SCRSS Digest

No 3, Autumn 2017, £2.00

Centenary of 1917 Russian Revolution

Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies

EUROPEAN SCHOOLBOOKS LIMITED

THE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES OF EUROPE

Discover our extensive range of Russian books including language learning resources, classic and contemporary literature, children's books, periodicals and much more

Visit our **European Bookshop** in London
123 Gloucester Road
SW7 4TE
or place your order online

www.russianbookshop.co.uk

We speak Russian and are happy to advise you on the most suitable materials.
Email us at russian@esb.co.uk
Telephone us on 01242 245252

До скорой встречи!

Contents

Welcome 1
SCRSS News 2
Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News 3
The Significance of the Russian Revolution & the Role of the Peasantry 3
The Function of Art in the Worker State 5
Women in the Russian Revolution 8
The Russian Revolution & Avant-Garde Architecture 12
The First Soviet Constitutions, Self-Determination & the Right to Secession 16
Nadezhda Lamanova: Pioneer of Soviet Clothing Design 18
The Influence of the October Revolution on the Russian Language 21
The Beginnings of Anglo-Soviet Cultural Relations 23
Reviews 26

Welcome

1917 Russian Revolution Centenary Issue

By Ralph Gibson, Honorary Secretary of the SCRSS

Welcome to this special issue of the *SCRSS Digest* to mark the centenary of the Russian Revolution. The range of content reflects the diverse interests of the Society's members and contributors, and I am sure you will find much to reflect upon.

Many of you have already seen the centenary-related exhibitions at the Royal Academy, British Library and Design Museum in London, and are planning to visit *Red Star over Russia* at Tate Modern, opening in November. In addition to these major exhibitions, there has been no shortage of smaller events, exhibitions and projects across the UK, reflecting the huge impact of those 'ten days that shook the world' back in 1917.

The SCRSS itself has been making its own contribution to the anniversary, focusing on the strengths of the SCRSS Soviet Collections – our library of the arts, humanities and social sciences of the USSR (1917–91). Using our poster archive, we have produced an iconic collection of five mugs commemorating the Russian Revolution. The Society is also a co-founder of the Russian Revolution Centenary Committee (RRCC). The RRCC is developing three key projects: a film festival in September and October at two London cinemas, a major international conference on 4 November at TUC Congress House, and a documentary film narrated by Maxine Peake.

The SCRSS is, of course, a 'child' of the Russian Revolution, having been established in 1924 soon after the recognition of the USSR by the British Government. Founded as the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR, the Society has always sought to increase knowledge and understanding of that vast country. The founding members and supporters, including such famous names as George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, John Maynard Keynes and Constance Garnett, were keen to create an authentic source of information on all aspects of the first country in the world to pursue a socialist course. To that end, talks were arranged, books and others materials collected, newspaper articles translated, exhibitions organised and language lessons started.

Over ninety years later, the Society strives to preserve and develop those collections, and continue the range of activities. In the last few years we have focused on our extensive library, including sorting, cataloguing and digitising the Society's own archive records, as well as our photographic and research collections. Although much could still be improved, the almost universal response of first-time visitors to the SCRSS library is one of wonder that a collection dedicated predominantly to the Soviet era continues to exist here in central London.

SCRSS News

1917 Centenary Round-Up

The SCRSS was delighted to host the Marx Memorial Library's touring exhibition *The Impact of the Russian Revolution on World War One (1917–22)* in June, together with a lecture by its curator Professor Mary Davis. See the Next Events section for details of another visiting exhibition in October – the TUC Library's *The Russian Revolution and its Impact on the Left in Britain 1917–26*. As mentioned on page 1, the SCRSS is a co-founder of the RRCC, which is organising a series of events in the autumn, including a major international conference, film festival and new documentary film – see the RRCC website at www.1917.org.uk for full details and online booking.

In addition, in co-operation with the North Wall Gallery and St Edwards School in Oxford, and our affiliate TopFoto, the SCRSS is currently preparing a new photo exhibition about *Lenin and the Russian Revolution.* The exhibition will use material from the SCRSS Photo Library – see www.scrss.org.uk/photolibrary.htm for more information on our photographic collections, including a link to TopFoto's website for easy viewing of all SCRSS images digitised to date.

Membership Renewal

If your annual membership is due for renewal any time up to the end of 2017, you should receive a green renewal notice with this copy of the *SCRSS Digest*. Please help us by responding promptly. If you're uncertain about your membership status or believe that you've already renewed, contact the Honorary Secretary by email on ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk. My thanks to all members who generously add donations to their membership fee: your donations are vitally important for the day-to-day operation of the Society. We rely on our membership to continue our invaluable work. The SCRSS Council set a target of securing one hundred new members during 2017 to mark the Russian Revolution centenary. We hope this issue will encourage you to continue your membership and help bring in new members from your colleagues, family and friends. As well as individual and joint membership, the Society also welcomes affiliations from companies, organisations and educational institutions. See www.scrss.org.uk/membership.htm for current membership rates.

SCRSS Library Access

See Next Events for details of the special Saturday library openings for members from October to December (no appointment necessary). Weekday access continues to be very limited and all weekday visits are by appointment only, so we encourage members to take advantage of our Saturday openings, which often also coincide with exhibitions and / or lectures. The SCRSS Council will continue to seek ways of improving access to the library and email members as additional opportunities arise.

Next Events

Thursday 28 September to Thursday 14 December (excluding 19 & 26 October)
Evening Class: Russian Language for Intermediate Level (Term 1)
SCRSS members £40 / non-members £60 per term

Saturday 7 October, 11.00–16.00
Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members with TUC Library Exhibition *The Russian Revolution and its Impact on the Left in Britain 1917–26*
SCRSS members only – free admission

Friday 13 October, 17.00–19.00
Exhibition: *The Russian Revolution and its Impact on the Left in* Britain *1917–26* from the TUC Library
Free admission

Friday 13 October, 19.00
Lecture: Mike Pentelow on *Lenin in London*

Friday 3 November, 19.00
Talk: Margarita Mudrak on the *Russian Revolution Centenary and St Petersburg* (followed by informal social evening)

Saturday 4 November, 10.00–18.00
Event: Russian Revolution Centenary – Marking 100 Years Since the October Revolution
Location: Congress House, TUC, London
Tickets: £10 / £8 unwaged (book online at www.1917.org.uk)

Saturday 11 November, 11.00–14.00
Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members
SCRSS members only.

Saturday 11 November, 14.00–16.00
Lecture: Andrew Jameson on *The October Revolution in Russian Literature*

Saturday 2 December, 11.00–16.00
Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members
SCRSS members only.

Full details for all the above events are available on the SCRSS website at www.scrss.org.uk/cinemaevents.htm. Events take place at the SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB, unless otherwise stated. Admission fees: films and lectures £3.00 (SCRSS members), £5.00 (non-members); other events as indicated.

Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News

Next Events

Sunday 12 November, 12.30
Event: Remembrance Sunday
For further details, see the SCRSS website at www.scrss.org.uk/ cinemaevents.htm.

The Soviet War Memorial is located in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum in London.

Feature

The Significance of the Russian Revolution and the Role of the Peasantry

By Mary Davis

Why and how should we mark the centenary of the Russian Revolution? It is easy to see why many seemingly unlikely organisations are keen to get involved in a commercially exploitable event. But for those of us who understand that the October Revolution marks the first time in human history that the majority class (workers and peasants) took and held state power, this centenary holds a special significance.

The most surprising fact about the Bolshevik Revolution is that it occurred and succeeded at all. Firstly, 80 per cent of the population of the Russian Empire were peasants and mostly illiterate. Secondly, during the period between February and October 1917 the Bolsheviks were not in majority anywhere, even in the soviets (workers' and soldiers' councils). Thus, they had only eight months to change things. Thirdly, and perhaps most remarkable of all, the Revolution survived five years of Civil War and Wars of Intervention, in which the Red Army was engaged in fighting White Russians *and* the armies of fourteen interventionist countries. Whilst an attempt to explain these three points can unlock the key to appreciating the significance of the October Revolution, it is vital, first of all, to understand why it could have happened in Russia – demographically speaking, the most unlikely country.

Marxists had always understood that a socialist revolution was expected to occur in the most advanced capitalist country, given that industrialisation had resulted in the massive expansion of the working class. Thus, the commonplace explanation for this unlikely first socialist revolution is that it happened because Russia was 'the weakest link in the imperialist chain'. However, this explanation is inadequate,

largely because it fails to understand both the 'peasant question' and also the importance of the Bolshevik (Communist) Party.

Lenin analysed the Russian peasantry in two important books: *The Agrarian Question in Russia* (1908) and *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899). In summary, Lenin rejected the view of the peasantry as a single social group and, instead, he distinguished three categories. The richest peasants were the kulaks who accounted for around 12 per cent of the rural population and were defined as those who cultivated 50 acres and above, amounting to 31 per cent of the land. Next came the middle peasants, seven per cent of the rural population (a steadily diminishing group), who cultivated 35–50 acres. Finally, the largest group, ever increasing numerically, were poor peasants. Their holdings were less than 35 acres and, as a result, they were dependent on wage labour. Although they accounted for 81 per cent of the rural population, this group of peasants only held 35 per cent of the land and had to supplement their income by selling their labour power. In sharp contrast to the peasantry, the big landowners, 0.002 per cent of the rural population, nonetheless owned 27 per cent of the land.

Lenin also noted that capitalism was growing in the Russian countryside and that capitalist relations in agriculture steadily undermined the commune (the *mir*), given that it was increasingly dominated by rich peasants. However, according to Christopher Hill, at the same time the commune also posed a contradiction in that it retarded capitalist development because it "artificially preserved the economically unfit and retarded the mobility of labour".[1] This helps to explain the Russian Government's attempt after 1906 to destabilise the commune.

The 1905 Revolution prompted Lenin to advocate a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'. This reflected his view that, whereas the kulaks and middle peasants would continue to support capitalist infiltration in agriculture, the poor peasants would not. Their main concern lay in the confiscation of landed estates, a demand which was adopted wholeheartedly by the Bolsheviks.

The 1905 Revolution worried the Russian Government and Stolypin, its new prime minister (1906–11), was particularly anxious to resolve the peasant revolt by enhancing capitalist development. The principal aim of his reforms was to stimulate the appearance of a class of prosperous land-owning peasants. He hoped that independence from the commune would breed enterprise and lead to improved agricultural yields. Moreover, Stolypin aimed to counteract peasant disturbances by encouraging an agricultural class that would have a vested interest in preserving the regime. Lenin described this as the 'Prussian path' in agriculture. By this he meant capital in alliance with landowners (Junkers and the industrial bourgeoisie in the Prussian case).

According to Orlando Figes,[2] the Stolypin reforms were unsuccessful mainly because, instead of relieving the situation in the countryside, they added a new dimension to peasant tensions. Poor peasants (the overwhelming majority) maintained a desire to see the redistribution of noble estates, regarding this as the only real solution to the problem of land hunger. In addition, the appearance of independent farmers – whose ambitions had disrupted the traditional work patterns of the village community – provoked resentment among those who remained within the commune.

Anyway, the 'reforms', despite their potential to split the peasantry, were disrupted by Stolypin's assassination in 1911 and the outbreak of war in 1914. The war put the final nail in the coffin of 1906–7 measures, almost literally. It was responsible for the death of around ten million conscripted peasant soldiers and two million horses. The Bolshevik slogan of 'Peace, Bread and Land' thus had a direct appeal to the majority of peasants, without whose support the revolution could not have been maintained.

Marxist theory, developed by Lenin, was essential to understand Russian reality, especially the Russian peasantry. The concrete application of Marxist analysis led to the Bolshevik / Menshevik split in 1903. This meant that the Bolsheviks could play the leading role in developing the theory, strategy and tactics necessary for revolutionary change. This is a key issue in explaining the October Revolution. Bolsheviks, despite exile prior to 1917, maintained close contact with Russia and influenced events by means of their newspapers and pamphlets which entered the country illicitly. They had prepared the groundwork for 1917.

When Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917, he published an important document known as the *April Theses*. This set out the Bolshevik policy to transform the current Russian bourgeois republic into a socialist state. In effect, it turned into the demands around which revolutionary workers, soldiers and peasants rallied. In summary, it called for opposition to World War I and, hence, opposition to the unelected Provisional Government. It identified the February Revolution as a transitional stage to a full socialist revolution, after which landed estates and banks would be confiscated and nationalised, and production and distribution would be under the control of workers' soviets. The period between the February and October Revolutions was identified as the phase of the 'dual power'. This was because, although the unelected Provisional Government *de facto* ruled Russia after the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, within the towns especially, at grass roots level, the elected soviets of workers and soldiers were exercising an increasingly important influence on the daily lives of the Russian people. Within eight months the Bolsheviks gradually gained a majority in the soviets, thus enabling them to mount an effective revolutionary challenge and to establish the first socialist state, based on the active support of the majority of the population – workers and peasants. This was clearly seen during the horrors of the Civil War and the Wars of Intervention.

The Russian Revolution, its impact and its aftermath, is truly inspirational. We should certainly celebrate it, study it and, above all, learn from it. It is to be hoped that its legacy will help to inspire confidence in the potential power of workers today.

Footnotes

1 C Hill, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution*, English Universities Press, 1947, p 86

2 Orlando Figes website, URL: http://www.orlandofiges.info/section3_RevolutionorReform/index.php

Mary Davis FRSA is Visiting Professor of Labour History at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has written, broadcast and lectured widely on women's history, labour history, imperialism and racism. She was awarded the TUC Women's Gold Badge in 2010 for services to trade unionism. She is a founder member of the Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Committee and 'A Charter for Women'.

Feature

The Function of Art in the Worker State

By Christine Lindey

The pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde debated the aesthetics and the social role of art, but it only had a small, ineffectual presence on the fringes of the tsarist state, which had rigid arts policies. The Bolshevik revolution changed this. In 1917 Anatoly Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Enlightenment, immediately replaced these state policies with pluralist ones; thus avant-garde artists joined more traditional artists in positions of power in art education and state patronage. Now, not only were aesthetic issues aired publicly, they were no longer pie in the sky. The resulting abundance of radical and conflicting ideas made a heady brew. As artists redefined the social role of art to serve the fledgling Soviet state, so they sought a new aesthetic.

As Lunacharsky stated in 1920: “[T]he whole question of art is this: can revolution give anything to art, and can art give anything to the revolution...?”[1] A key issue was how art should relate to the past in order to build a new present and future.

Lyubov Popova’s *Dynamic Construction*, 1919
(image courtesy of Sputnik)

Before 1917 the Suprematists, led by Kasimir Malevich, virulently rejected the past, partly on aesthetic grounds. They would liberate art and creativity from the past shackles of subject and styles to create a totally pure art. Malevich’s now famous *Black Square* of 1913 still remains one of art’s most radical statements. In 1915 he wrote: “The artist can be creator only when the forms in his pictures have nothing in common with nature…”[2]

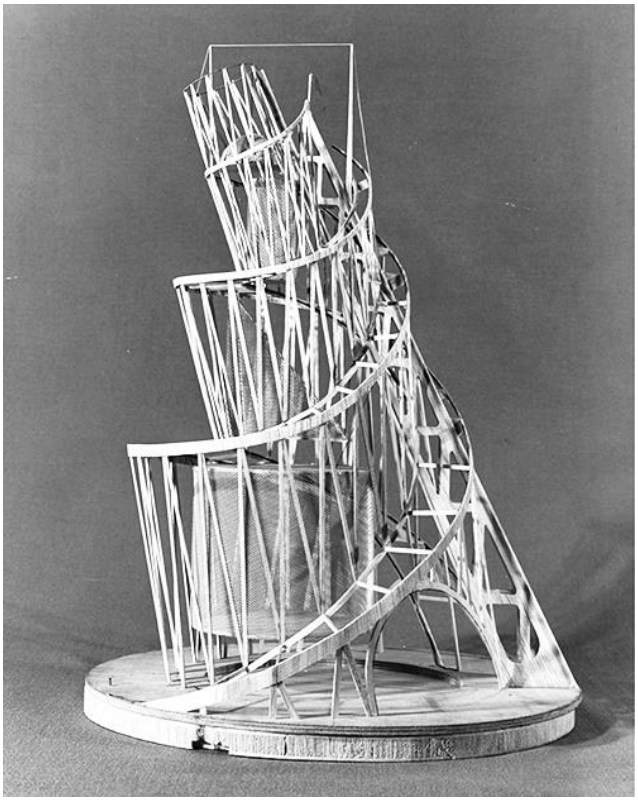
After 1917 some supporters of the Revolution rejected past academic art partly on political grounds – to disassociate their art from that of the oppressive tsarist regime. The Komfut (Communist-Futurist) group’s manifesto in 1919 asserted: “Under the guise of immutable truths, the masses are being presented with the pseudo teachings of the gentry…”[3]

This short-lived group shared views and members with Proletkult (Proletarian Culture movement), including Nathan Altman and Vladimir Mayakovsky, who held that the function of art was to agitate and propagate socialism. Rather than creating individualist and permanent collectible works, their works and actions would be collectivist, ephemeral and topical. From 1919 their ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) posters were handmade overnight, often hurriedly, to cover shop windows with six or twelve posters on a single theme, giving the public up-to-date information, explaining government policies or ridiculing its enemies.

ROSTA poster by Vladimir Mayakovsky
(SCRSS Library)

The Constructivist Lyubov Popova, who taught at Moscow’s influential VKhUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical Workshops), stated in 1921: “The past is for history. The present and the future are for organising life… We are breaking with the past because we cannot accept its hypotheses. We ourselves are creating our own hypotheses anew, and only upon them, as in our inventions, can we build our new life and new world view…”[4] By taking art into production, the Constructivists would become self-effacing constructors, helping

to build the new egalitarian society alongside other workers. Refuting the tsarist concept of the artist as an individualist (male) genius-creator of unique statues and paintings, they would design for mass production to improve daily life. “Down with ART as a bright PATCH on the mediocre life of the propertied man… Work in the midst of everyone, for everyone, and with everyone,’ declared Alexander Rodchenko in 1921.[5]



Vladimir Tatlin's *Monument to the Third Communist International*, 1919–20 (SCRSS Library)

Building the new world equated to *modernity*. Designs for posters, typography, textiles, ceramics and clothing were simple and practical, but they also signified a total break with the tsarist past. Modernity meant welcoming the rapid technological change brought about by new materials, processes and technologies, such as the telephone, film, flying machines and electrification. Rather than a stone or bronze statue, Vladimir Tatlin’s unbuilt project for a *Monument to the Third Communist International* was to consist of abstract geometric forms made of sheet glass in a metal frame. This modernist electrified monument would soar over Petrograd but would also function as a communications tower. International avant-gardes also embraced modernity, but Soviet artists were fired by the prospect of making real socio-political change.

However, the large Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR) defended realist art on political and aesthetic grounds. They cited Lenin’s reminder that proletarian culture should learn from, rather than reject, past art; socially committed art by Gustave Courbet and Ilya Repin, as well as recent formal innovations from France, could serve them as prototypes. In 1922 they declared: “We will depict the present day: the life of the Red Army, the workers, the peasants, the revolutionaries, and the heroes of labour. We will provide a true picture of events and not abstract concoctions discrediting our Revolution…”[6]

Alexander Deyneka’s *Defence of Petrograd*, 1927 (SCRSS Library)

Some, such as Isaak Brodsky, used precise realist styles, but others, including Alexander Deyneka and Boris Grigoriev, assimilated Cubist and Expressionist elements into moderately modernist but legible styles. Their realist depictions of everyday life and heroic events of the revolution would inspire current and future Soviet citizens. Defining themselves as artists of the Proletarian Revolution, the priority was to transform “the authentic revolutionary reality into realist forms

comprehensible to the broad mass of workers" (1924).[7]

Suprematist, Constructivist and Proletkult artists were to influence over a century of worldwide art and design. Yet in their day relatively few Constructionist designs went into production, due to the difficult economic situation and the aesthetic conservatism of public taste. In prioritising subject matter over formal innovation, AKhRR artists were more responsive to the needs and tastes of their public. The fact that they were ignored or marginalised until recently by Western art history stems partly from criteria that prioritise innovation and artists' intentions over artists' social responsibility. This led it to ignore its own primarily realist early twentieth-century art, in which the avant-garde was far more marginalised than in the Bolshevik state.

Footnotes

1 JE Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934,* Thames & Hudson, 2017, p 189

2 Ibid, p 122

3 Ibid, p 164

4 JE Bowlt & M Drutt (Eds), *Amazons of the Avant-Garde: Alexandra Exter, Natalia Goncharova, Liubov Popova, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova and Nadezhda Udaltsova*, Guggenheim Museum, 2000, pp 320–321

5 AN Lavrentiev & JE Bowlt (Eds), *Aleksandr Rodchenko: Experiments for the Future*, New York, MOMA, 2005, p 143

6 Ibid Bowlt (2017), p 266

7 Ibid Bowlt (2017), p 269

Christine Lindey is an art historian and lecturer. Her areas of expertise are nineteenth and twentieth-century art, with a special interest in Soviet and Socialist art. She is currently finishing a book on British socially committed art in the 1940s–50s. She has taught art history at Birkbeck College, University of London, and at the University of the Arts, London.

Feature

Women in the Russian Revolution

By Kate Clark

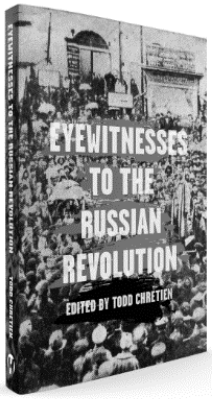
This centenary year gives us the chance to reflect on the significance and effects of the Revolution on the whole world – workers' rights and the struggle for women's emancipation foremost among them.

Nadezhda Krupskaya (SCRSS Library)

What was the situation of women in Russia and Central Asia before the Revolution?

The vast majority were from rural peasant households, living a life of drudgery not very different from that under serfdom, which was abolished only in 1861. In March 1916 *The Times*, in its *Book of Russia*, wrote: "[…] poverty and ignorance are widespread, and it is the women of the lower classes who feel most keenly the effects of the social and economic backwardness of the country."[1]

NEW TITLES FROM HAYMARKET BOOKS

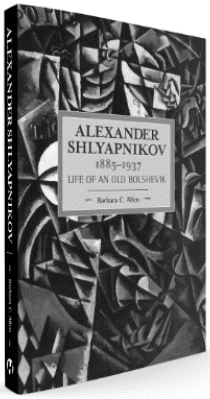


£20.99

Eyewitnesses to the Russian Revolution

Edited by Todd Chretien

The Russian Revolution turned the world upside down. This reader tells the story of what happened with riveting eyewitness accounts.



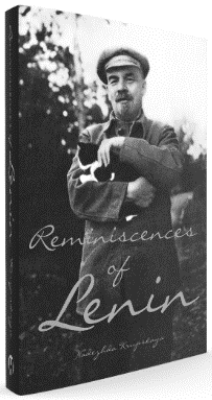
£24.99

Alexander Shlyapnikov, 1885–1937

Life of an Old Bolshevik

Barbara C Allen

The first biography—in any language—of Alexander Shlyapnikov, a leader and founder, along with Kollontai, of the Workers' Opposition.

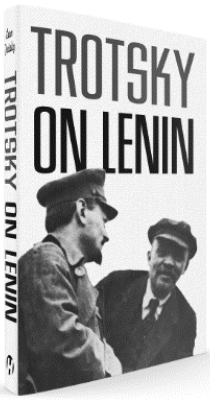


£20.99

Reminiscences of Lenin

Nadezhda K Krupskaya

A personal account of Lenin's life and thought, written by the woman who knew him best.



£19.99

Trotsky on Lenin

Leon Trotsky

Combining *Young Lenin* and *On Lenin* in one volume, this is a fascinating political biography by fellow revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

HaymarketBooks

haymarketbooks.org | uk@haymarketbooks.org

Women in Central Asia, then part of Russia's tsarist empire, were living under feudalism, with practically no political, social or economic rights. The veil was ubiquitous and girls could be married off even before puberty.

It was the decision by the autocratic Tsar Nicholas II to take Russia into the First World War that served as a catalyst for the momentous changes three years later.

Women who worked in industry, many replacing men at the front, were becoming politicised, due to exploitation by factory owners and seeing their menfolk killed and wounded in the war. Women increasingly joined in demands for peace, land and bread.

In Russia there had been a feminist movement since the beginning of the twentieth century, with the formation in 1905 of the League for Women's Equality, and a number of very committed and capable Bolshevik women, among them Konkordiya Samoilova, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand, were active among working-class women in opposing the war. The more upper-class part of Russia's feminist movement, just as in Britain, supported Russia's participation in the war.

The Bolsheviks (Majority) were so called after a Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) split due to irreconcilable political differences. The Mensheviks (Minority) formed a more social democratic party, as opposed to the Bolsheviks who were fighting not only to bring down the tsarist government, but also to establish a socialist government in its place.

As well as opposing the war, Bolshevik women leaders worked to get factory women to join trade unions, which had recently become legal, and to spread the ideas of socialism, which they considered a prerequisite for women to achieve true equality with men. They published magazines focusing on women's issues, such as *Rabotnitsa* (Woman Worker) which came out as early as 1914. And they organised industrial action – between 1912 and 1914 some 9,000 strikes were recorded, and Bolshevik trade unions and influence increased significantly.

In February 1917 the Provisional Government was formed, following the collapse of the tsarist government. But the Petrograd Soviet was in many ways more powerful and better organised, taking advantage of the lifting of press censorship. Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government failed to carry out any major reforms and, worse, it continued the hugely unpopular war**.** The Bolsheviks' slogan of 'Peace, Land, Bread!' was increasingly taken up by women and men alike. International Women's Day in 1917 saw mass demonstrations by women and strikes among many sections of the female workforce.

These were heady days, prior to the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks were represented in the soviets – councils set up across Russia since 1905 among workers, peasants and soldiers – but did not form a majority in many of them. The Bolsheviks argued for these local and regional councils of workers' deputies to take power from Kerensky's Provisional Government, which had soon become discredited. 'All Power to the Soviets!' was the Bolsheviks' call.

"Either we must abandon our slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets' or else we must make an insurrection. There is no middle course...," wrote Vladimir Lenin[2], arguing against others in the Bolshevik leadership who voted against insurrection at an all-night meeting of the party's Central Committee on 23 October 1917.

The role of Bolshevik women in the years leading up to and during the Revolution was recognised by the party's leader, Lenin, when he told German revolutionary Clara Zetkin in 1920: "Women workers acted splendidly during the revolution. Without them we should not have been victorious."[3]

After the victory of the Revolution the Bolsheviks immediately removed discriminatory

legislation. Children outside wedlock were granted equal rights, divorce was made available on request, and both spouses given equal rights to property and earnings.

Women achieved full rights to education, marking a turning point in the progress of women towards equality. This was especially the case in the backward Central Asian republics which had become part of the USSR by the early twenties.

Alexandra Kollontai reading her credentials as Soviet Ambassador to Mexico, mid-1920s (SCRSS Library)

A Women's Section (*Zhenotdel*) of the RSDLP was established in 1919, intended to inform and educate poor working-class and peasant women, check enforcement of the new legislation, and set up political education and literacy classes for women throughout Russia.

Just take a look at their life stories. Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869–1939), known mainly in the West as Lenin's wife, was a leading Bolshevik who suffered arrest by the Tsar's police and exile. She was on the editorial board of the RSDLP newspaper *Iskra* (Spark), became a leading specialist in education and in the thirties served as Education Commissar.

Konkordiya Samoilova (1876–1921), a member of the RSDLP since 1903, spent a year in prison for her views. She was the founding editor of *Pravda* and on the editorial staff of *Rabotnitsa*.

Inessa Armand (1874–1920) played a leading role among the Bolsheviks in exile in Western Europe, was instrumental in setting up the *Zhenotdel* and chaired the first International Conference of Communist Women in 1920. She was the first woman to be honoured by being buried in Red Square.

Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952) was a leading feminist who fought for women's equality, not only through legislation, but also by bringing into the open issues of sexual freedom, marriage and the family. Her book *The Social Basis of the Woman Question* (1909) and her essay *Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle* (1921) are still relevant today. Her opposition to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which ended the war with Germany, and to other measures where she found herself in a minority in the Bolshevik leadership, do nothing to undermine her weighty contribution to women's equality. Rather, it shows that she was a revolutionary with her own views which she was well capable of defending.

However, it is a salutary, looking today at the worldwide legacy of the Russian Revolution, to recognise that women's equality has still not been achieved either here in Britain or in Russia (for example, on equal pay).

In the Soviet Union by the thirties there was not one single woman on the Central Committee of the CPSU. In the eighties, when I worked in Moscow, there was only one woman in the top leadership.

The *Zhenotdel* was dissolved in 1930. In a Soviet encyclopaedia published in 1987 you can find: "The women's movement reached the Caucasus and Central Asia only after the Civil War. As a result of the cultural revolution and in the course of the building of socialism, the women's question in the USSR has been completely solved."

Russia's women Bolsheviks who gave their energies, their skills and in some cases their lives to the cause of women's equality under

a just, socialist society, would turn in their graves if they could see how much more still remains to be done to achieve true women's emancipation in Russia and Central Asia today.

Footnotes

1 Cited in A Rothstein, 'Building the Culture of Socialist Society' in *SCRSS Digest*, No 1, Spring 2017, pp 11

2 From Lenin's 'Letter to the Comrades' (*Rabochy Put*, 31 October 1917) cited in J Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1961, p 32

3 Cited in M Davis, 'The Women of the Russian Revolution', *Morning Star*, 8 March 2017

Kate Clark was Moscow correspondent for the Morning Star from 1985–90 and The Scotsman from 1989–90, she was also Deputy Features Editor of the BBC Russian Service from 1993–96. Now retired, she is a Vice-Chair of the SCRSS Council. Her autobiography 'Chile in My Heart: A Memoir of Love and Revolution' was published in 2013. At present she is working on a memoir of her years as a Moscow correspondent.

Feature

The Russian Revolution and Avant-Garde Architecture

By Jean Turner

In the nineteenth century, as in all the other arts, Russians were examining new forms of expression in architecture, following a backlash against Peter the Great's import of classical architecture to Russia and the rejection of Catherine the Great's Age of Enlightenment. Designers returned to interpreting traditional Russian forms of building and decoration.

This took place in a fervour of intellectual debate on the correct principles of building. In her book *Russian Avant-Garde* Catherine Cooke describes the different centres of architectural theory: "[…] the Architecture School of the Imperial Academy of Arts in St Petersburg was a bastion of Classicism but it had two more radical rivals, the architecture department of the St Petersburg Building College and the Royal College in Moscow. In the 1850s and '60s it was teachers in these two schools, Apollinari Krasovsky in Petersburg and Mikhail Bykovsky in Moscow, who laid the foundations in Russia for a Rationalist view of architecture rooted in new technologies and social tasks."

Mosselprom Building, Moscow. Original architect Nikolai Strukov, 1913; re-designed by architect David Kogan, 1925 (SCRSS Library)

After the assassination of Alexander II by People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*), an authoritarian social order was imposed. However, a new class of industrialist and banking dynasties had arisen from among the freed serfs with strong nationalist and cultural prejudices based on peasant and

mercantile values. Their chosen form of design emerged as *Moderne*, or Art Nouveau, personified by the work of Fyodor Shekhtel.

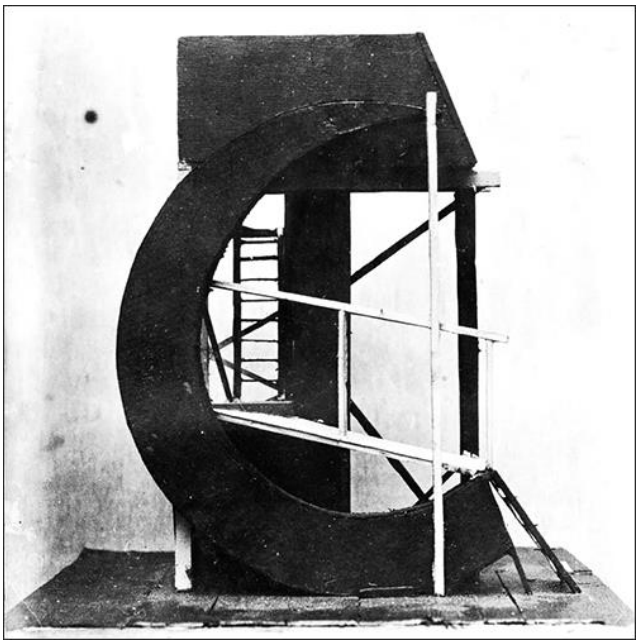
As in other countries at this time, women were demanding entry to universities to receive architecture training. Since all the colleges were involved in radical unrest against tsarist authoritarianism, it was feared that women, often being supporters of radical workers' demands, would bring trouble to the universities.

Among five women at the Congress of Russian Architects in 1911, two – Elena Bagaeva and Luisi Molas – ran their own architectural school, using the Academy curriculum and professors from the College of Civil Engineering. In 1902 women's construction classes were pioneered in Moscow by Ivan Fomin, William Walcot and others, and held at Shekhtel's office premises. By 1917 women had their own polytechnics in Moscow and Petersburg with full five-year courses in architecture, structural engineering, chemistry and electro-mechanics, and had by decree achieved "the right to erect buildings". However, the decree was only implemented, along with many other practical and educational freedoms, after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917.

The first two decrees of the new Bolshevik Government were the Decree on Peace, which took Russia out of World War I, and the Decree on Land, which nationalised all land and real estate, laying a new and unique foundation for Soviet architecture and planning.

Lenin handed Anatoly Lunacharsky control of the Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*). This shaped a policy of public education, including a planned appropriation of the heritage of the old world alongside the new forms that had emerged in the arts and architecture. This view was later challenged in 1920 by Alexander Bogdanov's Proletkult which argued that the proletarians themselves would create new forms of culture *ab initio*.

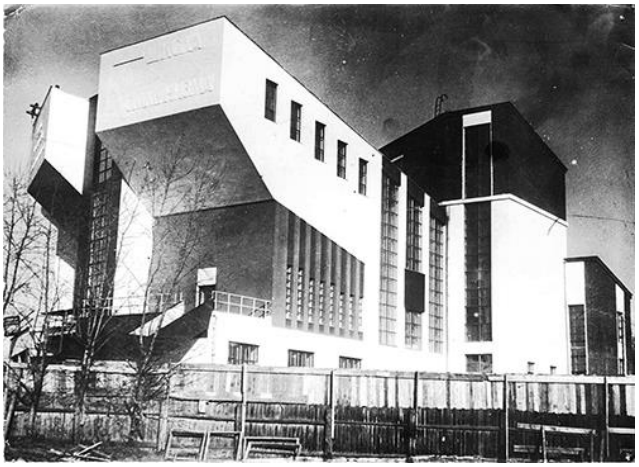
In November 1917 the Bolshevik Party called a meeting at the Smolny Institute of Petrograd's progressive younger painters, writers and designers to discuss their potential collaboration with Soviet power. With equal speed, the new Commissariat harnessed the support of the more establishment artists such as Boris Kustodiev, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin and Alexander Benois, charging them with the preservation of art works in public buildings and with creating a preservation policy for historic buildings.



Model for Rostrum, Red Square, Moscow. Designed by Proletkult, 1920s (SCRSS Library)

Rebels such as Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexander Rodchenko and Lyubov Popova, originally on the fringe of the respectable world of academia, began teaching in art schools and research institutions. The Higher Art and Technical Workshops (VKhUTEMAS) in Moscow produced the artistic movements of Rationalism and Constructivism. The Rationalists focused on aesthetic rationality and form; the Constructivists on technical rationality and science. The Suprematists Ivan Leonidov and Iakov Chernikov favoured individual buildings of an abstract geometric quality on open sites. Classicism was not totally rejected but took new forms, for example in the work of Ivan and Igor Fomin, and Vladimir Shchuko and Vladimir Gelfreikh who designed the Lenin Library.

Much of their first work was theoretical because the five years of civil war and foreign intervention had destroyed the economy. Traditional building industry materials were virtually unobtainable. Models of proposed public buildings and monuments, for example Vladimir Tatlin's 1919 *Monument to the Third Communist International*, were produced in the materials available but without any possibility of construction. According to John Milner, Tatlin's Tower was intended to span the River Neva.



Rusakov Communal Club, Moscow. Architect Konstantin Melnikov, 1935 (SCRSS Library)

During the civil war period, artists, actors and designers were at liberty to create propaganda productions for the new Soviet state. In the words of Alexei Gan, "the whole city would be the stage and the entire proletarian masses of Moscow the performers". These productions became a focus of revolutionary design. Petrograd held an enormous festival for the first anniversary of the October Revolution that involved eighty-five separate design projects across the city by famous artists and designers, including Nathan Altman who decorated Palace Square with a temporary architectural sculpture.

No major reconstruction could begin until the problem of rapid production of building materials had been resolved. However, these propaganda projects and models were to form the basis of the now famous avant-garde buildings built between 1923 and the 1930s when Soviet architecture influenced the West, rather than vice versa. All were designed by Soviet architects, with the exception of a few by Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelsohn.

The emphasis was on the rapid building of communal housing and services, workers' clubs, palaces of culture and department stores. These were intended to improve the education and living conditions of the working class and relieve women from domestic work, allowing them to take a full part in industrial production. In the First Five Year Plan (1928–32) top priority was given to building construction to support rapid development in the electrical, iron, steel and transport industries.

Many of these iconic buildings are still standing, albeit some in a poor state of repair. However, they remain a tribute to the power of the Marxist-Leninist ideology that produced the world's first workers' and peasants' socialist state, a state that became the patron of modern art and architecture for over seven decades.

Bibliography

J-L Cohen, C Lodder & R Pare, *Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915–1935*, Royal Academy of Arts, 2011

C Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture and the City*, Academy Editions, 1995

C Cooke (Ed), 'Russian Constructivism and Iakov Chernikov' in *Architectural Design*, Vol 59, No 7/8, 1989

C Lindey, 'Utopia: Russian Art and Architecture 1900–1989' in *SCRSS Digest*, Spring 2012, pp 8–10

C Lindey, 'Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915–1935' in *SCRSS Digest*, Spring 2012, pp 12–13

Moscow Heritage at Crisis Point, Moscow Architecture Preservation Society and SAVE Europe's Heritage, 2009

Jean Turner studied at Kingston School of Art and worked for thirty-five years as a local authority housing and schools architect. She was General Secretary, then Honorary Secretary, of the SCR / SCRSS from 1985–2013 and is currently Honorary Treasurer.

THE RUSSIA HOUSE LTD

Assisting tourists and business to travel to, from and within Russia since 1970.

VISA SUPPORT / INVITATION

We can provide the Official Support / Invitation for your visit:

* Special Purpose / Aim-Tourism for the urgent business visit;
* Full Business Support – single / double for 1 or 3 months;
* Business Visa – Multi Entry One Year;
* Tourist Visa – Hotel or Private Stay.

LODGE / FINGERPRINT / ENDORSEMENT / COLLECTION

We include a meet and fingerprint assist service when lodging the documents and we collect the visa'd passport when issued and will dispatch to you by your preferred method ready for your visit to Russia.

We check all forms, correct answers and collate in the accepted format for presentation to the consulate.

"Oodles and oodles of free advice, hand holding and tlc!"

RUSSIA HOUSE EST. 1970

RUSSIA – EXPERIENCE COUNTS

THE RUSSIA HOUSE LTD

Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London SE1 1HH
Tel: 0207 403 9922. Email: russia.house@therussiahouse.co.uk.
URL: www.therussiahouse.co.uk

Feature

The First Soviet Constitutions, Self-Determination and the Right to Secession

By Bill Bowring

This short article examines the central core of the first constitutions of Soviet Russia and of the USSR, and its continued relevance. Its predecessor, the tsarist Russian Empire, was a multi-national, multi-ethnic empire whose components had varying degrees of autonomy. It included, among many others, Finland, a Grand Duchy with its own parliament, laws and Lutheran religion; Poland, incorporated into the empire as a result of the nineteenth-century Partitions; the Baltic territories, conquered from Sweden in the Great Northern War; the former Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, conquered by Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century; and the Khanate of Crimea, annexed by Catherine II in 1783.

Lenin had campaigned from before the outbreak of World War I for the destruction of the tsarist (and other) empires, and for the principle of the right of nations to self-determination, on which he wrote a substantial book. He drew on the writings of Marx and Engels from the second half of the nineteenth century, as they fought for the right to self-determination of Ireland, Poland, Algeria, India and many others. Lenin's opponents included Rosa Luxemburg, the Austro-Marxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, and the revolutionary Jewish Bund, all of whom rejected the break-up of their respective empires and regarded the right of nations to self-determination as a surrender to bourgeois nationalism. Their aim was to achieve socialism over the whole existing territories of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

The first constitutional document of Soviet power, following victory in the October Revolution, was the *Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People*[1], drafted by Lenin on 16 January 1918 and published in *Izvestiya* on 17 January *(note: this article uses New Style dates throughout)*. On 25 January it was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets and subsequently formed the basis of the Soviet Russian Constitution of 1918. According to Chapter 1, Article 1: "Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power, centrally and locally, is vested in these Soviets." This was immediately followed by Article 2: "The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics."

The phrase "free nations" was crucial. Thus, Chapter 3 welcomed the proclamation of "the complete independence of Finland, commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia, and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia".

These principles were put into practice immediately following the Revolution. On 19 December 1917 the Finnish Diet adopted a declaration of Finland's independence; on 31 December 1917 the Council of People's Commissars issued a *Decree on the State Independence of Finland*. At that meeting Lenin personally handed the text of the decree to Finnish Prime Minister Pehr Evind Svinhufvud. Following the signing of the armistice between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria) at Brest-Litovsk on 15 December 1917, Soviet Russia and Persia worked out a common plan for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia. And on 11 January 1918 the Soviet Russian government issued the *Decree on Turkish Armenia*.

The next step was the *Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (RSFSR)*, which was adopted by the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 10 July 1918.[2] The Declaration, together with the Constitution, constituted a single fundamental law of the RSFSR. Altogether, they contained 90 articles, covering all constitutional aspects of the new socialist republic.

The following provision was of particular importance: “11. The soviets of those regions which differentiate themselves by a special form of existence and national character may unite in autonomous regional unions, ruled by the local congress of the soviets and their executive organs. These autonomous regional unions participate in the RSFSR upon a Federal basis.”

These were principles as to which Lenin was uncompromising. In 1919 the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became independent, despite their bourgeois governments, as did Poland, despite the war between it and Soviet Russia. In 1922, towards the end of his life, Lenin came into sharp conflict with Stalin as to whether Georgia should have the right to independence, albeit under a Menshevik government. On 31 December 1922 Lenin wrote in his *Testament*[3]: “It is quite natural that in such circumstances [*i.e. Stalin’s actions in Georgia*] the ‘freedom to secede from the union’ by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great-Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is... Stalin's haste and his infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious 'nationalist-socialism' played a fatal role here.”[4] Lenin died on 21 January 1924.

On 31 January 1924 the *Constitution of the USSR* was approved by the Second Congress of Soviets of the USSR.[5] This formalised the December 1922 *Treaty on the Creation of the USSR* between the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Transcaucasian SFSR to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It started with a Declaration, which included: “It is only in the camp of the Soviets, only under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat that has grouped around itself the majority of the people, that it has been possible to eliminate the oppression of nationalities… The will of the peoples of the Soviet Republics recently assembled in Congress, where they decided unanimously to form the USSR, is a sure guarantee that this Union is a free federation of peoples equal in rights, that the right to freely withdraw from the Union is assured to each Republic…”

It was on this that Lenin had insisted in 1922. Article 4 proclaimed: “Each one of the member Republics retains the right to freely withdraw from the Union.” Article 6 stated: “The territory of the member Republics cannot be modified without their consent; also, any limitation or modification or suppression of [Article] 4 must have the approval of all the member Republics of the Union.”

Lenin’s principled position remains highly controversial in Russia.

As early as 1991, the year of the collapse of the USSR, Vladimir Putin denounced Lenin. A YouTube clip contains a number of such statements by him over the years.[6] On 25 January 2016 Mr Putin accused Lenin of placing an ‘atomic bomb’ under Russia. In Mr Putin’s opinion, Lenin was responsible both for destroying the great Russian Empire, but also preparing the destruction of the great USSR. Thus, Mr Putin was particularly critical of Lenin’s concept of a federative state with its entities having the right to secede, saying it had heavily contributed to the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. He added that Lenin was wrong in his dispute with Stalin, who, in Mr Putin’s words, advocated a unitary state model. Mr Putin also said that Lenin’s government had whimsically drawn borders between parts of the USSR, placing Donbass under the Ukrainian jurisdiction in order to increase the percentage of proletariat, in a move Mr Putin called “delirious”.[7]

When the USSR collapsed in late 1991, the fifteen union republics, all of which had the right to secede under the 1978 Constitution of the USSR, duly became independent states, to the horror of Mr Putin and his fellow-thinkers. In 1990–91 many federative components of the RSFSR sought to gain the status of union republics, so as to have

the right to secede. Several, including the republics of Chechnya, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, declared sovereignty. Chechnya suffered two bloody wars from 1994 to 1997, and from 1999 to 2009; Tatarstan was granted special treaty status by President Yeltsin which it has only recently lost. Under the 1993 Russian Constitution there are twenty-one ethnic republics in the Russian Federation with, until recently, their own presidents, state languages (in addition to Russian) and other privileges, although no right to secede. Mr Putin is working hard to reverse Lenin's policy of federative relations.

Footnotes

1 Marxists Internet Archive, URL: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/jan/03.htm

2 Ibid, URL: https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/constitution/1918/

3 Ibid, URL: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/dec/testamnt/autonomy.htm

4 In 2010 *Azbuka Klassika* (St Petersburg) published this and other texts by Vladimir Lenin in a paperback edition of 5,000 copies under the title *O natsionalnoy gordosti velikorossov* (On the National Pride of Great Russians).

5 The Handwritten Constitution of the Russian Federation website, URL: http://constitution.sokolniki.com/eng/History/RussianConstitutions/10266.aspx

6 YouTube, URL**:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lIoEwESh320

7 *The Guardian* website, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/vladmir-putin-accuses-lenin-of-placing-a-time-bomb-under-russia

Bill Bowring, BA, Barrister, is Professor of Law in the School of Law, Birkbeck College, University of London. He is also International Secretary of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers and President of the SCRSS. He has many publications on topics of international law, human rights, and the law of Russia and the Former Soviet Union, including 'Law, Rights and Ideology in Russia: Landmarks in the Destiny of a Great Power' (2013, Routledge).

Feature

Nadezhda Lamanova: Pioneer of Soviet Clothing Design

By Helen Turner

Nadezhda Lamanova (1861–1941) was a talented Soviet fashion designer whose clever and innovative designs for working people in the first decades after the Russian Revolution were all the more extraordinary given that she came from an opposing tradition of providing *haute couture* to the tsarist aristocracy.

Striped long blouse, designed by Nadezhda Lamanova (drawing by Helen Turner)

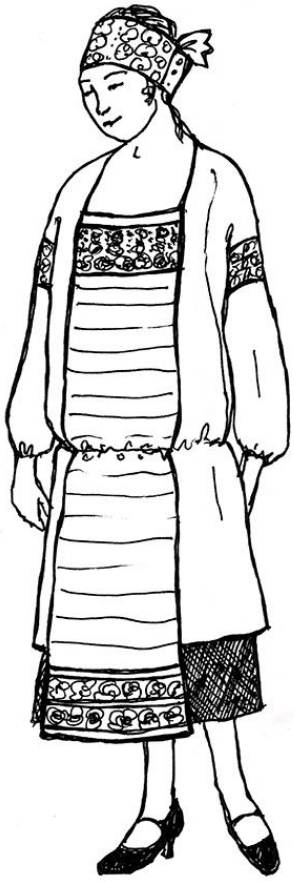
Soviet clothing production was in a poor state in the immediate post-revolutionary period; mass production had been almost non-existent before 1917 with most clothing made at home or in small workshops from bought dress patterns. Although most of the limited number of clothing factories at this time were making uniforms for the Red Army, there was much discussion throughout the late 1910s and early 1920s

about the necessity of future mass production of clothing. However, lack of fuel, raw materials and manpower in the new textile factories meant that craft work, small workshops and home-made clothes were still crucial for years to come.

Initially, traditional Russian folk designs continued to be popular – and to influence Suprematist artists and designers, for example Kazimir Malevich and Alexandra Ekster, who worked with the Applied Art Workshop in Verbovka in the late 1910s.[1] However, from 1921 the Constructivist theorist Osip Brik of the Moscow Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK) began promoting 'Productivism' (a variant of Constructivism) as a new way of thinking about how everyday objects could be transformed under socialist production. The artist was to get as close as possible to the process of production, ideally embedded within it.[2] In the 1920s Anatoly Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Enlightenment, began to involve artists directly in industry and the applied arts.[3]

As a result, artists Varvara Stepanova and Lyubov Popova started work on clothing and textile design at the First Cotton Printing Factory (Tsindel Works) in Moscow, aiming for production of cheap, accessible textile patterns suitable for the new age.[4] Stepanova, in particular, combated the conservatism of the factory's designs with bold geometric patterns, strong colour and ideas for androgynous clothing "organized for working in various branches of labor".[5] Other textile designers used repeat motifs of the new industrial output or created patterns based on Soviet emblems.

Here Nadezhda Lamanova enters the scene. As an *haute couturier* in pre-revolutionary Russia, she had been 'Supplier of the Court of Her Imperial Majesty', making exquisite embroidered luxury clothing for the court from her workshop, set up in 1885. She also created costumes for the Moscow Art Theatre, her initial introduction being through her family friend Konstantin Stanislavsky. Given her background, she might have been expected to flee Russia after the October Revolution, but she did not. Imprisoned briefly in 1919, she was freed through the intercession of writer Maxim Gorky. Clearly smart, resilient and quick to adapt, later in 1919 (aged 58) she took part in the First All-Russian Conference in Art and Production, at which she argued for dress being the most suitable vehicle for the dissemination of art into the everyday.[6] "[Art]… must develop the artistic taste and feeling of the masses… Artists must take the initiative and… produce… clothing which will be suitable to the new structure of our working life."[7]



Dress apron, incorporating peasant towels, designed by Nadezhda Lamanova (drawing by Helen Turner)

In the same year, Lamanova became head of the Workshops of Contemporary Clothes Design, charged with investigating and promoting socialist dress, including development of the curricula for the first schools of Soviet clothing design. Like Popova and Stepanova, she reduced many dress shapes to a series of rectangles. However, coming to the problem as a professional dressmaker and cutter rather than as a Constructivist artist / theoretician, her designs are softer in shape,

incorporating, for example, pleating. Influenced by and knowledgeable about Western – particularly Parisian – fashion, she experimented with 'model dress', using traditional Russian peasant shapes, such as the straight shirt, and aiming for simple designs that would aid mass production. Nonetheless, she never lost the desire for pattern and colour, using decorative features on sleeves and borders, such as unbleached woven and embroidered linen peasant towels as dress aprons.[8] She believed that Russian peasant dress had proved adaptable over a long period, combining form and function with Russian national characteristics[9], and that folk motifs strengthened national identity in the "new life – active, dynamic and conscious".[10]

Short coat with upright collar, wide sleeves and belt, designed by Nadezhda Lamanova (drawing by Helen Turner)

Despite winning the Grand Prix for a 'costume based on folk art' at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, her Soviet versions of contemporary Western fashions, though very appealing, remained handmade because of the continuing difficulties of mass production.[11] She designed clothes that the home dressmaker could reproduce: for example, a simple straight dress with a lace border made of either a curtain or a bedspread.[12] In 1925 Lamanova and the sculptor Vera Mukhina, her close friend and colleague, published *Iskusstvo v bytu* (Art in Everyday Life), a supplement of clothing designs that included patterns, instructions and recommendations for their construction in simple, easily bought fabric, such as unbleached linen. The clothing was designed to be made with very little cutting, from simple shapes. For example, an overcoat is made of one piece of fabric, wrapped round the body with 'V' cuts for the sleeves.

Throughout the 1920s Lamanova continued to work on ways to improve the industrialisation of clothing manufacture, alongside other projects. She designed many costumes for film, for example *Aelita* (Yakov Protazanov, 1924), *Alexander Nevsky* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1938) and *Circus* (Grigory Alexandrov, 1936). She became artistic consultant to the House of Clothing Design, established in Moscow in 1935, with Lamanova's erstwhile student Nadezhda Makarova as its first director. She continued to work in the theatre, collaborating with her friend Stanislavsky, until 1941, when she died suddenly in the street after a visit to her friends and clients at the Moscow Art Theatre.

Lamanova's work on everyday dress in the immediate post-revolutionary period has apparently been forgotten, except in academia, but her theatre costumes have endured. Last summer the Moscow Museum of Fashion held a major exhibition of theatre costume from the collection of the Museum of the Moscow Art Theatre, showing about twenty beautiful suits and dresses made under the guidance of Lamanova for productions of *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Othello*, and *Anna Karenina*. As Stanislavsky wrote in 1933, after the premiere of *The Barber of Seville*: "Our precious, irreplaceable, genius Nadezhda Lamanova; yell loudly: Bravo, encore!"[13]

Footnotes

1 D Elliott, 'Art into Production' in D Elliott & J Ryan (Eds), *Art into Production: Soviet Textiles, Fashion and Ceramics 1917–1935*, Museum of Modern Art Oxford, Crafts Council of England and Wales, 1984, p 7

2 C Kiaer, '"Into Production!": The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism' in *Transversal* web journal, EIPCP, 03, 2009, URL: http://eipcp.net/transversal/0910/kiaer/en

3 Ibid Elliott, p 6

4 T Strizhenova, 'Textile and Clothes Design in the Twenties and Early Thirties' in ibid Elliott & Ryan, p 82

5 Ibid Kiaer

6 D Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism*, MIT Press Ltd, 2010, p 38

7 J Bowlt, 'Constructivism and Early Soviet Fashion Design' in A Gleason et al (Eds), *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, Indiana University Press, 1989, p 216

8 T Strizhenova, *Iz istorii sovetskogo kostyuma*, Moscow, Sovetsky Khudozhnik, 1972, p 33

9 Ibid Elliott, p 7

10 E West, '"hap-hap-hap-hap-happy clothes": Avant-Garde Experiments in / with Material(s)' in S Posman et al (Eds), *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avant-Garde and Material Exchange*, De Grutyer, 2013, p 80

11 Ibid Bartlett, p 57

12 Ibid Strizhenova (1972), p 35

13 Gallerix website, URL: https://en.gallerix.ru/pr/vystavka-modeler-kotoromu-veril-stanislavskiy/

Note: The illustrations are based on photographs in Strizhenova (1972).

Helen Turner originally studied Theatre Design, working as a set and costume designer, and a lecturer in Performing Arts. She later completed an MA in Museum and Gallery Education, and worked as an Education Coordinator at a variety of arts organisations. She now promotes Latin American music and volunteers on an arts programme for elderly people at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.

Feature

The Influence of the October Revolution on the Russian Language

By Andrew Jameson

One of the lesser known aspects of the Russian Revolution was its dramatic impact on the Russian language. The language of Chekhov became virtually unrecognisable. This article highlights some of the changes – from orthographic reforms and the abolition of terms of rank associated with the tsarist regime, to the politicisation of everyday language, new acronyms and abbreviations reflecting the new bureaucracy, and the 'democratisation' of speech and style.

Spelling Reform and Literacy

After the October seizure of power the Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*) lost no time in proposing major reforms. On 23 December 1917 Lunacharsky decreed that long-planned reforms of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet be immediately implemented. This would remove obstacles to teaching in schools. There were three cases of duplicated letters, two letters each for the sounds 'e', 'i' and 'f', and in each case one of these was abolished. Secondly, the 'hard sign', which had been obligatory at the end of every word ending in a hard consonant, was abolished as unnecessary. Revolutionary sailors visited all the printing works and removed all the hard signs. *War and Peace* became seven pages shorter! At the same time, a long-term campaign to abolish illiteracy ('Likbez') was begun and ran for at least ten years.

Societal Change

Few societies have undergone such brutal change as Russian society after the October Revolution. Masses of terms defining the life of the Russian Empire were discarded, abolishing the very structure of society at a stroke. The nobility lost all their titles and were reduced to 'citizen'. Peter the Great's *Table of Ranks* lost its meaning, along with the elaborate forms of address that had been obligatory. Military and court titles lost their value. The middle classes who ran the Russian state, state employees, court, legal, police and administrators all lost their status and many were declared 'enemies of the people'. After 1917 these terms were used only to refer to life before the Revolution, or when speaking about foreign countries.

In their haste to distance themselves from the previous regime the Bolsheviks replaced

many important terms, especially those that denoted aspects of party, social, administrative and political life. Thus, the word министр (minister) was replaced by народный комиссар (People's Commissar) and министерство (ministry) by народный комиссариат (People's Commissariat) – abbreviated, respectively, as нарком and наркомат; полиция (police) and полицейский (policeman) were succeeded by милиция (militia) and милиционер (militiaman); and посол (ambassador) by полномочный представитель (plenipotentiary) – abbreviated to полпред. However, in the late 1930s to early 1940s some terms were reinstated (министр, посол), as well as many military ranks discarded after the Revolution (полковник – colonel, адмирал – admiral, генерал – general, etc).

Political Language

Before 1917 political, social, military and economic terminology had circulated only among the narrow social circles of educated people and reformers. The October Revolution, the Civil War (1918–22), and the political struggle involved in these events, drew large numbers of uneducated or poorly educated people – workers, soldiers and peasants – into political discourse for the first time.

Words of foreign origin, which had previously enjoyed limited circulation, flooded into mass usage via the press, political leaflets and oral propaganda. The Bolshevik leaders, themselves from the middle class, showed off their education by comparing themselves with the politicians of the French Revolution, and adopting words associated with the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, such as декрет (decree), комиссар (commissar) and трибунал (tribunal).

Abbreviations

Abbreviations very quickly became the favourite resource of the emerging Soviet bureaucracy. Many of the new bodies had descriptive names that were longer than the previous equivalents. Abbreviation was inevitable if the new terms were to be manageable. The process had already begun as Russia was modernising itself before the Revolution, but it was dramatically speeded up. Some linguists also associate the introduction of abbreviations with the growing use of telegrams and the telegraph, for example in war reports and commands. There were three main groups of abbreviations:

1. Simple acronyms: for example, ЧК (Cheka – Extraordinary Commission for Struggle with Counter-Revolution and Sabotage), the most notorious of the security 'organs' (as they are known in Russia), from 1917.

2. Abbreviations formed from truncated words ('stumps'): for example, агитпроп (агитационная пропаганда – political propaganda and agitation); исполком (исполнительный комитет – executive committee); совдеп (совет депутатов – Council of Deputies).

3. Mixed abbreviations, combining stumps and initial letters: for example, Роста (Российское телеграфное агентство – Russian Telegraph Agency, 1918–25).

The rapid spread of abbreviations was reflected in post-revolutionary literature; even poetry, normally alien to the stylistic features of bureaucratic language, succumbed to acronyms. Some new abbreviations produced cacophonous combinations of sounds, and were long and difficult to pronounce. The poet Mayakovsky wittily recorded this feature of the rising Soviet bureaucratic language in his 1922 poem *Прозаседавшиеся* (Conference-Crazy).

High and Low Styles

The use of 'educated words' became fashionable among Bolshevik activists at different levels. The newspaper *Rabochaya Moskva* even commented: "If your speech is obscure, it means you are a Bolshevik." This lack of clarity in speech caused frustration

for ordinary people and concern among the ruling elite. Lenin wrote an article entitled *On the Cleansing of the Russian Language*, published in 1924, which was followed by a wide-ranging debate in the newspapers. He stated: "We are spoiling the Russian language. We use foreign words without need. And use them incorrectly." Lenin concluded in his usual uncompromising style: "Is it not time to declare war on the corruption of the Russian language?"

At the same time the language received an influx of non-standard elements, emerging from the social dialects of factory workers and peasants, from the language of sailors and from criminal argot. The spread and mix of these elements occurred not only 'vertically', through social groups, but also 'horizontally', across the country. A substantial contribution to the latter process was made by the *besprizorniki*, neglected children left homeless by the Revolution and Civil War.

For the first few years after the Revolution, Bolshevik ideology tolerated the infiltration of the language by non-standard elements. These were largely perceived as a sign of linguistic 'democratisation'. An extreme position was adopted by the Proletkult movement with its theory of proletarian culture. Proletkult claimed the exclusive right to develop the perfect language for the proletariat. It proposed to do away with the systems of declension and conjugation, and to abolish capital letters as the 'privileged group in the alphabet'. As for the vocabulary, the influx of jargon, crude demotic forms, slang and dialectisms was accepted as one element of a new, pure language, whose mission was to replace the old, corrupt 'bourgeois' language of the nineteenth century.

'Normalisation'

However, as Bolshevik hopes for world revolution faded, to be replaced by 'socialism in one country', the language entered a new phase. The first generation of new intelligentsia, people educated in a Soviet environment, emerged, and they sought and promoted standard norms. Maxim Gorky in his article *About the (Russian) Language* criticised its trivialisation "in a country which so successfully – on balance – is ascending towards the highest level of culture". And we must not forget that Russian literary culture had always had high standards, while linguists have always appreciated, and cared deeply for, the Russian language. And so, the Revolution in the Russian language can be said to have concluded when notable linguists of the time, acting on a suggestion originally made by Lenin, and revived by Gorky, produced the definitive dictionary of the post-revolutionary period, defining good usage and style. It is known as the Ushakov dictionary, published in four volumes over the period 1935–40, and is a monument to, and an indispensable source for, the culture of the early years of the first socialist state.

Please note: For a free hand-out with a full range of Russian examples, translations and sources for topics covered in this article, please email Andrew Jameson at a.jameson2@dsl.pipex.com.

Andrew Jameson learnt Russian in the Forces and worked in Berlin as a radio monitor. Subsequently he taught Russian language and culture at Portsmouth and Lancaster universities, as well as organising many popular Russian residential courses for adults. He has a particular interest in the cultural history of the Russian language. He now works as a professional translator.

Feature

The Beginnings of Anglo-Soviet Cultural Relations

By Andrew Rothstein

This is an abridged reprint of an article originally titled 'Cultural Relations 1917–1967' from the Anglo-Soviet Journal (ASJ), 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution special issue, 1967, pp 14–20. The ASJ was published by the Society between 1940–92.

The beginnings of Anglo-Soviet cultural relations must be sought in the fragments of information which began to reach this country, soon after the revolution of November 1917, about the efforts of the newly-created Soviet Government to bring education, science and appreciation of all the arts to the mass of the people, hitherto deprived of them. The information came in fragments, because to the barriers of a hostile censorship were added those of the war on the Soviet Republic which rapidly developed in the spring and summer of 1918. Only that tiny section of the British public which read the Socialist press and one or two of the other papers, notably the *Manchester Guardian*, had access even to these fragments. Yet such as they were, they opened the eyes of at least some working in the cultural field, and not otherwise committed: they could find common ground, inspiring and even exciting, with the new régime in Russia – so strangely different from all existing states in its title of 'Workers' and Peasant's Government'.

The first such materials, from the summer of 1918, were those put out by the People's Russian Information Bureau (PRIB), an organisation set up in Fleet Street by left-wing socialists. Particularly effective was the four-page printed folder *Maxim Gorki on the Bolsheviki* (January 1919) in which the great writer declared (as a former opponent) that future historians would have "nothing but admiration and amazement at the grandeur of the present cultural work". At that stage the determination to provide education for all children was its biggest feature and Dr John Rickman, member of a Friends' Relief Unit which had spent many months in Samara (now Kuibyshev) from 1916 to 1918, vividly described in articles for the *Manchester Guardian*, reprinted as a booklet by the PRIB, *An Eye-Witness from Russia*, in March 1919, the "most generous" educational programme being carried out, the enthusiastic response it met from public and teachers, the opening of new schools, libraries and training colleges. [T]he Bureau published duplicated press bulletins once or twice a week […]

By this time the first British visitor, specially equipped by past experience in Russia as a newspaper correspondent, had managed to break through the Allied blockade and return to Soviet Russia. This was Arthur Ransome, of the *Daily News*. His letter to the American *New Republic* – sent in May 1918 and reprinted in England as a pamphlet, *The Truth About Russia* (Workers' Socialist Federation, 1919), had already won him much notoriety; now he published a small book, *Six Weeks in Russia in 1919*, which became a best-seller wherever people were not wildly anti-Soviet. Among much else still of great interest for the historian, he drew a strictly factual picture of cultural effort, in spite of all the hunger and other hardships, which caused a sensation: an account of the prodigious theatrical life of Moscow, his chapter on the "enormous" growth of the universities and of the great popularity among the workers of the classics of Russian literature […]

These tiny windows on the arts in Soviet Russia were invaluable, being opened just when foreign invasion and the flood of quite extraordinary lying about the Soviets were at their height – but they were tiny. Others were opened a little more widely in 1920, when the Red Army was winning its decisive victories. That year saw the coming of the first British (or any other) Labour Delegation to Soviet Russia in May and June. In its very cautious Report, concerned moreover principally with other topics […], the delegation confirmed that not only was education expanding but "in connection with the theatre, music, painting and sculpture, sports and physical development, means of pleasure and cultivation have been given to the workers on a scale unknown in earlier days," and that it had "been much struck by the enlightened policy of the Soviet Government in the matter of child life".

Then, in the early autumn of 1920, there came the first cultural visitors proper, whose experiences might have opened relations in this sphere much earlier, had they been heeded, than it turned out. The first was Mrs Clare Sheridan, sculptress, cousin of Winston Churchill, brought up amid

aristocracy and royalty. Mrs Sheridan aroused the horror and fury of her class by going to Russia in September to make busts of Lenin, Dzerzhinsky, Trotsky and other Soviet leaders, establishing good relations with distinguished Soviet colleagues like Andreyev and Konenkov, and coming back to publish her diaries for a whole week in *The Times*: it had contracted for them, paid her £100 a time, but took its revenge in a leading article (November 27, 1920) by attacking her and denouncing Soviet Russia, "chilled with hunger, pale with fear, rotting into a cold slime". Her book *Russian Portraits* (1921) naturally had some naïveté and some errors; but she was transparently honest, she saw through the poverty and inexperience, she understood the great future before the arts: "despite all the discomfort I love the bedrock of things here," she wrote […]

HG Wells followed in October. The record of Wells' journey is in a strange book, made up of articles reprinted from the *Sunday Express* – *Russia in the Shadows* (1921). Utterly misleading in its analysis of the "irreparable" economic breakdown, badly misinformed about many events great and small, ludicrous in its tranquil Bloomsbury assumption of superiority to the ignorant and incompetent Bolsheviks and in the lecture he read Lenin – yet at the same time the book was vigorous in its defence of the Bolsheviks as "the only possible backbone now to a renascent Russia", in its demand that the western Powers should establish diplomatic and trade relations with them, and in its tributes to the "astonishingly good" educational work of the Bolsheviks, their determined efforts to save scientists, artists and writers from the worst of the prevailing hunger, and their large-scale measures to preserve art treasures […]

But these two visits remained an isolated event, the fruit of the first relaxation generally felt when intervention was ending, but not followed up for several years – primarily because of the far from happy political relations (putting it mildly) between the two countries. From the beginning of 1921 until the beginning of 1924, I recall only one major cultural event in this sphere – the paper on the Kursk ironfield read in 1921 at the British Association by the famous mathematician and marine architect Academician AN Krylov, who had been deputed to re-establish broken ties with the world of science abroad – and one destined to become no less famous but which attracted little attention at the time – the arrival in Cambridge for work under Professor Rutherford of a promising young Soviet physicist, Peter Kapitza […] The main channel for authentic information in this sphere for the British people during these years was *Russian Information and Review* – a journal published by the Russian Trade Delegation and edited by Emile Burns, at first (from October 1921) fortnightly, and then (from October 1922) weekly.

A new page was opened in July 1924, with the foundation, at a meeting of over 100 distinguished British workers in the arts and sciences, of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR.[1]

The full story of slowly developing Anglo-Soviet cultural relations between that date and 1941 [when the Soviet Union entered the war] would read too much like a series of annual reports of the SCR for me to attempt: in those years it was mainly through the efforts of the Society that the expansion occurred […] It was only in 1941, when the Soviet Union entered the war, that] the acquainting of the two countries with each other's cultures met with the encouragement and assistance of the British authorities […]

The direct obstruction of the period before 1924, and the all-but-unique position of the SCR in the next fifteen years regarding the field of cultural relations, could never be brought back […] The SCR may claim without exaggeration to have done the pioneering work on this side of the sea during those difficult years […]

Footnote

1 The original name of today's Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies (SCRSS).

Reviews

A Short History of the Russian Revolution
By Geoffrey Swain (IB Tauris, 2017, ISBN: 9781780767932, Pbk, 232pp, £10.99)

SCRSS Catalogue No: 2611

This book deserves a place on the bookshelf of those who might find themselves spoilt for choice among the volumes being turned out on the 100th anniversaries of the Russian February and October revolutions. It cuts through much of the welter of largely tendentious propaganda that obfuscates, passing off regurgitation of others' works as scholarship on these world-transforming events. The very fact that there is so much contradictory stuff, arguments and varied opinions demonstrates the relevance to today of those events. This book is for the serious student and demands effort and more than a fleeting interest in the topic.

Professor Swain's sources are archives, the accounts of witnesses and participants in the two revolutions of 1917, memoirs, the work of other scholars and references to his own works. The whole is presented to the reader, together with an exciting chapter on the revolutionary tradition of Russian labour that takes in the earlier 1905 revolution, something often neglected in writings on the revolutions of 1917. Other chapters deal with the period between the overthrow of the Tsar's brutal dictatorship, the winning of political power by the Bolsheviks, and the establishment of the first legislature of the Soviets (councils) elected by factories, the peasantry, the army and fleet. Along the way he covers the failed attempts at coalitions with non-Bolshevik parties. As part of that process, he describes the failure of the Mensheviks (the closest approximation to today's social democratic parties) to win support among the revolutionary masses for continuing the world war and doing deals with sections of the Liberal establishment that were first in government following the Tsar's overthrow.

The author introduces the reader to the conflicting dramatis personae among whom Lenin was outstanding. Swain strives for balance in his assessment of their contributions and certainly does not follow the standard hagiography of Trotsky that dominates the views of a number of political sects and much of academia today. Those rely heavily on Trotsky's post-revolutionary writings in praise of himself. What emerges is not a picture of a Bolshevik coup but of a popular revolution lead by the Bolsheviks. An interesting feature of Professor Swain's work is that he allows discerning readers to follow the changing currents of revolutionary thinking among the people and to judge the performances of leading individuals for themselves; thus calling into question the widely propagated presentation of the October revolution as a coup.

The volume covers a lot of ground within close print, and any new edition could do with a fuller index and, especially, a glossary of the many organisations that are referenced by their acronyms.

Professor Swain concludes the volume with a brief discussion of what might have happened if what did happen had not happened – a risky enterprise! I found this the least satisfactory section. While the author has shown throughout how the Bolsheviks were able to win over factory and military councils to support their revolutionary path, he argues that the uncompromising stand of the Bolsheviks inevitably led to “a Bolshevik dictatorship”. Speculation as to whether there might have been an alternative to the seizure of power by the working class is legitimate. However, this speculation is made doubtful, in my opinion, by the author’s concluding it was Mikhail Gorbachev's attempt to introduce what he calls “an element of democracy” that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union... That, however, is the subject for another book.

Mick Costello

1917: Stories and Poems from the Russian Revolution
Selected by Boris Dralyuk (Pushkin Press, 2016, ISBN: 978-1-78227-214-4, Pbk, 236pp, £8.99)

Reading this cleverly constructed volume feels like witnessing the Russian Revolution at first hand. Dralyuk confines his selection to writings from the actual period of the Revolution, from February 1917 with the abdication of Tsar Nicolas II, to late 1919 during the period that has come to be known as the Red Terror. The book serves two types of reader: those who are not Russian specialists, who can read the introductions to the texts, containing information about the writers' lives, before reading the texts themselves; and those who want academic information, sources and further reading, information that is contained in the notes at the end of the book. Dralyuk has tried to refer to sources in English language as much as possible.

All very well, but what is the book *about*, I hear you say. Well, this is a book of strong emotions. The poetry section (pp 15–71) is well balanced between visionary enthusiasm about the future and contemplation of the inevitable destruction involved. The expected names appear: Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Pasternak, Esenin, Blok and Mayakovsky. One or two names deserve to be better known, such as Mikhail Kuzmin, an early gay writer. The chaos and uncertainty of those years comes clearly through in the texts and the introductions, which are mostly written without intrusive hindsight. The poetry is translated in verse form, generally reflecting the metre, creative use is made of semi-rhymes, and overall it comes over very well. The 'star of the show' is Blok's epic poem *The Twelve*. Blok, by the way, is generally regarded as Russia's second poet after Pushkin.

As Dralyuk himself comments, prose written within this book's time frame tends to be more critical (pp 77–209) because of the immediate horror of the destruction and bloodshed. The jokey *Guillotine* satire of Teffi and the bitterness of Zozulya's *Dictator* actually describe the events of the Red Terror at that time. In contrast, Kuprin contributes a story of early aviation, and one of my favourite writers, Kataev, crafts a charming story of officer cadets in training. Remizov contributes a lay of ancient times about the Ruin of Rus. Two writers who will become famous in the future are represented by their very first literary efforts. Mikhail Zoshchenko, whose deadpan humour so resembles that of the American Damon Runyon, contributes a straight assessment of the possible future, while Mikhail Bulgakov soberly assesses the likely fate of Russia as compared with a go-ahead West. And there are quite a lot more interesting items for which we do not have space here.

All in all, well worth the price, and the original Russian texts of the poems are available for free download at https://bdralyuk.wordpress.com/1917-stories-and-poems-from-the-russian-revolution/.

Andrew Jameson

Between Dog and Wolf
By Sasha Sokolov (translated by A Boguslawski, Columbia University Press, 2016; ISBN: 978-0-231-18147-1, Pbk, 296pp, £12.95)

SCRSS Catalogue No: 2523

This is a complex novel, likely to appeal more to the erudite than the casual reader. It combines a colloquial stream of consciousness and poetic narrative, and has been compared to *Finnegans Wake*. The publishers say that "it has long intimidated translators because of its complex puns, rhymes, and neologisms".

The story is one of a murder investigation, set against the Russian landscape, on the Upper Volga River, where Sokolov worked as a game warden. He spent almost a full year living there in a wooden cabin with no electricity. Apparently, it is based on an incident when a fellow warden drowned under mysterious circumstances. The story is told in three forms. The lead, Ilya

Petrikeich Zynzyrela, is a one-legged itinerant knife-sharpener whose chapters are told in colloquial, accented dialect. Ilya's sections are contrasted by chapters of prose and rhymed verse, depicting the warden Yakov Ilyich Palamakhterov. After a wake for a drowned man, Ilya kills the warden's dog, thinking it's a wolf. Then the vengeful warden steals Ilya's crutches…

First published in Russia in 1980, Sokolov began to write this novel, his second, before he emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1975.

Charles Stewart

Sheffield International DocFest 2017

For documentary film buffs, Sheffield's International DocFest never fails to interest. However, of the few films from the FSU this year, almost none were actually made in Russia or by Russian directors – evidence once more of the poor state of documentary filmmaking in today's Russia. Given the importance of documentaries not only in informing the public, but throwing light on pressing social, political and environmental issues, one longs to see documentaries by Russian directors about aspects of their reality, seen from their point of view.

The Trial, directed by Askold Kurov, concerns the 2014 trial of Ukrainian activist and filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, charged with planning a terrorist attack in Crimea. We hear testimonies of the prosecution and defence, and a plea for leniency at a meeting of intellectuals with President Vladimir Putin. "He was not on trial for his views," Putin told them, "but for his actions." If true, allegations by defence witnesses of torture, including electric shock, are surely cause for concern.

Two other films seem bent on showing the extremes of the Russian psyche. In Dmitri Kalashnikov's *The Road Movie*, filmed through a car windscreen, the viewer careers at sickening speed along snow and ice-covered roads, crashing into vehicles and swerving dangerously to avoid impact. And in *On the Edge of Freedom* (directed by Denmark's Jens Lengerke) young Russian and Ukrainian daredevils climb onto the roofs of high-rise buildings and along the edge of towering cranes for kicks. Is this really the best that can come out of today's Russia?

The Fall of Lenin is an 11-minute Ukrainian documentary showing the toppling of statues of Lenin as the spirits of the USSR are exorcised. And in *The Last Tape*, a 12-minute German documentary, we meet a Ukrainian conscript off to war in the contested Russian-speaking Eastern Donbass region. His foster grandfather, a war veteran, questions the young man's eagerness to go to war.

Kate Clark

SCRSS Image Catalogue Numbers, This Issue

Front cover: What the October Revolution Gave Women Workers and Peasants (SCRSS002448). *Page 6:* ROSTA poster (SCRSS002490). *Page 7:* Monument to Third International (SCRSS004647). *Page 8:* Nadezhda Krupskaya (SCRSS001218). *Page 10:* Alexandra Kollontai (SCRSS000699). *Page 12:* Mosselprom Building (SCRSS001934ADdg). *Page 13:* Model for rostrum (SCRSS000344). *Page 14:* Rusakov Communal Club (SCRSS000348).

The SCRSS cannot accept responsibility for incorrect information or unsatisfactory products. Always check with the organisation concerned before sending money. Reviews and articles are the opinions of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the SCRSS.

Copyright notice: All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner. © SCRSS 2017

Printed and published by:
SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB
Tel: 020 7274 2282, Fax: 020 7274 3230
Email: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk
Website: www.scrss.org.uk
Registered Charity No 1104012
Editor: Diana Turner
Publication date: September 2017

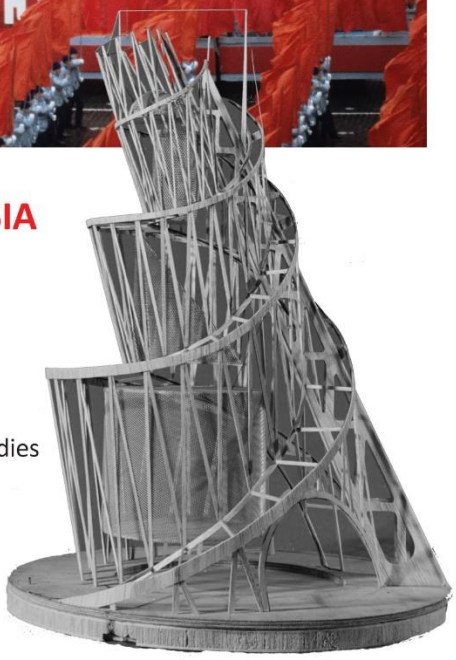
www.topfoto.co.uk
the imagery of nearly everything
requests@topfoto.co.uk - +44 1732 863939

REPRESENTING THE BEST IMAGES OF RUSSIA

Sputnik
formerly RIA Novosti

SCRSS
Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies

TASS



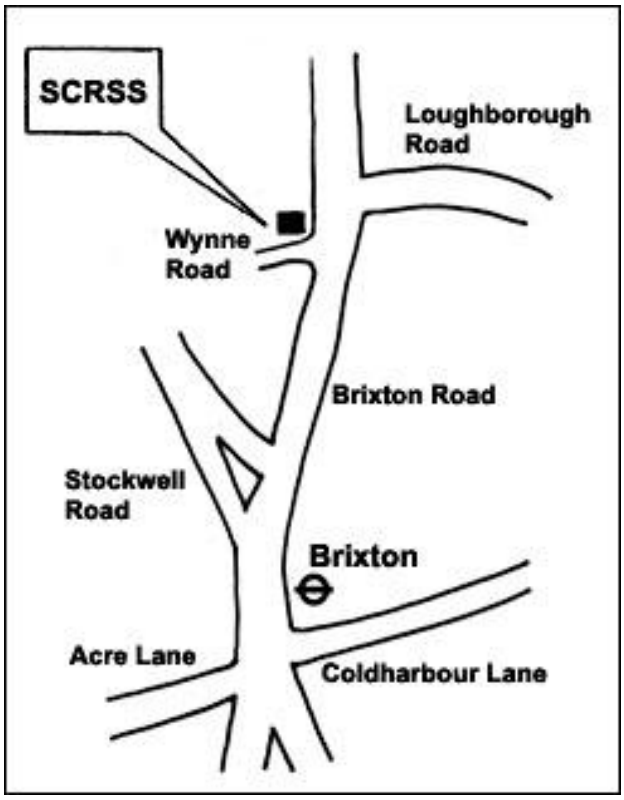
Over 8000 SCRSS images are now available to license for your project
or to purchase as prints from TopFoto.co.uk

Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies (SCRSS)

Registered Charity No. 1104012

Address

320 Brixton Road
London, SW9 6AB
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7274 2282
Fax: +44 (0)20 7274 3230
Email: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk
Web: www.scrss.org.uk



Opening Hours

Monday–Friday
10am–1pm and 2–6pm
By prior appointment

How to Find Us

Nearest underground stations:
Brixton (Victoria line), Oval (Northern line)
Buses: 3, 59, 133, 159, 415 (Loughborough Road stop)

Cover illustration (SCRSS Library): poster *What the October Revolution Gave Women Workers and Peasants*. The signs on the buildings list: library, nursery, mother and baby home, women workers' club, adult school, canteen, council of workers' and peasants' deputies. The woman stands on a mound with the words: land to the peasants, factories to the workers.

Society for Co-operation in
SCRSS
Russian and Soviet Studies