilian deaths in Bucha and Mariupol.*



Sergei Mikhailov, a journalist and editor of the Listok publication, was arrested in 2022 near Moscow [SOTA/Telegram]

30 Aug 2024



LATEST NEWS UKRAINE

## Russian FSB opens criminal cases against CNN journalist and Ukrainian reporters filming in Kursk Oblast

The Russian securities services announced that CNN's Nick Paton Walsh, along with two Ukrainian journalists Olesia Borovyk and Diana Butsko, are accused of illegally crossing into Russian territory to report on Ukrainian military activities in Kursk Oblast.

 BY VIRA KRAWCHUK · 22/08/2024 · 2 MINUTE READ



Journalists in Sudzha, Kursk Oblast. Source: Screenshot from CNN report by Nick Paton Walsh

# Marina Ovsyannikova: Anti-war Russian journalist sentenced in absentia

4 October 2023

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Watch: Anti-war demonstrator disrupts Russia's state TV news

**Moscow's court has sentenced journalist Marina Ovsyannikova, who protested live on air against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, to 8.5 years in jail.**

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< NEWS

March 7, 2024

## Russia: Journalist sentenced to seven years for speaking out against war

Recently added

We must act globally to safeguard the future of humanity

#FreeTheFive Blog: ADOLFO CAMPOS

Iran: Ten years after 'Woman Life Freedom'

Trofimowa sagte aus, dass das gesamte von ihr aufgenommene Filmmaterial die Behörden des erfundenen Staates der Volksrepublik Luhansk durchlief, die Anastasia als „sehr nett“ und „lustig“ beschrieb, und dass sie viel über das „politische Leben in der Ukraine“ lernte.

12/19

**- You obviously had gigabytes of video footage. What did you do with it? Carry it around with you?**

— I had to somehow upload the materials, because it was unclear when I would go back to Moscow. And in general, it was really scary to carry all this with me. You never know, a rocket could hit the house and everything would burn down. So I went to the nearest city [in the territory of the self-proclaimed LPR — LB], went to the local administration and uploaded the materials there. The first time I came, they said, hello, I'm filming a movie here, can I use your internet to send the materials there. They were like, okay, fine. The only document I showed was my passport, that I was definitely from Russia, born in Moscow.

They sat me down at a table in the accounting department, gave me a table. I laid out everything there - a computer, a hard drive, cards. I agreed that I would leave my computer with materials in the accounting department so that they would be uploaded. I bought a cake. There are wonderful, incredible accountants working there, very nice, funny. From these jokes, of course, you learn a lot about political life in Ukraine. They were very tasty when they were talking about Zelensky. I was silent, just listening.

Trofimowa behauptete auch, dass sie während der Dreharbeiten nicht Zeuge von Kriegsverbrechen wurde. Der Grund dafür war wohl, dass sie weit von den Fronten entfernt war. Nach Angaben des Kyiv Independent haben die Russen über 150000 dokumentierte Kriegsverbrechen begangen

13/19

“Russians at War” is being marketed by the filmmakers as an anti-war documentary, and Trofimova has claimed in press coverage that she came to view the Russian soldiers she filmed as “**absolutely ordinary guys**” who are tools in a political game.

Critics say that the film’s attempts to “humanize” Russian soldiers are an affront to Ukrainian victims, particularly in light of the nearly 150,000 **documented Russian war crimes** committed in Ukraine since 2022.

Anastasia scheint vor Propaganda nicht gefeit zu sein: Sie sagte, dass 🇷🇺 „seit vielen Jahren nicht mehr an Kriegen teilgenommen hat“; sie hat die Kriege in Transnistrien (1992-93) Abchasien (1994-96) Tschetschenien (1999-2009) Georgien (2008) & Syrien (2015-22) vergessen.

14/19

The Russian director begins by expressing her surprise at the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Throughout the film, Trofimova consistently uses the term “invasion” rather than “full-scale invasion” and fails to mention Russia’s invasion and **temporarily occupied Crimea** back in 2014.

Trofimova also claimed that her country “hasn’t participated in wars for many years and that she only read about wars in books.” Thus, the war in 2022 came as a “complete shock” to her.

“It’s puzzling how the director could have overlooked her country’s involvement in various wars and occupations for at least the last 30 years (Transnistria 1992-93, **Abkhazia** 1994-96, Chechnya 1999-2009, Georgia 2008, and **Syria** 2015-2022),” Bassel pointed out.

In Venedig hatte Trofimowa auch Zeit, den Dokumentarfilm Songs of Slow Burning Earth von Olha Zhurba über den Krieg in der Ukraine zu kritisieren. Laut Anastasia war sie „kein großer Fan“ des Endes, da es „ukrainische Kinder und russische Kinder gegenüberstellte,...

15/19

## SONGS OF SLOW BURNING EARTH

Dec 11, 2023



- **Director:** Olha Zhurba
- **Scriptwriter:** Olha Zhurba
- **Countries:** Ukraine / Denmark / Sweden / France
- **Genre:** Documentary
- **Country of shooting:** Ukraine
- **Language:** Ukrainian
- **Duration:** 95 min

### SYNOPSIS

Landscapes, occasional conversations and encounters, and sounds that weave in and out of the frame compose SONGS OF SLOW BURNING EARTH. Captured in varying proximities to the frontline over two years, the audiovisual diary of Ukraine’s immersion into the abyss of total war traces the subtle changes in Ukrainian society. The ragged chords of panic and horror of the first weeks of the Russian invasion slowly morph into the numb stillness of the acceptance of death and destruction, which eventually becomes the tragic normality for the local population, but just an afterthought for the rest of the world. Against the backdrop of the (meta)physical landscape of collective disaster, a new generation of Ukrainians aspires to imagine the future.

...mit 🇺🇦 Kindern, die darüber nachdenken, was sie tun können, um eine bessere Ukraine für die Zukunft aufzubauen, und 🇷🇺 Kindern, die einfach nur marschieren & Kriegslieder singen.“ Ihr zufolge stellte der Film die Russen als „aggressive & schreckliche Menschen“ dar.

16/19

To that point and in answer to a second question by the same journalist on whether she had seen the Ukrainian films in Venice, Trofimova voiced her disquiet at the ending of Olha Zhurba's documentary *Songs of Slow Burning Earth* which is also playing Out of Competition.

The audiovisual diary captures the impact on Ukrainian people and society in the first two years of the ongoing Russian invasion, which began in February 2022.

“I found it to be really good, especially the first 15, 20 minutes... when people just started to find out that the war is beginning... I found it to be really strong,” said Trofimova.

“The ending, though, I wasn't that much of a fan of because it sort of contrasted Ukrainian kids and Russian kids, with Ukrainian kids thinking about what they can do to build a better Ukraine for the future, and Russian kids were just shown as marching and singing war songs.

“I found this to be playing into that whole narrative that Russians, by definition, are these aggressive and awful people... you know that it's in their blood to be to be this way. “

Wir finden Trofimowas Beide-Seiten-Blickwinkel problematisch, denn in diesem genoziden Krieg können wir eindeutig den Angreifer (Russland) & den Verteidiger (Ukraine) nennen. Vielleicht liegt Trofimowas Sichtweise daran, dass sie eines Tages nach Russland zurückkehren will.

17/19

– **After the film's release, you won't return to Russia, will you?**

– I will wait for the reaction of the authorities. It sounds naive, but I would really like to work in Russia. Because now there is a division, we do not see each other and do not hear each other. Therefore, I would still continue to try to bridge this huge gap. But it depends on the reaction to the film.

Das Toronto Film Festival musste die Vorführung von „Russians at War“ (beschrieben als „eine fesselnde Geschichte über Opfer & Desillusionierung, in der Soldaten wie Schachfiguren in einem ruchlosen Spiel erscheinen“) wegen massiver Reaktionen der 🇺🇦 Gemeinschaft absagen.

18/19

## NEWS

# TIFF halts 'Russians At War' screenings after "significant threats"; producers lament "heartbreaking" situation

BY JEREMY KAY | 13 SEPTEMBER 2024



SOURCE: COURTESY OF TIFF  
RUSSIANS AT WAR

In a disturbing and unprecedented development, Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) has paused three upcoming screenings of the documentary *Russians At War* after top brass were made aware of "significant threats to festival operations and public safety".

STATEMENT

September 12, 2024

## Update to *Russians at War* Screenings

Effectively immediately, TIFF is forced to pause the upcoming screenings of *Russians at War* on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday as we have been made aware of significant threats to festival operations and public safety. While we stand firm on our statement shared yesterday, this decision has been made in order to ensure the safety of all festival guests, staff, and volunteers.

This is an unprecedented move for TIFF.

As a cultural institution, we support civil discourse about and through films, including differences of opinion, and we fully support peaceful assembly. However, we have received reports indicating potential activity in the coming days that pose significant risk; given the severity of these concerns, we cannot proceed as planned.

This has been an incredibly difficult decision. When we select films, we're guided by TIFF's Mission, our Values, and our programming principles. We believe this film has earned a place in our Festival's lineup, and we are committed to screening it when it is safe to do so.

STATEMENT

September 11, 2024

The film's producers, which includes Canadian Oscar nominee Cornelia Principe, called TIFF's decision "heartbreaking" in a statement provided by the festival and condemned those who have spoken out publicly against *Russians At War*, including Freeland, Ukraine's consul-general for Toronto Oleh Nikolenko and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

"Their irresponsible, dishonest, and inflammatory public statements have incited the violent hate that has led to TIFF's painful decision," the producers wrote. "This temporary suppression is shockingly un-Canadian."



Trofimowa hat ihren Dokumentarfilm als „Antikriegsfilm“ bezeichnet, was ihr in Russland etwa 7 Jahre Gefängnis einbringen würde. Bislang haben sich weder der Kreml noch die russischen Behörden zum Dokumentarfilm geäußert.

Wir halten ihn für beschönigende Propaganda.

July 03, 2024

By [RFE/RL's North.Realities](#)

## Russian Anti-War Documentary Director's Prison Term Extended



Russian director Vsevolod Korolyov was convicted and sentenced to the three-year term in March on a charge of distributing false information about Russia's military.

A St. Petersburg court of appeals on July 2 extended the three-year prison term of documentary director Vsevolod Korolyov, known for his anti-war stance, to seven years, the court press service said. Korolyov was convicted and sentenced to the three-year term in March on a charge of distributing false information about Russia's military. He was arrested in July 2022 after he posted two reports online about Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, namely about alleged atrocities committed by Russian troops against civilians in Ukrainian towns and cities. He pleaded not guilty. *To read the original story by RFE/RL's North.Realities, click [here](#).*

### **Why do critics say *Russians at War* is propaganda?**

Trofimova herself admitted in a recent interview that her film's source sample "is not ideal." The movie doesn't feature a single anti-invasion Ukrainian. Instead, viewers get a main protagonist from Donetsk fighting on Russia's side and a scene where an elderly woman in the Donbas receives Russian humanitarian aid and talks about how she fears Ukrainian troops. The people living in occupied Ukraine who do not welcome Russian invaders either refused to speak to her or had already fled the area, said Trofimova.

Film critic Anton Dolin told Meduza that Trofimova's documentary likely appealed to the Venice Festival's organizers because all her characters "curse the war and want peace," and the movie offers an overall message that resonates with "European humanists" who are "unlikely to delve into the nuances." Dolin said most of the European journalists who saw Trofimova's film in Venice described it privately as "peace-promoting and honest." "I am sure the selection committee came to the same conclusion," he said.

Documentarian Vitaly Mansky told TV Rain that *Russians at War* is a "professional" and "very important" propaganda piece that he compares to work by Nazi propaganda filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl. He said it would be "idiocy" to accept Trofimova's claim that she managed to film on Russia's frontlines for seven months without the Defense Ministry's permission. (Mansky said he tried previously to hire someone to record footage on Russia's side of the front, but the Russian authorities immediately arrested his cameraman.)

Das Buch „Vatnik Soup - The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation“ wird am 20. September 2024 veröffentlicht. Man kann es jetzt hier vorbestellen (mit zusätzlichen Extras!)

#### **Vatnik Soup — KLE-art**

FOR ENGLISH TEXT on shopping site: Select language in top menu Do your friends believe Ukraine is full of neo-Nazis and secret biolabs? Do you feel overwhelmed by propaganda and lies every time you...

<https://www.kleart.dk/webshop/p/vatnik-soup>

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