

The 1917 Revolution Continues on Russian TV

By [Mark H. Teeter](#)

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Actor Milosh Bikovich as the main hero Sergei Kirsanov-Dvinsky, in "Wings of Empire." **Triiks Media**

If last week's 1917 centennial serials have left you suffering from Lenin-Trotsky-Stalin withdrawal — Russia's central TV stations have now gone four days without airing a big-budget, multi-part epic about the Revolting Three in their previously Bolshevism-starved prime-time schedules — Wednesday evening you can take heart (and maybe some Pepto): Channel 1 is launching another great whomping 8-part series.

The new entry is so determined to keep viewers from wandering back to the Internet that it includes the much-maligned Alexander Kerensky along with the now-standard cast of Commies; changes the emphasis from (In)famous People to Regular Old People; and rounds up a nice handful of highbrow Silver Age cultural figures to sweeten the deal.

Channel 1 has this to say about it:

“The film’s action covers the period from 1913 to 1921, reflecting the dramatic events of Russian history – a hurricane coursing through the fates of people and nations, leaving behind for some the ruins of the past and for others the foundation for a new life.”

Not purple enough? Wait, there’s more. Actually, a lot more: the following represents about a quarter of the breathless blurb:

“‘Wings of Empire’ is not about specific historical personalities, but about the people of that era, representatives of the three main classes – the nobility, the peasantry and the commoners: Sergei Dvinsky, a Junker of the Cavalry School, is confident that he will become a great military leader; Sofia Bekker, the daughter of a German baker, dreams of becoming a famous poetess; and Matvei Osipov, a factory worker, is carried away with the idea of universal equality and justice. They are completely different, they have different aspirations and different views on life, but each of them is inspired by a dream.

“Each will become not only a witness, but also a participant in the events that took place in Russia. This is the story of their growing up, their struggle and confrontation, their experiences and loves — and, of course, their personal tragedies, woven into the history of a vast country. In the film, the creators have their heroes confront not only the political leaders Kerensky, Trotsky, Sverdlov, Stalin, etc., but also cultural figures: Anna Akhmatova, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Nikolai Gumilyov are just some of them. And everyone has to answer the main question: does everything that happens to them and the country represent a rapid rise to something new or a terrible fall into an abyss?”

Anyone who read that last bit and wondered “Is this a trick question?” should probably skip this series. But who knows, it might just be great. The publicity stills speak well of the location shots and costumes, at least.

OK then, please put your seatbacks and tray tables into their upright and locked positions and fasten your seat belts for takeoff at 9:30. And maybe get a pillow ready too: you can either doze off comfortably on it or, if the events on screen start threatening to drown you in yet another wave of Channel 1 fake history, it may be used as a flotation device.

Крылья империи/Wings of Empire. Historical drama. Russia, 2017. Channel 1, Wed. at 9:30 p.m.; parts 1-2. Premiere

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